

## François Hollande's policy on Syria offers a perfect example of how not to conduct international politics

[Blog Admin](#)

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*While the British parliament has effectively ruled out UK intervention in the Syrian conflict, French President François Hollande has been adamant that France will take part in any US-led military strikes against the country. [John Gaffney](#) writes that in contrast to the UK and the United States, who have sought parliamentary and congressional approval for their policy on Syria, Hollande has attempted to act unilaterally. He argues that the extent to which France now has to wait on the US before acting, and the growing pressure on Hollande to seek approval from the French parliament, have placed the President in an extremely weak position.*

There is an irony in the fact that America's oldest ally, France, has become its newest best friend. An irony in that it is not really true; rather, it is a diplomatic accident, born of David Cameron's hurried and unsuccessful [attempt](#) on 30 August in the UK Houses of Parliament to get backing for military action, and **French President Hollande's decision to virtually declare war on Syria without even consulting anyone else in Europe or in the French political class.**



François Hollande, Credit: france diplomatie (CC-BY-SA-3.0)

After the shock of the UK's vote, even Obama decided to consult his own Congress to maintain legitimacy and regain time. He even referred to the UK's role, but made no reference to France at all. As a result of both Cameron and Obama asking for parliamentary approval, **the French have been left isolated internationally and in political chaos domestically.** France's decision to wait until the G20 summit of 5-6 September before even beginning to build a coalition within and beyond Europe is also a sign of real disarray.

There's another irony – the period of the early American Republic John Kerry was referring to when France and America were allies, was an early example of catastrophic French miscalculation. France did back America, overstretched itself, and triggered the French Revolution of 1789. **As Gustave Flaubert said, 'irony**

takes nothing away from pathos'. President Hollande should pay attention to history. French standing in international politics is always highest when it cautions against military might, and searches for a diplomatic position as the voice of old Europe counselling the New World. When de Gaulle told Kennedy, then Johnson, to stay out of Vietnam, his international standing skyrocketed. When Chirac told Bush not to go into Iraq, the same thing happened. And both, incidentally, were right.

### **France and Syria: doing it all wrong**

My intention here is not to debate whether it is right to attack Syria. Rather, it is to examine how and why French policy over Syria has become an abysmal example of how to conduct international politics. The miscalculations are related to the presidential nature of the Fifth Republic itself. What the events of early September have shown is that as a result of the French President's ability to act with greater impunity than his counterparts, he is in greater danger of making mistakes. **He is weak because he is strong.**

In fact, all said and done, both David Cameron and Ed Miliband have come out of the 30 August vote not looking too bad. And they are off the hook for now. Democracy has spoken. François Hollande has hitched his wagon solely to the United States without being sure whether the wagon is going anywhere; and in the name of France's Universalist mission (which in this case is more like presidential caprice) is having to wait two weeks to find out. As a result, all the war leader kudos gained from the [Mali expedition](#) in January 2013 has been squandered, and Hollande's lack of foreign policy experience reaffirmed. He has made Sarkozy's action over Libya in 2011 seem positively artful.

Yet another irony is that while both the UK and the US sought legitimation through democracy, the French President seems able to go to war under his own initiative. **As a consequence, France has not appeared particularly democratic in comparison.** And irony of ironies, the left-wing Socialist Leader of the House, Claude Bartolone, argued on 4 September against a parliamentary vote on the very Gaullist grounds that it would undermine the President's constitutional (arbitrary) authority. Despite this, there probably will need to be a vote of some kind in a week or so.

But whatever the French do now, the authority of the French presidency has been severely damaged and the Fifth Republic altered because, ultimately, Hollande can't do what he wants. This was in part because the French President acted before he knew what the Americans were doing (and in spite of the noise, the French have no intention of acting alone), in part because public confidence in Hollande is so low that his legitimacy to act has vanished.

Until the US Congress agrees to Obama's request, the French can only talk about the one thing they are not doing, namely 'punishing' Syria. The consequence is that the air is thick with sound and fury signifying very little, like the leader of the Socialist Party, Harlem Désir, accusing opponents of cowardice similar to that of those who would not stand up to Hitler (Munich).

### **The personal and moral dimension to French politics**

This brings us to an issue of crucial importance for understanding the vagaries of French politics, which is that, even more than the American presidency, **French politics is overtly personalised, and depends upon a highly emotional language that insists upon morality more than it does upon law.** When the US told everyone in August 2013 to get their embassy officials out of Yemen, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office made the announcement for the UK. In France, the President himself made the announcement to the press, and made it as if it were a purely French and personal decision rather than a coordinated European and American one. As regards morality, when President Hollande last week implied immediate action against Syria, he said it was to punish Assad for using chemical weapons. He would have done better to simply say that it was illegal.

In one sense, Hollande has, for not the first time, been saved by **the right which is, as ever, in total disarray.** For the last ten days the right has been saying everything and its opposite about Syria, and about the President's prerogatives, the spirit of the Fifth Republic, about the rights of parliament, and the role of the United Nations. **No one, right or left, has offered reflection or clarity, let alone leadership.**

The French government is waiting for the Americans, and now for the UN chemical weapons inspectors' report, while bombarding the French public with heart-breaking videos of suffering children (but which are not proof of anything). There is very little discussion of whether 'punishing' Assad (whatever that means) runs the huge risk of making the civil war in Syria worse, dragging Lebanon, Iran, and Israel into the conflict, alienating the Russians for decades, and having no plan at all if Assad falls, or if Assad doesn't.

I said this article was not about the rights and wrongs of attacking Syria. **Ironically enough, the uncoordinated and confused international reaction to the appalling events in Syria has created a potential dynamic for a major non-military initiative supported by nearly everyone.** If France could lead on that, it would show its real stature, because, on a good day, no one can lead Europe and embody its best traditions better than the French.

*Note: This article gives the views of the author, and not the position of EUROPP – European Politics and Policy, nor of the London School of Economics.*

### **About the author**



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## Führende Ökonomen gegen Steuererhöhungen

14.09.2013 · Deutschlands Arbeitsmarkt und die Wirtschaft insgesamt stehen gut da. Steuererhöhungen, wie sie manche Partei vorhat, sind falsch, argumentieren prominente deutsche Wirtschaftswissenschaftler: Die Ungleichheit hierzulande steige nicht - sie falle.

Seit der Reformpolitik der Regierung des Bundeskanzlers Gerhard Schröder ist die Einkommensungleichheit in Deutschland nicht größer, sondern geringer geworden - Deutschland leidet nicht unter einer „sozialen Schieflage“: Eine Woche vor der Bundestagswahl warnen fünf führende Ökonomen (Kronberger Kreis) exklusiv in der Frankfurter Allgemeinen Sonntagszeitung davor, den Sozialstaat weiter zu belasten. Entgegen anderslautender Behauptungen, sagen sie, könne sich die Mittelschicht gut behaupten und die deutsche Wirtschaft und der Arbeitsmarkt stünden gut da. Das beweise: „Beschäftigung ist das beste Mittel gegen Armutsgefährdung.“

Die Ökonomen warnen vor weiterer Umverteilung und höheren Steuern, wie sie von vielen Parteien vorgeschlagen werden. „Deutschland verfügt über einen ausgebauten Sozialstaat, der in erheblichem Umfang Einkommen umverteilt. Nur in Belgien und Österreich wird durch das Steuer-Transfer-System mehr umverteilt.“ Deshalb gelte es, „steuerpolitischen Unfug“ zu vermeiden: „Ein höherer Steuersatz in der Einkommensteuer ist ebenso überflüssig und kontraproduktiv wie die Einführung einer Vermögensabgabe.“

### EEG-Reform dringend notwendig

Vorrang der Politik einer künftigen Bundesregierung müsse die Konsolidierung der öffentlichen Haushalte genießen. Um die (steigenden) Strompreise in den Griff zu bekommen, bedürfe es einer grundlegenden [Reform des Erneuerbare Energien Gesetzes \(EEG\)](#). Die künftige Bundesregierung müsse auch auf weitere Strukturreformen in der Europäischen Währungsunion dringen und die Europäische Zentralbank auf das Ziel der Preisstabilität verpflichten. „Eine Reduzierung der Finanzierungskosten einzelner Staaten gehört nicht zu den Aufgaben der Geldpolitik“, meinen die Kronberger-Kreis-Ökonomen.

Der Kronberger Kreis ist eine konservativ-liberale Denkfabrik, die für „Mehr Mut zum Markt“ ficht. [Ihr Sprecher ist Lars Feld](#), Mitglied im Sachverständigenrat (Fünf Weise) und Leiter des Walter Eucken-Instituts in Freiburg. Außerdem gehören ihm unter anderem an: Clemens Fuest, der das Zentrum für Europäische Wirtschaftsforschung in Mannheim leitet, Monopolkommissions-Mitglied Justus Haucap und Volker Wieland, der an der Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt lehrt.

## Why Syria's images of suffering haven't moved us

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Washington Post

By [Philip Kennicott](#), Published: September 13

*Philip Kennicott is the chief art critic of The Washington Post and the recipient of the 2013 Pulitzer Prize in criticism.*

In the [Odessa Steps scene](#) of Sergei Eisenstein's 1925 film "[Battleship Potemkin](#)," a boy no more than 3 or 4 years old is shot by czarist troops. Bleeding, he falls to the ground, where he is trampled by a frantic crowd fleeing the massacre. His anguished mother gathers up his broken body, showing it to the troops, and the camera, making a three-fold argument: Have pity on my son; have pity on my people; have pity on humanity.

In 1925, film was still a new medium, with astonishing power to shock, and humanity believed, naively, that it might set a standard for basic decency in the governance of people and the relations between nations.

The posture of the grieving parent, holding up a dead or dying child to provoke the conscience of the world, has appeared again — in images from Syria that show the consequences of a chemical weapons attack allegedly committed by the regime of Bashar al-Assad. In [a compilation of videos](#) shown to the Senate Intelligence Committee on Sept. 5, a man addresses the camera as he holds the limp body of a child — probably a girl. The shirt is pulled up, the mouth slightly open, the hair disheveled. She is clearly dead, though close enough to life that one can imagine she might wake up, shake off her torpor and go out to play.

In [a speech to the nation](#) on Tuesday, President Obama referred to those videos and adopted the same posture, rhetorically holding up dead children as an essential *casus belli* in his case for a strike against Assad's government. Seven times in his brief speech he referred to children, "children lying in rows, killed by poison gas," "a father clutching his dead children, imploring them to get up and walk," "children writhing in pain and going still on a cold hospital floor."

Even more striking than his stark description was his insistence that we look, that we seek out the videos — available through [a link on the White House Web site](#) — watch them and allow their power to shape our judgment about possible military intervention in the Syrian civil war.

And yet, no matter what one thinks of a military strike against Assad, it is remarkable how little outrage these images have provoked. The president repeated the word “children,” brought his listeners back to images of suffering young people, in part because those images haven’t sunk in. In some fundamental way, we haven’t really seen them.

But it’s not clear that even if we did look at these dark, grainy and chaotic videos, that would change things. Already, Americans overwhelmingly believe that Assad used chemical weapons, yet [public opinion remains resolutely opposed](#) to military intervention in Syria.

**We have arrived at a double crisis: a dissolution of agreement about what is civilized behavior and a dissolution of faith in the meaning of images — a crisis of politics and a crisis of representation. Given how closely photography and video have been linked to defining those international norms, this is a frightening moment.**

Images of children suffering form the ultimate emotional argument, compelling us to move from sentiment to action, from the particular to the universal, from passivity to engagement. In the past century and a half, we have credited photographs of dead, wounded or starving children with galvanizing political opinion — against an unpopular war in Vietnam and for humanitarian interventions in Africa.

Cecil Beaton buoyed spirits during the London Blitz with an image of [a wide-eyed girl](#) in a hospital bed, clutching a crudely made doll. But we have seen even worse: children covered in the dust of earthquakes, stalked by vultures, bloodied by bombs.

Children are always innocent, and so they are compelling subjects when a war or political situation is complicated. They are also not quite fully vested members of society, which makes it somehow more acceptable to exploit their images. In Nick Ut’s 1972 photograph of [a girl fleeing a napalm attack](#) in Vietnam, the child is naked, which would not be incidental to the image if the victim was an adult. The children in the Syrian videos are held and manipulated by older hands, pulling at the flesh around their glassy eyes; the impact of this medical objectification would be even more horrifying if they were adults.

For some reason — perhaps because they are in our care, we instinctively believe they belong to us — it doesn’t seem quite as invasive of a child’s privacy to picture her covered in blood and crying, as Getty Images photographer Chris Hondros did in 2005 in Iraq, when he photographed [5-year-old Samar Hassan](#) after American soldiers shot up her family’s car, killing both her parents.

But these images are often so deeply emotional and volatile that their power is ephemeral. One famous 1904 photograph of a man from Congo mourning his child is particularly poignant. He is seen in profile, sitting on a low ledge, contemplating [a small, severed hand and foot](#), all that remains of his daughter after she was killed, dismembered and cannibalized by armed agents of a Belgian rubber company. It was a powerful image, disseminated by missionaries who sought to indict the colonial regime of King Leopold II of Belgium. Today it seems melodramatic.

The power of Ut’s horrifying photograph of Kim Phuc screaming as she runs down a Vietnamese road is undiminished. But the image has become so famous that it is compartmentalized in the category of “icon,” felt as a powerful aesthetic object but disconnected from the history — from the American napalm — it contains. Four decades later, it reads like a scene from a pageant of generic historical horrors, not a document of a particular war and a particular atrocity.

We often credit images such as Ut’s with changing the course of public opinion. But his photograph came late in the American people’s reassessment of Vietnam, with the Paris peace talks already underway. Images of suffering don’t necessarily forge popular attitudes ex nihilo; they catalyze an already gathering consensus.

Images of dead children are so excruciating that we are now well-trained to short-circuit our emotional responses, to move from horror to suspicion to indifference. The suffering of Israeli and Palestinian children is so fraught that it's tempting not to look. The debate over who owned the bomb that killed BBC journalist Jehad Mashhrawi's [11-month-old son](#) — the Israelis or the Palestinians — neutered the impact of one of the most powerful images of 2012. That photo, and the controversy surrounding it, demonstrate why a foreign policy based on reaction to powerful images would be dangerous, inconsistent and probably hypocritical.

Concern over the failure of images to elicit compassion has been around for decades, at least. Susan Sontag articulated it best in her 1977 book [“On Photography,”](#) which called for an “ecology of images” — a more sustainable way to remain connected to their power and meaning. The surfeit of photographs, their superabundance, their abuse and numbing effect can deaden and corrupt us: “Images transfix. Images anesthetize.”

**We are all forced, in private ways, to create a personal ecology of images. We choose to look, we bear as much as we can, yet we often turn away in anger or annoyance when an image seems to demand too much of us. Images of suffering children, in particular, are subject to a kind of emotional inflation, losing power if used too often or without regard to how we can channel the feelings they invoke. Shortly after Eisenstein's mother holds up the body of her son, the filmmaker repeats the trope, upping the emotional stakes, with what is one of the most famous scenes in the history of cinema: A baby carriage teeters on the stairs, then careens down them. Extreme images of suffering are self-deflating; after you've used one, the only option is repetition, intensification, an increase in volume. They lead only to more passion, not understanding.**

**If photographs help build collective outrage about violence, war, colonialism and genocide, they may also be helping to dismantle international norms. The one consistent fact about the horrifying images that have come out of Syria over the past 2<sup>1</sup> / 2 years is that in many cases, we don't know who made them and what they depict. All we see are decontextualized cruelty and misery. Cynicism creeps in, and there is a natural tendency to push the images away as a kind of insoluble puzzle.**

Our own government has exacerbated this photographic and moral crisis. The Iraq war was sold to the American people in part with carefully annotated satellite photos that purported to show evidence of weapons of mass destruction. Those images were misread or misrepresented, and when their verity dissolved, perhaps some of our fear of such weapons dissolved with it, too. When torture, as morally reprehensible as the use of chemical weapons, became official U.S. policy, cloaked in euphemisms about “enhanced interrogation” and “stress positions,” another red line was crossed in our understanding of international norms. Media organizations, including The Washington Post, kept many of the worst [torture images from Abu Ghraib](#) out of wide circulation, and the few that did make it through the rigors of self-censorship, we were assured, confirmed only some surreal, Gothic anomaly. Torture looked like late-night frat games, not a deadly policy of abuse.

So it is little wonder that Americans are uninterested in engaging with images of suffering children in Syria and unconcerned about the introduction of chemical weapons into the Syrian conflict. Long after she called for an ecology of images, Sontag despaired of the idea. “There isn't going to be an ecology of images,” she wrote in [“Regarding the Pain of Others.”](#) There is no way “to ration horror, to keep fresh its ability to shock. And the horrors themselves are not going to abate.”

That is where we are now, in an ecosystem of images and an ecosystem of international decency that have been irretrievably polluted.

*Also in this week's Outlook section: Author and filmmaker Sebastian Junger says [sometimes being anti-war requires embracing force](#), Syrian novelist Samar Yazbek says she's [divided on questions facing her country](#), Eliot Cohen debunks [five myths about cruise missiles](#) and William Dobson reviews a book on [how presidents go to war](#). Read more from [Outlook](#), friend us on [Facebook](#), and follow us on [Twitter](#).*

## „Ein Europa, das es nicht gibt“.

### Michael Wohlgenuth zum Buch von Dominik Geppert

Noch ein Euro-Buch? Ist zu dem Thema nicht schon alles gesagt? „Schon, aber noch nicht von Jedem“, meinte einst Karl Valentin. Doch [dieses Buch](#) ist anders – es bietet Neues, weil es auf Altes verweist. Geppert ist Historiker der Uni Bonn. Und Historiker haben sich zur jüngeren Vergangenheit der Euro-Krise noch kaum zu Wort gemeldet.



Natürlich ist die Krise auch noch lange nicht „Geschichte“ – aber hat ihre Vorgeschichten. Und: schließlich wurde uns der Euro ja als „historisches Projekt“ der europäischen Integration verkauft. Eine Art Ökonomie im Dienste eines ehernen Geschichtsgesetzes, Geld als Geburtshelfer des ewigen europäischen Friedens und einer europäischen „Identität“.

Schon bei Kohl galt: die Einheitswährung als Frage von Krieg und Frieden. Wer anderes behauptete, sei geschichtsvergessen. Heute wissen wir es besser. Und vielleicht haben gerade die Architekten des Euro auch viel Geschichte vergessen. Etwa die der Lateinischen Münzunion und anderer historischer Beispiele regelmäßig gescheiterter Währungsunionen zwischen (teil-) souveränen Staaten.

Geppert kann hier als Historiker wirklich spannendes Anschauungsmaterial liefern. Er liefert aber auch Argumente, die gerade in der aktuellen Debatte nützlich und bedenkenswert sind.

Ich habe oft mit Politikern über die Euro-Krise debattiert. Diese waren meist keine Ökonomen, aber dafür „gute Europäer“. Und so kam dann Immer das Argument: „Der Euro ist ein politisches Projekt“. Das stimmt natürlich – ist aber keine Rechtfertigung. Eher würde ich argumentieren: stemmt man sich mit politischem Willen gegen ökonomische Vernunft, so ist dies ein Rezept für ökonomische UND politische Schäden. Und wenn man heute ökonomische Gesetzmäßigkeiten durch Erklärung des politischen Ausnahmezustands aussetzen möchte, dann nutzt man gerade auch in Deutschland den Verweise auf die Geschichte von Krieg und Frieden. Es ist nun schon öfters passiert, dass mir Politiker und Intellektuelle mit dem Argument von „Kriegsgräbern in Polen“ kamen, um ökonomische Argumente zu zerstören und „mehr Europa“ zu begründen.

Da ist man natürlich eingeschüchtert: Target-Salden können emotional nicht mit Kriegsgräbern konkurrieren. Und man wünschte, man könnte kompetent als Historiker kontern. Dominik Geppert kann das.

Und das ist die zentrale These des Buchs:



**„Die überkommenen historischen Begründungen der Integration hatten sich in der großen europäischen Krise unserer Tage ins Gegenteil verkehrt“.**

Das hätten wir vorher wissen können, ein wenig auf Historiker (aber auch Ökonomen) und nicht auf politische Visionäre hörend. Wir hätten das von Arnulf Baring mit Hilfe von Dominik Geppert schon 1997 veröffentlichte Buch „[Scheitert Deutschland?](#)“ lesen können – und die heutige Schulden-, und Vertrauenskrise Europas hätte uns nicht überrascht.

**Heute heißt es: Scheitert Griechenland, dann scheitert der Euro, dann scheitert Europa.** Das ganze teils noble, teil übermütige Projekt immer engerer Union bis hin zu den Vereinigten Staaten von Europa soll jetzt am griechischen Staatshaushalt oder an zwei zyprischen Banken scheitern? So können nur Ökonomen oder Investmentbanker der kurzen Frist (Keynes: „in the long run, we are all dead“) denken, nicht aber Historiker, die lange Fristen gewohnt sind.

Jetzt aber konkret zum Buch. Die zentrale These lautet:

**„Die überkommenen historischen Begründungen der europäischen Einigung verkehren sich in der aktuellen Krise ins Gegenteil. Das gilt für den Abbau zwischenstaatlicher Konflikte ebenso wie für die Bewahrung von Recht und Demokratie und die Mehrung von Sicherheit und Wohlstand“.**

Und weiter:

**„Die Maßnahmen zur Rettung des Euro ... drohen die Errungenschaften von über dreihundert Jahren westlicher Demokratiegeschichte und Rechtsstaatstradition zu untergraben. Sie bringen die Budgethoheit der nationalen Parlamente zum Verschwinden. Und sie gefährden die Prinzipien von *no taxation without representation* und *one man one vote*. Der alte Grundsatz, dass Verträge einzuhalten sind, gilt im Euroraum nicht mehr uneingeschränkt. Die Achtung des Rechts scheint ins Belieben der Regierungen gestellt. Im Namen Europas suspendieren unsere Politiker die Demokratie und hebeln den Rechtsstaat aus. Doch Frieden, Sicherheit und Wohlstand als die ursprünglichen Antriebe der europäischen Integration können nur in einem gesetzlichen Zustand der Rechtsgemeinschaft und Demokratie fortbestehen“.**

Die Folge:

**"In ihrem gegenwärtigen Zustand schleift die europäische Integration die Nationalismen im Euroraum nicht ab, sie spitzt sie zu. Sie sichert rechtsstaatliche Verfahren und demokratisch legitimierte Entscheidungen nicht, sondern gefährdet sie. Anstatt unsere Sicherheit zu erhöhen, produziert sie Unsicherheit. Sie einigt den Kontinent nicht, sie spaltet ihn: in Länder mit und ohne Euro, in Gläubiger- und Schuldnerstaaten".**

Nun gut, Kollege Geppert, aber „was tun?“, sprach (schon) Lenin: Es ist redlich und richtig, dass Dominik Geppert nicht verkündet: „ich hab die einfache und beste Lösung der Euro-Krise!“ (ich hab sie auch nicht).

Aber er lässt uns auch nicht ratlos:

**"Im Prinzip stehen drei Wege zur Auswahl: erstens der verspätete Durchbruch zu den Vereinigten Staaten von Europa, zweitens die Weiterentwicklung der Transfer- und Haftungsunion durch die Zusammenarbeit der nationalen Regierungen oder drittens eine Integration durch Dezentralisierung und Wettbewerb“.**

Und da bin ich ganz bei ihm: Der erste Weg taugt für Sonntagsreden, aber nicht für Realpolitik, und dies zudem zum Glück. Zudem:

**"Außer in Deutschland gab es nirgendwo eine Mehrheit für den Vorschlag, zur Lösung der Krise müssten die Einzelstaaten mehr Kompetenzen an Brüssel abtreten“.**

Der zweite Weg ist vielleicht der wahrscheinlichste, aber – folgt man der zentralen These des Buchs – einer, der Rechtsstaat, Demokratie und Wohlstand in Europa nicht fördert, sondern eher gefährdet.

Beide Wege wären nicht nur „geschichtsvergessen“, sondern auch „ökonomievergessen“ (wenn es das Wort gibt). Bleibt der dritte Weg, der klassisch-liberale:

„Die ... Konzeption einer offeneren, vielseitigeren und dezentraleren EU sollte ... als Zielperspektive dienen. Eine derartige Union ist ... als Blaupause unverzichtbar, um das Handeln bei der nächsten Zuspitzung der Krise, die eher früher als später zu erwarten ist, daran zu orientieren“.

Und:

„wenn wir einseitig die europäische Solidarität beschwören und nationale Traditionen, Denkweisen und Interessen verleugnen, sind wir auf ein Europa fixiert, das es nicht gibt“.

Ein wichtiger Denkanstoß; eine spannende und lohnende Lektüre.

- See more at: <http://blog.openeuropeberlin.de/2013/09/ein-europa-das-es-nicht-gibt-michael.html#sthash.vO2RITVd.dpuf>

## Ce qu'il faut retenir de l'intervention de François Hollande

Par [Chloé Woitier](#), [Marie Bartnik](#) Publié le 15/09/2013 à 21:32

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### • La Syrie

François Hollande l'a répété plusieurs fois au cours de son intervention: [l'accord américano-russe sur les armes chimiques syriennes](#) n'a pu se faire que grâce à la pression exercée par la France. Paris puis Washington menaçaient en effet de frapper le pays en réaction à l'utilisation de gaz chimiques contre des populations civiles. «Que ce serait-il passé s'il n'y avait pas eu de réaction? Bachar el-Assad aurait continué de gazer? **La pression française a convaincu la Russie de prendre l'initiative [d'une solution diplomatique] et c'est tant mieux.**»

Le président estime cependant que l'accord «[est une étape importante mais pas le point d'arrivée](#)» de la résolution du conflit. «La prochaine étape, c'est de trouver une solution politique à la crise syrienne. Nous pourrions le faire dès l'assemblée générale de l'ONU fin septembre». Il est, selon lui, nécessaire de maintenir la pression militaire pour faire avancer ce dossier. Mais pas à n'importe quel prix. «Pour nous, les représentants de la Syrie, c'est l'opposition démocratique, ce ne sont pas les islamistes radicaux», a insisté François Hollande. «Nous voulons être sûrs que ceux qui se chargeront de la transition politique en Syrie sont des démocrates. Nous n'allons pas installer ceux que nous considérons aussi dangereux qu'Assad, et que nous avons combattu au Mali».

### • Les propos de François Fillon sur le FN

Le président n'a pas souhaité commenter directement [les déclarations de François Fillon, qui rejette la politique du «ni-ni» et du «front républicain» en cas de duel FN-PS](#) au second tour des municipales. «Je suis chef de l'Etat, pas d'un parti, je ne me mêle pas de ces controverses», affirme-t-il. «Mais nous voulons que la France puisse être fière d'elle-même, et de ses valeurs héritées de l'histoire. Et il y a un principe fondamental: il y a des digues, des règles (...) ce qui nous rassemble, c'est la démocratie, c'est une conception commune de la France et de la république».

François Hollande rappelle que lorsqu'il était premier secrétaire du PS, il a eu à gérer le 21 avril 2002, lorsque Lionel Jospin avait été éliminé du second tour de la présidentielle au profit de Jean-Marie Le Pen. «Ce jour-là, je ne me suis pas posé de questions en me demandant lequel était le plus sectaire. Et bien, je n'ai pas hésité. J'ai appelé à voter Chirac et je ne le regrette pas.»

### • Le drame de Nice

«Je vois la colère, mais la justice, toute la justice, rien que la justice», a commenté le président à propos [du drame de la bijouterie de Nice](#). «La justice doit à chaque fois prévaloir: c'est à la justice de faire justice, et pas à qui que ce soit d'autre», a-t-il insisté.

François Hollande a rappelé que son gouvernement avait renforcé les moyens de la police et de la gendarmerie, et allait faire de même pour la justice et l'éducation, afin de lutter contre l'insécurité. Il appelle également les élus locaux à renforcer la vidéosurveillance. «Quand un pays est miné par le doute que crée l'insécurité, il perd ses références. Chacun doit rester dans la République en étant sûr d'être protégé».

#### • La taxe sur le diesel

Le chef de l'Etat n'instaurera pas de taxe sur le diesel en 2014 comme le réclament les Verts. «Il ne faut pas réduire l'écologie à l'impôt», a plaidé François Hollande. La contribution climat-énergie «intégrera toutes les énergies, dont le gazole, mais pas l'année prochaine». Un crédit d'impôt sur la rénovation thermique, que le chef de l'Etat souhaite favoriser, sera en revanche annoncé «très prochainement». Le chef de l'Etat ouvrira vendredi par un discours la conférence environnementale.

#### • Le budget 2014

[François Hollande](#) a promis qu'il n'y aurait pas de nouvelles hausses d'impôts l'année prochaine, hormis la hausse de la TVA et le plafonnement du quotient familial. Sensible au «ras-le-bol fiscal» exprimé par les Français, François Hollande a promis qu'aucune taxe nouvelle ne servirait à financer la Sécurité sociale, comme annoncé dans la presse cette semaine. L'augmentation des cotisations sociales, qui servira à financer les retraites, ne constitue pas un impôt en tant que tel, selon le chef de l'Etat.

Afin de redonner du pouvoir d'achat aux ménages les plus modestes, François Hollande a par ailleurs confirmé une décote de l'impôt sur le revenu. Les premières tranches du barème seront allégées, pour que la facture «des contribuables qui ont pu payer un peu plus d'impôts avec la refiscalisation des heures supplémentaires» soient moins lourde. Cette mesure s'ajoutera à la fin du gel de barème de l'[impôt](#) sur le revenu, qui avait été précédemment annoncée.

#### • La baisse du chômage

«On touche au but, on y est presque», a estimé François Hollande, presque un an jour pour jour après avoir promis sur TF1 d'inverser la courbe du chômage d'ici la fin 2013. Il a rappelé toute la panoplie d'outils mis en œuvre pour faire baisser le chômage (contrats d'avenir, contrats de génération, crédit d'impôt compétitivité-emploi, loi sur la sécurisation de l'emploi), tout en concédant que pour le faire baisser durablement, il faut avant tout insuffler de la croissance. «Il faut que les entreprises se sentent soutenues», a estimé François Hollande. L'avenir des entreprises, c'est l'avenir de l'emploi des salariés.»

## Hollande macht viele Kinder für Arbeitslosigkeit verantwortlich

16.09.2013 · Die Arbeitslosenzahlen in Frankreich erreichen monatlich neue Rekordstände. Präsident Hollande hat einen neuen Grund gefunden: Die hohe Geburtenrate verschärfe die Lage auf dem Arbeitsmarkt.



Sind die vielen Kinder in Frankreich für die hohe Arbeitslosigkeit verantwortlich?

Warum ist die Arbeitslosigkeit in Frankreich so viel höher als in Deutschland? Die [niedrigere Wettbewerbsfähigkeit der französischen Volkswirtschaft](#) ist nicht die einzige Ursache, ist [Frankreichs Präsident François Hollande](#) überzeugt. In einem Fernsehinterview machte er am Sonntagabend einen neuen Grund aus: Die hohe Kinderzahl französischer Frauen spiele eine Rolle.

Zwar beschwere man sich nicht darüber, dass [Frauen in Frankreich durchschnittlich 2,03 Kinder bekommen](#), so Hollande. Die französische Volkswirtschaft müsse deshalb aber mehr Wachstum generieren, weil mehr junge Menschen auf den Arbeitsmarkt kämen als in Staaten mit geringeren Geburtenraten. In Deutschland bringt eine Frau im Schnitt 1,36 Kinder auf die Welt. Der Bundesrepublik wird deshalb ein Bevölkerungsrückgang prognostiziert, während Frankreich in den nächsten Jahren weiter wachsen dürfte.

## German election diary

### What Bavaria means for Germany

Sep 16th 2013, 9:32 by A.K. | MUNICH

83,14



BAVARIA is a strange place. It is arguably Germany's most successful state, with all but full employment and one of the country's best education systems. It is also its most distinct state, as the only one that reverted after the second world war to its historical borders as a duchy and kingdom. Its state parliament is the only one that never formally voted for the modern German constitution (even though it also ruled that the constitution shall nonetheless apply in Bavaria). [Traditional garb is more idiosyncratic](#) and popular here than anywhere else in Germany, and merges more easily with ultra-modern, high-tech life styles and industries.

The state is also the only one in which the country's largest party, the centre-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU) led by chancellor Angela Merkel, is not present at all. Instead, a sister party called the Christian Social Union (CSU) takes the CDU's role in Bavaria. Both parties arose out of the chaos of the postwar years when previous Catholic and conservative parties merged to form new movements. Since then, the CDU and CSU have stayed separate, even though they form a common faction in the federal parliament.

The differences between Bavaria and Germany go on. All of which is simply to say: It has never been easy to project electoral trends from Bavarian elections to federal elections. Naturally, that isn't stopping anybody from trying to do so today.

Yesterday, Bavaria voted for its Landtag, or state parliament, and I joined the party inside the Landtag building, the beautiful Maximilianeum in Munich. And this coming Sunday, all Germans vote in the federal election for the Bundestag. So the question is: what did yesterday mean for next Sunday?

In Bavaria, the clear victor is Horst Seehofer (pictured), the state's premier and boss of the CSU. The CSU has governed Bavaria uninterrupted since 1958, for most of the time with an absolute majority, so there was no question at all about whether Mr Seehofer and the CSU would stay in government. The question was instead whether Mr Seehofer could regain the absolute majority, which the CSU lost during the last election in 2008. Since then, it has had to govern in coalition with the liberal Free Democrats (FDP), just as Mrs Merkel's CDU currently does in the federal government.

And yes, Mr Seehofer did regain the absolute majority, with 101 seats out of the 180 in the state parliament. He missed the absolute majority of votes (with "only" about 48%), but who's counting? Yesterday, he pushed

through the crowds in the Landtag in a big bevy of followers, cameras and microphones, being feted as a King Horst. Taken by itself, this bodes well for the sister party, the CDU, and Mrs Merkel on Sunday.

But the biggest news of the night was the miserable showing of the FDP. It fell clearly below the 5% threshold to enter the state parliament at all, so it is out. (The same threshold exists for the federal parliament.) I was in the FDP rooms as they announced the results. Everyone around me was dejected.

But only briefly, because as of this Monday morning, the Bavarian defeat has fired the FDP all across Germany with even more fighting spirit than before. The FDP often teeters on the brink of disaster. As Werner Weidenfeld, a politics professor here in Munich, says, such crises can be paradoxically positive for the party. Many voters, considering the liberals part of the bedrock of postwar German politics, become afraid that the FDP gets ejected and "tactically" [lend their second votes](#) to the FDP so that it stays in. Because the FDP has now become "the issue", Mr Weidenfeld thinks, it will still squeeze into the federal parliament on Sunday.

The suspense is whether these tactical votes will come entirely at the expense of the CDU, as they did in a state election in Lower Saxony last January. Next Sunday night, the only thing that will matter will be whether the CDU-CSU and the FDP have a joint majority of seats in the new parliament.

If not, the coalition kabuki begins, and we are in for some wrenching negotiations. The Greens will be weaker than they hoped to be earlier this year, if their showing in Bavaria yesterday is any guide. But the Social Democrats, who gained slightly in Bavaria over their showing in 2008, may have to make some fundamental decisions about whether to form a grand coalition with Mrs Merkel again, as they did in 2005.

The Economist explains

## Why is the use of chemical weapons taboo?

Sep 15th 2013, 23:50 by E.H.

83,16



ON AUGUST 21ST almost 1,500 people were killed in a nerve-agent attack in Syria. It was not just the scale of the atrocity which caused international outrage, but the fact that chemical weapons had been used. This crossed a "red line" previously defined by Barack Obama, prompting America to consider intervention against the Syrian regime, which is assumed by most observers to have been responsible for the attack. But then John Kerry, America's secretary of state, suggested on September 9th that military intervention could be avoided if the Syrian regime placed its entire chemical stockpile under international control. Syria's ally Russia [backed this suggestion](#), and on September 11th Bashar al-Assad, Syria's president, announced that he was prepared to go along with it. [On September 14th a joint Russian-American framework was agreed](#) to eliminate the weapons. But why is the use of chemical weapons especially taboo?

The first ban on chemical weapons was actually introduced before they had even been used. At the Hague convention in 1899, projectiles "the sole object of which is the diffusion of asphyxiating or deleterious gasses" were prohibited from international use. Even so, chemical weapons were deployed in Europe during the first world war by both sides. But they were not turned against civilians, unlike aerial bombardment and submarine torpedoes. When the Geneva protocol was agreed in 1925 the ban on chemical weapons was reiterated. During the second world war the taboo against them became stronger. Political leaders discussed their use at length. America decided not to use gas in its attack on the island of Iwo Jima. Adolf Hitler used Zyklon B poison gas in concentration camps, but refrained from using chemical weapons on the battlefield. Being the weapon that not even Hitler would use increased the stigma.

The taboo against the use of chemical weapons arises, in large part, from the shocking scale on which they can kill and the insidious and indiscriminate way they spread. But it also stems from the infrequency of their use. Because the ban on their deployment has mostly been observed, political leaders are, by and large, even less willing to flout it, thus reinforcing the taboo. The most notorious exception after the second world war was when Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons against Iran in the Iran-Iraq war, and against Kurds and other minorities in Iraq. Then in 1995 Aum Shinrikyo, a cult group, attacked the Tokyo metro system with a home-made nerve-gas, killing dozens of commuters. That attack heightened fears that terrorist groups might employ chemical weapons, further strengthening the taboo. That said, in many respects chemical weapons are no worse than other means of killing people. Mr Assad has shelled, bombed and beheaded his citizens too. Yet it was his use of chemical weapons that was considered intolerable and has prompted international action.



The Syrian armed forces have one of the largest stockpiles of chemical weapons: around 1,000 tonnes, including the nerve agents Sarin and VX. Getting rid of the weapons, assuming the Russian-American deal can be made to stick, will take considerable time. As Syria's civil war continues, it will be difficult for United Nations inspectors to reach all the sites where the weapons are stored, many of which are in areas where heavy fighting is under way. And despite the deal, [Mr Assad may not keep his word](#). The exceptional taboo that surrounds the use of chemical weapons has contributed to a diplomatic breakthrough, but dismantling Syria's deadly chemical arsenal will be hard, if not impossible, without a wider ceasefire.

09/16/2013 11:24 AM

## CSU Triumph

### Bavarian Vote Gives Merkel Pre-Election Boost

**Bavarian Governor Horst Seehofer won a resounding victory in a state vote Sunday that bodes well for Chancellor Angela Merkel in the Sept. 22 election. But her junior partner, the FDP, is struggling, which puts a question mark on who will govern with her.**

Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservative allies won an absolute majority in a [state election in Bavaria](#) on Sunday, heralding strong momentum for her party in the general election this coming Sunday.

The Christian Social Union, which has governed the prosperous southern state for the last 56 years, won 47.7 percent according to preliminary official results, meaning it will no longer rely on a junior coalition partner for power.

Its coalition ally for the last five years, the pro-business Free Democratic Party (FDP), slumped to 3.3 percent, far short of the five percent level needed for parliamentary representation.

That could give Merkel cause for concern because the FDP is her coalition partner in Berlin. However, the FDP was widely expected to do badly in Bavaria in any case, and Sunday's poor result for them could motivate people to vote tactically in the general election to ensure it remains strong enough to keep Merkel's current center-right coalition intact.

The opposition Social Democratic Party (SPD) gained 2.0 points to 20.6 percent in Bavaria but remained hopelessly far behind the CSU, even though they had fielded a strong candidate in Munich mayor Christian Ude. The opposition Greens also fared disappointingly, slipping 0.8 point to 8.6 percent.

Sunday's result is a personal triumph for Bavarian Governor Horst Seehofer, 64, who took over the leadership of the CSU in 2008 after the party slumped to 43.4 percent, missing an absolute majority for the first time in over four decades.

### 'Seehofer Superstar'

"The CSU is a people's party and we are deeply rooted in the Bavarian population. Every second Bavarian voted for us!" he told cheering supporters in Munich on Sunday night. The mass-circulation daily *Bild* on Monday ran the headline "Seehofer Superstar."

Commentators said the charismatic Seehofer, a political war horse regarded as one of the few conservatives left who are capable of standing up to Merkel, may now prove to be a thorn in her side by making forceful demands in upcoming coalition talks if she wins next Sunday.

He has, for example, been calling for a [motorway toll](#) for foreigners using German autobahns, a demand widely dismissed as populist campaign rhetoric but which he may now insist on, even though she has slapped the idea down.

However, the initial impact of his victory is a psychological boost for her conservatives in the last week of campaigning.

"I'm delighted. This will give us great tailwind and it shows the center-left has no chance of its own majority in Berlin," said Hermann Gröhe, general secretary of Merkel's CDU, currently 13 points ahead of the SPD in the latest nationwide poll released on Sunday by Emnid.

The CSU's campaign focus was, after all, similar to that of Merkel's Christian Democratic Union party, the Bavarian CSU's sister party at the national level -- forget about the issues, focus on the leader.

"Voters like winners. Such a strong signal from Bavaria will mobilize Merkel's supporters. On the other hand, such a bad result for the FDP could activate their voters," Thomas Jaeger, political scientist at Cologne University, told Reuters.

### **'Behold Bavaria'**

Merkel, like Seehofer, has admirable personal approval ratings and can point to a strong economic performance.

Bavaria has the lowest rate of joblessness of Germany's 16 states at a paltry 3.8 percent. It regularly comes at the top in comparative national education rankings and at the bottom when it comes to crime. Its capital city, Munich, regularly places in the Top 10 of rankings of the world's most liveable cities.

That explains the CSU's simple but effective campaign slogan: "Schaut Auf Bayern," loosely translated as "Behold Bavaria." A prosperous land of Alpine glory and fairytale castles built by mad kings, of yodelling and cowbells and thigh-slapping dances and peerless beer.

The term "Laptops and Lederhosen" is an old one but it still applies, and it explains why there was no appetite for a change in government. The CSU has ruled Bavaria for so long that it has become synonymous with the success of the state. And Seehofer, 64, embodies its catch-all appeal.

"Horst Seehofer has managed to be the most popular conservative and the most popular Social Democrat in one person," Patrick Döring, general secretary of the pro-business Free Democrats, said grudgingly.

Conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote on Monday: "The secret of the last true people's party lies in the fact that it doesn't stand for this or that, but for everything."

The same could be said of Merkel. She's famed for her U-turns and her absence of vision, but she's seen as a safe pair of hands who has steered Germany through the debt crisis without costing taxpayers too much, and who has presided over relatively strong economic growth.

So why change? Six days ahead of the election, even though her center-right alliance is neck-and-neck in opinion polls with the combined opposition of SPD, Greens and Left Party, the only real question is whether she'll manage to carry on her coalition with the FDP or if she will end up as head of a "grand coalition" with the SPD, an alliance with which she ruled in her first term between 2005 and 2009.

*cro -- with wire reports*

L'édito de Christophe Barbier, mercredi 11 septembre 2013, p. 5

## Le ridicule et l'impuissance

Christophe Barbier

L'Histoire retiendra peut-être que le sommet franco-allemand le plus mesquin depuis la Seconde Guerre mondiale s'est tenu dans un bus, à la va-vite, en marge du G 20 de Saint-Petersbourg. L'Histoire retiendra peut-être qu'un colloque de ministres des Affaires étrangères, improvisé dans un pays balte, a permis de sauver l'honneur et les apparences. L'Histoire retiendra peut-être qu'un secrétaire d'Etat américain s'est exprimé en français, à Paris, pour exposer la position des Etats-Unis. Mais, à coup sûr, l'Histoire retiendra que l'Europe politique s'est un peu plus discréditée à cause de l'affaire syrienne, que la désunion européenne a éclaté au grand jour et que le Vieux Continent risque de s'appeler bientôt le continent mort.

Le principal fautif s'appelle Allemagne. Concentrée sur son nombril électoral, inquiète de se retrouver sans majorité claire ni gouvernement stable, lasse de l'aventure collective, elle est de plus en plus germano-centrée : ce repli sur soi est l'écho de son déclin démographique, moins il y a d'Allemands, plus les Allemands sont allemands. La responsabilité revient ensuite à la Grande-Bretagne, dont les positions sont faussées par la perspective d'un référendum pour sortir de l'Union européenne : comment peser sur une organisation politique qu'on envisage de quitter ? L'Angleterre a chanté samedi à pleins poumons, pour la Last Night of the Proms de la BBC, le Rule, Britannia !, mais elle redevient petit à petit une île, frileuse jusqu'à remettre en question son soutien automatique aux Etats-Unis. Ce repli sur soi est l'écho de son déclin géopolitique : moins il y a d'Empire britannique, plus les Britanniques sont britanniques.

Fautives, également, les démocraties échappées du carcan soviétique : elles tremblent face à la Russie mais, quand la France défie Moscou, leur poltronnerie les rend muettes. Fautives, encore, les nations du Sud, qui excipent de la crise pour ne pas se mêler de géopolitique, et s'affichent aussi faibles que pauvres. Coupable, enfin, Bruxelles et sa technocratie embrouillée, tatillonne sur la taille des cages à poules, mais démunie face aux armes chimiques. Moins il y a d'europhiles, plus les technocrates sont technocrates.

En 2003, Jacques Chirac ne sut rien faire de son courageux refus d'attaquer l'Irak : ni s'attirer la gratitude généreuse du monde arabe ni relancer l'Europe. Dans quelques jours, nous saurons si François Hollande a eu raison de prôner la "punition" de Damas ou s'il a plongé dans un funeste guêpier. Que la fortune des armes lui sourie, et le président français aura la main en Europe ; son premier devoir sera d'y régler quelques comptes, en déclenchant trois révolutions.

1/ Lancer et animer un nouveau groupe politique, celui des nations qui veulent encore peser sur la marche du monde, discuter de tout et frapper quand il le faut. De cette phalange, l'Allemagne ne sera pas, la Pologne si, l'Italie, l'Espagne et la Suède peut-être, le Danemark sans doute ; quant à la Grande-Bretagne, elle y trouverait une manière de rester en Europe sans y rester... Ces pays, bras armé d'une Europe lui déléguant sa défense et sa diplomatie, prendraient les risques, et les autres partageraient la facture. Ainsi inventerait-on en Europe la protection de tous par quelques-uns, payée par les autres.

2/ Entamer un vaste chantier dans la zone euro, pour que les politiques économiques et sociales s'approfondissent à marche forcée. François Hollande a affiché cette ambition le 16 mai... et n'a rien fait depuis ! C'est parce que l'Europe de la prospérité est une rivière asséchée que l'Europe de la sécurité est sur le sable.

3/ Accélérer la mutation de l'Otan, qui se rouille lentement, en proposant aux Etats-Unis de la prendre en "gérance". L'attitude turque dans le dossier syrien crée un nouvel axe Paris-Istanbul, duo tout désigné pour relancer cette organisation inventée pour les conflits d'hier.

Il ne sera pas facile de réussir les frappes en Syrie. Il sera plus difficile encore de transformer en victoire politique ici l'éventuel succès militaire là-bas. Ce deuxième combat commence tout de suite.

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Angela Merkel

## A safe pair of hands

**Perceptions of Germany's chancellor, who is likely to win re-election on September 22nd, are completely different at home and abroad**

Sep 14th 2013 | BERLIN | [From the print edition](#)

83,21

SUPERSIZED and without commentary, a pair of hands went up the other day on the side of a building just outside Berlin's main train station, with Germany's parliament and government buildings in clear view. The idiosyncratic bracing of thumb and fingers made the digits on the poster instantly recognisable as belonging to Angela Merkel, who is up for re-election as chancellor on September 22nd. The "Merkel rhombus" has become something of a symbol.

Asked about it, she replies, in a disarming and characteristic deadpan, that she adopted the position to solve a practical problem, as any trained scientist would (she earned her PhD with a dissertation on quantum chemistry). The problem was what to do with those hands. The solution was to neutralise them against each other, which happens to be pleasingly symmetrical and also pushes the shoulders up, improving posture.

The explanation is pure Merkel—unpretentious, pragmatic, artfully plain. With a similarly choreographed candour she has let it be known that she likes to cook potato soup for her husband (a scientist who otherwise stays out of public view). She does her own shopping, occasionally getting lost in the supermarket aisles. Mrs Merkel "fits the cliché that we Germans have of ourselves: frugal, sombre, awkward and a bit unpolished in a likeable way," says Ralph Bollmann, author of one of a ream of biographies published this year. That common touch, he thinks, is why the Germans identify so much with their chancellor that in the past few years they have started to call her *Mutti*—"Mum".

The rhombus makes for a striking poster. As telling, though, is what the huge poster lacks. There is only one tiny bit of text: the initials CDU, tucked in the corner. They stand for the Christian Democratic Union, the centre-right party that Mrs Merkel leads, a big tent of churchgoers, conservatives and free-market liberals. Parties and platforms, not personalities, are supposed to play the lead role in German parliamentary elections. But this time, for the CDU, Mrs Merkel's person is the platform.

What is that platform's content? Outside Germany, Mrs Merkel is identified above all with a particular stance in the euro crisis, one which says it can only be solved with "austerity" (meaning brutal budget cuts) on the part of formerly profligate governments and wider economic reforms to make the entire euro zone competitive again. This explains the cheeky banners Irish football fans held up during last year's European championship: "Angela Merkel thinks we're at work". It also accounts for the odious posters of Mrs Merkel defaced with a Hitler moustache brandished by demonstrators in Greece.

Ganz, Schön, Lustig

Germans see things differently. Mrs Merkel has achieved close to nothing of what she promised in previous election manifestos. There has been no overall tax simplification, for example, only a few giveaways to special interests. She has undertaken no big reform—the last one, liberalising Germany's labour market, occurred a decade ago under her predecessor, Gerhard Schröder. Where she has made bold domestic changes, above all in deciding to give up nuclear power after the 2011 disaster at Fukushima in Japan, she has been adopting policies already favoured by the opposition parties. To Germans, therefore, Mrs Merkel is the opposite of ideological. She is a caregiver, like a *Mutti*, not a taskmaster, like her Irish or Greek caricatures.

By temperament, Mrs Merkel tries to slow political processes down. She also tries to break down problems into discrete units, observing and testing each solution separately before moving on to the next, as a good scientist

would. That is what she has done in successive Brussels summits dealing with the euro crisis. Where the world saw a dogmatic Prussian forcing others to be disciplined, the Germans saw a chancellor giving ground to demands from crisis countries and France (on bail-outs, rescue funds and banking union), but cautiously and in the smallest possible increments. As taxpayers, Germans felt she was protecting them even as they understood that more concessions might follow. Mr Bollmann sees this ability to accustom the Germans gradually to new realities, and to know when they are ready to accept more, as Mrs Merkel's particular genius.

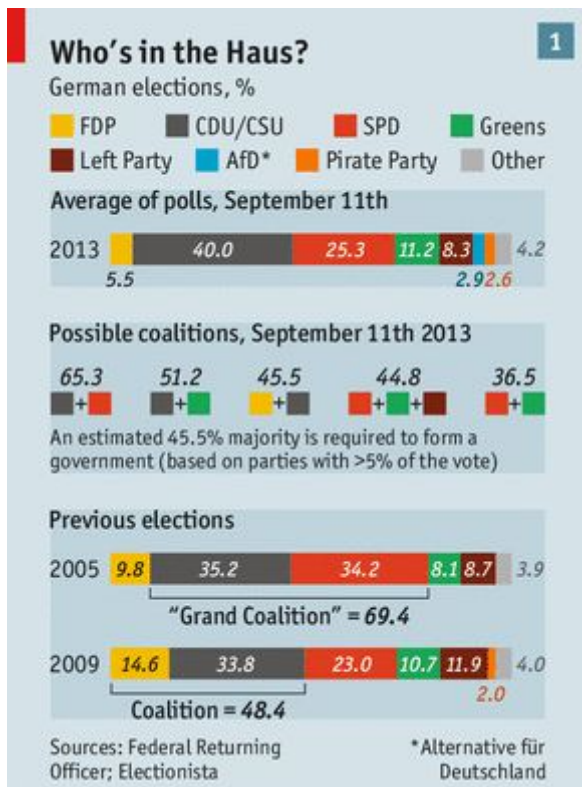
Her “politics of small steps” is communicated in a way her countrymen appreciate and foreigners find baffling. Mrs Merkel speaks with soothing tones and simple, reassuring phrases which often have little content—a “sanitised Lego language, snapping together prefabricated phrases made of hollow plastic,” as Timothy Garton Ash at Oxford University describes it. In part, Mr Garton Ash allows, this is just the modern German fashion. “Because of Hitler, the palette of contemporary German political rhetoric is deliberately narrow, cautious, and boring.” But Mrs Merkel has taken it to new extremes of moderation.

Peer Steinbrück, who as leader of the Social Democrats (SPD) is her main rival in the elections, parodies her well. When he says, “A good foundation is the best precondition for a solid basis in Europe, ladies and gentlemen,” it usually brings the house down because it really does sound like Mrs Merkel. In so doing it allows Mr Steinbrück to position himself, in contrast, as one who dishes out “straight talk”—*Klartext*. To Mr Steinbrück's frustration, however, his straight talk often leads to gaffes. When he says that he would not pay less than €5 (\$6.63) for a bottle of Pinot Grigio the German public spends a few days affecting outrage that a Social Democrat with blue-collar interests at heart would say such a thing. But when Mrs Merkel does her *Mutti*-talk, she gets away with it.



Once and future  
chancellors

A more personal lunge at Mrs Merkel over the euro crisis missed the mark. Trying to make her incrementalism into a shortcoming, Mr Steinbrück suggested that Mrs Merkel lacked “feeling” for the European project because she spent the first 36 years of her life in East Germany, outside the European Communities from which the EU grew. It is true that she has a different (though not necessarily lesser) emotional connection to the EU than that felt, say, by Helmut Kohl, the pro-French CDU chancellor who oversaw German reunification and the conception of the euro and who brought Mrs Merkel into national politics. But as Mr Steinbrück discovered, a lot of people were offended that he could suspect Mrs Merkel of insufficient euro-passion merely because she grew up an *Ossi* (easterner).



A good bit of what passes for campaign fisticuffs between these two politicians is in fact kabuki. They know and respect each other. In Mrs Merkel's first term, from 2005 to 2009, she led a "grand coalition" between the CDU and the SPD (see chart 1) with Mr Steinbrück as her finance minister. They worked well together. When the financial crisis struck in 2008, the two gave a joint press conference to assure German savers that their bank deposits were safe. That image endures as the moment when the German public calmed down.

Both are also known for a wry sense of humour. In Mr Steinbrück's case, it is broadly ironic (he blames his Danish grandmother for teaching it to him). Mrs Merkel's humour tends nowadays to be low-key and reserved for private occasions, or at least situations removed from the public glare. The block of flats in which she lives has fewer tenants than it did, for security reasons; so her doorbell, marked discreetly with her husband's name, Sauer, sits in a row with others marked Ganz, Schön, Lustig, Schön, Ganz (roughly translated: really quite funny, quite really). She is also a woman of culture and emotion. The risk of controversy does not stop her attending the Wagner festival in Bayreuth every summer; while she will sit through and enjoy the Ring Cycle, her particular favourite is said to be "Tristan and Isolde", with its morbid and tragic beauty.

A good foundation

One of the problems for the SPD and the other large opposition party, the Greens, in running against Mrs Merkel is that, in an admirable display of responsibility, they both voted with her at every step in the euro-rescue. Yes, the Greens, in particular, would have liked to go faster and would have been open to Eurobonds (issued separately by each euro-zone government but guaranteed by all), which Mrs Merkel has ruled out. Bolder action at the beginning might have nipped the crisis in the bud, says Jürgen Trittin, a leading Green; instead Mrs Merkel "always delays, then eventually does what we said". But to most Germans, this just sounds like nitpicking.

More annoyingly for Mr Trittin, voters now have the same blurred view of the parties' differences in energy policy. For most of the 30 years since the Greens entered parliament, their signature demand was for Germany to say *Nein, Danke* to nuclear power. Having previously backed nuclear power, in the days after Fukushima, Mrs Merkel made the most abrupt volte-face of her career. She decided to start turning the plants off and to exit nuclear power altogether by 2022.

For the Greens, this should have been a huge victory. Instead, it allowed Mrs Merkel to neutralise the entire subject. The *En ergiewende* ("energy turn"), which also encompasses a large and generously subsidised push into renewable energy, means putting up prices when in competitors such as America energy is getting cheaper;

this looks worrying to some businesspeople. But there is a consensus behind it among all the main parties. Mr Trittin is reduced to bickering about operational details (power lines and so forth) rather than attacking Mrs Merkel head-on.

This is part of a pattern that has been called Merkelvillianism. By small, sly moves, Mrs Merkel has inched the CDU leftward, poaching one policy after another from her centre-left rivals. For decades the CDU favoured military conscription. Then Mrs Merkel abolished the draft, as the left wanted. When the SPD and Greens promised a minimum wage, Mrs Merkel quickly put forth a similar idea (albeit with flexible wage floors across regions and industries). When old-age poverty became the issue earlier this year, she promised to provide higher pensions for older mothers. When the left called for rent controls this summer, she supported them, too. On only one weighty subject does she squarely oppose the left. They want to raise taxes; she does not.

Mr Steinbrück reaches for every available metaphor to paint Mrs Merkel as a plagiarist lacking any conviction. Living in a country run by her is like driving endlessly round a roundabout—few fender benders but also no direction; her finger doesn't point the way but only measures which way the wind is blowing; and so forth. Mrs Merkel drives some people in her own centre-right camp just as batty. A book by a veteran CDU adviser calls her Germany's "godmother"—in the mafia, not the maternal, sense—a person with no values who betrays the ones held by the CDU whenever it suits her. Peter Kohl, the estranged son of the former chancellor, has said that he will abstain from voting because Germany now has, in effect, three social-democratic parties: the SPD, the Greens and Mrs Merkel's CDU. Outside Germany, she is seen as unbending. ("*Austerit ät*, that new word: it sounds so evil," Mrs Merkel jokes in her aw-shucks way.) Inside Germany, she looks as stiff as a plateful of spaghetti.

#### The best precondition

There is strategic method in her flexibility. By creeping into the political terrain of the opposition parties, Mrs Merkel hopes to reduce their supporters' readiness to go to the polls. In doing so she knows that she will induce some CDU supporters to stay at home, too. But as long as she dampens turnout more for the parties of the left than for her own, she wins. Her political consultants call it "asymmetric demobilisation".

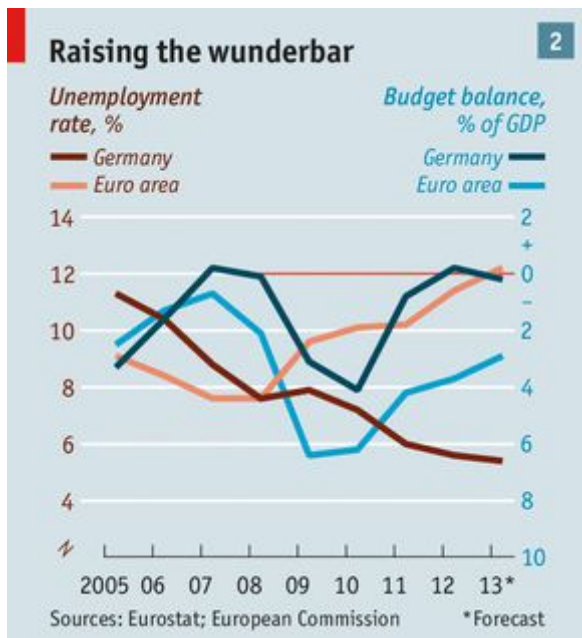
It is not an elegant or very principled strategy, but it seems a workable one. The CDU is the strongest party, with about 40% in most polls. Though it will not secure an absolute majority, most coalition scenarios play out well for Mrs Merkel. One possibility is a continued partnership between the CDU, its Bavarian sister party (the CSU) and the liberal Free Democrats (FDP), her current coalition partner. Another possibility, which would provide a bigger majority but trickier internal politics, is a grand coalition between the CDU and the SPD like the one that Mrs Merkel ran in her first term. Mr Steinbrück has said that he would not serve in such a government again, but that is not in itself a deal breaker.

A third option is a pact with the Greens. This is less likely because the Greens are at the moment further to the left than the SPD on such issues as tax hikes. But there are moderate greens, especially in south-western Germany. And the party, which shares power in six states, and has shared it with the CDU at state level in the past, is hungry for a return to federal government.

By contrast, an SPD-Green coalition, the only one that Mr Steinbrück has said he would accept, has almost no chance of winning a majority. The only remaining risk to Mrs Merkel is thus an alliance between all the parties of the left, including the party called the Left. But the Left is a pariah in mainstream politics because of its roots in East Germany's communist party and its goal of leaving or dissolving NATO. Mr Steinbrück wants no part in such a "red-red-green" pact, though others in his party could enter one without him.

Mrs Merkel thus has a good chance of staying in power. A victory would not be an endorsement of her domestic record, since that record is muddled. Instead, it would show that Germans forgive her for not having clear visions at home because she has governed during such unusual times. The global financial crisis began in her first term and spilled over into the euro crisis in her second. Disaster management took precedence over domestic reform.





And Germany has without question managed the crisis well (see chart 2). Tax revenues are gushing; the federal government could start repaying its debt in 2015. Youth unemployment is the lowest in Europe. Part of this is down to luck. Germany happens to be good at making the industrial goods that strong economies like China have been demanding. Part of it is down to Mr Schröder’s reforms, which made Germany’s labour market more flexible. But what Germans see is that, while many of its EU partners are struggling, Germany under Mrs Merkel looks strong.

If Mrs Merkel has a vision, it is that the euro zone and the entire EU should become strong, too. “I experienced the collapse of the German Democratic Republic, I don’t want to see the EU falling behind,” she has said. Her advisers believe that the trauma of 1989 informs her view of the euro zone today. Mrs Merkel often adds a statistic: that Europe has 7% of the world’s population, 25% of its output and 50% of its welfare spending. This is her way of warning that the status quo may not be affordable for much longer.

#### A solid basis in Europe

Europe “has no legal right to be leading in world history,” she says. “So we have to be careful that solidarity also leads to results, lest we all get weak together.” This message is aimed in part at France, Germany’s longtime partner, which is not reforming as fast as Mrs Merkel would like. In part, she is addressing Spain, Portugal and Greece, to encourage them to keep reforming. And in part she is talking, softly but sternly, to the Germans, lest they forget that as recently as the 1990s, Germany was called “the sick man of Europe”.

Keeping the European family healthy takes never-ending hard work and forbearance, says the Protestant pastor’s daughter and *Mutti* of her nation. For an otherwise protean woman, such sentiments probably do come from conviction.



Reuters

Muttisburg by night

The German election

## One woman to rule them all

German voters should re-elect Angela Merkel as their chancellor—and Europe's leader

Sep 14th 2013 | [From the print edition](#)

83,27



EVER since the euro crisis broke in late 2009 this newspaper has criticised the world's most powerful woman. We disagreed with Angela Merkel's needlessly austere medicine: the continent's recession has been unnecessarily long and brutal as a result. We wanted the chancellor to shrug off her cautious incrementalism and the mantle of her country's history—and to lead Europe more forcefully. She is largely to blame for the failure to create a full banking union for the euro zone, the first of many institutional changes it still needs. She has refused to lead public opinion, never spelling out to her voters how much Germany is to blame for the euro mess (nor how much its banks have been rescued by its bail-outs). We also worry that she has not done enough at home: in recent years no country in the European Union has made fewer structural reforms, and her energy policies have landed Germany with high subsidies for renewables and high electricity prices.

And yet we believe Mrs Merkel is the right person to lead her country and thus Europe. That is partly because of what she is: the world's most politically gifted democrat and a far safer bet than her leftist opponents. It is also partly because of what we believe she could still become—the great leader Germany and Europe so desperately needs.

Stick with Mutti

Politically, few can match Mrs Merkel. As other leaders have soared and dipped (Barack Obama and David Cameron spring to mind) or not taken off at all (poor François Hollande), she has remained both popular and trusted. And do not underestimate her achievement in holding Europe together. Greece has not fallen out of the euro; northern Europeans have paid for bail-outs; Spain and others have made reforms few thought possible; she helped get rid of clowns like Italy's Silvio Berlusconi. The euro's survival so far was not inevitable.

The German election campaign has been another episode in Merkelvillianism (see [article](#)). She has barely talked about domestic, European or foreign policy, but rather about trust. Her message is that Germany is

prospering, unemployment is at a 20-year low and she has handled the euro crisis well—so this is no time for a change. Her party's steady 40% poll rating suggests that the message is working. She is far more popular than her main opponent, Peer Steinbrück. He is an engaging politician from the liberal wing of the Social Democratic Party who was an excellent finance minister in Mrs Merkel's 2005-09 grand coalition, and his party has at times suggested braver answers to the euro crisis than Mrs Merkel has. But the Social Democrats have veered sharply left, with a redistributive manifesto of tax rises on the rich, a new wealth tax and a high minimum wage. The party has become anti-reform, to the extent of largely disowning the Agenda 2010 labour-market reforms made by the previous Social Democratic chancellor, Gerhard Schröder.

In a straight contest between Mrs Merkel and Mr Steinbrück, she would clearly have our vote. But Germany rules by coalition. Since Mr Steinbrück has no chance of winning with the Greens, his preferred partner, only three outcomes are plausible: Mrs Merkel's current coalition with the Free Democrats; another grand coalition with the Social Democrats, with Mrs Merkel staying as chancellor; and worst of all, a "red-red-green" coalition of Social Democrats, Greens and the Left party. This last, which Mr Steinbrück rejects but some in his party are tempted by, would be dangerous and unstable.

We favour a continuation of the present coalition. But most Germans prefer another grand coalition. Mrs Merkel herself is comfortable with the idea. The opposition parties control the upper-house Bundesrat, so their consent is already needed for big legislation. Yet a grand coalition would still be a bad outcome. The Social Democrats were bruised by their previous coalition with Mrs Merkel, so would be more recalcitrant. Voters would be pushed towards fringes, including a new anti-euro party, Alternative for Germany, that could well join the Left in parliament. The Free Democrats back economic reform and tax cuts, where a grand coalition would do little.

#### Angela's Agenda 2020

If Mrs Merkel is re-elected, what will she do? There are two reasons to think that she might become a more forceful proponent of reform at home and abroad. The first is that her instincts are generally on that side. In 2005 she put forward some bold ideas for reforms and tax cuts, though the fall in her party's share of the vote then reinforced her natural caution. In 2009 her enthusiasm was soon crushed by the onset of the euro crisis. But as the crisis fades and growth in Europe picks up, a third-term Merkel, with an eye on her legacy, might push harder to make Europe's economies more competitive.

The second reason for hope is that her cautious approach increasingly looks the more dangerous option for both Germany and Europe. Complacent Germans may be surprised to be told they need more reform. Yet despite today's strength their economy has many underlying weaknesses. A mix of poor demography, excessive reliance on exports, low productivity growth and too many low-paid jobs has led the OECD, a rich-country think-tank, to rank Germany joint last, with Luxembourg, in its growth projections for the next 50 years. The service sector should be opened to more competition. Higher education needs an overhaul: Germany has only one university in the world's leading 50. More investment is required, especially in infrastructure and research and development. Energy prices must be cut. And the public sector needs to become more responsive and productive.

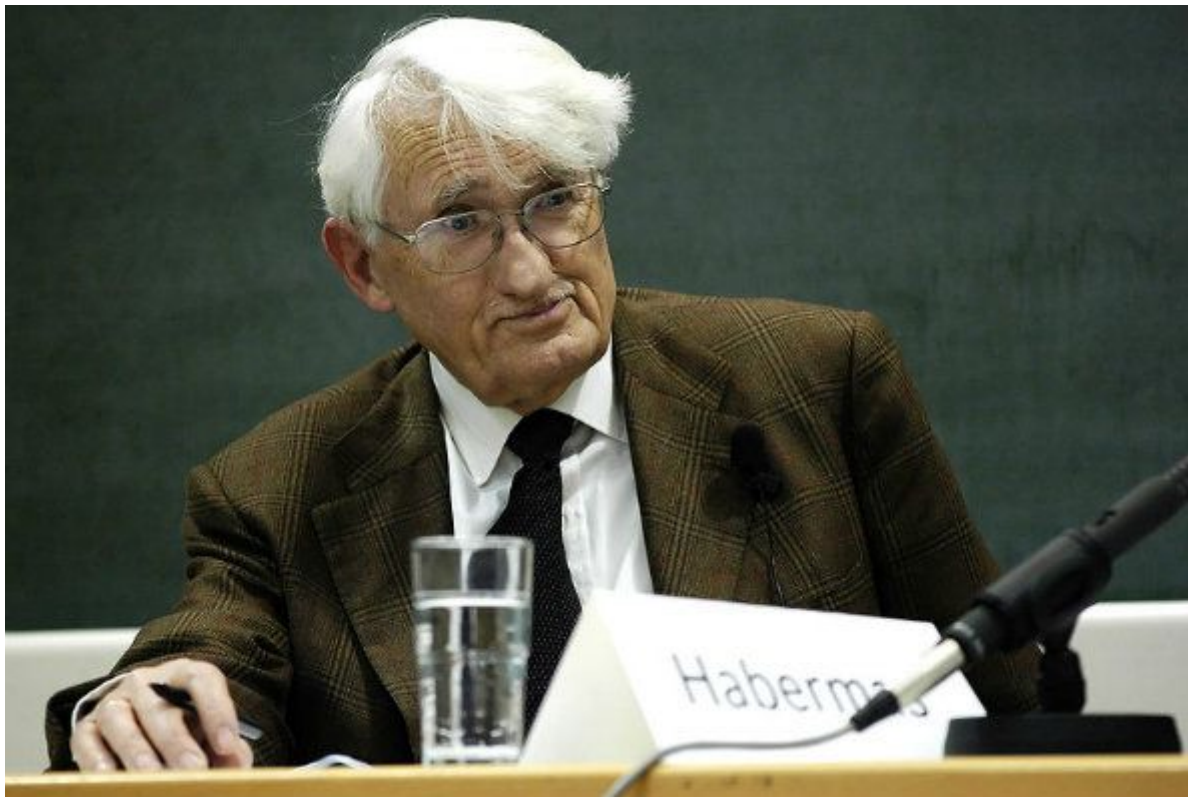
This adds up to a formidable domestic agenda. But in the end Mrs Merkel's real legacy lies in reshaping the EU. Again her instincts are promising: she wants to build a stronger financial union, to push more liberal policies, to complete the single market, to cut welfare and to trim regulation. She wants to keep Britain in the club, though not at any price. Assuming she wins the chancellorship, she will be Europe's dominant politician. Our bet is that she will want to be remembered as a decider not a ditherer.

## German election diary

### How Germany's political elite is failing

Sep 4th 2013, 9:17 by A.K. | BERLIN

83,29



Jürgen Habermas, a well-known German philosopher (pictured above) [recently diagnosed](#) a collective failure of Germany's political elites. At a time when Germany faces historic decisions about the future of the European Union, its politicians are waging an election campaign about banalities.

At the same time, German and foreign academics *are* discussing these historic challenges in great depth. Those challenges are not even entirely new. As I said [in my introductory post to this election diary](#), the so-called "German Question" has haunted Europe for centuries, changing form in each era. Germany was and remains "too big for Europe, too small for the world," as Henry Kissinger once put it. Phrased in a question, it would be: Can and should Germany *lead* Europe, or can and should it be just another member in a European system?

I've tried to capture the strange asynchrony between this year's election campaign with its bizarre controversies and the academic range of opinions about the current German Question [in an essay for the journal \*Juncture\*](#), which belongs to a progressive British think tank, the Institute for Public Policy Research ([IPPR](#)).

As you can tell, the German Question does not have any easy answers. It is really more of a dilemma, and therefore one that must be understood. But for that, it would first have to be debated. What a pity that it is not, at least not publicly.

## German elections 2013: Island of happy people

22 August 2013

[Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung](#) Frankfurt

83,30



On the Friedrichskoog beach in northwestern Germany

AFP

**A month ahead of elections, Germans are fine and unconcerned at their neighbours' problems. It is in this climate of satisfaction and buoyed by good polls that Angela Merkel is leading a campaign designed not to antagonise her countrymen, jokes Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.**

[Eckart Lohse](#)

Looking at Germany from above, the country, despite its borders being firmly on the continent, resembles an island. A balmy island where living is a breeze. nonetheless, it's in the middle of a choppy ocean. On the neighbouring islands people are not doing so well, as if they're feeling a little seasick; their islands lie a bit lower than the island of Germany. There, the waves thunder in over the sands and the fields, and some of these islands are at risk of being washed over entirely. The inhabitants of the island of Germany can probably see that, or they read about it in their newspapers. But those other islands seem so far away that the islanders of Germany need not worry about their balmy lives, scented by sea breezes.

That's dangerous. At some point, this tranquil life on the island of Germany may come to an end. No one will be able to say then that they hadn't been warned, that they hadn't seen the signs. Twelve years ago on a large neighbouring island in the West, a horrific attack left almost 3,000 dead. The inhabitants of the island of Germany thought that was pretty bad. Something similar happened on islands in the southwest and to the north. The German islanders thought that was pretty bad too. And so even at home, preparations for possible attacks were made. But the plots were discovered early enough and prevented, and the matter was quickly forgotten.

A few years later, something awful happened again on the big island to the west. A bank there, built up a long time before by a family of German immigrants named Lehmann, went bust, and it took billions in assets down with it. Plenty of savers lost the money they had hoped to live on in their retirement. Other banks got burnt too as the financial fire spread. Even the island of Germany smelled the smoke, as some of their own banks shut up shop.

## Not a serious business

For a brief moment, the happiness of the islanders in their warm hammocks was disturbed. What would happen to their money? Unrest grew as one neighbouring island to the south after another – there were close neighbours, after all – landed in big economic trouble. German money was pulled out and readied for the rescue. But the elites on the island of Germany told the crowds: the money hasn't been thrown away – you'll get back everything; you'll even earn interest on it. A small protest group drummed up some resistance to this course, but quickly sank into insignificance, and the German islanders had soon wiped the matter from their consciousness. Things will work out well, thought most. Meanwhile, the stacks of billions of invisible euros were twisting higher and higher into the stratosphere.

Life was too balmy

Other terrorist events, civil wars and massacres in significant numbers have not really blown over the German islanders. That the people in the south of Europe were being enveloped by a region of the world being shaken to the core was not recognised as a serious business.

Life was too sweet on the island of Germany

Life was too sweet on the island of Germany. The times when five out of 80 residents were unemployed were already history; only three out of 80 were in such dire straits these days. That a whole lot of people could barely scrape by on their wages and had to get something in secret from the island's government was a reality no one really wanted to see. That many children were growing up in poverty and being taken away from their parents by authorities out of fear that their parents could not care for them caused no outcry either.

## Happy chief

Every four years, the islanders must choose a new chief. Germany is a modern island: for eight years now, their chief has been a woman. Because there is no word for a female chief, she is called a chancellor. She's terribly happy to be the chief, as she keeps telling her subjects. There's an election coming up in a couple of weeks, and the chancellor wants to stay on as chief at all costs.

In the run-up to the election the islanders are constantly being polled on what they think of her. Despite her having been in power for so long, many of those asked still say they think she's good. She's really very popular indeed, says the party that the Chancellor leads. To help the people grasp what a great chief they have, pictures of the chancellor, oozing sincerity, are being spread around and wallpapered up everywhere. Only of her. Accompanying them are texts proclaiming what she has done for the island. And that her husband complains that she puts not enough *Streusel* in her *Streuselkuchen* crumble cake. This is the only criticism the chancellor permits.

Angela Merkel is not unpopular. But she is not popular with the masses either. The masses do not sprawl at her feet as if she were a Frankish Baronesse. Nor are they divided into admirers and enemies, as was once the custom for the tribal leaders of southern Germany. The masses are simply content that in the chief's tent there sits someone who does what the majority wants – and otherwise doesn't bother them.

## A Campaign in Germany, an Influence Far Beyond It

By *ALISON SMALE*

RECKLINGHAUSEN, Germany — Angela Merkel shows up right on time outside the sun-splashed old town hall here. The 59-year-old chancellor works the crowd of 5,000, gives three or four waves from the stage, then settles in for local small talk and — despite hecklers — a 30-minute stump speech. She mixes folksy expressions with statistics and worldly observations, and assures listeners that their affairs, at home and farther afield, are safe in her hands.

“Successful together,” proclaim posters of her center-right Christian Democratic Union. “Germany is strong, and should remain so,” says another. “Stay cool and vote for the chancellor!” urge T-shirts, emblazoned, like the outsize campaign poster at Berlin’s main railway station, with her trademark diamond-shape hand gesture.

Europe and the world may scour Germany’s election campaign in vain for clues about what the troubled Continent’s greatest power intends for its future. But the euro crisis, and Germany’s role in leading Europe out of it, are hardly mentioned. Ms. Merkel, who is widely expected to win a third four-year term, has given no hint of major changes for the euro or the European Union, or any change in course from policies seen as harsh by Southern Europeans and overly cautious by the financial markets.

Instead, all politics being local, the rest of Europe gets about five minutes in her stump speech, which stays closer to home. There are sly digs at the Greens for trying to institute a “Veggie Day” once a week in public cafeterias; barely a mention by name of her Social Democratic rival, Peer Steinbrück; and an awkward dance around a populist demand from Bavaria’s leading conservative to levy fees on foreigners using German autobahns.

As election day next Sunday nears, Ms. Merkel is warning her supporters against complacency, invoking a “rude awakening” if the votes do not suffice, despite her personal popularity, to build a desirable coalition in Germany’s complex parliamentary system.

Mr. Steinbrück, a skilled finance minister in Ms. Merkel’s first government, from 2005 to 2009, has slipped up repeatedly after declaring his candidacy last fall. But he has done better since their only televised debate, on Sept. 1, and [became the talk of the country](#) on Friday after the cover of a newspaper’s magazine showed him gesturing with his middle finger.

Opinion was split on whether the 66-year-old Social Democrat was teasing and being bold, or simply not behaving like someone seeking to become the leader of more than 80 million Germans and Europe’s strongest economy.

Ms. Merkel — ever cautious, ever concerned with keeping her options open, ever imperious to her critics — would not be caught in such a pose. She is more like a patient aunt, alternately stern or smiling, able to wait until quarrelsome charges, be they rival politicians at home or European leaders haggling in Brussels, calm down and agree on how to proceed.

When she does talk of Europe, her overwhelming concern is that it stay competitive, and Germany strong. Sparpolitik, or austerity, has virtually vanished from her public speeches. Referring to helping weaker European partners, she speaks of “solidarity” and “taking responsibility for oneself” as “two sides of the same coin.”



Even when her finance minister, Wolfgang Schäuble, briefly [caused a campaign stir in August](#) by saying that Greece would need a third rescue package sometime in the next two years, she refused to be more specific or to say whether Mr. Schäuble had cleared his comments with her first.

At her rallies, the euro is praised as the foundation of Germany's prosperity, while it is emphasized that a united Europe has had almost 70 years of peace — and, she says, “the older ones here know what that means.” When she glimpses anti-Merkel protesters, she tells her fans, “I know they won't be locked up” for speaking out against austerity that Greeks, Portuguese or Spaniards see as imposed by Berlin.

“Freedom of opinion, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, all that is Europe,” Ms. Merkel said in Düsseldorf last weekend as she fired up 7,000 supporters for the final days of campaigning. “When you look around the world, you know what we have.”

Ms. Merkel's emphasis on freedom may reflect human rights priorities ingrained by a life under communism. She saw that system collapse — an experience she does not want to risk repeating by doling out German money to shore up ill-structured European unity or missing opportunities outside Europe where, an adviser notes, 90 percent of global growth is occurring. “That is the main task,” he said, speaking anonymously because he was not authorized to discuss policy publicly.

John C. Kornblum, a former United States ambassador to Germany and a close observer of German affairs for more than four decades, sees in Ms. Merkel a chancellor who “knows more or less how far she can go with the German public” in terms of propping up European unity. She “obviously has more sophisticated thoughts than she expresses” and yet “no internal commitment” to the European Union, Mr. Kornblum said. “Her basic goals are national,” he added.

It is Germany's paradox that its European neighbors and American friends are wary of both its dominance and its reluctance to lead. As the fourth-largest economy in the world, known for its strong midsize companies that out-engineer competitors, Germany must look out for fresh trade opportunities. Yet that swiftly generates fear that Germans, seeing European markets shrink, will stake out richer ground in the United States, Latin America and Asia.

For her part, Ms. Merkel is clearly fascinated by foreign travel. As an East German, she could explore only the Soviet bloc and would have been permitted to go west for good only as a 60-year-old pensioner. She nurtures export opportunities; phalanxes of business figures have accompanied her on six trips to China, where she always lingers long enough to explore a different province outside Beijing. (By contrast, French news reports last spring noted that President François Hollande's first visit to China included a perfunctory 36 hours in the capital.)

Ms. Merkel is also a keen observer — her eyes scan every room and interlocutor — and she soaks up knowledge that peppers her speeches: South Korea spends 4 percent of its gross domestic product on research and development, while European Union countries lag behind their goal of 3 percent; Indonesia skillfully paid down its debt; China might soon view Germany only as the birthplace of Beethoven.

“The world is not sleeping,” Ms. Merkel warns, while noting Germany's shrinking place in it: if you divide 100 people based on world population, she notes, “only a bit more than one would be a German.”

In delivering these points, she frequently stumbles over her lines. But Germans, generally unsusceptible to rhetorical flash given their 20th-century history, find this sympathetic, noted Christoph Schwennicke, editor of [Cicero](#), the magazine that last year compared Ms. Merkel to a mother hen who would be sitting in her nest for some time. (Presenting a different image, the [newsmagazine Der Spiegel's current cover](#) depicts her as an echo of another self-willed German, Catherine the Great of Russia.)

Mr. Schwennicke cited six reasons for Ms. Merkel's longevity: she does not overestimate herself, reads people and situations well, cares for power but not its trappings, inspires loyalty in good people, tries not to give away her intentions, and is quick.

She is also presiding over a country that, since the World Cup here in 2006, has felt more assertive. Young Germans in particular are unafraid to fly or wave their national flag. Ms. Merkel is the only chancellor they have known since they were 18 and could first vote, and her party has clearly counted on this appeal.

“She has really done a lot,” said Dennis Duermann, 25, at the Düsseldorf rally. Mr. Duermann, who is half-Canadian and has lived in New York, sees Germany, with its welfare system and greater social equality, as the best country to live in — and credits Ms. Merkel. “She doesn’t try to make big speeches,” he said. “She just gets on with it.”

Nearly half the rebel fighters in Syria are now aligned to jihadist or hardline Islamist groups according to a new analysis of factions in the country's civil war.



Opposition forces have fragmented into as many as 1,000 bands Photo: Rex Features

By [Ben Farmer](#), Defence Correspondent, and Ruth Sherlock in Beirut

7:17PM BST 15 Sep 2013

Opposition forces battling Bashar al-Assad's regime in [Syria](#) now number around 100,000 fighters, but after more than two years of fighting they are fragmented into as many as 1,000 bands.

The new study by IHS Jane's, a defence consultancy, estimates there are around 10,000 jihadists - who would include foreign fighters - fighting for powerful factions linked to al-Qaeda..

Another 30,000 to 35,000 are hardline Islamists who share much of the outlook of the jihadists, but are focused purely on the Syrian war rather than a wider international struggle.

There are also at least a further 30,000 moderates belonging to groups that have an Islamic character, meaning only a small minority of the rebels are linked to secular or purely nationalist groups.

The stark assessment, to be published later this week, accords with the view of Western diplomats estimate that less than one third of the opposition forces are "palatable" to Britain, while American envoys put the figure even lower.

Fears that the rebellion against the Assad regime is being increasingly dominated by extremists has fuelled concerns in the West over supplying weaponry that will fall into hostile hands. These fears contributed to unease in the US and elsewhere over military intervention in Syria.

Charles Lister, author of the analysis, said: "The insurgency is now dominated by groups which have at least an Islamist viewpoint on the conflict. The idea that it is mostly secular groups leading the opposition is just not borne out."

The study is based on intelligence estimates and interviews with activists and militants. The lengthy fighting has seen the emergence of hundreds of separate rebel bands, each operating in small pockets of the country, which are usually loyal to larger factions.



Rebels from Jabhat al-Nusra at Taftanaz air base, Idlib, in

2011 (AP)

Two factions linked to al-Qaeda, [Jabhat al-Nusra](#) and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) - also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Shams (ISIS) - have come to dominate among the more extremist fighters, Mr Lister said. Their influence has risen significantly in the past year.

"Because of the Islamists make up of such a large proportion of the opposition, the fear is that if the West doesn't play its cards right, it will end up pushing these people away from the people we are backing," he said. "If the West looks as though it is not interested in removing Assad, moderate Islamists are also likely to be pushed further towards extremists."

Though still a minority in number, ISIL has become more prominent in rebel-held parts of Syria in recent months. Members in northern Syria have sought to assert their dominance over the local population and over the more moderate rebel Free Syrian Army (FSA).

The aim of moderate rebel fighters is the overthrow of their country's authoritarian dictator, but jihadist groups want to transform Syria into a hard-line Islamic state within a regional Islamic "caliphate".

These competing visions have caused rancour which last week erupted into fighting between ISIL and two of the larger moderate rebel factions.

A statement posted online by Islamists announced the launch of an ISIL military offensive in the eastern district of Aleppo which it called "Cleansing Evil". "We will target regime collaborators, shabiha [pro-Assad militias], and those who blatantly attacked the Islamic state," it added, naming the Farouq and Nasr factions.

Al-Qaeda has assassinated several FSA rebel commanders in northern Latakia province in recent weeks, and locals say they fear this is part of a jihadist campaign to gain complete control of the territory.

As well as being better armed and tougher fighters, ISIL and [Jabhat al-Nusra have taken control](#) of much of the income-generating resources in the north of the country, including oil, gas and grain.

This has given them significant economic clout, allowing them to "win hearts and minds" by providing food for the local population in a way that other rebel groups cannot.

ISIS has also begun a programme of "indoctrination" of civilians in rebel-held areas, trying to educate Syria's traditionally moderate Sunni Muslims into a more hard-line interpretation of Islam.

In early September, the group distributed black backpacks with the words "Islamic State of Iraq" stamped on them. They also now control schools in Aleppo where young boys are reportedly taught to sing jihadist anthems.

"It seems it is some sort of a long-term plan to brainwash the children and recruit potential fighters," said Elie Wehbe, a Lebanese journalist who is conducting research into these activities.

## European Union: A catatonic power

9 September 2013

83,38

[Rue89](#) Paris



[Stephff](#)

**Whether it's about coming up with a common position on the Syrian conflict or defending its conquests in the area of new technologies, Europe seems unable to respond to the challenges of the world. Is it still capable of a turn-around?**

[Pierre Haski](#)

It took 17 days to Europeans to raise their collective voice on the chemical massacre of August 21 in Syria. And they did that only after the intervention by the American, John Kerry. Humiliating.

At the same time, Europe, which saw the birth of the GSM technology that dominated the global mobile telephony, is watching Nokia, the last major European producer of smartphones, get [swallowed up](#) by America's Microsoft.

The old continent has lost the battle of innovation to the United States, and to new players such as South Korea and China. Is Europe condemned to be a vast market of consumers, after having dreamed of being one of the powers that would shape the world of tomorrow?

Everyone knows the quote by Henry Kissinger: "Europe? Give me a name and a phone number." The Syrian crisis shows that the wicked quip remains on-target, despite the ambition of Europeans to give their union a "common foreign and security policy". Throughout this crisis with its many twists and turns since the chemical weapons massacre at Al Ghouta, the 28 have failed to speak with one voice. France and Great Britain took leadership positions (up until the Commons [vote](#) that forced David Cameron to withdraw from the project of military strikes) without persuading the other 26 countries to join them.

To the point that, on his arrival at the G20 in St Petersburg, European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, whose existence is regularly forgotten there, began by [distancing the Council from](#) the position taken by an increasingly isolated France.

## Inactive French diplomacy

It took the meeting of the 28 Foreign Ministers in Vilnius following the G20, which was attended by the US Secretary of State John Kerry, for Europe's chief diplomat Catherine Ashton, whose existence is also often forgotten, to express [a firm stance](#) on principles condemning the use of chemical weapons.

No doubt this is partly the result of the astonishing inaction of French diplomacy, which has not actually attempted to mobilise the support of the other Europeans, and to Germany's absorption in its election campaign, which explains why it has taken so long to take a clear position.

It is, however, above all else, the enduring weakness of Europe that lies at the root of the malaise, and that weakness predates even the latest crisis in Syria. The creation of a European diplomatic corps under new institutions, led by the very professional French diplomat Pierre Vimont, has not been enough to bestir a political animal that had fossilised before it had even proved itself.

## Fading manufacturing fortunes

It is one of the great end-of-summer news items from the world of business: Microsoft [has swallowed up](#) the mobile phone segment of Finland's Nokia, the last big manufacturer of mobile phones in Europe. After France's Alcatel, Germany's Siemens and Sweden's Ericsson, which all threw in the towel one after the other, it's now Nokia that is stepping into the shelter of the American flag, after having reigned over the telecoms world for many years. In just a few years the universe of mobile telephony has completely changed its face, without the Europeans ever waking up to what was happening to them.

The United States, South Korea and China: this leading trio has completely marginalised the Europeans in a key sector of technological innovation

Where the Europeans once controlled 80 per cent of the world market with their second-generation GSM standard, the emergence of smartphones has reversed the situation. The top dogs in the sector are now called Samsung, Apple, Google and, gradually, new Chinese brands like Huawei, ZTE or Xiaomi, and Taiwan's HTC. The United States, South Korea and China: this leading trio has completely marginalised the Europeans in a key sector of technological innovation. Europeans do still have a presence in network equipment (including Alcatel, Siemens, Ericsson, Nokia) and rumours of mergers between companies that are faring rather poorly are buzzing through the markets.

The sinking feeling is raising worries about Europe's ability to remain a land of innovation and technological creativity, beyond Airbus and some all too rare successes, and not just a large and captive market addicted to buying machines designed and manufactured by others. Can Europe pull itself together, or is it condemned to remain the vast market wished for by those who, like the British, have never joined in the project of political union that has driven so many Europeans for half a century?

The financial crisis of recent years has damaged the solidarity and the common political will of the current 28 countries (since the accession of Croatia on July 1), gradually giving way to apathy at best, and to the rise of populism and withdrawal into nationalism at the worst.

## A new joint project for Europe's citizens

Europe's leaders have managed to avoid the worst during the storm in the Eurozone, but they have failed to prove to their people the relevance of the European project

Europe's leaders have managed to avoid the worst during the storm in the Eurozone, but they have failed to prove to their people the relevance of the European project. On the contrary, in the absence of any real reasons to believe, they must cope with scepticism and growing rejection.

The guarantee of peace, which was the engine of the founding fathers in the aftermath of the Second World War, is not sufficient to win support, even if – and the strong image of [Oradour-sur-Glane](#) last week has reminded us of this – the weight of history cannot be brushed away by sleight of hand.

Yet this Europe that has made peace with itself is no more able today to reflect on the conflagration unfolding outside its borders in Syria, being laid waste by civil war, than it is to come up with a new joint project for its citizens.

Can this joint project still be drafted by a France suffering poor economic health and sagging morale, by an overpowering but timid Germany, or by a few others like Poland, the major success story among the new members?

European leaders have a window of opportunity between the German elections in late September and the European elections next spring, which promise to be disastrous, to summon up a collective burst of energy. But an objective analysis of the state of Europe, and its current leaders, leaves one doubtful.



## Chemical weapons agreement strengthens Assad

The agreement on the [destruction](#) of Syria's chemical weapons won't help stop the civil war, the conservative daily The Financial Times writes: "While this is a positive development, it is right to be sceptical of success. ... **A danger is that this agreement may ultimately entrench Mr Assad's position inside Syria. The risk for the US is that it might appear to be saying that dealing with Syria's chemical weapons is of paramount importance - and that while there is progress on that front, Mr Assad can go on butchering his people. The US and Russia must therefore intensify calls for a political settlement of the civil war.**" (15/09/2013)

» [to the homepage](#) (Financial Times)

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Who's saying what » [Escalation in the Syrian civil war](#)

Libération - France

## Hollande doesn't convince sceptics

In a televised interview aired on Sunday evening, French President François Hollande spoke out on the developments in Syria and the economic situation in France. The left-liberal daily Libération says Hollande didn't cut the mustard on the home front: "**The method was clear. First to show that France was right to envisage - with Washington - [military strikes](#) against the regime in Damascus, in answer to Bashar al-Assad's abominable use of chemical weapons. And then to assure listeners that without this mutual resolve, a plan for dismantling Syria's chemical weapons would never have seen the light of day.** Nevertheless his heavy-handed pedagogical tone stripped his arguments of some of their force. But as convincing as he was on foreign policy, Hollande lacked the momentum to set the course for [economic revival](#) or reassure those who remain sceptical." (16/09/2013)

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

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## U.S. and Allies Push for Strong U.N. Measure on Syria's Arms

By [MICHAEL R. GORDON](#)

PARIS — Secretary of State John Kerry and the foreign ministers of France and Britain said on Monday that they would not tolerate delays in dismantling Syria's chemical weapons and would press ahead with a strong resolution in the United Nations Security Council to enforce the disarmament plan.

"It is extremely important that there are no evasions," William Hague, the British foreign secretary, said at a joint news conference.

Referring to President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, Mr. Kerry said, "If Assad fails in time to abide by the terms of this framework, make no mistake, we are all agreed — and that includes Russia — that there will be consequences."

A major question, however, is whether the United States and its allies are pursuing the short-term goal of dismantling Syria's chemical arsenal at the expense of their ultimate objective of pressing Mr. Assad to relinquish power.

The schedule for eliminating Syria's chemical weapons is ambitious: all of them are to be eliminated by the middle of 2014. And experts say that [meeting such a schedule](#) will depend heavily on the cooperation of the Assad government.

Laurent Fabius, the French foreign minister, insisted that there was no contradiction between the disarmament goal and the longer-term diplomatic objective, because removing Mr. Assad's chemical arsenal would undermine his military position and would eventually smooth the way for his ouster.

"It will be a weakening of his position," Mr. Fabius said. "He must understand that there is no military victory."

Mr. Kerry made a similar point. "We are taking a weapon away from him that he has been using against his people," he said, while acknowledging that the Syrian military had also used conventional artillery and airstrikes indiscriminately against the population.

**Mr. Fabius emphasized the importance of increasing support for the Syrian opposition, much of which has expressed a sense of betrayal over the United States' decision to put off a military strike.**

"In order to negotiate a political solution, we need a stronger position," Mr. Fabius said. "We therefore intend to strengthen our support to Syrian national coalition rebels. If you want to change the Assad regime without falling in the hands of the terrorists, you have to support the moderate opposition."

**Mr. Fabius remarked that much of the public appeared to think that the choice in Syria was between Mr. Assad's government and Islamic militants, but he said that was false.**

Mr. Fabius said the Syrian opposition would be invited to an international meeting in New York that would be convened on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly, whose formal session opens next week and is scheduled to continue into early October.

The [framework plan](#) on quarantining and destroying Syria's chemical arsenal was worked out by the United States and Russia [on Saturday](#) but now needs to be incorporated into a Security Council resolution.

Under the framework agreement, the terms of the accord are to be included in a resolution under Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter, which would authorize punitive measures if Syria does not comply. While Russia would almost certainly veto any Security Council endorsement of a military strike, other measures could include disrupting Syria's means of communications as well as imposing economic sanctions.

In addition, Mr. Kerry has said the United States remains prepared to launch a unilateral strike if Syria fails to meet its commitments.

Mr. Kerry said that every representation of compliance by the Syrian government would be verified. "Nothing can be accepted at face value or in words alone," he said.

Mr. Hague added that Britain, France and the United States were intent on preventing Syria from engaging in a "cat-and-mouse game."

"The pressure is on them to comply with this agreement in full," he said. "The world must be prepared to hold them to account if they don't, and our three countries are certainly determined to do so."

## Tiptoeing around Islam and a ban on Muslim women wearing the veil

By [Benedict Brogan](#) [Politics](#) Last updated: September 16th, 2013

83,44



Nothing illustrates better the anxiety of the British political classes in 2013 than the debate – if that's the word – about the wearing of the veil. The issue has been circling overhead like a flight stuck in a holding pattern over Heathrow, waiting to land. Unrelated events have joined to give the issue critical mass.

The controversy over Birmingham Metropolitan College's prohibition on full facial coverings – only to back down when protests began to get heated – has coincided with a court case involving a woman who demanded her right to appear veiled in the dock, in which the judge ruled first that she couldn't, then agreed that she might pending a further ruling. To those David Cameron added a bit of tinder last week when his office said he would be happy to have the veil banned in his children's schools, but only in the name of a head teacher's right to set uniform policy. Then, in this morning's Telegraph, came the spark, [in the form of Jeremy Browne](#), who said he was uneasy about the whole thing, wondered about the issue of compulsion for young women, and called for a national debate.

The facts are far more complicated of course. For starters, the debate relies on various forms of shorthand: veil is easier to grasp, but niqab is more accurate. Or take Birmingham Metropolitan: what it really wanted was to bar the wearing of "all hoodies, hats, caps and veils" on its premises to make students more easily identifiable. And in the court case, we should remind ourselves that the prosecution had no objection to the woman appearing veiled, as long as an agreed system of identification was in place.

But none of that detracts from the political issue, which is that a number of politicians, from Jack Straw through Jeremy Browne to Ukip, are all uneasy about what they perceive as a contradiction between their liberal values of individual freedom and identity and a faith that appears by some interpretations to suppress freedom.

Ukip want an outright ban, aligning themselves with the French view, that the veil represents a direct challenge to the secular state. [Dr Sarah Wollaston, writing in the Telegraph](#), wants politicians to stop leaving it to individual institutions and set national guidance. Other Tories might take an even more robust view, as might some Labour MPs. Nick Clegg expressed polite sympathy but quashed the idea of a national ban, limiting it to schools. That I suspect will be Mr Cameron's view, and no doubt Theresa May's. But consider this: we are less than two years from a general election, next spring the Tories face a thrashing from Ukip in the European elections, and among Conservatives the jockeying for life after Dave is well under way. What might Boris say about the matter next time he is asked? Or Michael Gove for that matter? Will ministers find a way of defending religious liberty and the integrity of the courts and the rights of schools? We will get a ruling later on the Blackfriars Crown Court case. How will ministers respond if, the judge decides it is lawful to wear a niqab

in the dock? Will they suggest that rape victims and children might be afforded the same privileges for example? The longer you scrutinise the issue, the more you find reasons why ministers might be tempted to tiptoe around it rather than confront it head on.

## Kritik an François Hollande

# Geburten sind gut für das Wachstum

16.09.2013 · Ist Frankreichs hohe Geburtenrate der Grund für hohe Arbeitslosigkeit? Wissenschaftler widersprechen dem französischen Präsidenten.

Von Benedikt Müller

83,46



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François Hollande stößt mit seiner Äußerung zur Geburtenrate auf Unverständnis

Die französische Familienpolitik gilt gemeinhin als Vorbild, wenn es um die Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf geht. Mit durchschnittlich zwei Kindern pro Frau hat Frankreich die höchste Geburtenrate in Westeuropa. Jetzt hat Präsident François Hollande mit der Aussage für Aufsehen gesorgt, [die vielen Kinder seien ein Grund für die hohe Arbeitslosigkeit in Frankreich](#). Im Vergleich zu Staaten mit niedrigeren Geburtenraten müsse die französische Volkswirtschaft mehr Wachstum generieren, weil mehr junge Menschen auf den Arbeitsmarkt kämen, sagte der Präsident am Sonntagabend in einem Fernsehinterview. Dabei nannte er explizit Deutschland als Gegenbeispiel.

Mit seiner These stößt Hollande auf großes Unverständnis in Wissenschaft und Forschung. „Das ist eine skandalöse Aussage, die sich der sozialistische Präsident hier erlaubt“, sagt Tilman Mayer, Präsident der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Demographie (DGD). Die hohe Arbeitslosigkeit in Frankreich sei vielmehr Folge der wirtschaftlichen Lage und der Reformunfähigkeit der französischen Sozialisten. „Die Aussage fällt voll auf ihn zurück“, sagt der Politikwissenschaftler.

### „Kein positives Signal für die Familienpolitik der Sozialdemokraten“

Ganz im Gegenteil sei die nachwachsende Generation eine wichtige Grundlage der wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung eines Staates, sagt Mayer. „Es ist ein Vorteil Frankreichs, dass es sich auf eine gute Höhe der Kinderzahl verlassen kann.“ Die jungen Menschen seien gut für das Wachstum einer Volkswirtschaft. Eine schrumpfende Bevölkerung bringe dagegen Folgeprobleme mit sich, „die man niemandem wünscht“, beispielsweise für die Sozialversicherung.

Mit seiner Aussage fällt Hollande laut Mayer der erfolgreichen Familienpolitik Frankreichs in den Rücken. Das bleibe nicht ohne Auswirkungen für den Wahlkampf in Deutschland. „Das ist kein positives Signal für die Familienpolitik der Sozialdemokratie in Europa“, sagt der DGD-Präsident. Schließlich orientiere sich gerade die SPD regelmäßig an Hollandes Handeln in Frankreich.

### In der Europäischen Union wurde genau umgekehrt argumentiert

Der Zusammenhang zwischen Geburtenrate und Arbeitslosigkeit wurde bisher nur in umgekehrter Richtung diskutiert. [So hatten Wissenschaftler des Max-Planck-Instituts für demografische Forschung und der](#)

[Universität Lüneburg im Juli darauf hingewiesen](#), dass die Geburtenrate in krisengeplagten Staaten sinkt, weil viele Menschen ihre Arbeit verloren haben oder ihre wirtschaftliche Situation als unsicher empfinden. Beispielsweise ist die Geburtenrate in Spanien von 1,47 Kindern pro Frau im Jahr 2008 auf 1,36 im Jahr 2011 zurückgegangen.

Umso skeptischer betrachten die damals involvierten Wissenschaftler die Argumentation des französischen Präsidenten. „Ich habe den Eindruck, François Hollande versucht damit, die hohe Jugendarbeitslosigkeit in Frankreich zu entschuldigen“, sagt Michaela Kreyenfeld vom Max-Planck-Institut für demografische Forschung. Gerade innerhalb der Europäischen Union sei in den vergangenen Jahren genau andersherum argumentiert worden: In der Lissabon-Strategie und dem Nachfolgepapier Europa 2020 gelten höhere Geburtenraten als erwünschtes Mittel, die Beschäftigung zu erhöhen und die Europäische Union wettbewerbsfähiger zu machen.

## Die Zahlen sprechen eine andere Sprache

Auch aus den Zahlen der Weltbank aus dem Jahr 2011 lässt sich keineswegs ableiten, dass Staaten mit hoher Geburtenrate tendenziell eine höhere Arbeitslosigkeit aufweisen. Auf den Vergleich Frankreichs mit Deutschland trifft Hollandes These zwar zu, aber Gegenbeispiele sind schnell gefunden: In den Niederlanden ist die Geburtenrate ebenfalls deutlich höher als in Deutschland, die Arbeitslosigkeit aber geringer. Spanien dagegen weist eine ähnlich niedrige Geburtenrate wie die Bundesrepublik auf, die Arbeitslosenquote ist aber um ein Vielfaches höher.

Im weltweiten Vergleich legen die Zahlen sogar nahe, das Gegenteil von Hollande zu behaupten: Wo viele Kinder geboren werden, ist die Arbeitslosenquote tendenziell niedriger. Dementsprechend kann sich DGD-Präsident Tilman Mayer gut vorstellen, dass die französische Regierung die Aussage ihres Präsidenten relativieren wird. Sonst laufe Hollande Gefahr, in den Konflikt mit einer ganzen Generation zu geraten.

## La dette française va exploser tous les records en 2014

Par [Marie Visot](#) Publié le 16/09/2013 à 19:53

83,48

INFO LE FIGARO - Le taux d'endettement du pays grimpera jusqu'à 95,1% du PIB fin 2014, selon nos informations. Soit environ 1950 milliards qui équivaudront, en théorie, à une ardoise de plus de 30.000 euros par Français.

En présentant la semaine dernière les grandes lignes du projet de loi de finances pour 2014, les ministres de Bercy, [Pierre Moscovici](#) et [Bernard Cazeneuve](#), se sont montrés particulièrement discrets sur un sujet: l'endettement. Et pour cause, la dette va crever tous les plafonds l'année prochaine. Selon nos informations, le texte qui sera présenté dans huit jours montrera qu'après avoir atteint 90,2% du PIB en 2012, la dette de la France en représentera 93,4% en 2013 et grimpera jusqu'à 95,1% fin 2014! Un record, bien supérieur au taux de 94,3% envoyé au printemps par Paris à Bruxelles dans le programme de stabilité.

Il faudra en fait attendre 2015 pour que l'endettement hexagonal entame sa décrue. «Avec le retour à un équilibre structurel des finances publiques et une croissance de l'activité de 2% en volume, le ratio de dette diminuerait de 2 points par an en moyenne», anticipe déjà l'exécutif pour la période 2015-2017.

### Hausse de 120 milliards en deux ans

Mais d'ici là, la dette de la [France](#) dépassera 1950 milliards d'euros à la fin 2014, si la croissance atteint 0,9% comme le prévoit le gouvernement. Soit une hausse de plus de 120 milliards en deux ans et un total qui équivalra, en théorie, à plus de 30.000 euros par Français.

Le pic de 2014 est «le reflet de la situation du déficit public», souligne-t-on dans les rangs du gouvernement où on reconnaît qu'«on est à un sommet et qu'il faut que ça change». Certes, Bercy prévoit que ce déficit recule de 4,1% cette année à 3,6% fin 2014. Mais, d'une part, c'est moins que ce qui était initialement prévu - Paris ayant décidé de profiter de la flexibilité de deux ans, jusqu'en 2015, offerte par la Commission européenne pour ramener ses finances publiques dans les clous du pacte de stabilité; et d'autre part, ce n'est pas suffisant pour inverser la courbe.

Le chiffre «intègre en outre les plans de soutien financiers à la zone euro», insiste-t-on. Ces derniers ont déjà eu un impact sur la dette 2012 de la France de 48 milliards. Une note qui grimpera en cumulé à 62,5 milliards fin 2013 avant de culminer à 68,7 milliards fin 2014. Hors soutien à la zone euro, la dette atteindrait 91,8% du PIB à la fin 2014, un chiffre plus avenant sur lequel l'exécutif a prévu de communiquer beaucoup plus.

### «Le risque d'emballage de la dette n'est pas que théorique»

À la veille de l'été, le premier président de la [Cour des comptes](#), Didier Migaud, lors de la présentation de son rapport annuel sur les finances publiques, avait prévenu qu'«aussi longtemps que notre pays aura une dette élevée, il se situera dans une zone dangereuse qui l'expose à un risque en cas de hausse des taux d'intérêt». Avant de prévenir que «le risque d'emballage de la dette n'est pas que théorique», rappelant au passage que la charge d'intérêt des administrations publiques (environ 46 milliards en 2012, comme en 2013) représente en France plus du double de l'effort budgétaire consacré à la recherche et à l'enseignement supérieur.

La semaine dernière, le ministre de l'Économie ne pouvait s'empêcher de lâcher: «L'opposition prophétisait une attaque spéculative; nous n'avons jamais emprunté si peu cher.» Avec un tel record d'endettement à venir, l'Agence France Trésor, la cellule de Bercy chargée de placer au mieux la dette de la France, doit croiser les doigts pour que cela dure...



September 16, 2013

## The Next Fed Chairman's Global Clout

By *ESWAR S. PRASAD*

83,49

The U.S. Federal Reserve remains the most powerful central bank in the world. Its policy actions reverberate in every corner of the globe, something no other central bank can claim. Even the hint of a “taper” — the withdrawal of easy money policies — has roiled emerging markets. The prospect of rising interest rates in the United States has led investors to pull back from riskier investments in those countries. Emerging markets like Brazil, India and Indonesia are facing plunging currencies and declining stock markets.

Low interest rates in the United States had led investors to look to emerging markets for better returns on their money, fueling booms in equity and real estate markets as well as higher inflation in some countries. For the previous two years, emerging markets had been complaining about how these inflows fueled by cheap money in the United States caused their currencies to appreciate too rapidly, hurting their export competitiveness. The fact that those same currencies are now tumbling has led to the opposite complaint — that the Fed should back off more slowly from its earlier policies and better communicate its intentions to financial markets.

Given the global impact of the Fed's actions, the choice of a replacement for Ben Bernanke as chairman of the Federal Reserve is being watched with keen interest. No matter who is chosen, there are important changes in store for central banks and financial markets the world over.

Despite the global economic crisis, financial markets are now more closely connected than ever before. China, India and other major economies have continued removing restrictions to capital flows, opening up their markets to cross-border investment. Given this increased mobility, actions by any of the major central banks have effects well beyond their own national borders.

Moreover, in the aftermath of the crisis, central banks have become even more important to economic management, taking on much of the burden of controlling inflation, improving financial stability and promoting growth. This is a difficult balancing act in the best of times. It becomes virtually impossible when fiscal and other policies are working at cross-purposes.

In the United States, for instance, short-term fiscal tightening (along with the uncertainty associated with deficit and debt-ceiling negotiations that repeatedly go down to the wire) has hobbled the recovery. Meanwhile, little has been done to tackle the longer-term fiscal problems, especially entitlement spending. The focus on short-term austerity has limited productivity-enhancing expenditures in such areas as infrastructure and education.

In India, the government has been unwilling to undertake politically unpopular reforms to tackle large budget deficits and structural problems such as stifling labor-market regulations. This has left it to the makers of monetary policy to do all the heavy lifting. Other emerging markets face similar issues.

The reliance on central banks to make up for the failings of other policies has created inevitable international tensions. The right monetary policy for one country might not necessarily be what is good for another. Unlike fiscal policies, whose effects tend to stay mostly domestic, monetary policies do affect currency values and financial markets in other countries through cross-border financial flows.

Whoever takes over from Bernanke, the reality is that the Fed chairman has a mandate to focus only on domestic objectives. Fair enough: No central bank in the world has anything but domestic objectives in its mandate. But when the Fed acts, it matters to the world in a way that no other central bank's actions do.

In a [report](#) by a committee of academics and former central bankers in which I participated, we argued that the Fed and a small group of central banks from both advanced and emerging market economies should hold

regular meetings and issue a report on their monetary policy intentions. Even if this procedure only exposed mutual inconsistencies in policy, it would be a way to bring broader pressure on politicians to stop relying on the crutch of monetary policy and prod them to take politically unpopular measures to improve productivity and the prospects of long-term growth while making global capital flows more stable.

So who would the rest of the world vote for to head the most important central bank? Now that [Lawrence Summers has withdrawn from the race](#), the presumptive front-runner is Janet Yellen. Many central bankers view her as someone who is empathetic to the spillover effects of U.S. policies, someone who has enough credibility to soothe financial markets and ably steer the Fed.

In any event, no matter who gets the job, what many of the world's central bankers are hoping for is a Fed that can go back to the more modest objectives of maintaining low inflation and financial stability. On that, at least, there is certainly international agreement.

*Eswar Prasad is a professor of economics at Cornell University and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. He is the co-author with M. Ayhan Kose of "Emerging Markets: Resilience and Growth Amid Global Turmoil."*

## The Bavarian Barometer

### Another sign that Germany is heading for a grand coalition.

The results of Sunday's state election in Bavaria increase the likelihood that Germany's next government will be a left-right coalition. **That's bad news for anyone hoping that Europe's most important national election will do much to end the euro zone's economic woes quickly or decisively.**

Voters in Germany's richest state gave a parliamentary majority to the Christian Social Union, the Christian Democratic Union's Bavarian sister party, which has led the state parliament for nearly 60 years. But they also gave 20.6% of their votes to the Social Democrats, a two-percentage-point increase over the 2008 result.

The losers in Bavaria were the small parties. The Free Democrats failed to meet the 5% threshold for entering the state parliament in Munich. As Chancellor [Angela Merkel](#) has moved the Christian Democrats toward the center on green energy, pensions and a minimum wage, her coalition partners in the FDP have failed to articulate a strong pro-growth agenda to retain the support of disillusioned conservatives. FDP politicians have criticized the Chancellor for not building on Gerhard Schröder's labor reforms, but the party's campaign this year hardly offers more.

Historically there has been a secret constituency for the FDP: Nobody wants to tell pollsters that they plan to vote the party even if they end up doing so. The disaster in Bavaria may also impel the Merkel coalition's supporters to vote strategically on September 22. But if the Free Democrats fail to gain the 5% of the vote needed to enter the Bundestag, it will mostly be the party's own doing.



German Chancellor Angela Merkel and leader of the Christian Democratic Union party CDU on Sunday.

Also coming up short Sunday were the Greens, who not long ago were considered a potential spoiler in the federal vote due to the once-radical party's growing mainstream clout. Yet Mrs. Merkel seems to have taken the air out of the party by folding environmentalist policies into the CDU's platform. If the Greens struggle in the national election as well, the CDU and SPD might be forced into a grand coalition to avoid forming unstable alliances with weak small parties.

**The big outstanding variable is Alternative for Germany, or AfD, a new party that wants Germany to leave the euro zone. The party didn't field candidates in Bavaria, but for the past few months Christian Democrats have quivered privately about whether the upstarts will steal enough votes for the Merkel coalition to lose its majority.**

The Free Voters, a Bavarian euroskeptic party, finished third in Sunday's vote—not a huge surprise given the state's tradition of proud independence from the rest of Germany. But it could suggest that German voters

haven't entirely bought into their politicians' affirmations that it's in taxpayers' interest to prevent a euro crack-up at all costs.

So far AfD has hovered around 5% in most opinion polling. Political polls in Germany must be digested with great caution: The biggest ones are conducted by organizations close to the major parties. Even AfD has been running a mood-manipulation campaign by highlighting the supposed anti-AfD biases in other polls' methodologies.

But given the German political mainstream's monolithic consensus on euro-zone issues, AfD is positioned to capture disenchanted voters from all major parties. More Germans this year say they plan to make up their minds at the last minute. If AfD makes a big, disruptive debut on Sunday, it will be because they are offering, well, an alternative.

That counts for something in Germany this year. The 2013 election is already being memorialized as the country's most boring in decades. Strong economic performance is allowing the Christian Democrats to cruise on their laurels, and on the euro crisis, the two major parties are in near-perfect alignment. A grand coalition would likely mean not much policy change in exchange for more legislative gridlock.

Still, a contest that has been only marginally about substantive differences will be decided, instead, by voters' whims. Mrs. Merkel may be counting on her personal popularity to carry the day, but in a tight race following a soporific campaign, the margin for surprise is large.

## James Salters neuer Roman

### Verführt und zerstört

16.09.2013 · Schreiben ist schwerer als Krieg: James Salter, Meister des kinematographischen Erzählens, legt nach mehr als dreißig Jahren Pause einen Roman vor. Bei einer Begegnung zuhause in Bridgehampton spricht er über „Alles, was ist“.

Von [Patrick Bahners](#)

83,53



© Matt Nager/Redux/Redux/laif „Nur die Dinge, die durch Schreiben bewahrt werden, haben eine Chance, wirklich zu sein“: der amerikanische Romancier James Salter, geboren 1925.

Große Gärten. Riesig wirken die satten Grünflächen, wenn man aus der Stadt kommt. So weit zurückgesetzt sind die Häuser, dass kein Spaziergänger darauf spekulieren kann, einen Blick durch ein Fenster zu werfen. Trotzdem haben die meisten Eigentümer sicherheitshalber grüne Mauern auf der Grundstücksgrenze hochgezogen. Nirgendwo auf der Welt, stand kürzlich in der Zeitschrift „Architectural Digest“, gebe es so imposante Hecken wie in den Hamptons am östlichen Ende von Long Island.

„Die Gründer dieses Ortes haben hier Landwirtschaft betrieben“, erläutert James Salter dem Besucher bei der Rundfahrt durch Bridgehampton. Er hält am Friedhof an und weist auf das älteste Haus hin, das hinter Bäumen verborgen ist. Es stammt aus dem siebzehnten Jahrhundert. „Später sind die Leute hierhergezogen, um hier zu wohnen.“ Salter hat das Haus in Bridgehampton, in dem er mit Kay Eldredge, seiner zweiten Frau, lebt, 1986 gebaut, auf einem kleinen Grundstück in der Nähe des Bahnhofs. Ungefähr dasselbe Baujahr wird Salters grauer Mercedes haben.

### Momente der Intensität, der Lust und Gefahr

James Salter, als James Horowitz am 10. Juni 1925 geboren, ist in New York City aufgewachsen. Eine oder zwei Klassen unter Jack Kerouac besuchte er die Horace Mann School, die berühmte humanistische Privatschule in der Bronx. Seine Großeltern waren jüdische Einwanderer aus Europa. Die Mutter war in Washington großgeworden, der Vater hatte die Militäarakademie in West Point absolviert und arbeitete als Immobilienmakler ohne Fortüne.

In Bridgehampton scheint der Prozess der Zivilisation ein Endstadium erreicht zu haben. Nach der Beseitigung aller Spuren von Arbeit genießen die Hausbesitzer ihren Wohlstand wie einen zweiten Naturzustand. Bausünden springen nicht ins Auge; in der Feier eines Stils der Zeitlosigkeit wird der Ehrgeiz der einzelnen Bauherren unsichtbar. James Salters Romane bringen die Erfahrung zum Ausdruck, dass nichts von Dauer ist, dass alles zerrieben wird. Das einzig Wertvolle in Salters Welt sind Momente der Intensität, der Lust und Gefahr. Die Literatur hat den Zweck, die Erinnerung an diese Exaltationen zu beschwören. In diesem Frühjahr hat der achtundachtzigjährige Salter seinen sechsten Roman veröffentlicht, den ersten nach 34 Jahren. „Alles, was ist“, die deutsche Übersetzung von „All That Is“, erscheint in dieser Woche im Berlin Verlag.

## Vom Weltkriegsveteran zum Verleger

Der Held des Romans ist Philip Bowman, ein Weltkriegsveteran, der gerade noch die allerletzte Seeschlacht im Pazifik miterlebt hat und sich als Verlagslektor am Rand des weltliterarischen Lebens von New York bewegt. Er gründet keine Familie, wird lange nicht sesshaft, mietet ein nicht ganz fertig gebautes Haus in einer Sackgasse kurz hinter Bridgehampton. Seine Freundin, Christine, die aus der Ehe mit einem Griechen eine Tochter hat, findet ganz in der Nähe schließlich doch noch das perfekte Haus, das er immer gesucht hat. Sie vermittelt den Verkauf und verdient sich eine Provision, er lässt seinen Namen und ihren Namen ins Grundbuch eintragen. Während einer Dienstreise erreicht ihn die Nachricht, dass er verklagt worden ist. Christine will das Haus für sich allein haben und setzt ihren frech erfundenen Anspruch vor Gericht durch. Für den Treuebruch rächt sich der Vertriebene mit einem Akt der kaltblütigen Grausamkeit, auf den nichts in Bowmans Geschichte den Leser vorbereitet hat außer seinem Namen: Er ist der Mann mit dem Bogen. In seinen Memoiren „Burning the Days“ („Verbrannte Tage“) hat Salter geschrieben: „Ein Name ist ein Schicksal.“

Bowman lernte Christine kennen, als sie sich ein Taxi vom Kennedy-Flughafen nach Manhattan teilten. Während sie nebeneinandersaßen, schwiegen sie zunächst lange. Die Bekanntschaft seiner englischen Geliebten Enid machte Bowman auf einer der legendären Partys des Londoner Verlegers Sir Bernard Wiberg, in dem Salter Lord Weidenfeld porträtiert. Zunächst hatten sie einander nichts zu sagen. Seine Frau, die aus der jagenden Aristokratie südlich von Washington stammt, fiel ihm in einer New Yorker Bar auf. Sie verabredeten ein Wiedersehen, und beinahe hätten sie einander verpasst.

Ein Raunen der schmerzhaften Erkenntnis ging bei Salters erster New Yorker Lesung aus „All That Is“ durch den großen Saal des Kulturzentrums 92Y auf der Upper East Side, als die Schilderung der unglücklicherweise glückenden Brautwerbung den Höhepunkt erreichte, die Definition der Liebe als des „Schmelzofens, in den alles geworfen wird“. Es ist ja wohl dichterische Absicht, dass der pure Zufall die fatalen Verbindungen einfädelt? Rhetorische Gegenfrage des Autors: „Tragen sich die Dinge im Leben denn nicht so zu?“ Auch Salters erste Frau kam aus der guten Gesellschaft des Hauptstadtlums. In den Memoiren hatte er nichts über sie zu sagen.

Die auffälligste formale Eigenschaft des neuen Romans ist eine Art Zoomverfahren in der Personenregie. Nebenfiguren wie Bowmans Chef Robert Baum, Roger Straus nachgebildet, dem Gründer des Verlags Farrar, Straus and Giroux, werden eingeführt und sogleich unerhört nah herangeholt, durch Schilderung einer Begebenheit, die sie fürs Leben gezeichnet hat. Auf diese episodischen Perspektivwechsel angesprochen, hebt Salter die Konsequenzen für den Rhythmus der Erzählung hervor. „Man erfährt etwas über verschiedene Leute, man bekommt etwas zu sehen, und sie gehen an einem vorbei, um wiederzukehren oder auch nicht. Währenddessen aber geht hinter ihrem Rücken, ohne dass man es merken würde, ein ganzes Zeitalter vorüber.“ Das Buch ist ein Gegenentwurf zum historischen Roman. Die Chronologie bleibt vage, und nicht einmal Kennedys Ermordung ist groß der Rede wert. „Das war natürlich eine Entscheidung.“

Alle Varianten des Engagements, die von den New Yorker Intellektuellen in den Jahrzehnten nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg durchgespielt wurden, sind hier gleichermaßen ohne Bedeutung. Die illustrative Verknüpfung von Romanhandlung und Zeitgeschichte hält Salter für ein „uninteressantes Kunstmittel“. Eine innere Zeit tritt an die Stelle der historischen: „Das Buch fließt dahin, folgt einem unregelmäßigen Muster. Die Schreibart selbst hat eine verführerische Kraft. Sie reißt den Leser mit, anders als im normalen, erwarteten, vertrauten Roman.“ Bowman ist ein Verführer, und auch der Verfasser sieht sich als Verführer - und als Verführten.

## Auch der Krieg wird zum Traum

Als Drehbuchautor für Filme mit Charlotte Rampling, Robert Redford und Omar Sharif verdiente Salter das Geld, das er in seine Häuser in Bridgehampton und Aspen, Colorado, steckte. Nüchtern stellt er einerseits fest, er habe nur deshalb für Hollywood geschrieben, weil er mit den Romanen seine Familie nicht hätte ernähren können. Aber andererseits spricht er vom Film wie von einer großen Liebe, die nach dem Erlöschen unverständlich geworden ist. „Ich ließ mich anziehen, in Versuchung führen, begehrte, für den Film zu arbeiten, wegen der Erregungen und der Energie des Kinos.“ Wie Charles Swann bei Proust zu dem Schluss kommt, er habe Jahre seines Lebens an eine Frau verschleudert, die gar nicht sein Genre sei, befindet Salter im Rückblick, er sei „wahrscheinlich ein etwas zu subtiler Autor für Zwecke des Films“.

Das kinematographische Erzählen ist für diesen Romancier die leichteste Übung. „Einen Tag zu beschreiben oder das Wetter oder Gebäude oder eine Epoche ist nicht furchtbar schwierig. Fast alles daran ist visuell. Das Problem ist die Wahrheit, die Tragfähigkeit der Konstruktion, der Sätze und Absätze.“ Als Schüler schrieb Salter Gedichte. Nur Gedichte. „Ich schrieb gerne, aber ich wusste nicht, wie es gemacht wird. Es kostet Zeit, bis man erkennt, dass das, was man geschrieben hat, nicht gut ist.“ Die Konstruktion von „Alles, was ist“ wird gleich am Anfang offengelegt, im Motto: „Es kommt eine Zeit, da einem bewusst wird, dass alles ein Traum ist und dass nur die Dinge, die durch Schreiben bewahrt werden, eine Chance zu haben, wirklich zu sein.“

Für den Leser, so der Autor, kommt diese Zeit erst am Ende des Buches, wenn er das Motto richtig versteht. Wichtig in seinem Leben sei der Krieg gewesen, gibt Bowman einmal zu Protokoll. Doch der Krieg bezeichnet hier nicht die ultimative Realität, an der gemessen, das übrige Leben sich als Traum darstellen würde. „Der Krieg ist wichtig“, sagt Salter, der wie der Vater in West Point ausgebildet wurde, im Weltkrieg keinen Kampfeinsatz mehr erlebte, aber als Kampfflieger am Korea-Krieg teilnahm, „aber innerlich wichtig. Auch der Krieg wird zum Traum. Er war kein Traum, als man noch nicht wusste, was passieren würde. Aber dann wurde er dazu.“

## „Gründlich über jemanden zu schreiben bedeutet, ihn zu zerstören“

Salter, zuletzt Kommandeur einer Kunstflugstaffel in Bitburg, quittierte 1957 den Dienst bei der Luftwaffe, von dem seine ersten beiden Romane handeln. „Ich werde oft gefragt: Welchen Einfluss hat es auf Ihr Schreiben, dass Sie Pilot gewesen sind? Lange habe ich einen solchen Einfluss bestritten, aber wenn ich darüber nachdenke, muss ich zugeben, dass es wahrscheinlich einen Effekt gibt. Es macht einen Unterschied, ob man der Pilot eines Linienflugzeugs ist, von Menschen umgeben, auch wenn es Passagiere sind, oder ein Kampfflieger.“ Er war allein. „Etwas zu erreichen, wo es um alles oder nichts geht und nicht das Glück den Ausschlag gibt, beeinflusst nicht den Charakter, aber die Einstellung zum Leben und die Meinung, die man von sich hat.“ Salters Perfektionismus ist ein ritterliches Stilideal. Er strebt im Schreiben nach Authentizität, will sein „gesellschaftliches oder falsches Selbst“ ablegen. Auch im Gespräch möchte er um jeden Preis das richtige Wort finden. Er spricht langsam, mit Nachhall. Mitten im Sommer liegt Rauhreif auf seiner Stimme.

„In meinem Fall hat der Beruf des Kampfpiloten das Gefühl erzeugt, privilegiert zu sein. Außerdem einen Sinn für Proportionen. Und einen furchtlosen Blick auf Entfernungen und Möglichkeiten.“ In den Memoiren hat er mit gelegentlichen Anflügen schwarzen Humors geschildert, wie viele seiner Kameraden und Vorgesetzten bei Unfällen umgekommen sind. Hat die Verinnerlichung dieses Berufsrisikos Folgen für den Umgang des Romanciers mit seinem erfundenen Personal? „Mich hat diese Erfahrung hart werden lassen. Nicht meine Gefühle haben sich verhärtet, wohl aber meine Haltung.“ In den Memoiren bekennt Salter: „Gründlich über jemanden zu schreiben bedeutet, ihn zu zerstören, zu verbrauchen.“

## Ein lakonischer Erzählton

Ist das Schreiben dann sogar eine Fortsetzung des Luftkriegs mit anderen Mitteln? Eine Aufzählung aller denkbaren Berührungspunkte vom Fokussieren bis zum Zeittotschlagen unterbricht Salter mit einem apodiktischen Satz in tieftraurigem Ton: „Schreiben ist schwerer.“ Er setzt zunächst zu einer Begründung an und sagt dann bloß noch einmal: „Schreiben ist schwerer.“

Im Vergleich mit dem erotischen Phantasiestück „A Sport and a Pastime“ („Ein Sport und ein Zeitvertreib“) und dem pathetischen Scheidungsepos „Light Years“ („Lichtjahre“) ist der Erzählton des jüngsten Romans lakonischer. Hätte Bowman auch Schriftsteller sein können? „Natürlich. Aber Geschichten über Schriftsteller haben nichts Verlockendes für mich.“ Machte Salter Bowman zum Lektor, weil er einen passiven Helden brauchte? Tatsächlich sind Bowmans berufliche Aktivitäten kein Gegenstand des Romans. „Das wäre ein anderes Buch: die dramatische, aufwühlende Geschichte, wie Ayn Rand es schaffte, ihr Buch zu vollenden, welcher Verlag es am Ende annahm, wie es das Publikum eroberte.“

## Fasziniert von Max Beckmann

Ein Stoff jedoch bricht ein in den abgeschlossenen Garten der träumerischen Kultivierung privater Erinnerungen. Robert Baum wird durch seine Weigerung charakterisiert, ein Buch mit der bei Holocaustleugnern beliebten These zu verlegen, Reinhard Heydrich sei Jude gewesen. Nur in dieser indirekten Form eines Exempels, fast nebenbei, könne die Judenverfolgung in einem seiner Romane vorkommen, meint Salter: als Buch im Buch. Er ist überrascht zu erfahren, dass in Deutschland Bücher aus der Perspektive der Opfer Hitlers ein großes Publikum finden. Wie sei das denn mit W. G. Sebalds Befund der Tabuisierung des Bombenkriegs zusammenzubringen? „Ich selbst könnte über diese Sachen nicht schreiben. Der Radius meines emotionalen Verstands ist dafür zu schmal. Mir fehlt ganz einfach der Mut, mich wirklich dem Thema zu stellen.“ Dieser letzte Satz widerlegt sich selbst: Das Geständnis bezeugt den Mut des Autors.

Vor einigen Jahren war Salter eingeladen worden, einen Essay über einen Maler seiner Wahl zu schreiben. Er entschied sich für Max Beckmann. Der Verleger, ein Franzose, war nicht einverstanden. Er gab vor, Beckmann nicht zu kennen. Was fasziniert Salter an Beckmann? „Ich mag die Persönlichkeit des Malers, ich mag seine Kühnheit.“ Salter greift nach einem deutschen Wort: Walpurgisnacht. Dass bürgerliche Mäzene Geschmack an diesem Hexensabbat fanden, dass die wilden Szenen im Salon hingen, gibt ihm zu denken. Ihm gefällt, dass sie sich der Entschlüsselung verweigern: „die unauflösliche, unentzifferbare Allegorie“.

## Was will der realistische Roman?

In Salters bürgerlichen Romanen siegen die Passionen über die Interessen. Das Private schlägt das Öffentliche aus dem Feld. Kann man diese Abkehr von der Politik politisch deuten? Baum lehnt den Heydrich-Bestseller ab, weil er das trivialliterarische Muster durchschaut: Zu gut gingen die Dinge auf, wenn Antisemitismus sich auf Selbsthass zurückführen ließe. Die skandalöse Unmoral von Salters Chroniken der Exzesse verweist auf den Verdacht, dass moralische Geschichten zu einfach sind.

Als Salter den Besucher zum Zug bringt, gibt er ihm ein Zitat von Maupassant mit auf den Rückweg in die Stadt. Er hat es in den Memoiren des Historikers John Lukacs gefunden: Das Ziel des Verfassers realistischer Romane „ist nicht, eine Geschichte zu erzählen, uns zu amüsieren oder an unsere Gefühle zu appellieren, sondern uns zu nötigen, die dunklere und tiefere Bedeutung der Ereignisse zu bedenken und zu verstehen“.



September 8, 2013

83,57

## After Bold Step on Syria, French Leader Finds Himself Dismissed as Lackey

By [SUZANNE DALEY](#)

PARIS — As portrayed in a satirical television show here this week, President François Hollande is left behind to [hold President Obama's coat](#) while the American leader and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia hold private talks. Mr. Hollande gullibly concludes he is playing a key role.

Later in the show, “Les Guignols de L’Info,” a rough French equivalent of Jon Stewart’s “The Daily Show,” Mr. Hollande is seen interrupting a visit to a school [to ask Mr. Obama's permission](#) to use the bathroom.

If Mr. Hollande ever thought that his decision to stand steadfast alongside the United States in backing a retaliatory strike against Syria would give him new stature on the global stage or help him at home, the last week has been a sharp shock.

Public opinion is running strongly against him; a poll published this weekend in the conservative daily newspaper Le Figaro showed about two-thirds of the French opposed to military action against Syria. There are growing demands that he grant Parliament a vote on the matter, and considerable speculation that he could lose if he did.

The White House is doing its best to buttress Mr. Hollande — Secretary of State John Kerry, on a visit here this weekend, used a televised appearance to make the case, in French, that failure to act would be akin to the Munich Agreement of 1938, in which Britain and France sought to appease Hitler by allowing him to control the Sudetenland. But the French president is learning, like British leaders before him, that close alignment with Washington carries as much risk of looking weak as opportunity to look strong.

Earlier this year the French marveled when Mr. Hollande, inexperienced in foreign policy, weighed down by economic woes and often seen as vacillating, executed a swift and successful military strike in Mali. They rewarded him with an increase, though fleeting, in his usually dismal approval ratings.

This time around, so far at least, he has not received even that brief benefit.

Mr. Hollande is facing an avalanche of sometimes contradictory criticism from left and right: that he is acting rashly in committing France to military action; that he is being too timid in awaiting the go-ahead from the United States and the United Nations; that he needs to heed public and parliamentary opinion and that he needs to assert the traditionally broad powers of the French president to employ the armed forces without parliamentary approval.

Perhaps most of all, he is being criticized for failing a basic test of French politics — protecting the country’s pride. Having quickly agreed to join in a military action, France is now forced to wait on the sidelines while Congress debates whether to give its approval. Mr. Hollande’s critics say he looks like a lackey.

Even some who have endorsed a military strike have taken Mr. Hollande to task for his handling of the issue. A front-page editorial in Le Figaro by Paul-Henri du Limbert said that no one could criticize Mr. Hollande for wanting to face down barbarity, but nonetheless his strategy left something to be desired. The president, he said, had somehow managed to “throw a spotlight on his own powerlessness.”

“It is a singular situation,” Mr. du Limbert concluded. “but no one can expect that France will come out of it looking stronger.”

To some degree, Mr. Hollande's decision to stand with the United States and Prime Minister David Cameron of Britain in calling for a military strike against Syria to "punish" the Assad government for a chemical weapons attack is well in line with French tradition.

French troops were gassed in World War I and France has been long been active in trying to ban such weapons. Mr. Hollande's Socialist Party is generally sympathetic to humanitarian intervention in the case of atrocities.

Under President Nicolas Sarkozy, Mr. Hollande's predecessor, France sought closer ties with Syria, and invited President Bashar al-Assad to Bastille Day celebrations at the Élysée Palace. As a result a number of business agreements were forged between the two countries, most of which have dissolved since the violence erupted.

France has other reasons to care about what happens in Syria, including protecting neighboring Lebanon, a former French mandate. It is also being pressed by allies including Saudi Arabia to see the conflict in Syria as part of a broader proxy fight over Iran. Mr. Kerry said Sunday that he had received assurances of Saudi support for a strike on Syria.

But for Mr. Hollande, as for Mr. Obama and Mr. Cameron, almost nothing on this issue has unfolded smoothly or quickly.

Under pressure to win more support from other European countries, Mr. Hollande has now said any action should await the completion of a report by United Nations weapons inspectors on the apparent gas attacks, which took place near Damascus last month and according to American intelligence reports killed more than 1,400 people. When he succumbed to pressure to hold a debate on the matter in Parliament, opponents across the ideological spectrum brought up many of the same concerns being discussed in Britain and the United States.

"There was a contagion effect from what was going on in the U.S.," said Hubert Védrine, a former French former minister who is member of Mr. Hollande's party. "And people became very aware that Syria is not Mali. And suddenly there were some very difficult questions being discussed. Can we do it? Is it legitimate to do it? Will it achieve anything?"

Mr. Hollande's supporters say he could hardly have anticipated this turn of events, especially Mr. Obama's decision to seek legislative approval.

"What we have seen in recent years is American presidents trying to get more powers for themselves," said one former adviser to Mr. Sarkozy, who declined to be named because he did not want to look like he was meddling in Mr. Hollande's affairs. "So, I think it natural that it surprised Hollande that Obama would do something like that."

Nonetheless, Mr. Hollande now faces a Parliament empowered by public opinion, with some members, including his own supporters, still calling for a vote on the issue. Some have suggested that polling the Parliament could even present Mr. Hollande with a deft way of reasserting France's independence.

Noël Mamère, a prominent member of the Green Party who supports Mr. Hollande's stance, said he wanted the French Parliament to hold a vote on the same timetable as the United States Congress.

"I think that is a way to show that we are deciding on our own," he said.

Scott Sayare and Maïa de la Baume contributed reporting.

## Comparatif: comment se décide une entrée en guerre, selon le pays



Le porte-avions américain USS Nimitz était déployé, le 1er septembre, dans les eaux de la Mer Rouge.

REUTERS/Hugh Gentry

Par [Romain Mielcarek](#)

83,59

**Le Parlement français doit débattre mercredi 4 septembre d'une intervention militaire en Syrie. Cet échange avec le gouvernement n'a pas besoin d'être suivi d'un vote : le président est seul décisionnaire dans ce domaine. Une particularité qui ne se retrouve pas systématiquement ailleurs dans le monde.**

### France

En France, la Constitution stipule que le président, en tant que chef des armées, est décisionnaire en matière d'intervention à l'étranger. Il dirige les différents conseils et comités militaires. De son côté, le Premier ministre est garant de la Défense nationale. Historiquement, le Parlement n'avait de compétence dans ce domaine que pour déclarer la guerre, une mesure jamais vue du temps de la Ve République.

Le Parlement n'a, en réalité, qu'un droit d'information sur les opérations extérieures. Il a d'ailleurs fallu attendre 2008 pour qu'une réforme constitutionnelle garantisse ce pouvoir parlementaire qui reste limité. La présidence n'a comme obligation que d'informer les élus, dans les trois jours qui suivent le déclenchement des opérations. Lors de cette information, qui peut être suivie d'un débat, les données présentées restent à la discrétion de l'Élysée qui doit simplement préciser les objectifs de la mission.

[Cliquer pour agrandir](#)



Au cours des années 2000, les parlementaires ont régulièrement dénoncé ce déséquilibre des pouvoirs, obtenant satisfaction en 2008. Les élus votent désormais le maintien d'une opération au cours d'un débat qui doit se tenir dans les quatre mois suivant le déclenchement des hostilités. Jusqu'ici, ils ont systématiquement reconduit les

mandats des troupes déployées en Afghanistan, au Liban, au Kosovo, au Tchad, en République centrafricaine, en Côte d'Ivoire, en Libye ou encore plus récemment au Mali.

Le Parlement bénéficie aussi d'un pouvoir réel en matière budgétaire puisque c'est lui qui valide les comptes de la Défense, notamment pour ce qui est du portefeuille consacré aux opérations extérieures.

Si malgré tout, le gouvernement décide de [soumettre la décision](#) d'une intervention extérieure au Parlement, il peut le faire au titre de l'[article 49-1](#) de la Constitution comme ce fût le cas en 1991 lors de la première guerre du Golfe. Il permet d'engager un débat, éventuellement suivi d'un vote, sur un sujet de politique générale. En cas de refus des parlementaires, le gouvernement peut-être amené à démissionner. Une autre version de cette démarche existe au travers de l'[article 50-1](#) qui n'amène que l'une des deux chambres parlementaires à voter et qui n'implique pas de renouvellement du gouvernement en cas de déception.

## Etats-Unis

Aux Etats-Unis, la relation entre le pouvoir exécutif et le pouvoir législatif, en matière d'opérations extérieures, est en [perpétuelle évolution](#). La Constitution prévoit que le président est le commandant en chef des forces armées et qu'il peut, en tant que tel, décider d'une intervention et la mener à son terme. Le texte indique que le Congrès, de son côté, a la possibilité de déclarer une guerre, la financer et suivre son avancement. La pratique a montré que le chef de l'Etat a bénéficié en général, quelles que soient les critiques, d'une très grande autonomie dans la menée d'une opération à l'étranger.

Cliquer pour agrandir



En 1973, la Résolution sur les pouvoirs militaires a introduit quelques spécificités plus précises. Elle prévoit notamment que le président consulte aussi souvent que possible le Congrès sur les opérations en cours ou à venir. S'il décide le déploiement de la force sans avoir consulté le Congrès, il doit l'en informer sous 48 heures. Les parlementaires bénéficient alors d'un délai de soixante jours pour s'opposer à l'opération. Le cas échéant, le retrait des troupes est obligatoire, situation qui ne s'est présentée qu'une seule fois dans l'histoire récente des Etats-Unis, au cours de la [crise de Mayaguez](#) en 1975.

La décision de Barack Obama de soumettre une intervention en Syrie à un vote du Congrès est perçue par de nombreux analystes américains comme un précédent. Le président a promis de se plier à la décision des élus, quitte à mettre de côté sa prérogative en matière de décision dans ce domaine. Pour les observateurs, ce choix pourrait réduire durablement la marge de manœuvre du président.

Il faudra attendre la rentrée du Parlement américain pour engager le vote en question, au cours de la semaine du 9 septembre au plus tôt. En attendant, les élus ont commencé à s'exprimer dans les médias sur le texte de deux pages présenté par le président. La plupart d'entre eux semblent bien décidés à l'amender au maximum pour prévenir toute interprétation abusive du projet, notamment en ce qui concerne le déploiement de troupes au sol.

## Grande-Bretagne

Au Royaume-Uni, c'est le monarque qui est seul habilité à déclarer la guerre. Le Premier ministre peut, au nom du roi – ou de la reine – mettre en oeuvre un projet d'intervention militaire.

Les [modalités de décision](#) restent parfaitement informelles en Grande-Bretagne. Ainsi, le Premier ministre n'a pas comme obligation de soumettre son projet au Parlement. La tradition veut que le chef du gouvernement le

fasse pour les conflits de grande envergure, comme ce fût le cas en 1939 en Europe, en 1982 pour les Malouines ou encore en 2003 pour l'Irak. Le Premier ministre peut cependant décider de passer outre, si l'urgence l'impose. Il doit dans ce cas justifier « le plus vite possible » sa décision.

Une fois le projet d'intervention communiqué, le Parlement dispose de 48 heures maximum pour proposer des amendements et voter. Dans le cas de la Syrie, les échanges ont duré un peu plus de sept heures avant que les élus ne refusent le déploiement de forces britanniques, avec [13 voix d'écart](#).

Le gouvernement pourrait dès lors décider de proposer un nouveau projet d'intervention, en modifiant les modalités de celle-ci. Il assure cependant que l'idée n'est absolument pas à l'ordre du jour et que, dès lors que le Parlement a rejeté l'idée d'une action militaire en Syrie, la question ne serait plus envisagée.

## Allemagne

En Allemagne, la Constitution place l'armée sous [tutelle du Parlement](#). Elle répond cependant aux ordres du Chancelier en temps de guerre et du ministre de la Défense en temps normal. La Loi fondamentale prévoit que ce dernier décide de toute question concernant les forces armées, notamment en matière de déploiements à l'étranger.

Cliquer pour agrandir



L'armée allemande peut intervenir à l'étranger à condition que le Bundestag approuve la mission confiée. Les parlementaires peuvent autoriser ou mettre fin à une opération à l'étranger. Ils ne peuvent cependant jamais proposer une intervention, cette tâche étant dévolue au ministre de la Défense. Traditionnellement, les débats parlementaires avant un déploiement sont particulièrement longs et précis, rendant Berlin peut réactif face à une crise internationale. La Constitution prévoit une exception en cas de déploiement de faible intensité mais cette mesure n'a jamais été utilisée.

Au sein du Bundestag, la commission de la défense bénéficie d'un statut spécifique. La Constitution allemande considère ce contrôle sur le pouvoir exécutif comme prioritaire. Les membres de cette commission sont les seuls à pouvoir, de leur propre initiative, se constituer en une commission d'enquête spécifique.

L'Allemagne dispose de plus d'une spécificité parlementaire supplémentaire. Le Bundestag élit tous les cinq ans un [Commissaire parlementaire aux forces armées](#) qui n'est ni fonctionnaire, ni parlementaire. Chargé de veiller au respect des droits des forces militaires, il bénéficie d'un droit à l'information et se rend régulièrement sur le terrain. Sans être directement intégré dans le processus de décision, en ce qui concerne les interventions, il est régulièrement entendu par les élus sur les opérations en cours.

## Espagne

En Espagne, le Premier ministre engage les forces armées sans avoir besoin d'une autorisation du Parlement. C'est ce qui s'est produit lors de la participation de Madrid aux opérations en Irak, en 2003. Depuis 2004, une tradition de consultation parlementaire s'est cependant instaurée.

## Pays-Bas

Aux Pays-Bas, une déclaration de guerre requiert la mobilisation des deux chambres du Parlement dans une session extraordinaire. Pour tous les autres types d'opérations militaires, y compris à l'étranger, le

gouvernement bénéficie d'une absolue liberté et doit simplement informer les élus. Dans la pratique, le Parlement a toujours été consulté avant que des militaires néerlandais ne soient envoyés en mission.

## **Italie**

La Constitution italienne prévoit que le gouvernement est responsable de la politique étrangère et de l'action militaire. Sa seule obligation est d'informer le Parlement, sans que les modalités ne soient précisées. La pratique veut que le gouvernement transmette un dossier aux élus ou à l'une des commissions spécialisées. Un débat peut avoir lieu afin d'orienter le projet militaire. Le Parlement exerce un contrôle budgétaire en décidant des moyens alloués aux différentes opérations auxquelles participent les forces italiennes.

## **Australie**

En Australie, le Premier ministre décide seul du déploiement de forces militaires. Comme en Grande-Bretagne, il peut soumettre ce type de projet à la Chambre des Représentants. Il s'agit cependant généralement d'une note d'information, plus que d'un vote de confirmation. En 2003, lors de l'invasion de l'Irak, Cambera a ainsi organisé un vote parlementaire alors que l'annonce de la participation des forces australiennes avait déjà été annoncée. Les élus réclament régulièrement un meilleur contrôle parlementaire sur cet aspect du pouvoir exécutif.

tags: [Allemagne](#) - [Défense](#) - [Diplomatie](#) - [Etats-Unis](#) - [France](#) - [Royaume-Uni](#) - [Syrie](#)

09/17/2013 11:34 AM

**Going Nowhere**

## France Opts for Meek Reforms and Hope

By Mathieu von Rohr

83,63

**French President François Hollande's announced reforms have either been delayed or watered down so much that they will do little to address his country's pressing problems. Fearing unrest, he prefers hope over hardship.**

Only rarely in a Western democracy does the head of state call together the country's business leaders to charge them with tasks for the future and to jointly evoke their country's greatness.

Precisely this, though, is what happened last week at the Élysée Palace in Paris, where [President François Hollande](#) got a tour of what French technology currently has on offer. The president held a robot, cast an approving glance at 3-D printers and electric vehicles, and received a run-down on such innovations as fuel-efficient "two-liter" cars and electric airplanes.

The high point of the day was a film shown in the presence of the president and his industry minister, Arnaud Montebourg. The dramatic string strains of Vivaldi's "Summer" accompanied images of things [France](#) has invented and "given the world" in the past -- among them the steam locomotive, the automobile, radioactivity and, finally, the high-speed TGV train and the supersonic Concorde plane.

The fact that all these innovations lie in the past serves to highlight the country's real problem: Over the last decade, French industry has lost over 700,000 jobs. Now the government has unveiled a new plan to encourage growth in 34 selected industry sectors, with the aim of bringing about a "third industrial revolution."

However, since the French government doesn't have the money to fund these projects, it is relying primarily on private investment. The "new industrial France" of Hollande and Montebourg is not a governmental investment program of the type seen in the past, although France does want to take the lead on industrial policy-making once again. Last week's event also seemed driven by the hope that recollections of a glorious past will provide the country with the courage it needs to pursue a better future. And, since France is currently faring so poorly despite some tentative signs of recovery, a better future is certainly needed.

### Pseudo Reforms

The weeks following the summer recess were widely expected to be a time for Hollande to set a new course. The announcement of a coming large-scale pension reform was meant to demonstrate that the president was capable of taking decisive action on a fundamental issue. But that reform, which has now been unveiled, has primarily demonstrated one thing: that Hollande doesn't believe in large-scale reform.

The pension reform didn't touch France's retirement age or the special rules that apply to government employees. Instead, both employees and employers are to pay more contributions, with the number of years of contributions required before qualifying for a full pension being raised to 43 by 2035.

Making more profound change would bring with it "the risk that many people would take to the streets, without the certainty that we would be able to see the reform through to the end," Hollande told *Le Monde* in justifying his decision.

Instead, Hollande prefers to make small changes, as was also evident in his reform of French labor laws this spring. Now, on the pension question, all sides have been left unsatisfied anyway, with strikes and demonstrations taking place in Paris last week. Still, at least the issue is unlikely to lead to nationwide unrest.

This, though, leaves the precarious financial state of the country's pension fund beyond 2020 still unresolved. "The pension non-reform is a decision with far-reaching consequences," writes economist Élie Cohen, who usually supports Hollande. "It confirms that the president has no interest in making structural reforms and marks the end of any attempts at reform until the end of his term in office."

When European Economic Affairs Commissioner Olli Rehn criticized the slow pace of the reforms last week, French Finance Minister Pierre Moscovici issued a clear response: It's simply not possible to go any faster, he said.

### **New Tax Increases and Fees**

In order to meet the Maastricht criteria limiting budget deficits to 3 percent of GDP by 2015, France plans to cut government spending by €15 billion (\$20 billion). But a fundamental -- and urgently needed -- restructuring of France's bloated public sector, with its convoluted levels of government, is still not in the cards.

The government did promise the French people a "tax pause," but the very phrase seems to suggest a short period of rest that would then naturally be followed by new tax increases and fees. And, indeed, it emerged last week that the government is planning new surcharges on electronic cigarettes, energy drinks and sweeteners, and there are widespread fears that taxes will continue to rise, as well. In a prime-time interview on Sunday night, Hollande was seeking to reassure his fellow countrymen by promising there would be no new taxes whatsoever.

Meanwhile, the president is holding on to hope that economic growth will finally return to his country. At the moment, however, projected growth for 2014 is not even 1 percent.

What remains is a feeling of stasis, a general bad mood -- and serious concerns about upcoming local and EU-level elections next year. Politicians and polling institutes fear the current situation in France may lead to record results for the right-wing populist National Front.

*Translated from the German by Ella Ornstein*



## **Lawyers Seek Clarity on Headscarves in Court**

By Joachim Wagner

**The German court system has a patchwork of rules and regulations about whether female lawyers should be permitted to wear the hijab, or Muslim headscarf, in court. Experts say the lack of legal clarity is unsustainable, and that a big debate is brewing.**

Three times judges have taken issue with the headscarf worn by one female lawyer in Berlin. They declared that by wearing it, the lawyer, as an "officer of the court," was in violation of the ideological and [religious](#) neutrality of the justice system. All three times the Muslim lawyer, who has requested to remain anonymous, agreed to compromise.

For two of the trials in question, the lawyer removed her headscarf, under which she wore, in the words of Berlin court spokesman Ulrich Wimmer "a type of cap." In the third case, Wimmer says, the lawyer "wore her headscarf differently, fastening it the back so that it looked more like a peasant's headscarf." The judges were satisfied, finding that with these changes the lawyer's head covering "no longer had a religious appearance."

All three trials in question -- concerning a rear-end collision; a car that collided with a taxi while pulling out of a parking spot; and a crash in an intersection -- were thus able to proceed. In the future, however, the lawyer says she is no longer willing to make such "demeaning compromises." If a judge again takes issue with her headscarf, she plans to file a complaint with Berlin's constitutional court. The bar association has promised her both financial and personnel support.

Can a lawyer wearing a headscarf in court be reconciled with the justice system's constitutional obligation to maintain ideological and religious neutrality? This is a fundamental question that high-level judges in Germany may soon face. Versions of this question have already been raised elsewhere. For example, may an officer of the court wear a yarmulke, as occurred in the local court of the Berlin city district of Lichtenberg? May a court stenographer wear a headscarf? Should the justice system allow a trainee lawyer in a robe and hair covering to represent the public prosecution during a trial?

In each of these cases, the conflict over a piece of cloth boils down to one key question: How secular should our justice system be? Or, in other words, to what degree are religious symbols acceptable in the justice system of a multi-religious society? Should, for example, a crucifix be allowed in the courtroom, as has been the case at the National Socialist Underground (NSU) trial? A member of Turkey's parliament has objected to this, saying the presence of a crucifix is a violation of the principles of a secular, constitutional legal system and amounts to a threat to all non-Christians, especially the Muslim family members of the right-wing extremist group's alleged murder victims.

### **Headscarves Pervasive in Courts**

Among lawyers and experts outside the justice system, there is little support for the compromises the Berlin lawyer has had to make on the matter of her headscarf. Women's rights activist Seyran Ates, who herself works as a lawyer in Berlin, calls these "compromises with a bitter aftertaste" and says the question of headscarves is not an issue on which compromise is possible. Mathias Rohe, a law professor in Erlangen who specializes in the legal status of [Islam](#), believes the legal system "cannot sustain its cumbersome and aimless approach to the headscarf."

This is not a question of a few isolated cases. According to a survey conducted by the Berlin city-state's justice department, female lawyers who wear headscarves now work in almost all branches of Berlin's justice system: seven out of 11 district courts, the regional court, the social court, the administrative court and the higher administrative court. Conflicts, it seems, rarely arise.

Peter Scholz, vice president of the local court in Berlin's Tiergarten district and an expert on Islamic law, believes that "the vast majority of judges and prosecutors are in favor of allowing lawyers to wear headscarves." Scholz himself says he had no objections the time he heard a case in which one of the lawyers wore a headscarf. However, he also recalls a trial in 2011 in which a colleague didn't want a defense lawyer in the courtroom as long as she was wearing a headscarf.

Ates, the lawyer and women's rights advocate, says a ban on headscarves in the courtroom is the practical equivalent to a ban on the legal profession. Still, she believes "the religious neutrality of the justice system" is more important, in part because she finds that female lawyers wearing headscarves present "an image of women and a division of roles that are not what we want." Ralph Ghadban, an Islamic Studies scholar who teaches in Berlin, believes the headscarf as a religious symbol has no place in the courtroom. Allowing the headscarf constitutes "a step-by-step erosion of the state," he says.

Kenan Kolat, chairman of the Turkish Community in Germany, takes a different view. "If an accredited lawyer is banned from wearing a headscarf, that essentially amounts to an occupational ban," he says, calling this "unacceptable." Nurhan Soykan, a lawyer who serves as secretary-general of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany and who herself wears a headscarf, is likewise outraged. She calls the Berlin judges' suggestion that Muslim women should remove their head coverings, or fasten them differently, "dehumanizing and disrespectful."

Marcus Mollnau, president of Berlin's bar association, says a ban on headscarves for female lawyers in the courtroom would be "an encroachment on religious and occupational freedom, for which there is no legal basis." Headscarves do not violate the justice system's mandate of neutrality, he says, because lawyers perform their duties independently and are concerned first and foremost with their clients' interests.

Stefan Finkel, chairman of Berlin's association of judges, puts it even more clearly. "The neutrality obligation doesn't apply to lawyers," he says. "Lawyers can wear turbans, yarmulkes or headscarves."

### **Standards Vary By State and Court**

This, though, can apparently lead to recognition problems. Soykan, the lawyer with the Central Council of Muslims in Germany, says just a few years ago she still came across a number of judges who didn't even realize she was a lawyer because of her hair covering. They "would ask in confusion where the lawyer was," she says. She also had to put up with insulting comments.

Lawyer Kadriye Aydin, on the other hand, regularly appears in court in the federal state of Hesse wearing a headscarf. She says that only early on in her career, in 2005, did a family court judge twice refuse to allow her to file a petition because of her headscarf, on the grounds that "the court dress code allows only robes without a head covering," according to a court transcript of the session. In both cases, Aydin secured the help of colleagues she had approached in the hall of the courthouse, and who filed the petitions on her behalf.

For judges and public prosecutors, on the other hand, the law is clear. State-level regulations, such as Berlin's "ideological symbol law," dictate that these officials may not wear any "visible religious or ideological symbols" while performing their duties. In Hesse, for example, an ordinance states that Muslim women training for legal professions are not allowed to wear a headscarf while performing duties in which they "are, or could be, perceived as a representative of the justice system or of the government."

This means that a woman wearing a headscarf may not preside over civil or administrative court trials or represent the public prosecutor's office in court. The ordinance in Hesse goes so far as to state that such a principled expression of religion can negatively impact these trainees' overall assessment, "since failure to perform up to standard is, as a matter of principle, evaluated as 'unsatisfactory.'"

As for lay judges wearing headscarves, the German justice system has proven at times tolerant and at times strict, varying from state to state and sometimes even from court to court. For example, Berlin's highest appeals court ruled that the position of lay judge is an "honorary post" in which the person in question remains a private individual "despite exercising this office." A lay judge's right to wear a headscarf during a trial is thus protected by the fundamental right to freedom of religion, the court continued, and the only way to change this would be on the basis of a law that does not currently exist.

Dortmund's regional court, on the other hand, approved the disqualification of a lay judge because of her headscarf.

### **'Legal Uncertainty'**

It's no wonder that the justice system's reaction to the question of headscarves comes across as helpless and disoriented. The system lacks a clear compass as to how to best preserve the state's obligation to maintain neutrality, given Germany's increasing cultural, ethnic and religious diversity.

The German Constitutional Court outlined two possible approaches in a 2003 ruling on a headscarf ban for teachers. The first path would be to more strictly enforce "the government's obligation to maintain ideological and religious neutrality," in part to avoid conflicts between those of different religions, ideologies and ethnic groups -- for example, by preventing the possibility of a Jewish defendant in a yarmulke facing a Muslim lay judge in a headscarf.

The second route would be to go in the opposite direction, by taking increasing religious diversity as an opportunity to "practice tolerance" and thus to "contribute to integration."

In other countries, opinions on the matter diverge widely. In secular France, a lawyer wearing a headscarf in court would be inconceivable. In Spain, well-known judge Javier Gómez Bermúdez barred a lawyer with a headscarf from a trial. In liberal Britain, on the other hand, lawyers have had the right to wear headscarves in court since 2006. The same became true in Turkey earlier this year.

Many in Germany wish for such clear rules here, as well. Islamic law specialist Rohe points out that an unacceptable "legal uncertainty" has arisen in which "neither judges nor lawyers know where things stand." This uncertainty must be fixed, Rohe says, whether by a court ruling or by lawmakers. Until this happens, lawyers who wear headscarves cannot know from one appointment to the next what to expect in court.

*Translated from the German by Ella Ornstein*

## Die EU ist nicht am Ende - aber der Euro

Nein, die EU ist nicht am Ende. Der Euro aber schon. Freilich: Der Kontinent sollte sich an Charles de Gaulles Idee vom "Europa der Vaterländer" orientieren. Nur so wird er an Stärke gewinnen. Von Alan Posener



Foto: welt online Europa: Kommt es zum Bruch oder wächst zusammen, was zusammengehört [Bild teilen](#)

Europa steckt in einer tiefen Krise. Nichts ist irreführender als der Glaube, es handele sich um eine [Währungskrise](#). Es ist vielmehr eine Krise der europäischen Idee. Sie ist freilich durch die Gemeinschaftswährung ausgelöst worden. Und die Gemeinschaftswährung wird, früher oder später, ihr Opfer sein. Wenn durch dieses Opfer der europäische Gedanke eine Renaissance erfährt, wird es nicht umsonst gewesen sein. In allen europäischen Ländern gibt es starke euroskeptische Minderheiten.

Seit dem Ausbruch der Finanzkrise vor fünf Jahren sind diese Minderheiten ständig gewachsen. Heute steht das traditionell euroskeptische Großbritannien keineswegs allein da. Was die antieuropäische Stimmung in der Bevölkerung angeht, haben andere Länder die Briten inzwischen überholt; und nirgends ist diese Stimmung größer und gefährlicher als in der Eurozone.

Das muss man sich vor Augen führen: Im "Kerneuropa", von dem die deutschen Politiker Wolfgang Schäuble und Karl Lamers träumten, und das mit der "Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion" verwirklicht zu sein scheint, ist die Stimmung gegen die Integration am stärksten.

### Europa und seine Looser

Dieses "Kerneuropa" ist in Wirklichkeit eine Föderation von Loser-Staaten, darunter ein *failed state* wie Griechenland, mehrere *failed nations* wie Italien, Belgien und Zypern, eine Reihe von Staaten, deren Wirtschaft auf die Intensivstation gehören, wie Portugal, Spanien und Irland, einer reformunwilligen Mittelmacht wie Frankreich und einem selbstzufriedenen Deutschland, das sehenden Auges auf eine demografische Katastrophe zusteuert.

Gemeinsam ist dieser Gruppe nur, dass in ihr die Arbeitslosigkeit im Schnitt höher und die Wachstumsraten niedriger sind als anderswo in der Europäischen Union. Der Euro hat aber nicht nur einen Keil zwischen diese

Gruppe und den Rest Europas getrieben; er hat die Bevölkerungen der Euroländer gegeneinander aufgebracht. Alle Umfragen zeigen, dass Deutschland in den Ländern Südeuropas zutiefst unbeliebt ist, während in Deutschland selbst die Stimmung gegen "Pleite-Griechen" und andere angeblich faule Südländer beunruhigende Ausmaße annimmt.

Dass es so weit kommen konnte, haben drei deutsche Politiker mit zu verantworten. Helmut Kohl setzte zusammen mit François Mitterrand den Euro durch, um die europäische Einigung "unumkehrbar" zu machen. Das Gegenteil ist eingetreten. Gerhard Schröder setzte zusammen mit Jacques Chirac die Maastricht-Kriterien für Deutschland und Frankreich außer Kraft.

## **Scheitert der Euro, gewinnt Europa**

Damit war der Schuldenkrise Tür und Tor geöffnet. Angela Merkel schließlich trieb die Verwandlung der [Eurozone](#) in einen gemeinsamen Haftungsverbund voran und schuf mit dem "Fiskalpakt" einen intergouvernementalen Lenkungsausschuss für diesen Verbund, der weitgehend jenseits und außerhalb der entmachteten europäischen Organe Kommission, Rat und Parlament – und weitgehend ohne Kontrolle durch die nationalen Parlamente – agiert. Europa existiert als Union faktisch nicht mehr.

Merkel begründet ihre destruktive Politik mit der Behauptung: "Scheitert der Euro, scheitert Europa." Aber das entspricht nicht den Tatsachen. Die Leistungen, für die Europa mit dem Nobelpreis ausgezeichnet wurde, erreichte die Europäische Union ohne den Euro: die Einigung Westeuropas nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg; die Schaffung einer demokratischen Perspektive für Griechenland, Spanien und Portugal nach dem Ende der dortigen faschistischen Regimes; und die Überwindung der Teilung des Kontinents nach dem Zusammenbruch des sowjetischen Imperiums. Seit der Einführung des Euro hat die EU nichts mehr getan, um seinem Ruf als Friedensmacht gerecht zu werden. Scheitert Europa, dann liegt es am Euro.

Noch aber wäre Zeit, den Euro abzuwickeln und Europa zu retten. Europas Schicksal hängt nicht davon ab, dass es eine einheitliche Art des Wirtschaftens übernimmt. Es hängt davon ab, dass es ein einheitlicher Raum der Freiheit und des Rechts ist. Demokratie und Rechtsstaatlichkeit sind ebenso unverhandelbar wie die Handelsfreiheit und die Bewegungsfreiheit von Menschen, Waren und Kapital. Aber die Währungs-, Fiskal-, Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitik sollte Sache des Wettbewerbs unter den Staaten sein, ebenso wie die Schul- und Kulturpolitik.

## **Europa der Vaterländer**

Am Anfang der EU stand die Integration der Kohle- und Stahlindustrien Frankreichs und Deutschlands; die beiden Länder sollten dadurch strukturell unfähig werden, Krieg gegeneinander zu führen. Heute sind sie strukturell unfähig, gemeinsam einen Krieg gegen gemeinsame Feinde zu führen.

Seit 2010 entwickeln Briten und Franzosen eine gemeinsame Militärkapazität, ausgehend von einer Analyse ihrer Schwächen beim Libyen-Feldzug. Deutschland wurde erst gar nicht gebeten, bei diesem Unternehmen mitzumachen. Eine Demütigung, die hierzulande kaum registriert wurde, geschweige denn, dass es dagegen einen Protest gegeben hätte.

Um Charles de Gaulle zu zitieren: Was spricht dagegen, dass die EU ein ["Europa der Vaterländer"](#) wird? Ein Staatenbund, das die Kräfte des Kontinents bündelt, statt mit ungeheurem Kraftaufwand die Staaten zu fesseln? Mehr Europa wagen hieße dann: Mehr Demokratie, mehr Freiheit, mehr Vielfalt wagen – und, ja auch, mehr Mitglieder wagen. Wo die Regeln lockerer sind, kann der Club mehr Mitglieder vertragen. Noch ist es nicht zu spät, dieses größere, freiere Europa anzugehen.

***Ist die Europäische Union am Ende? [Ja, sagt Christoph B. Schiltz. Die alte EU ist zu Reformen nicht mehr in der Lage. Der Euro soll aber bleiben.](#)***

## **Britain Is Pulled, Reluctantly, Into Debate Over Wearing Full-Face Veils in Public**

By [STEPHEN CASTLE](#)

LONDON — The vexing debate over the wearing of full-face veils in public has come to Britain, a country that prides itself on the protection of individual liberty.

A judge in London decided Monday that a Muslim woman standing trial on charges of intimidating a witness can attend court wearing her facial veil, which covers everything but the eyes, but must remove it to give evidence so the jury can better evaluate her claims.

That ruling comes a week after Birmingham Metropolitan College withdrew a ban on face coverings after protests and accusations of discrimination.

Together the two cases suggest that it is becoming increasingly hard for the government to remain quiet about an issue that has already prompted legislation in continental Europe, most notably in France, which has the largest Muslim population in Europe.

There, in the name of secularism and public order, and with bipartisan political support, full facial veils were banned in public places two years ago. France also bans the wearing of any religious symbols in state schools.

There is no ban on wearing the veil in public in Britain, and government policy has allowed schools to make their own decisions on what students wear.

In Britain, some members of Parliament and others beginning to push for a ban on wearing the facial veil, or niqab, in public places argue that they are protecting young women from domestic pressure to wear them, setting them apart from a more secular Western society; opponents see such laws as restrictions on personal and religious freedoms.

So far the British government has tried to keep a distance from the issue but, in recent days, politicians have been challenged on their views.

Speaking on Monday in Glasgow, Nick Clegg, the deputy prime minister, said that Britain “shouldn’t end up like other countries issuing edicts from the center or laws from Parliament telling people what they should and shouldn’t wear. This is a free country and people going about their own business should be free to wear what they wish.”

“I think it is very un-British to start telling people what pieces of clothing they should wear,” he added.

Mr. Clegg then qualified his statement, however, saying that there are “exceptions to that as far as the full veil is concerned” — citing security checks at airports and classrooms, where teachers want to address pupils face-to-face.

Earlier, Jeremy Browne, a Home Office minister, told The Telegraph newspaper that the subject was “a good topic for national debate” and that he is “instinctively uneasy about restricting the freedom of individuals to observe the religion of their choice.”

“But there is genuine debate about whether girls should feel a compulsion to wear a veil when society deems children to be unable to express personal choices about other areas like buying alcohol, smoking or getting married,” Mr. Browne told the newspaper.

“We should be very cautious about imposing religious conformity on a society which has always valued freedom of expression,” Mr. Browne added.

A spokesman for Prime Minister David Cameron said Monday that the government supports the right of institutions like schools to set their own policies on uniforms and dress codes within the framework of laws that ban discrimination. But Mr. Cameron does not support the idea of a general ban, like the one in place in France, and there was no plan to redraft guidance to schools from the central government, he said.

Critics of the wearing of the veil in public said the government’s policy of delegating decisions to the schools, which are often part of the communities affected, has been compromised by the perception that the college in Birmingham was pressured to reverse its ban. They have suggested that the school should have had more support from the government to implement its original decision.

Last week Birmingham Metropolitan College said in a statement that it had opted to modify its policies “to allow individuals to wear specific items of personal clothing to reflect their cultural values.”

“We have listened to the views of our students and we are confident that this modification to our policies will meet the needs of all of our learners and stakeholders,” it added.

In Monday’s legal ruling, Judge Peter Murphy took steps to accommodate the defendant in the case, a 22-year-old London woman who cannot be named for legal reasons.

She will be offered a screen to shield her from public view while giving evidence. But the judge said that her face had to be visible to him, the jury and lawyers.

If she fails to comply with the order during the trial, she could be jailed for contempt of court.

Talat Ahmed, chairwoman of the Muslim Council of Britain’s Social and Family Affairs Committee said in a statement that “recent events will once again generate controversy when in fact what we really need is sensible, nonhysterical conversation.”

## After the German Election

### **Berlin will remain a slow, deliberating and frustrating actor in Europe for years to come.**

- WSJ Opinion September 17 MATS PERSSON

83,72

A satirical cartoon in the Italian magazine *l'Espresso*, depicting a father and son, illustrated it best: "Papa," says the son, "I have to go to the toilet."

"Hush," answers the father. "Hold it until after the German elections."

By now most commentators have realized that there won't be a quantum leap toward more euro-zone integration following the German elections. However, while most have focused on coalition dynamics, there are in fact three far more profound limitations that will continue to restrict Germany's ability to act in Europe long after the Sept. 22 elections, and will prevent any swift move toward a euro-zone banking union or fiscal union: One of these limitations is political, one is constitutional and one is economic.

First, German public support for the euro remains highly conditional. According to a recent Open Europe/Open Europe Berlin poll, a majority of Germans support more euro-zone integration if it means more central controls over other countries' taxation and spending. However, a clear majority remain opposed to any policy that involves putting German cash on the line, such as further loans to struggling euro-zone countries, write-downs of existing loans, a joint banking backstop or fiscal transfers.

This is neither surprising nor new. In the 1990s when the euro was forged, the gulf between public and elite opinion was already conspicuous. But despite mounting scepticism, the cost of saving the euro hasn't actually trickled through to people's wallets. If that ever changes, via a slow-down in the German economy, or if savers start to really feel the pinch from the European Central Bank's low interest rates or future possible money printing, we may quickly hit the limit of what the public is willing to endure. Let's not forget that, given Germany's regional structure, there's almost always another election on the horizon. Between now and when Greece is supposed to exit its bailout program in June 2015, for example, there will be at least five state elections in Germany, as well as the European elections in 2014. German politicians cannot escape public opinion.

Second, the German republic was set up after World War II specifically to prevent hasty centralizations of power. Ironically, this was done at the behest of the Americans and the British—though both Washington and London have been vocal critics of Berlin's cautious approach in the euro-zone crisis. Systemic circuit-breakers such as Germany's Constitutional Court were put in place to counter rash decision-making, while the modern German constitution in 1949 got rid of the federal government's Weimar-era emergency powers.

Today, slowness and consensus are encoded in the very fabric of the German constitutional DNA. This will not change after the elections, nor should we wish it to. While it is unlikely to rule against the ECB's bond-buying program, the Constitutional Court will continue to lay down new red lines for what Germany can and cannot do. The Court has already said that before the euro zone moves to a transfer union, a change to the German constitution will be needed, which will first require a referendum. It's constitutionally complicated, for example, to write down Greek debt, given that 75% of it is now owned by taxpayer-backed institutions in Germany and the rest of the euro zone. If those institutions take losses on what until now have been loan guarantees, that will in effect turn the euro zone into a transfer union for the first time, which the Constitutional Court has said is illegal. German politicians will continue to have one hand tied by the court in Karlsruhe for years to come.

Then there is the third and most fundamental limitation: Germany can't afford to underwrite the euro forever. If implicit debt, such as the liabilities of Germany's social-security system, are taken into account, the real level of German public debt would be 192% of GDP—much higher than Italy's 146%. Germany has also racked up an



exposure to the struggling peripheral countries of around €1 trillion—equivalent to some 40% of its GDP. If Berlin were to begin accepting losses on this, the cost could snowball quickly, as all its sovereign debtors would look for equal treatment. Furthermore, Germany faces a demographic time bomb.

By 2050, the country's current population of 82 million is projected to have declined to around 70 million—less than in 1963. Far fewer workers will be around to finance the country's pay-as-you-go social-security system. This is worse than it looks. Germany, of course, already has its own deeply unpopular transfer union. In this system, out of 16 federal states, only three—Bavaria, Hesse and Baden-Wurttemberg—are permanent net contributors, with Hamburg moving in and out of that status. Under a hypothetical euro-zone transfer union, these four German regions would proportionally carry a huge burden.

All of this means that there's a relatively stable trajectory to German's EU politics, which defies electoral cycles. So can we expect any movement after Sept. 22? Maybe a little. Particularly in a coalition government that included the center-left Social Democratic Party, we may see some easing of austerity in favor of structural reforms in countries such as Greece or Portugal. But Germans won't give up their deep-held belief in frugality overnight.

Almost any German government is also likely to continue to insist on strong controls over other countries' taxation and spending, most likely via the EU institutions, as quid pro quo for more cash. So the complicated sequencing that's pitting the Germans against the French will continue to dog the euro zone. Make no mistake, Germany will remain a slow, deliberating and frustrating actor for years to come.

*Mr. Persson is director of the London-based think tank Open Europe and an advisory board member of Open Europe Berlin.*

## Britisches Lob für AfD

### "Lucke säße in London im Kabinett"

Von [Carsten Volkery](#), London

**In Deutschland ist die AfD eine Splitterpartei, in Großbritannien läge sie im Mainstream: Konservative Euro-Skeptiker sind voll des Lobes für die Newcomer. Sie hoffen, dass sich Kanzlerin Merkel von den Euro-Gegnern treiben lässt - und zusammen mit Premier Cameron Reformen in Brüssel durchsetzt.**

Als Bernd Lucke vor der Sommerpause zu Besuch in [Großbritannien](#) war, wurde der Gast regelrecht hofiert. Abgeordnete der regierenden Konservativen trafen sich mit dem Parteichef der [Alternative für Deutschland](#) (AfD) zu Vier-Augen-Gesprächen. Die Hauptnachrichtensendung des Landes, die BBC-Show "Newsnight", lud ihn zur besten Sendezeit zum Gespräch ins Studio. Niemand beschimpfte ihn als Rechtspopulist, stattdessen lobten alle seine Intelligenz.

"Bernd Lucke ist ein sehr beeindruckender Mann", sagt Douglas Carswell, einer der führenden EU-Skeptiker der britischen [Konservativen](#): "Er ist bei den Tories hochangesehen."

Das Abschneiden der AfD bei der Bundestagswahl wird auf der Insel mit Spannung erwartet. Die Anti-Euro-Partei gilt als überfälliger Neuzugang in der deutschen Politik. Konservative wie Carswell hoffen, dass sie doch noch Gleichgesinnte in Deutschland finden werden. Während die AfD im [Bundestagswahlkampf](#) teilweise in eine Schmutzdecke gestellt wird, können die Briten so gar nichts Anstößiges an ihr erkennen. "In Großbritannien wäre Lucke ein moderater Mainstream-Konservativer", sagt Carswell. "Er säße wahrscheinlich im Kabinett."

### "Wäre ich Deutscher, würde ich AfD wählen"

Als Lucke im Juni vor einer Wand mit schwarz-rot-goldenen Flaggen im "Newsnight"-Studio saß, kündigte ihm Moderator Jeremy Paxman als Mann des Tabubruchs an. Es gebe in Deutschland eine neue Partei, "die das bislang Unaussprechliche zu sagen wagt", sagte Paxman. "Der [Euro](#) ist Wahnsinn." Lucke lächelte höflich und beantwortete die wohlwollenden Fragen in fließendem Englisch.

Die [konservative Blogger-Webseite ConservativeHome](#) schreibt, das Programm der AfD sei aus britischer Sicht "nichts Besonderes". Die Partei sei nicht mit der britischen Unabhängigkeitspartei Ukip zu vergleichen, die den Austritt aus der EU fordert. Die AfD stehe vielmehr inhaltlich den Tories am nächsten, die ebenfalls den Euro ablehnen und die EU reformieren wollen. Die Partei von Premierminister [David Cameron](#) sei "in deutschen Augen offensichtlich eine rechtspopulistische Bewegung".

Der konservative Kommentator Andrew Gimson schreibt: "Wäre ich ein deutscher Wähler, würde ich mich so sehr über die Weigerung der beiden großen Parteien ärgern, über Europa zu debattieren, dass ich AfD wählen würde." Der Sieg der neuen Partei könne die große Geschichte des Wahlsonntags werden, schrieb Gimson am Dienstag in der "Times": "Eine Gruppe ehrlicher und eloquenter Euro-Skeptiker hat Deutschlands erdrückenden politischen Konsens aufgebrochen und den Bundestag erreicht."

### Cameron setzt auf Merkel

Die Sympathisanten der AfD sitzen jedoch - wie Carswell - auf den hinteren Bänken im Unterhaus. Die Regierung hingegen setzt weiterhin auf die Schwesterpartei CDU. Premier Cameron hofft, dass [Angela Merkel](#) ihm in ihrer dritten Amtszeit hilft, nationale Zuständigkeiten aus Brüssel in die Hauptstädte zurückzuholen.

Aus Camerons Sicht ist der Aufstieg der AfD ein zweiseitiges Schwert. Auf der einen Seite kann er hoffen, dass Merkel unter dem Druck von rechts ihre EU-Kritik verschärft und die britischen Forderungen in Brüssel unterstützt. Die jüngsten positiven Signale der Bundesregierung werden in London auch auf den Einfluss der AfD zurückgeführt.

Auf der anderen Seite würde ein Einzug der Euro-Gegner in den Bundestag jedoch wohl Schwarz-Gelb verhindern und zu einer Großen Koalition führen. Eine Regierungsbeteiligung der SPD ließe eine deutsche Unterstützung für die Renationalisierung der EU aber in weite Ferne rücken.

Ein Sieg der AfD wäre "bad news" für David Cameron, schrieb Mats Persson, Chef der euroskeptischen Denkfabrik Open Europe, in einem "Telegraph"-Blog. "Dann müsste Merkel fast sicher mit der SPD regieren." Eine große Koalition würde sich jedoch eher an Paris als an London ausrichten.

Für Carswell spielen solche taktischen Erwägungen eine untergeordnete Rolle. Er drückt Luckes Truppe die Daumen. "Wir alle in Europa profitieren, wenn Merkel gezwungen wird, die Euro-Skepsis der Deutschen ernst zu nehmen".

*URL:*

## Pädophilie-Affäre: Trittins fataler Fehler

Plötzlich steht der grüne Spitzenkandidat im Fokus der Pädophilie-Debatte. Das wird seine Partei Stimmen kosten – und ihn möglicherweise die Karriere. Ein Kommentar Von [Lisa Caspari](#)

DIE ZEIT 16. September 2013 15:11 Uhr



Der grüne Spitzenkandidat Jürgen Trittin | © Thomas Peter/Reuters

Als unangefochtener Star der Grünen hat [Jürgen Trittin](#) diesen Bundestagswahlkampf begonnen. Die interne Mitgliederabstimmung über die beiden Spitzenkandidaten gewann der 59-Jährige haushoch, während Renate Künast und Claudia Roth persönliche Enttäuschungen erlebten. Die Parteibasis schätzt den ehemaligen Kommunisten und heutigen Realpolitiker sehr, in den Fernseh-Talkshows ist Trittin Dauergast. Unübersehbar waren seine Ambitionen auf ein hohes Regierungsamt in einer rot-grünen Koalition. Spätestens seitdem Trittin Fakten über die Euro-Krise buffelte und den Grünen ein ambitioniertes Einkommenssteuer-Konzept verordnete, war klar: Er will Finanzminister werden.

Ob es dazu noch kommt, ist inzwischen ungewisser denn je. An diesem Montagmorgen ereilt die sowieso von der [Bayern-Wahl](#) geplagten grünen Wahlkämpfer ein weiteres Schrecknis: [Jürgen Trittin hat Anfang der achtziger Jahre als Student ein Kommunalwahlprogramm in Göttingen presserechtlich verantwortet, in dem Straffreiheit für Sex mit Kindern gefordert wird](#). Der Spitzenkandidat hat das [eingeräumt und als Fehler bezeichnet](#) – [aber erst nachdem es der Göttinger Politikwissenschaftler Franz Walter herausgefunden hatte](#).

Schon ohne diese Enthüllung standen die Grünen zuletzt [in den Umfragen nicht mehr gut da](#). Viele in der Partei hatten das auch auf die [Pädophilie-Debatte](#) der vergangenen Monate zurückgeführt. Alles, was Konservative den Grünen vorwerfen, findet sich in dieser Debatte wieder: dass die Grünen gar nicht so etabliert seien, wie immer angenommen. Dass sie in der Vergangenheit komische, verwerfliche Ideen hatten und diese vielleicht auch immer noch irgendwie verfolgen, dass sie jedenfalls den Menschen "angeblich nicht gut tun", wie eine grüne Wahlkämpferin in Bayern am Wahlabend entmutigt feststellte.

Die Parteiführung war anfangs recht geschickt mit den Vorwürfen umgegangen, dass die Grünen in den achtziger Jahren von Päderasten unterwandert gewesen seien, die sich von der damals noch alternativen Partei mehr Verständnis und Nachsicht gegenüber ihren Neigungen erhofften: Sie beauftragten Franz Walter, [die Fehler der Vergangenheit zu untersuchen und alles aufzuklären](#).

Lange schien es so, als ob keiner der aktuellen grünen Spitzenpolitiker mit der Affäre in Verbindung gebracht werden konnte. Was Walter jetzt aber sechs Tage vor der Bundestagswahl über Jürgen Trittin aus den Archiven befördert, hat aber das Potenzial den Abwärtstrend der Grünen massiv zu beschleunigen.

**Denn unweigerlich bleibt die Frage: Warum hat Trittin seinen Fehler nicht schon längst öffentlich gemacht?** Hoffte er darauf, etwas verbergen zu können? Oder erinnerte er sich schlicht nicht mehr daran, wie er es am Montag in einer Stellungnahme begründet hat?

Dass der Göttinger als Student in sehr linken Kreisen unterwegs war, ist bekannt. Es gibt keinerlei Beweise, dass er mit den Pädophilie-Thesen persönlich übereinstimmte. Trittin verantwortete das Kommunalwahlprogramm, in dem die wirren Thesen standen, nur presserechtlich. Aber damit hat er das Gedankengut nun mal abgesegnet, ob ihm die Tragweite als junger Mensch damals bewusst war oder eben nicht.

Dass Trittin nicht vor Wochen schon die Vergangenheit seines Göttinger Umfeldes kritisch hinterfragt hat, dass er nicht von sich aus auf die Idee kam, auch dort könnte etwas gewaltig schief gelaufen sein, war ein großer Fehler. Jetzt wird es richtig eng für ihn. Wie angeschlagen er ist, war auf seiner Pressekonferenz am Montag deutlich zu sehen.

Schon länger wird er für den misslungenen Steuer-Wahlkampf seiner Partei verantwortlich gemacht – mehr oder weniger öffentlich [auch vom Realo-Flügel seiner eigenen Partei](#). Es sind missmutige Fragen, die da kommen: Musste man ausgerechnet Belastungen für die Mitte der Gesellschaft – zu denen auch viele gutverdienende Grünen-Wähler gehören – in den Mittelpunkt des eigenen Wahlkampfes stellen? Hat man die Negativ-Kampagne des politischen Gegners unterschätzt?

Kurz: In der Partei köchelte es schon, bevor die jüngsten Vorwürfe gegenüber Trittin bekannt wurden. Das Wahlergebnis am kommenden Sonntag wird so zwangsläufig auch über sein Schicksal entscheiden. Im Moment sieht alles danach aus, als ob gerade er, der in diesem Wahlkampf immer so selbstgewiss (manche sagen: selbstgerecht) auftrat, am meisten Schaden nimmt. **Fraglich ist damit, ob Trittin auch 2014 noch die Leitfigur der Grünen sein wird.**

Zeit Online - Germany

#### **Paedophile debate catches Greens off guard**

Just days before Germany's parliamentary elections, accusations that Jürgen Trittin, the leading candidate of the Alliance '90/The Greens, formerly [tolerated paedophilia](#) have put the party in a tight spot. A local election programme published by Trittin in 1981 called for sex with children to be decriminalised under certain circumstances, a political analyst commissioned by the party to look into its former positions on the matter has revealed. Trittin's career is at stake, the online portal of the liberal weekly paper Die Zeit comments: "Nothing proves that he personally agreed with the party's position on paedophilia. Trittin was merely responsible under German press law for the local election programme in which the scatterbrained ideas were set out. But that means he gave them his blessing, whether or not as a young man he was aware of the consequences of such an action at the time. It was a grave mistake for Trittin not to have been more critical about past attitudes in the circles he frequented in Göttingen. ... Anger was simmering in the party even before the most recent accusations against Trittin came out. The results of this Sunday's elections will therefore also decide his fate." (17/09/2013)

## Germans distrust Brussels, want UK to stay in EU: poll



By Gareth Jones

BERLIN | Tue Sep 17, 2013 10:09am EDT

83,78

(Reuters) - A majority of Germans do not trust European Union institutions and one in two want Brussels to devolve more powers to EU member states, according to a poll on Tuesday that confirmed a shift to greater Euroscepticism in Europe's largest economy.

The YouGov Deutschland survey also showed a majority of Germans believe a British exit from the EU would be bad for both [Germany](#) and the EU, and that the next German government, after Sunday's election, should work actively to keep Britain inside the 28-nation bloc.

British Prime Minister David Cameron, who has pledged to hold a referendum on Britain's continued EU membership by 2017, is the most trusted foreign EU leader among Germans, the poll showed, four points ahead of French President Francois Hollande.

Fewer than one in three Germans trust the European Commission, the EU's executive arm, and the European Parliament fared only slightly better, said the poll, which interviewed 1,010 adults between August 21 and August 26.

The most trusted institution was Germany's Constitutional Court, which has addressed taxpayers' concerns over the legal and financial implications of [euro zone](#) bailouts by insisting on the right of the Berlin parliament to be fully consulted.

Half of those surveyed said they backed efforts by some EU politicians, who include Cameron, to repatriate powers from the European level, while 26 percent were opposed. Criminal justice, data protection and employment laws were among areas where Germans wanted national politicians to decide policy.

A majority of Germans wanted to cut Berlin's contribution to the EU budget and thought farm and regional aid subsidies - the two largest budget items - should be dealt with at the national level.

"Though Germany will remain wedded to Europe, once the question of EU powers is boiled down to specific policies, there is widespread support among German public opinion for the return of powers from Brussels to member states," said Nina Schick, an analyst at the Open Europe think-tank which published the poll.

## EURO ANGST

The findings chime with a previous YouGov poll published on September 3 that underlined German weariness with bailing out ailing euro zone members after three years of debt crisis, and confirmed a loss of appetite for "more Europe" in Germany, which has traditionally backed closer EU integration.

A new anti-euro party, the Alternative fuer Deutschland (AfD), could break the 5 percent barrier to enter parliament after the election on Sunday, though opinion polls show a strong majority of Germans continue to back the common currency.

The latest YouGov poll will provide pleasant reading for Cameron as he presses his case for Britain to form a looser association with the EU. Many Britons, especially in Cameron's Conservative Party, see Brussels' influence as too stifling.

Nearly two in three Germans polled said Germany and Britain could be strong allies in reforming the EU, though [France](#) is still viewed as Germany's most important ally.

Fifty-seven percent of Germans said Britain's exit from the EU would be damaging to the EU's credibility and prestige.

Chancellor Angela Merkel is tipped to win Germany's election on Sunday, though it is unclear who will join her conservatives in the next coalition government.

Merkel, who has backed off from her earlier calls for "more Europe", has forged a good working relationship with Cameron and has refrained from criticizing his push for looser British ties to the EU.

## My grovelling apology to Herr Schäuble

By [Ambrose Evans-Pritchard Economics](#) Last updated: September 17th, 2013

83,80

[958 Comments](#)



Wolfgang Schäuble: he's right about everything

German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble has been vindicated.

For my part, I have been wrong about everything. German discipline policies for the eurozone have been a tremendous success. I am ashamed for suggesting otherwise.

As the wise, patient, and always self-effacing Mr Schäuble writes today in *The Financial Times*, the Euro-sceptics talk and write relentless drivel.

“[Ignore the doomsayers: Europe is being fixed](#)” is the headline:

The eurozone is clearly on the mend both structurally and cyclically.

What is happening turns out to be pretty much what the proponents of Europe’s cool-headed crisis management predicted. The fiscal and structural repair work is paying off, laying the foundations for sustainable growth. This has taken critical observers aback. It should not have, because, in truth, we have seen it all before, many times and in many places.

Despite what the critics of the European crisis management would have us believe, we live in the real world, not in a parallel universe where well-established economic principles no longer apply.

Mr Schäuble says Germany pulled it off the old-fashioned way earlier this decade, with root-and-branch reform. The UK did it in the 1980s, Sweden and Finland in the early 1990s, Asia in the late 1990s:

The recipe worked then and it is working now, somewhat to the chagrin and bemusement of its numerous critics in the media, academia, international organisations and politics.

In just three years, public deficits in Europe have halved, unit labour costs and competitiveness are rapidly adjusting, bank balance sheets are on the mend and current account deficits are disappearing. In the second quarter the recession in the eurozone came to an end.

Systems adapt, downturns bottom out, trends turn. In other words, what is broken can be repaired. Europe today is the proof.

So there we have it. The problem is solved. How can I not have seen it? How can any of us on this blog thread have missed it?



I apologise for mentioning that unemployment is 27.8pc in Greece, 26.3pc in Spain, 17.3pc in Cyprus, and 16.5pc in Portugal, or for pointing that it would be far worse had it not been for a mass exodus of EMU refugees. Nor was it proper to mention that Greek youth unemployment is 62.9pc. These are trivial details.

I apologise for pointing out that the EU-IMF Troika originally said the Greek economy would contract by 2.6pc in 2010 and then recover briskly, when in fact it contracted by roughly 23pc from peak-to-trough, and will shrink another 5pc this year according to the think-tank IOBE. This slippage is well within the normal margin of error.

I apologise for mentioning that the debt trajectories of Spain, Greece, Italy, and Ireland have accelerated upwards under the austerity plans, and therefore that the policy has been self-defeating.

It was quite uncalled for to point out that Italy's debt ratio has jumped to 130pc of GDP, or to so suggest that debt cannot keep rising on a contracting nominal GDP base, and I will wash my mouth soap if I ever utter the words "denominator effect" again. It is shabby to use such cheap language.

I apologise for mentioning IMF studies showing that the fiscal multiplier is three times higher than first thought by EU officials in EMU crisis states, and therefore that the contractionary effects of belt-tightening are far greater than first calculated.

As for using that pious and pretentious Greek word "hysteresis" to suggest that mass unemployment and the collapse of investment in southern Europe has lowered the economic growth trajectory of these countries for years to come, outweighing any of the alleged gains from the EU-imposed reforms: this is just trying to blind good folk with posh talk.

I apologise for suggesting that German reforms under Schröder have been vastly overblown, and that German competitiveness gains have been chiefly the result of a beggar-thy-neighbour wage squeeze at the cost of EMU trade partners. Nor should I have said that a small open economy like Sweden in the 1990s may well be able to tighten its way back to vitality in the middle of a global boom, but if half Europe does so in unison in a slump, it will inflict carnage.

It was unconscionable of me to say that Germany has locked in a semi-permanent trade advantage over Club Med, or for saying that the trying to close this gap by imposing deflation on the South is impossible because this will play havoc with debt dynamics.

How could any of us in the eurosceptic camp have stooped to the historical pornography of the 1930s, suggesting for one moment that EMU replicates the worst errors of the interwar Gold Standard, or that the German-led creditor bloc is doing to Spain exactly what the US-led creditor bloc did to Germany from 1928-1933? Just sheer smut.

I apologise personally to Mr Schäuble for calling him a dangerous mediocrity: arrogant, shallow, narrow-minded, provincial, and unscientific in equal degree. This was shockingly rude. It brings shame to Fleet Street.

I should not have questioned his wisdom in thinking it is possible to harmlessly enforce contractionary policies on the South of a single currency zone without offsetting expansion in the North. Events have shown that he has the finest mind in Europe, and a superb grasp of European politics. Moreover, people have seen the light even in Greece, where he is now adored.

I apologise for screaming for two years that the EMU would blow apart unless Germany allowed the ECB to step up to its responsibilities as a lender of last resort for sovereign states, as it finally did at one minute to midnight in July 2012. It was the Fiscal Compact that saved EMU, and the Six Pack, and the Two Pack, and all those rule books from Berlin.

It was carping for me to suggest that recent charts showing a dramatic narrowing of unit labour costs in Spain *et al* are largely bogus, the mirror of mass unemployment that causes an automatic rise in apparent productivity; and nor should I have quibbled about the low trade gearing of Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Greece, or suggested

that exports are too small a share of GDP to lift these countries out of the morass quickly. This is just pointy-headed, clever-clever, anorak stuff, and frankly laughable.

So no, Mr Schäuble has pulled it off. The German Constitutional Court is in the pocket of the German finance ministry and will thankfully run a coach and horses through the Grundgesetz when it rules next month, or soon after. The court will not stop the ECB keeping Italy and Spain afloat. The law has been stitched up, so no problems there.

The eurozone is recovering. It is immune to the sharp rise in the exchange rate of the euro over the last six months. It is immune to a 70 basis point rise in borrowing costs imported from Fed tapering. It is immune to the emerging market crisis. It doesn't matter that the M3 money supply has rolled over again, slowing to stagnation levels, or that EMU credit contracted at an accelerating rate of 1.6pc in July. None of this matters.

I feel like an utter fool. Having read Mr Schäuble's succinct and well-crafted thoughts, I just want to curl in a ball and weep. *Es tut mir leid.*

## Europe's Best Hope Is a German Grand Coalition

By Peter Bofinger Sep 17, 2013 8:44 PM GMT+0200

83,83

The elections in Germany this weekend won't produce drastic change in the country's euro-area policies, leaving the region vulnerable to risks that are widely underestimated.

One reason to hold this pessimistic view is that the two most plausible outcomes of the [Sept. 22 vote](#) would return Chancellor [Angela Merkel](#) to power; either her conservative bloc re-forms its existing coalition with the Free Democratic Party or she enters into a grand coalition with the main opposition [Social Democrats](#). For Europe, there is reason to hope for the latter.

Merkel's approach to the euro area's financial crisis has four decisive characteristics: It lacks a clearly stated long-term vision; it is very cautious; it is extremely pragmatic; and on fiscal policy, it is dominated by the philosophy of the proverbial Swabian housewife, which holds that there is nothing worse than debt.

These principles are clearly reflected in Germany's management of the euro crisis. All major steps forward were firefighting measures designed to address only immediate threats, including the creation of the currency area's two crisis funds: the European Financial Stability Facility in 2010 and the European Stability Mechanism last year. [Germany](#)'s sole forward-looking contribution to the policy framework of the euro area is the fiscal compact, which severely limits the ability of governments to incur debts.

### Dangerous Gamble

There is no reason to think that after Sept. 22, Germany will change course and offer new initiatives to shape the euro area. The muddling-through will continue. This approach is based on the hope that, somehow, problem countries will be able to reach a cyclical turnaround; structural reforms will pay off; and eventually debt-to-gross-domestic-product ratios will start to decline.

The underlying assumption is that the European Central Bank will be able and willing to go on protecting the system against panic attacks in the financial markets. Under this rosy scenario, there is no need to move forward with political integration, particularly in fiscal policy. It may work out, but it is an unnecessary and dangerous gamble to take with [Europe](#)'s future.

What happens if this benign future doesn't materialize? So far, in two large problem countries, [Italy](#) and [Spain](#), but also in [Greece](#), the recession hasn't ended and unemployment continues to rise. Thanks to the ECB's pledge last year to do what it takes to prevent a sovereign default, Europe's banking system remains calm. Yet, as deleveraging goes on, new investors will have great difficulty in getting projects funded. And although budget deficits have come down slowly, the debt-to-GDP ratios so closely monitored by investors are steadily increasing.

So far, there are no clear signs that the euro crisis's three-step vicious cycle -- a banking crisis feeds a public-sector crisis that, in turn, feeds a macroeconomic crisis -- has been broken. Under such a negative scenario, the [European Central Bank](#) could be in a very uncomfortable position. For instance, a political crisis in Italy combined with a continuing recession could easily lead to a new wave of investor panic. If crisis strikes, the central bank could fulfill the pledge it made last year to intervene in the market by purchasing bonds, but only after Italy has asked for an adjustment program and once its government has adopted the required policy measures.

What happens if politicians are unwilling to ask for such a program? Or if they are unable to assemble the parliamentary majorities needed to adopt the required adjustment measures? A decision by the ECB to buy [Italian bonds](#) unconditionally would create very serious problems for Germany, whose constitutional court would regard such a measure as a monetary financing incompatible with the euro's underlying treaty.

## Fragile State

The impressive stabilization that ECB President [Mario Draghi](#) has achieved with his “whatever it takes” pledge shouldn’t be regarded as permanent. The euro area is still in a very fragile state caused by the fundamental problem of the common currency’s institutional architecture, which creates a monetary union but allows the 17 member states to retain their fiscal and political autonomy.

Draghi’s stabilization of the bond markets offered a window of opportunity for fundamental reform that has remained largely unexploited, most recently because debate has been put on hold until after Germany’s elections. There has been progress in building a banking union, but no attempts have been made to bring better political integration to the euro area, and valuable time has been lost trying to secure treaty change.

Consider what would happen if, as is likely, the muddling-through continued and Germany insisted on waiting until the last moment to defuse any crisis. For example, a problem emerges in Italy and the constraints set by the German constitutional court mean the ECB cannot provide the promised unlimited backstop. Then, the governments of the euro area would suddenly have to assume joint liability for Italian debt that would far exceed the capacity of the European Stability Mechanism. In 2011, the [German Council of Economic Experts](#) developed a plan for a redemption pact that would resolve such problems by establishing common liability for all public debt in the euro area above a 60 percent threshold, but it isn’t clear that this mechanism could be activated at short notice. A financial meltdown in Europe, together with the uncontrolled breakup of the monetary union, would then be possible.

If Merkel has to cooperate with the Free Democrats again, there will be considerable resistance to any fundamental changes to euro-area policy. A coalition with the Social Democrats could be different, however, because that party’s leaders have committed to adopting the debt-redemption pact without waiting for another crisis. A grand coalition would find it easier to implement the measures that Europe needs, even though they would be unpopular in Germany, whatever the result this weekend.

([Peter Bofinger](#) is a professor of economics at the University of Wuerzburg and a member of Germany’s Council of Economic Experts.)

## Retraite : un salarié sur deux partira avant 62 ans

- Par [Guillaume Guichard](#)
- Publié le 18/09/2013 à 20:06

83,85

INFO LE FIGARO - Grâce au dispositif pénibilité, le nombre de salariés partant de manière anticipée grimpera à 330.000 par an.

En matière de retraite, l'exception est bien partie pour devenir la règle. Le gouvernement a beau ne pas avoir touché à l'âge de départ à 62 ans dans le projet de loi de réforme des retraites présenté mercredi, il ne cesse de le rogner. Sans le dire. À tel point qu'à la fin de la décennie un salarié sur deux pourra techniquement partir en retraite avant ses 62 ans, et ce avec une pension complète. Pour être très précis, 330.000 salariés par an pourront d'ici la fin de la décennie partir en retraite dès 60 ans, sur un total de 635.000 à 730.000 départs attendus par l'assurance-vieillesse ([Cnav](#)). Bref, les dérogations à un départ à 62 ans - à compter de 2017, suite à la [réforme Woerth de 2010](#) - concerneront chaque année entre 45,2 % et 51,9 % des aspirants retraités.

La réforme des retraites cuvée 2013 introduit une nouvelle usine à exceptions qui s'additionne aux mesures dérogatoires existantes. Les salariés qui auront eu un métier pénible pourront bénéficier d'un «compte personnel de prévention de la pénibilité» qui permettra, à partir du 1er janvier 2015, d'accumuler des points pour partir plus tôt à la retraite. Ce dispositif montera progressivement en charge pour bénéficier, à terme, à un salarié sur quatre, selon les experts de la commission Moreau pour l'avenir des retraites (un sur cinq, selon le gouvernement). Soit, peu ou prou, 150.000 personnes par an pour un coût total annuel à terme de 2,5 milliards, financé par des cotisations employeurs.

Mais ces 150.000 «exemptés» de la retraite à 62 ans seront loin d'être les seuls. Le premier grand coup de canif au recul de l'âge légal de départ fut porté par l'exécutif au début de l'été 2012. D'un simple décret, le gouvernement Ayraut a ouvert la possibilité à 100.000 personnes par an, à horizon 2017, de partir en retraite avant l'heure. Un chiffre au doigt mouillé, reconnaissait d'ailleurs à l'époque le gouvernement, mais précis à la dizaine de milliers près. Et donc potentiellement révisable... à la hausse. Les heureux bénéficiaires? Les salariés «ayant commencé à travailler à 18 ou 19 ans et ayant la durée de cotisation requise», précisait mi-2012 [Marisol Touraine](#). Coût de cette promesse de campagne, l'engagement 18 du candidat Hollande: 3 milliards au bas mot, financés par une hausse progressive des cotisations salariés et employeurs, de 0,25 point à compter de 2013.

### Hausse des cotisations

Cerise sur le gâteau, le «décret Hollande» se superpose aux mécanismes dérogatoires antérieurs, mis en place lors des [réformes Fillon de 2003](#) et Woerth de 2010, qui permettent à 80.000 personnes par an de partir avant l'âge légal. La première a institué le mécanisme des carrières longues pour les salariés ayant commencé à travailler dès 14 ans. La seconde a créé un dispositif de compensation pour les salariés ayant un taux d'incapacité permanente de 10 % au moins.

Entre le «[décret Hollande](#)», les «carrières longues» Fillon et les «invalidité» Woerth, ce sont donc chaque année 180.000 salariés qui bénéficieront à partir de 2016, selon la Cnav, d'un droit à partir avant 62 ans. 180.000 en plus des 150.000 «pénibilité». Le compte est bon.

## Le débat sur le port du voile intégral trouble le Royaume-Uni

Par [Florentin Collomp](#) Publié le 18/09/2013 à 18:34

83,86



En réclamant une loi pour encadrer le port de la burqa dans les lieux publics, des élus ébranlent le dogme de tolérance religieuse.

Une jeune femme de Hackney, un quartier de l'est de Londres, poursuivie pour subornation de témoin, voulait comparaître devant le tribunal entièrement voilée. Après plusieurs jours de réflexion, le juge, Peter Murphy, l'a autorisée à assister à son procès couverte de son [niqab](#), qu'elle devra cependant ôter lorsqu'elle sera à la barre. Visible des jurés, son visage sera alors protégé du public par une cloison. En rendant ce jugement de Salomon, lundi, le magistrat a enjoint le Parlement à légiférer sur un «tabou» dans le système judiciaire.

L'incident fait suite à la décision, la semaine dernière, d'un établissement d'enseignement supérieur de Birmingham de revenir sur une interdiction du voile intégral en vigueur depuis huit ans. Les dirigeants ont cédé à une campagne qui a réuni 9000 signatures sur une pétition. Ces deux événements relancent un débat nourri en Grande-Bretagne sur la question du voile islamique. Plusieurs politiciens réclament l'adoption d'une loi pour l'encadrer dans les lieux publics. On ne parle pas du foulard (hijab) recouvrant les cheveux mais du niqab ou de la [burqa](#) qui masquent la totalité du visage hormis les yeux. [Pas question non plus d'une interdiction totale de principe, comme en France](#). Il s'agit plutôt de prévoir des mesures pratiques adaptées à des environnements particuliers, écoles, aéroports ou tribunaux.

Ces discussions bousculent pourtant le dogme britannique de large tolérance en matière religieuse. Un député conservateur, Philip Hollobone, a déposé une proposition de loi en ce sens à la Chambre des communes. Cette semaine, à son tour, Jeremy Browne, secrétaire d'État libéral-démocrate (centriste) au ministère de l'Intérieur, a invoqué la nécessité d'une réflexion nationale sur le voile à l'école. «Je ne suis pas à l'aise avec l'idée de restreindre la liberté d'individus d'observer la religion de leur choix, concède-t-il. Mais il y a matière à un débat sincère sur le fait que de très jeunes filles puissent se sentir obligées de porter un voile.»

Au Birmingham Metropolitan College - 35.000 étudiants dont 43 % d'origines ethniques non européennes -, l'interdiction du niqab visait à faciliter l'identification des élèves lors des examens et la communication avec les professeurs pendant les cours.

## Embarras du gouvernement

Embarrassé par ce sujet explosif, le premier ministre [David Cameron](#) a laissé entendre qu'il soutiendrait «personnellement» une telle interdiction dans l'école de ses enfants. «Il ne considère pas que le Parlement doive légiférer sur ce que les gens portent dans la rue», précise un porte-parole de Downing Street, mais «il n'est pas incompatible avec nos institutions d'édicter des codes vestimentaires». «Ce n'est pas au gouvernement de dire aux femmes ce qu'elles doivent porter», renchérit la ministre de l'Intérieur, [Theresa May](#). Des exceptions liées à la sécurité doivent cependant être prévues.

Les associations qui représentent les musulmans - 4,8 % de la population britannique - se divisent. Pour certaines, cette polémique ne fait qu'accroître l'exclusion des femmes musulmanes. Pour d'autres, l'islam doit se conformer aux règles de l'État. «Il n'est pas raciste ou islamophobe de demander à quelqu'un de montrer son visage. Je suis contre l'interdiction totale du voile facial en France. Mais toute règle a ses exceptions. Il n'est pas acceptable dans un État laïc de ne pas pouvoir identifier des personnes dans des lieux sensibles pour la sécurité», estime Maajid Nawaz, fondateur de la fondation Quilliam contre l'extrémisme.

September 18, 2013

## Germany's Effort at Clean Energy Proves Complex

By MELISSA EDDY and STANLEY REED

83,88

BERLIN — It is an audacious undertaking with wide and deep support in Germany: shut down the nation's nuclear power plants, wean the country from coal and promote a wholesale shift to renewable energy sources.

But the plan, backed by Chancellor Angela Merkel and opposition parties alike, is running into problems in execution that are forcing Germans to come face to face with the costs and complexities of sticking to their principles.

German families are being hit by rapidly increasing electricity rates, to the point where growing numbers of them can no longer afford to pay the bill. Businesses are more and more worried that their energy costs will put them at a disadvantage to competitors in nations with lower energy costs, and some energy-intensive industries have begun to shun the country because they fear steeper costs ahead.

Newly constructed offshore wind farms churn unconnected to an energy grid still in need of expansion. And despite all the costs, carbon emissions actually rose last year as reserve coal-burning plants were fired up to close gaps in energy supplies.

A new phrase, “energy poverty,” has entered the lexicon.

“Often, I don't go into my living room in order to save electricity,” said Olaf Taeuber, 55, who manages a fleet of vehicles for a social services provider in Berlin. “You feel the pain in your pocketbook.”

Mr. Taeuber relies on just a single five-watt bulb that gives off what he calls a “cozy” glow to light his kitchen when he comes home at night. If in real need, he switches on a neon tube, which uses all of 25 watts.

Even so, with his bill growing rapidly, he found himself seeking help last week to fend off a threat from Berlin's main power company to cut off his electricity. He is one of a growing number of Germans confronting the realities of trying to carry out Ms. Merkel's most ambitious domestic project and one of the most sweeping energy transformation efforts undertaken by an industrialized country.

Because the program has the support of German political parties across the spectrum, there has been no highly visible backlash during the current election campaign. But continuing to put the program in place and maintaining public support for it will be among Ms. Merkel's biggest challenges should she win a third term as chancellor in Sunday's election.

Ms. Merkel, of the traditionally conservative and pro-business Christian Democrats, came up with her plan in 2011, in the emotional aftermath of the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan. It envisions shutting down all of Germany's nuclear plants by 2022 and shifting almost entirely to wind and solar power by 2050.

The chancellor's about-face not only seized the energy initiative from her center-left opponents, it also amounted to a gamble that could prove to be her most lasting domestic legacy — or a debacle whose consequences will be felt for generations.

The cost of the plan is expected to be about \$735 billion, according to government estimates, and may eventually surpass even that of the euro zone bailouts that have received far more attention during Ms. Merkel's tenure. Yet as the transition's unknowns have grown, so have costs for the state, major companies and consumers.



Mr. Taeuber showed up last Friday, one of three “walk-ins” that day at one of two agencies in Berlin offering aid to people struggling to pay their energy bills. He arrived just as employees from the power company Vattenfall were on the way to his apartment.

Sven Gärtner, an agency employee, called Vattenfall with the promise of a payment plan, sparing Mr. Taeuber from being disconnected. “The boys were already in the basement, but they agreed to pull them back,” Mr. Gärtner said triumphantly.

Since January, Mr. Gärtner said, his group has intervened in more than 350 cases to prevent Vattenfall from leaving one family or another in the dark. In the first six months of this year, about 1,800 sought help, 200 more than in all of 2012.

With consumers having to pay about \$270 each in surcharges this year to subsidize new operators of renewable power, the hardest hit are low-wage earners, retirees and people on welfare, Mr. Gärtner said. Government subsidies for the plan amounted to \$22.7 billion in 2012 and could reach \$40.5 billion by 2020, according to John Musk, a power analyst at RBC Capital Markets.

“The energy transformation makes sense, but its implementation has been sloppy and uncoordinated,” Mr. Gärtner said. “People can’t be expected to keep cutting more and more in other areas. They are not receiving enough for the basic costs to cover their energy needs.”

Part of the reason consumer prices have risen so sharply is that, for now, the government has shielded about 700 companies from increased energy costs, to protect their competitive position in the global economy.

Industrial users still pay substantially more for electricity here than do their counterparts in Britain or France, and almost three times as much as those in the United States, according to a study by the German industrial giant Siemens. The Cologne Institute for Economic Research said there had been a marked decline in the willingness of industrial companies to invest in Germany since 2000.

Already there are winners and losers. A third of electronics and automotive companies have increased profits with the plan, and 11 percent of those in the chemical and metal industries have had losses, the German Economic Institute reported.

“We are now coming to a critical stage, and all the politicians are aware of this,” said Udo Niehage, Siemens’s point person for the transition. “The costs are becoming high, maybe too high, and you have to look at the consequences for the competitiveness of our industry in Germany.”

Rivalling the costs are the logistical challenges of eventually shifting 80 percent of energy consumption to renewable sources, something that has never been tried on such a grand scale.

One of the first obstacles encountered involves the vagaries of electrical power generation that is dependent on sources as inconsistent and unpredictable as the wind and the sun.

And no one has invented a means of storing that energy for very long, which means overwhelming gluts on some days and crippling shortages on others that require firing up old oil- and coal-burning power plants. That, in turn, undercuts the goal of reducing fossil-fuel emissions that have been linked to climate change.

Last year, wind, solar and other nonfossil-fuel sources provided 22 percent of the power for Germany, but the country increased its carbon emissions over 2011 as oil- and coal-burning power plants had to close gaps in the evolving system, according to the German electricity association BDEW.

“It is great that we have achieved such a high percentage of renewable energy,” said Michael Hüther, director of the Cologne Institute for Economic Research. “But there are negative repercussions that we are now beginning to feel and must be addressed by the next government.”

Large offshore wind farms that have been built in Germany's less populated north generate energy that must then be transported to industries and sites in the south.

"We worked 24-hour days and weekends," said Irina Lucke, who spent most of last year on the low sandy island of Borkum in the North Sea, supervising the assembly of 30 soaring turbines for the largest offshore wind farm. It is owned mostly by the utility EWE and was due to open last month.

Those turbines will probably not generate electricity until next year. Workers must still sweep the seafloor for abandoned World War II ordnance before a cable can be run to shore. "It's really frustrating," Ms. Lucke said. The delay threatens to add \$27 million to the \$608 million cost of the wind park.

Even without the energy the offshore turbines could produce, Germany's power grid has been strained by new wind and solar projects on land, compelling the government to invest up to \$27 billion over the next decade to build roughly 1,700 miles of high-capacity power lines and to upgrade lines.

The largely rural northern state of Schleswig-Holstein produces as much as 12,000 megawatts of power with new wind turbines and solar panels, but it can consume only about a sixth of that.

"Schleswig-Holstein is a microcosm for all of Germany," said Markus Lieberknecht of the grid operator Tennet. "Where energy was previously brought into the state and distributed to small communities, these communities are now producing the power, and we need to find a way to transmit it to the larger urban areas. Everything has been stood on its head."

September 18, 2013

## A Promise to Protect Pensions Will Test Greece's Red Line on Austerity

By NIKI KITSANTONIS

83,91

ATHENS — With a fresh inspection by Greece's foreign creditors looming next week and labor unions leading a new wave of strikes, the government here has drawn a red line: it will keep pushing economic reforms but vows to impose no more austerity measures on Greeks already battered from three years of tax increases and pension cuts.

That could prove a hard promise to keep.

There is an estimated shortfall of 2.5 billion euros, or \$3.3 billion, in the country's social security funds for the year. And Greece is peering into an even larger chasm, an 11 billion euro financing gap that its international creditors have said the country will face as its debt payments come due over the next two years.

A third foreign bailout, on top of the total 240 billion euro in bailouts given to Greece since 2010, is now assumed to be necessary.

No wonder Greek trade unions and labor experts are warning that, despite the supposed red line, further pension cuts are likely. The concerns brought thousands of Greeks to the streets of Athens on Wednesday, calling attention to a two-day strike by civil servants, whose salaries and pensions have already been cut by 30 percent over the last three years. The strike was called to protest the government's plans for thousands of forced transfers and layoffs in the Civil Service, but fears about pensions were in the air.

"Just let them try and cut our pensions again," said Maria Vassilopoulou, a 45-year-old nurse taking part in the protest. "They'll have a riot on their hands."

The Greek labor minister, Yiannis Vrotsis, denied over the weekend that pensions would be withheld or cut. "I want to reassure people that their pensions will not be touched," he said. "Families can make their plans feeling safe and secure."

But retirees are on edge. Stathis Meltakis, a 65-year-old car mechanic who retired this year, has been counting on a monthly payment of 850 euros from the country's biggest pension fund for private sector workers, IKA, which provides health coverage to 5.5 million people and pensions to more than 800,000. But last week, the union representing IKA workers warned of cuts of 10 to 30 percent in pensions next year.

"I've no idea when I'll get it or how long the checks will keep coming," Mr. Meltakis said. "You can't be sure of anything anymore."

With Greece still not meeting the financial targets set by its international creditors, labor unions and economists worry that public pensions and state social security spending, which this year will total 18 billion euros, could be reduced again.

"Basically, the pension system is collapsing," said Savas Robolis, a prominent Greek labor economist who leads the research institute of the private workers' union, the General Confederation of Greek Workers. He said that the funds' decline was long in the making, after years of mismanagement, but that the country's debt crisis dealt the final blow.

With unemployment at a record 28 percent, fewer workers are paying into the funds, which have been sapped, too, by the early retirements of thousands of civil servants scrambling to escape forced transfers and layoffs.

Mr. Robolis's report called for growth-enhancing measures to increase the size of the Greek work force. Currently, only one Greek works for every two who do not. He also warned of the need to find ways of bolstering social security revenue.

Of immediate concern is how to plug the social security funds' estimated deficit for this year of 2.5 billion euros.

Unlike the country's banks, Greece's pension funds were not recapitalized after a 50 percent write-down of private Greek debt last year, part of the country's second bailout. The funds, as a result, came out of the bailout with a loss of 12 billion euros.

Debts owed to IKA — mostly by employers delinquent on their social security contributions — ballooned to 8 billion euros, from 4.8 billion euros in 2010, the union representing IKA workers said. The union's warning was followed by reports in the Greek media that IKA borrowed 150 million euros from the state to pay pensions in October.

Mr. Vrotsis, the labor minister, acknowledged over the summer that the country's pension system was "not viable" and "in need of a fundamental overhaul." Among the proposed measures is the creation of an electronic system for employers to declare their contributions. An estimated half-million self-employed Greeks are thought to be illegally avoiding their obligation to pay into the system.

At the same time, a crackdown on social security fraud — a problem considered as pernicious as the country's widespread tax evasion — has seen some results. A unified payment system started operating in June and identified at least 50,000 false claimants, many of whom had been collecting the pensions of dead relatives for years.

"In a short period of time, we managed to put sturdy foundations in an old and rotten structure," the Labor Ministry's general secretary, Panagiotis Kokkoris, said.

While larger countries in the euro zone with debt problems, including Spain and Italy, have also cut benefits, the impact of the changes has been less acute than in Greece, where three years of austerity measures have deepened a recession and brought political and social upheaval.

The Greek pension problem is expected to be on the agenda next week when officials from the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund meet in Athens. Other points of discussion are expected to include additional forced transfers and layoffs in the Civil Service, lagging tax collection and a slow-moving privatization drive. Hanging over the meetings is that 11 billion euro funding gap, which could necessitate another bailout, albeit one much smaller than the previous two.

Despite the bleak numbers, Greece is predicting a primary surplus — revenue not counting debt payments for this year — chiefly because of a boom in tourism.

Prime Minister Antonis Samaras pledged last week to give 70 percent of any surplus to pensioners on low incomes, but political opponents accused him of making false promises.

Already, pressure is building on Mr. Samaras's fragile coalition government. Teachers, hospital staff and other civil servants, as well as lawyers, are on strike this week.

"Pensions are the easy target," said Mahi Triantafyllou, a 58-year-old high-school teacher, at one protest. "They'll hit us again."

## Wirtschaftskrise

### Der industrielle Niedergang Frankreichs setzt sich fort

19.09.2013 · Um Frankreichs Industrie ist es nicht gut bestellt. Allein dieses Jahr mussten 191 Fabriken schließen. Die französische Regierung versucht vergeblich die Wirtschaft zu entlasten.

Von [Christian Schubert](#), Paris

83,93



© AFP Kein gutes Jahr für Frankreich: Die Industrie geht immer weiter zurück, Tendenz sinkend

Das verarbeitende Gewerbe befindet sich in Frankreich weiter auf dem Rückzug. In den ersten drei Quartalen dieses Jahres haben 191 Fabriken und Werke geschlossen, berichtete die französische Beratungsgesellschaft Trendeo am Mittwoch in Paris. Das entspricht ungefähr dem Rückgang des Vorjahres. Gleichzeitig sind jedoch rund ein Viertel weniger Industriestandorte eröffnet worden als im Vorjahr. „Für zwei Fabriken, die schließen, macht ungefähr eine neue auf“, berichtet David Cousquer, Ökonom und Geschäftsführer von Trendeo, einer Gesellschaft, die nach eigenen Angaben Veröffentlichungen in Medien und anderen öffentlichen Quellen auswertet. Dies habe den Vorteil, dass die jüngsten Entwicklungen schneller erfasst würden als durch die offiziellen statistischen Behörden, meint Cousquer.

Die langfristige Tendenz eines industriellen Niedergangs Frankreichs bestätigt sich auch in Zahlen des statistischen Amtes der EU-Kommission (Eurostat). Danach trug das verarbeitende Gewerbe 2011 nur noch 10,1 Prozent zur Bruttowertschöpfung bei. Das ist der niedrigste Wert im Euroraum. Italien dagegen kam auf 16 und Deutschland auf 22,6 Prozent. In fast allen europäischen Ländern geht der Industrieanteil an der Wertschöpfung zurück, in Frankreich jedoch besonders stark. Zwischen 2001 und 2011 sank der Anteil im europäischen Vergleich um 2,5 Prozentpunkte, in Frankreich um 4,6 Prozentpunkte.

### Steuererleichterungen sollen Industrieunternehmen dienen

Seit 2009 habe Frankreich im Saldo 613 Fabriken weniger, berichtet Trendeo – mit entsprechenden Auswirkungen auf die Beschäftigung. 140.000 Arbeitsplätze seien in diesem Zeitraum verlorengegangen. Im laufenden Jahr habe sich der Prozess noch einmal beschleunigt. 17.000 Stellenstreichungen wurden zwischen Januar und August gezählt, 3000 mehr als im gleichen Vorjahreszeitraum.

Die Regierung versucht den Niedergang der Industrie aufzuhalten, indem sie zum Beispiel mit öffentlichen Mitteln innovative Industrieunternehmen fördert. Auch ihr Steuererleichterungsprogramm in Höhe von 20 Milliarden Euro jährlich soll den Industrieunternehmen dienen. Doch tatsächlich sind es vor allem große Dienstleistungskonzerne wie die Post und Einzelhändler, die am stärksten davon profitieren.

Der Arbeitgeberverband Medef protestiert lautstark gegen die hohen Lasten durch Steuern und Abgaben, findet bisher aber wenig Gehör in der Regierung. Das gilt auch für die Forderung nach Deregulierung. Am Mittwoch

begannen die Abgeordneten die Debatte über das geplante Gesetz gegen die Schließung von profitablen Standorten. Der jüngste Gesetzentwurf sieht vor, dass ein Konzern drei Monate lang einen Käufer für ein Werk suchen muss, das Gewinne macht und dennoch aus strategischen Gründen geschlossen werden soll.

## Entlastung der Wirtschaft gestaltet sich schwierig

Nach Ansicht der sozialistischen und anderer linker Abgeordneter kommt es häufig vor, dass vor allem finanzorientierte Investoren Standorte stilllegen und sie nicht der Konkurrenz überlassen wollen. Die Beschäftigten hätten dann den Schaden. Wenn das neue Gesetz nicht beachtet wird, ein Unternehmen zum Beispiel nicht ernsthaft sucht, sollen Strafzahlungen von bis zu 28.000 Euro je betroffenem Arbeitnehmer fällig werden. „Dieser Gesetzentwurf verbietet nicht die strategischen Restrukturierungen, sondern verteuert ihre Kosten in der Hoffnung, dass dies abschreckend wirkt“, sagte der Abgeordnete François Brottes, Vorsitzender des Wirtschaftsausschusses in der Nationalversammlung.

Die Arbeitgeber halten das geplante Gesetz dagegen für eine „Absurdität“, wie der Vizepräsident Geoffroy Roux de Bézieux kürzlich sagte. Es würde vor allem ausländische Investoren davon abhalten, in Frankreich zu investieren. Der Gesetzentwurf heißt in Frankreich „Loi Florange“, was auf das stillgelegte Stahlwerk des indischen Unternehmers Lakshmi Mittal in Lothringen abzielt.

Dass sich die Regierung mit einer Entlastung der Wirtschaft schwertut, zeigen auch die jüngsten Manöver in der Steuerpolitik. Präsident François Hollande hatte für nächstes Jahr eine „Steuerpause“ für Haushalte und Unternehmen angekündigt. Sein Premierminister Jean-Marc Ayrault meinte hingegen am Mittwoch, dass die Steuererhöhungen erst 2015 zu einem Ende kämen.

## Energiewende

# Keine Spur vom grünen Beschäftigungswunder

19.09.2013 · Mit der Energiewende sind große Hoffnungen auf neue Arbeitsplätze verbunden. Doch bislang stehen die erneuerbaren Energien nicht einmal für ein Prozent aller Erwerbstätigen.

Von [Sven Astheimer](#)

83,95



© ZB Einbruch: In der Solarindustrie sind 40 Prozent der Stellen weggefallen

Die Förderung von Umweltschutz und erneuerbaren Energien in Deutschland waren von Anfang an mit großen Erwartungen für den Arbeitsmarkt verbunden. Politiker und Lobbyisten versprachen ein wahres Beschäftigungswunder durch die Ausrichtung der deutschen Wirtschaft, vor allem der Industrie, auf mehr Nachhaltigkeit. Im derzeitigen Wahlkampf stellen die Grünen durch einen grünen Wandel in der Wirtschaft eine Million neuer Arbeitsplätze bis 2025 ins Schaufenster. Auch die SPD lockt mit dem Versprechen auf mehr Beschäftigung. Claudia Kemfert vom Institut der Deutschen Wirtschaft, die als Mitglied im Schattenkabinett des SPD-Spitzenkandidaten Thorsten Schäfer-Gümbel im Falle eines Wahlsieges die Energiewende in Hessen koordinieren soll, hält einen Beschäftigungszuwachs durch die erneuerbaren Energien von 100.000 Stellen bis zum Ende des Jahrzehnts für möglich – ein Bereich, den der Stromkunde mit dreistelligen Milliardensummen subventioniert.

Es gibt jedoch auch skeptische Stimmen aus der Wissenschaft. Das Institut zur Zukunft der Arbeit (IZA) in Bonn warnt in einer Studie, über die diese Zeitung als erste berichtet hat, vor überzogenen Erwartungen an einen ökologischen Umbau der Wirtschaft. „Ich glaube nicht, dass Green Jobs auf absehbare Zeit für ein Beschäftigungswunder sorgen werden“, sagt Autor Nico Pestel. Er kritisiert vor allem, dass es weder einen brauchbaren internationalen Standard für grüne Beschäftigung gibt noch eine solide Datenbasis, mit der Beschäftigungserfolge nachvollzogen werden können.

## Zwei Millionen Erwerbstätige im Umweltschutz

In der Tat ist umstritten, was als „grüne Beschäftigung“ gilt. Zählt dazu im engeren Sinne nur das Produzierende Gewerbe, etwa die Hersteller von Photovoltaik- und Windkraftanlagen, oder auch Dienstleister und Zulieferer sowie Handwerker? Und ist der Heizungsinstallateur nun ein „grüner Beschäftigter“, weil er auch die Sonnenkollektoren auf das Dach montiert? Oder hat er lediglich sein Geschäftsfeld erweitert, dafür vielleicht andere aufgegeben? Gleiches gilt für den Malermeister, der nun Häuser dämmt.

Nach einer internationalen, sehr weitreichenden Definition arbeiteten 2008 rund 2 Millionen Menschen in Deutschland im „Umweltschutz“, wie aus der IZA-Studie hervorgeht. Davon entfiel jedoch weit mehr als die Hälfte auf „Personalaufwendungen und umweltorientierte Dienstleistungen“, wozu Architekten,

Gartenlandschaftsbauer und der öffentliche Personennahverkehr zählen. Von einem Beschäftigungszuwachs kann in diesen Fällen nicht gesprochen werden, da diese Arbeitsplätze schon existieren.

## **Immer weniger Arbeitsplätze in der Solarwirtschaft**

Für ein echtes Beschäftigungsplus muss deshalb der Blick auf die erneuerbaren Energien gerichtet werden. Weil diese jedoch kein eigener Wirtschaftszweig sind, gibt es auch keine zusammenfassenden Beschäftigungsdaten, heißt es dazu aus dem Statistischen Bundesamt in Wiesbaden. Nur einzelne Bereiche werden bislang akribisch gezählt, zum Beispiel die Solarproduktion. Die Daten dazu, die dieser Zeitung vorliegen, haben es in sich. Demnach ist die Zahl der Beschäftigten in der Herstellung von Solarzellen und Solarmodulen innerhalb eines Jahres um 41,5 Prozent auf nur noch 5828 in der ersten Hälfte dieses Jahres gesunken. Erfasst werden Unternehmen mit mindestens 50 Mitarbeitern, von denen es nur noch 21 in ganz Deutschland gab. Einige der jüngsten Insolvenzen im Zuge des harten Preiswettbewerbes vor allem mit asiatischen Anbietern sind in der Statistik noch gar nicht enthalten. Zusammen mit den knapp 690 Mitarbeitern (minus 17 Prozent) bei Produzenten von Solarwärmekollektoren waren damit von Januar bis Juni weniger als 7000 Menschen bei größeren Herstellern beschäftigt – Tendenz fallend. Für Branchenvertreter sind dies alarmierende Signale.

Man könne die Zahlen „nicht bestätigen oder nachvollziehen“, antwortet der Bundesverband der Solarwirtschaft auf eine Anfrage dieser Zeitung und verweist auf Berechnungen des Forschungsinstituts Prognos, das für das Jahr 2011 noch von 22.000 Vollzeitarbeitsplätzen in der Photovoltaikproduktion ausging. „Diese Zahl dürfte sich nach unseren Schätzungen inzwischen beinahe halbiert haben“, räumt der Verband zwar ein, weist allerdings auf besagte Wertschöpfungsketten aus Handwerkern, Zulieferern und Distributoren (Großhändler, Projektierer) hin. Die Lobby schlägt diese Arbeitsplätze hinzu und kommt für das Jahr 2012 noch auf rund 100.000 Arbeitsplätze in Deutschland, die durch die Photovoltaik-Technologie „geschaffen und gesichert“ würden. In diesem Jahr dürften es jedoch deutlich weniger sein.

## **Kein „grünes Beschäftigungswunder“ in Sicht**

Dagegen liegen für die Windkraft gar keine gesicherten Beschäftigtenstatistiken vor. Der Bundesverband Windenergie weist deshalb auf Berechnungen und Umfragen im Auftrag des Bundesumweltministeriums hin. Demnach waren im Jahr 2012 knapp 378.000 Personen durch die Nutzung erneuerbarer Energien beschäftigt. Mit einem Minus von 4000 ergab sich erstmals ein Rückgang seit 2006. Zu den erwähnten rund 100.000 Beschäftigten durch Solarenergie kommen jene durch Biomasse (128.900), Windkraft (117.900), Geothermie (13.900), Wasserkraft (7200) und geförderte Forschung/Verwaltung (9400). Insgesamt entsprach dies weniger als einem Prozent aller Erwerbstätigen in Deutschland. Ein „grünes Beschäftigungswunder“ lässt sich daraus kaum ableiten.

Schließlich wirft Arbeitsmarktforscher Pestel noch die wichtige Frage auf, ob aus diesem errechneten Bruttozuwachs am Ende ein Netto-Beschäftigungsanstieg wird. Oder – mit anderen Worten – inwieweit „der grüne Wirtschaftswandel nicht-grüne Arbeitsplätze gefährdet“. Diese Zahlen zu erheben dürfte allerdings auch gestandene Statistiker an ihre Grenzen führen.



## Le ras-le-bol des petits commerces face aux braquages

- Par [Isabelle de Foucaud](#)
- Publié le 19/09/2013 à 06:54

83,97



**Bijoutiers, mais aussi buralistes, magasins d'électroménager, supérettes ou boulangeries sont la cible de vols violents. Des commerçants vont écrire à Jean-Marc Ayrault dans les prochains jours pour que soit pris en compte cet aspect de leur métier dans le débat sur la pénibilité.**

«Les braquages de bijoutiers ont explosé ces dernières années et le sentiment d'insécurité lié à ces cambriolages a augmenté.» Invité [sur RTL ce mercredi](#), le ministre de l'Intérieur, [Manuel Valls](#), a dit «comprendre l'exaspération des citoyens». Les vols violents ont pourtant légèrement reflué au premier semestre 2013 par rapport à la même période de 2012, revenant de 300 à 250 faits, selon l'Observatoire de sûreté de l'horlogerie-bijouterie. L'an dernier, la filière en a recensé 580, après une année record en 2011 (715). Toujours est-il qu'on reste loin des niveaux de 2007, avec ses 260 faits.

«L'inflexion récente montre que les commerçants ont réussi à mieux s'équiper pour assurer leur sécurité», explique Jacques Morel, référent sécurité de l'Union française de la bijouterie, joaillerie, orfèvrerie, des pierres & des perles (UFBJOP). Sas, caméras, télésurveillance, vitrine blindée, voire vigiles, les bijoutiers ont déployé les grands moyens ces dernières années. «Ces dispositifs coûtent très chers et ne sont pas accessibles à tous les commerces», nuance toutefois l'expert.

Les enseignes qui manipulent beaucoup d'espèces, ouvrent tard et sont situées dans des quartiers isolés sont des proies faciles

Gérard Atlan, président du Conseil du commerce de France (CdCF)

En parallèle, les braqueurs ont dû diversifier leurs cibles ces dernières années, alors que les établissements bancaires sont devenus ultra sécurisés. «La délinquance a évolué et elle s'attaque aux commerces», a reconnu Manuel Valls. Buralistes, magasins d'électroménager, supérettes, boulangeries ou stations-services ne sont plus à l'abri. «Les enseignes qui manipulent beaucoup d'espèces, ouvrent tard et sont situées dans des quartiers isolés sont des proies faciles», résume Gérard Atlan, président du Conseil du commerce de France (CdCF). «Nous subissons deux braquages par jour en moyenne», témoigne-t-on au siège de la Confédération des buralistes, selon qui ces attaques ont augmenté de 10 à 15% entre juillet 2012 et juillet 2013.

### La pénibilité du métier en question

Pour Doron Lévy, consultant en sûreté et fondateur du cabinet Ofek Consulting, «l'équation est d'autant plus problématique pour les commerçants que pour fidéliser leur clientèle et développer leur chiffre d'affaires, ils ne doivent pas non plus devenir des forteresses».

Face à ce fléau, les professionnels s'organisent pour se défendre. Parmi leurs initiatives, l'alerte par SMS permet à un commerçant victime d'un vol de prévenir la police, la gendarmerie et les commerçants du département. «La première expérience 'Alerte Commerces', menée dans le Jura en 2010, a prouvé son efficacité», se félicite Georges Sorel, président de la Fédération française des associations de commerçants (FFAC). Le dispositif a séduit d'autres départements, notamment l'Ille-et-Vilaine. «Ces solutions collectives restent difficiles à mettre en oeuvre dans les grandes villes», relativise Georges Sorel, selon qui «nos problèmes de sécurité semblent insolubles, quand on voit des Arsène Lupin déjouer les systèmes les plus sophistiqués».

C'est pourquoi les associations de commerçants comptent se battre sur un autre front. Selon nos informations, leurs représentants ont préparé un courrier qu'ils vont adresser dans les prochains jours à Jean-Marc Ayrault pour lui demander que soit prises en compte les «souffrances» des commerçants qui ont été agressés ainsi que «l'angoisse générale» de la profession [dans le débat sur la pénibilité](#). De quoi justifier, selon eux, que les commerçants gagnent des trimestres et puissent ainsi partir plus tôt à la retraite.

## L'étrange pedigree d'un conducteur de la RATP

- Par [Anne Jouan](#)
- Publié le 18/09/2013 à 18:42

83,99



INFO LE FIGARO - Impliqué dans la mort d'un automobiliste en juin dernier, l'homme, sanctionné en 2008 pour conduite en état d'ivresse, totalisait 20 accidents en cinq ans et sortait de prison. Il est toujours salarié de la Régie.

Le 19 juin dernier, un couple qui s'apprêtait à célébrer prochainement ses 40 ans de mariage se rend en voiture au cimetière d'[Ivry-sur-Seine](#) fleurir la tombe d'un proche. Le couple roule lentement, à 10 km/heure, quand il est percuté par un bus RATP de la ligne 323. Le conducteur de la voiture, âgé de 63 ans, mourra des suites de ses blessures. Quant aux passagers du bus, cinq (dont deux enfants âgés de 2 ans et de 26 jours) ont dû être hospitalisés ainsi que le gardien du cimetière.

Dans cette histoire, c'est le profil du conducteur du bus qui pose question. Ryan\*, 30 ans, père d'un bébé de cinq mois, machiniste à la RATP depuis 2007, totalise 20 accidents en cinq ans dont une suspension de permis en 2008 pour conduite sous l'empire de l'alcool.

En 2012, il avait été condamné pour vol aggravé à 24 mois de prison, dont 18 avec sursis assorti d'une mise à l'épreuve. Il s'agissait en fait d'un braquage de prostituées dans un hôtel de Lons (près de Pau). Déguisé en policiers, avec faux brassards et pistolets à grenaille, Ryan était accompagné de deux comparses. Le butin de ce que son avocat avait qualifié d'«équipe de pieds nickelés» s'était élevé à 300 euros. Ryan était sorti de la maison d'arrêt de Pau début mars. Avant l'accident, le conducteur n'avait plus que 3 points sur son permis de conduire. En 2009, il en avait perdu 6, puis 3 en 2010 et en 2011, il avait dû effectuer un stage au cours duquel il avait récupéré 4 points.

### Un rapport d'évaluation interne accablant

Ce fameux 19 juin, avant de percuter la voiture, il passe un appel avec son mobile personnel à propos de l'achat d'un chien de combat, un Staffie pour lequel il veut négocier un crédit. Puis il raccroche et redémarre.

«Je ne sais plus si j'avais mon téléphone à la main ou si je l'ai repris après dans ma sacoche, toujours est-il que je me suis retrouvé avec le téléphone dans la main droite, confie-t-il le 9 juillet au brigadier de police en charge de son audition lors de sa garde à vue dans le cadre d'une enquête préliminaire. Au début, je ne savais pas trop si j'envoyais un message à la vendeuse immédiatement ou si j'attendais d'être arrivé au terminus pour lui envoyer un message (...). J'avais mon téléphone à la main, il était déverrouillé, je suis rentré machinalement dans le menu message et j'ai abandonné l'idée d'envoyer un message. J'ai relevé les yeux, j'ai vu le véhicule devant moi, j'ai entendu quelqu'un me dire «attention!», j'ai appuyé sur le frein et le choc s'est produit.» Question du policier: «Qui est responsable de l'accident?» Réponse de Ryan: «Je pense que si je n'avais pas eu le téléphone...» Question: «Comment expliquez-vous ces multiples accidents (les 20 en cinq ans, NDLR)?»

Réponse: «Par manque de vigilance et une conduite parfois inadaptée (...) Je suis censé être maître de mon véhicule (...) en ayant le téléphone à la main, je ne pouvais pas totalement être maître de mon véhicule.»

En août 2012, Ryan avait subi une évaluation de la part de la RATP après un stage effectué quelques mois plus tôt. Le responsable de la formation notait sur son rapport: «Le respect du Code de la route reste du domaine du hasard.» Ou encore: «L'allure est souvent excessive en arrivant sur les feux et aux points d'arrêts», «la conduite n'est pas suffisamment sécurisante vis-à-vis des tiers et de la clientèle suite à une allure qui n'est pas toujours adaptée».

Aujourd'hui, Ryan ne conduit plus d'autobus mais il est toujours salarié de la [RATP](#). Une procédure disciplinaire a été ouverte après l'accident pour «manquement aux obligations fondamentales de sécurité». Elle est toujours en cours. Selon nos informations, la famille de l'automobiliste décédé va porter plainte dans les prochains jours contre Pierre Mongin, le PDG de la RATP, pour mise en danger délibérée de la vie d'autrui. Une peine passible d'un an d'emprisonnement et de 15.000 euros d'amende.

*(\*) Le prénom a été modifié*

## En Allemagne, les partis se divisent sur le soutien aux énergies vertes

Le Monde 18 septembre

83,101

A trois jours des élections générales en Allemagne, tous les partis politiques sont d'accord sur deux points : la sortie du nucléaire est une bonne chose, mais l'une des priorités du futur gouvernement doit être d'en repenser les modalités.

Angela Merkel peut être satisfaite : 82 % des Allemands approuvent toujours la décision la plus importante de son deuxième mandat - la sortie du nucléaire en 2022 -, prise après la catastrophe de Fukushima de 2011. Mais sa mise en oeuvre est critiquée par 48 %, qui s'inquiètent notamment de la hausse de leur facture d'électricité. D'autres dénoncent le recours plus important **aux** centrales au charbon.

Depuis 2000, les consommateurs paient une taxe pour favoriser les **énergies** renouvelables, qui permet de garantir pendant vingt ans **aux** producteurs d'énergie issue du solaire, de l'éolien et de la biomasse des prix supérieurs à ceux du marché.

Economies d'énergie

Aujourd'hui, 25 % de l'électricité allemande provient des **énergies** renouvelables. Cette réalité se généralise **sur** une partie du territoire, puisque particuliers et agriculteurs y contribuent à hauteur de 45 %. Du coup, le montant de la taxe s'envole. Un ménage qui consommait 3 500 kilowatts-heure d'électricité par an a vu en 2012 sa facture annuelle augmenter de 125 euros. En 2013, cette taxe est passée à 185 euros et pourrait atteindre 220 euros en 2014.

Dans son programme, l'Union chrétienne-démocrate (CDU) d'Angela Merkel reste prudente. Elle veut "*améliorer*" le dispositif mais exclut de revenir **sur** les aides promises, affirmant toutefois qu'à terme, les **énergies** renouvelables doivent "*être compétitives pour qu'elles puissent affronter le marché sans aide publique*".

Par ailleurs, la CDU juge que l'**Allemagne** a "*besoin de centrales à gaz et au charbon modernes pour compenser de manière efficace les variations des **énergies** renouvelables*" et veut favoriser les économies d'énergie. Son objectif est de diminuer de 20 %, d'ici à 2020, la consommation d'énergie globale et "*d'au moins 10 % la consommation d'électricité dans les bâtiments*". Les investissements nécessaires doivent être "*aidés financièrement*", indique le programme sans plus de précision.

Le Parti libéral (FDP), qui fait pourtant campagne pour continuer à diriger le pays avec la CDU, est plus radical. Il juge nécessaire une réforme "*rapide et fondamentale*" de la subvention **aux énergies** renouvelables. S'il ne met pas en question l'aide **aux** installations existantes, il juge que les nouvelles installations doivent être compétitives, sans subvention. Le FDP est ainsi favorable à un moratoire **sur** le développement des **énergies** renouvelables.

Le Parti social-démocrate (SPD) et les Verts ont été incapables de présenter un projet de réforme commun. Le SPD veut "*réformer fondamentalement*" la subvention **aux énergies** renouvelables, alors que les Verts veulent la conserver. Autres différences : le SPD est pour le maintien des exonérations dont bénéficient les entreprises, alors que les Verts veulent les réduire. Enfin, les écologistes sont contre l'utilisation de centrales au charbon, alors que, pour Sigmar Gabriel, président du SPD, "*on ne peut pas sortir du charbon et de l'atome en même temps*".

**Frédéric Lemaître**

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## Pour une Allemagne européenne plus forte

LE MONDE | 17.09.2013 à 17h46 • Mis à jour le 18.09.2013 à 11h13 |

83,102

Hans-Gert Pöttering (Président de la Fondation Konrad Adenauer et ancien président du Parlement européen)



La CDU (Union chrétienne-démocrate) est le parti [politique](#) européen par excellence en [Allemagne](#). Depuis la fin de la seconde guerre mondiale, grâce en particulier à la détermination des chanceliers Konrad Adenauer, Helmut Kohl et maintenant Angela Merkel, il n'a cessé d'[œuvrer](#) au rapprochement entre les peuples sur le continent pour que l'[Union européenne](#) devienne une véritable communauté de valeurs, fondée sur la dignité de l'homme, la liberté, la démocratie, l'Etat de droit et la paix.

La solidarité et la subsidiarité sont les grands principes sur lesquels repose cette communauté qui lie les Européens entre eux. Avec la responsabilité de chaque Etat membre pour soi-même, ils constituent la base du fonctionnement du projet européen. Ils sont également un atout précieux pour l'[avenir](#) car les Européens ne tireront leur épingle du jeu, dans un monde globalisé et multipolaire, que s'ils défendent ensemble leurs valeurs et leurs intérêts.

### IL EST PRIMORDIAL QUE L'UE SE RENFORCE

La crise qui frappe actuellement la zone euro ne doit pas [occulter](#) le fait que le monde change, que de nouvelles puissances économiques et politiques émergent, en Asie notamment, avec une [population](#) jeune qui croît rapidement tandis qu'elle diminue et vieillit en [Europe](#). C'est justement pour répondre à ces défis, et [continuer](#) d'[assurer](#) aux Européens stabilité, croissance et sécurité sur le continent, qu'il est primordial que l'UE se renforce dans les mois et les années à [venir](#).

La priorité doit être donnée aux mesures visant à une sortie de crise efficace et durable, en approfondissant le travail effectué depuis 2008 au niveau des Etats membres et à l'échelle européenne et cela même si, dans un premier temps, certaines mesures sont malheureusement douloureuses pour les pays concernés. La réduction des dettes et des déficits publics et le renforcement de la coordination des politiques budgétaires nationales constituent ainsi un objectif essentiel et qui doit absolument être atteint pour [stabiliser](#) la zone euro et [redonner](#) confiance aux citoyens, aux investisseurs et aux marchés.

Il est également indispensable que les Etats membres poursuivent leurs réformes structurelles afin de [renforcer](#) leur compétitivité, de [retrouver](#) le chemin de la croissance et de [consolider](#) la monnaie unique. C'est également la réponse la plus efficace, à long terme, au problème du chômage, et notamment celui des jeunes qui atteint, dans de nombreux pays de l'Union, des proportions alarmantes et tout à fait inacceptables.

Que cela soit dans les différentes capitales européennes ou au sein des institutions de l'UE, il est important, par ailleurs, que tous ceux qui contribuent, au quotidien, à [surmonter](#) la crise respectent les politiques et les accords conclus au niveau européen et s'attachent à les [mettre](#) en œuvre dans un esprit d'équipe et de façon coordonnée. Il en va autrement de la crédibilité du projet européen dans son ensemble et de l'Union économique et monétaire avec sa monnaie unique en particulier.

## FAIRE [AVANCER](#) LE PROJET COMMUNAUTAIRE

De plus, pour [surmonter](#) la crise et [sortir](#) renforcée de cette épreuve, l'UE a besoin d'une coopération étroite entre la France et l'Allemagne, sans que celle-ci ne domine ou n'éclipse pour autant les autres partenaires européens. Cela est un défi car ces deux pays ont des traditions et des références politiques, économiques, sociales et culturelles différentes, mais l'histoire de la construction européenne prouve que Paris et Berlin sont capables de [surmonter](#) leurs divergences et de se [mettre](#) d'accord pour [faire avancer](#) le projet communautaire.

En tant qu'ancien président du Parlement européen et seul député à siéger au sein de cette assemblée depuis 1979, je suis également convaincu que, pour préparer l'[avenir](#), au-delà d'une politique économique et financière mieux coordonnée et efficace, il est indispensable que l'Union européenne se fixe de nouveaux objectifs.

Le premier d'entre eux devrait être l'approfondissement de la politique étrangère, de sécurité et de [défense](#) commune qui vise à [renforcer](#) le rôle de l'UE dans la gestion de crises militaires et civiles hors de ses frontières. Les Européens devraient être ambitieux dans ce domaine-clé à l'échelle internationale, en particulier dans le contexte d'une situation très instable au [Proche-Orient](#) et en [Afrique](#) du Nord.

Le Conseil européen des chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement, qui sera consacré à cette question au mois de décembre, constituera un rendez-[vous](#) important. Espérons qu'il engendrera une nouvelle dynamique.

Les chrétiens-démocrates allemands sont bien conscients du fait que leur pays doit beaucoup au processus d'intégration européenne. Ils savent combien c'est un atout pour l'Allemagne de [participer](#) à une communauté de valeurs et de droit unique au monde, qui compte plus de 500 millions de personnes dans maintenant 28 pays membres et qui concourt, depuis sa création, à la stabilité économique et à la prospérité du continent.

Les chrétiens-démocrates savent également que c'est quand les pays européens parlent d'une seule voix qu'ils sont le plus entendus sur la scène internationale. Ils ne veulent donc pas d'une Europe allemande, mais bien plus d'une Allemagne européenne, qui assume ses responsabilités en tant que première puissance économique au sein de l'UE, et qui travaille avec ses partenaires à l'approfondissement du processus européen.

Un troisième mandat d'Angela Merkel en tant que chancelière fédérale permettra à l'Allemagne de [travailler](#) selon ces principes, pour [venir](#) à bout de la crise économique et financière qui touche l'Europe depuis maintenant cinq ans, et pour préparer le continent aux grands défis géopolitiques, économiques et culturels de ce siècle.

Pour [mener](#) à bien ce projet, la chancelière, et avec elle son parti, la CDU, ont besoin du soutien de leurs partenaires – en Allemagne, mais aussi partout en Europe et en particulier chez son plus proche voisin, de l'autre côté du Rhin.

Hans-Gert Pöttering (Président de la Fondation Konrad Adenauer et ancien président du Parlement européen)

**Hans-Gert Pöttering** est député européen et ancien président du Parlement européen (2007-2009).

Créée en 1956, la Fondation Konrad Adenauer est affiliée au mouvement chrétien-démocrate allemand.

## Merkel the European will wake up – once Germany's elections are over

[Ulrich Beck](#)

[The Guardian](#), Monday 2 September 2013 15.15 BST

83,104

It may look as if the chancellor is dozing on the volcano of the European crisis: but that will all change if she wins a third term



The TV debate between Angela Merkel, of the CDU, and the Social Democratic candidate, Peer Steinbrück, is screened at a CDU election campaign event in Hanover, on 1 September 2013. Photograph: Peter Steffen/ Peter Steffen/dpa/Corbis

With Germany's federal elections taking place in late September, a visitor to Berlin these days might expect the city to be raging with debate on Europe. Surely the streets are alive with Eurosceptics wailing for the return of the mark and impassioned Europeans demanding "ever closer union". In fact, Germany is oddly detached. So far the campaign has focused on US intelligence surveillance, the rising cost of energy and childcare facilities. Military intervention in Syria may become an issue – but that's it.

In [Sunday night's TV debate](#), Angela Merkel, the Christian Democrat chancellor and her main opponent, Peer Steinbrück of the Social Democrats, came out more or less equal (though polls show that Steinbrück performed better at convincing previously undecided voters – which are still as many as one in three). Europe was one of the first items on the agenda, yet both candidates seemed eager to move on to more comfortable terrain. Germany, the key to solving the euro crisis, seems immune to a truly polarising dispute over alternatives, especially since none are available for free.

Since the start of the crisis, many governments across Europe have been swept from power. Germany's, on the other hand, has never looked more secure. Germans love Merkel. Why? Because she asks little of them. And because Merkel is practising a new style of power politics in Europe, which I have called [Merkiavellism](#): a combination of Machiavelli and Merkel. "Is it better to be loved or feared?" Machiavelli inquired in *The Prince*. [His answer](#) was that "one ought to be both feared and loved, but as it is difficult for the two to go together, it is much safer to be feared than loved, if one of the two has to be wanting".

Merkiavelli is applying this principle in a new way. She is to be feared abroad, and loved at home – perhaps because she has taught other countries to fear. Brutal neoliberalism to the outside world, consensus with a social democratic tinge at home – that's the successful formula that has enabled Merkiavelli constantly to expand her own position of power and that of Germany as well.



There's a striking discrepancy concerning the positions of executive elites and political parties too. In most European countries there are strong Eurosceptic movements and parties giving the increasingly restless citizenry a voice. To them the austerity politics imposed by their governments are monstrous acts of injustice. They are losing their last spark of hope and trust in politics.

This, again, is not the case in Germany. Here we find a rare state of consensus. The Social Democrats and the Greens may be challenging the detail of Merkel's austerity programmes, but have so far always voted with her in parliament. Meanwhile, two of the parties that form Merkel's government – the Bavarian CSU and the liberal FDP – are remarkably distant from the position of Merkel's party. As a result the German debate on the eurozone crisis takes place without an opposition in parliament.

In the real world, meanwhile, the European crisis is coming to a head, and Germany finds itself faced with a historic decision. It must attempt either to revive the dream and poetry of a political Europe in the imagination of the people, or to stick with a policy of muddling through and of using hesitation as a means of coercion – until the euro do us part. Germany has become too powerful to be able to afford the luxury of indecision and inactivity. But Germany is sleep-walking down its own special path. As [Jürgen Habermas puts it](#): "Germany isn't dancing. It's dozing on a volcano".

And there is a final paradox: even if Germany is dozing on a volcano, even if there is no discussion on the moment of decision, the most likely outcome of the elections is going to be in favour of the next step towards a political EU. This is because most likely Merkel will return to the chancellery for a third term. Under her, I expect that there will be a silent turn to a politics of more Europe: switching positions is the key element of Merkiavelli's power politics. In the unlikely event that Merkel won't be re-elected, a red-green government would take the initiative, together with France, Italy, Spain, Poland etc, to correct the design flaw of European monetary union and take the next step in completing the political union: producing a situation in which Merkel, in opposition, constitutes the informal part of a "grand coalition".

# L'Europe, grande absente de la politique merkélienne

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83,106

Ulrich Beck (Sociologue et philosophe)

Wolfgang Schäuble, le ministre allemand des [finances](#), a récemment nié que l'[Allemagne](#) cherchait à [assurer](#) un rôle dirigeant au sein de l'[Union européenne](#). Pourtant, comme l'a découvert le spécialiste de science [politique](#) Edgar Grande à l'occasion d'une vaste [enquête](#) menée au niveau européen, la réalité est tout autre. Son équipe et lui ont étudié les discours sur la crise européenne tenus dans différents contextes nationaux. Les conclusions mettent en évidence une différence très nette entre l'Allemagne et les autres pays européens, y compris le [Royaume-Uni](#).

Le débat allemand sur la [crise de l'euro](#) a été avant tout un débat national, alors que dans tous les autres pays ce fut un débat essentiellement européen dominé par des acteurs aussi bien supranationaux qu'allemands. Ces résultats empiriques confirment clairement mon diagnostic sur l'"[Europe](#) allemande", dont, à l'occasion de la crise de l'euro, se vérifient les deux significations : tandis que l'Allemagne est au [centre](#) de tous les discours nationaux en Europe, la discussion en Allemagne même est presque exclusivement centrée autour de l'Allemagne.

Vu la proximité des élections fédérales, le visiteur se rendant à Berlin pourrait s'[attendre](#) à [voir](#) la ville en proie à des débats enflammés autour de l'Europe. Or les Allemands sont étrangement détachés de la question. La campagne pour les élections du 22 septembre a essentiellement tourné autour des révélations sur la surveillance électronique américaine (l'affaire Snowden), de la hausse du prix de l'énergie et des [services](#) à l'enfance. C'est tout. Élément-clé pour résoudre la crise de l'euro, l'Allemagne semble soigneusement éviter toute discussion clivante au sujet d'alternatives dont aucune n'est disponible gratuitement.

## LES ALLEMANDS ADORENT LA CHANCELIERÈRE

Depuis qu'a éclaté la crise de l'euro, de nombreux gouvernements européens ont été renversés. Mais en ce qui concerne la chancelière allemande, Angela Merkel, le contraire semble vrai. Les Allemands l'adorent – d'abord et avant tout parce qu'elle leur demande peu. Mais aussi parce qu'elle pratique un nouveau genre de politique du [pouvoir](#) en Europe : le merkiavelisme – une combinaison de Machiavel et de Merkel. "*Vaut-il mieux être aimé que craint ?*", s'interrogeait Machiavel dans *Le Prince*.

Sa réponse est qu'"*il faudrait l'un et l'autre, mais comme il est difficile d'[accorder](#) les deux, il est bien plus sûr d'être craint qu'aimé, si l'on devait se [passer](#) de l'un d'eux*". Merkiavel applique ce principe de façon novatrice. A l'étranger on doit la [craindre](#), en Allemagne elle veut se [faire aimer](#) – peut-être parce qu'elle a appris à certains pays étrangers à la [redouter](#). Néolibéralisme brutal hors des frontières, consensus mâtiné de [social](#)-démocratie en Allemagne même – voilà la formule gagnante qui a permis à Merkiavel de [renforcer](#) en permanence sa propre position ainsi que celle de l'Allemagne.

Il existe par ailleurs une divergence frappante entre les positions des élites dirigeantes et celles des partis politiques. Dans tous les pays européens on trouve de puissants mouvements eurosceptiques ou antieuropéens qui répercutent le mécontentement croissant des citoyens. A leurs yeux, les politiques d'austérité qui leur sont imposées par leurs gouvernements sont de monstrueuses injustices. Elles leur font [perdre](#) leur ultime lueur d'espoir et de confiance dans les systèmes politiques nationaux et européens.

Sur ce point aussi, l'Allemagne est différente : il y règne un rare consensus. Les deux partis d'opposition, les sociaux-démocrates et les Verts, ont sans doute contesté tel ou tel point des programmes d'austérité de Merkel, mais ils ont toujours voté avec elle au Parlement. D'autre part, deux des partis qui composent le gouvernement de Merkel, la CSU bavaroise (droite) et le FDP libéral, sont remarquablement éloignés des positions de leur propre gouvernement et beaucoup moins enthousiastes sur l'engagement européen dans le sauvetage de la [Grèce](#).

## CRISE DE L'EURO : UN STADE CRITIQUE

Il en résulte que le débat allemand sur la crise de l'euro n'a pas suscité d'opposition au Parlement. On a plutôt assisté à un étrange mélange des pour et des contre. D'un côté, [vous](#) avez une "Grande coalition" informelle entre le gouvernement et l'opposition, à [savoir](#) les sociaux-démocrates et les Verts.

De l'autre, cette grande coalition se heurte à la CSU et au FDP, des partis qui appartiennent à la coalition gouvernementale. Il existe une curieuse "façon allemande" de [changer](#) de position dans les votes parlementaires portant sur une décision majeure, ce qui explique que la chancelière Merkel n'ait pu s'[assurer](#) le soutien plein et entier de ses partenaires.

Mais la crise de l'euro est en train d'[atteindre](#) un stade critique, et l'Allemagne doit aujourd'hui [prendre](#) une décision historique. Elle doit [choisir](#), soit de [revitaliser](#) dans l'imagination des peuples le rêve et la poésie d'une Europe politique, soit s'en [tenir](#) à une politique confuse et [avoir](#) recours à l'hésitation comme moyen de coercition – jusqu'à ce que l'euro, finalement, nous sépare.

L'Allemagne est devenue trop puissante pour [pouvoir](#) s'[offrir](#) le [lux](#)e de l'indécision et de l'inactivité. Mais l'Allemagne poursuit son chemin comme un somnambule. Ou, comme le dit Jürgen Habermas : *"L'Allemagne ne danse pas sur un volcan, elle somnole dessus."*

Ultime paradoxe : même si l'Allemagne ne somnole pas sur un volcan, même s'il n'y a aucune discussion sur le moment de la décision, le contexte résultant des élections sera très probablement favorable au passage à l'étape suivante sur la voie d'une union politique européenne. Il est plus que probable en effet qu'Angela Merkel reste à la chancellerie pour un troisième mandat.

Je m'attends à [assister](#) à un virage silencieux vers une politique plus européenne. Tout compte fait, les changements de position sont l'élément-clé de la politique de Merkiavel. Et [sauver](#) l'euro et l'Europe sera pour elle un bon point dans les [livres](#) d'histoire.

## L'ÉTAPE SUIVANTE : [PARACHEVER](#) L'UNION POLITIQUE

Dans l'hypothèse peu probable où Merkel ne serait pas réélue, un gouvernement rouge-vert prendrait assurément l'initiative, aux côtés de la France, de l'[Italie](#), de l'[Espagne](#), de la [Pologne](#), etc., de [corriger](#) l'erreur de conception qui a marqué l'union monétaire européenne et de [franchir](#) l'étape suivante visant à [parachever](#) l'union politique : on aurait alors une situation dans laquelle Merkel, dans l'opposition, constituerait la partie informelle d'une "Grande coalition".

Examinons les élections allemandes vues de l'étranger. Dans les différents gouvernements, dans les rues européennes et dans les couloirs de Bruxelles, tout le monde attend de [voir](#) dans quelle direction va s'[engager](#) Berlin. *"Je serai sans doute le premier ministre polonais des [affaires étrangères](#) de l'histoire à [faire](#) une telle déclaration, a dit Radek Sikorski en 2011, mais la voici : je redoute moins la puissance allemande que je ne commence à m'inquiéter de l'inaction allemande."*

A [partir](#) du 23 septembre, lendemain des élections, quelle que soit la constellation politique qui en sortira, la question de [savoir](#) quelle Europe nous voulons et comment y [parvenir](#) sera au cœur des politiques allemande et européenne. Espérons que ce sera *ein anderes Europa* ("une autre Europe"), cosmopolite, capable de défendre sa position dans un monde cerné par les périls, et non pas *eine Deutsche Bundesrepublik Europa* – "une République fédérale allemande d'Europe".

*Traduit de l'anglais par Gilles Berton*

Ulrich Beck (Sociologue et philosophe)



A la Une, vendredi 13 septembre 2013, p. 1

ÉDITORIAL

## **Dépense publique : serrer les boulons ou repenser l'Etat?**

**83,108**

Pour piquer au vif le président de la République, il suffit de douter de sa volonté de réformer la France en profondeur. « *Je ne vois pas ce qui vous autorise à parler de petits pas* », répliquait François Hollande, dans ces colonnes, le 31 août, avant de soutenir que, « *en quinze mois, jamais la France n'aura engagé autant de réformes structurelles* ».

Nul doute qu'aujourd'hui il ajouterait à son plaidoyer le projet de loi de finances 2014, dont les grandes lignes ont été dévoilées le 11 septembre. Et pour cause : dans ce pays bâti autour de son **Etat**, aucun gouvernement n'avait encore osé annoncer une réduction des dépenses publiques de 15 milliards d'euros en un an : 9 milliards pour **l'Etat** et les collectivités territoriales, 6 milliards pour la Sécurité sociale. C'est, en effet, un effort historique. Le président pourra dire que si la droite en a souvent rêvé, lui **l'a fait!** Au nom du « *sérieux budgétaire* » qu'il revendique et de **l'impératif** de réduction des déficits et de la dette du pays.

Les sceptiques - il n'en manque pas - affirment que la France n'a jamais respecté ses engagements de maîtrise du déficit public (4,1 % du PIB en 2013). Ce gouvernement pas plus que les précédents. Ils attendent donc de voir. D'autant que le gouvernement avance masqué : il affiche un chiffre spectaculaire mais ne dit mot, pour **l'heure**, du détail des économies. De peur, sans nul doute, d'agiter un chiffon rouge devant des administrations qui sont autant de vieux bastions électoraux.

Les Cassandre - il n'en manque pas davantage - ajoutent que cet effort structurel de réduction des dépenses, équivalent à 1 % du PIB, n'est pas à la hauteur de la situation d'un pays que François Fillon, alors premier ministre, avait estimé « *en faillite* » dès **l'automne** 2007. Mais ces responsables seraient plus crédibles s'ils n'avaient, en leur temps, laissé filer dangereusement les dépenses de **l'Etat**.

La faille n'est pas là. Hanté, à **l'approche** d'une année électorale, par le risque de provoquer de dangereuses crispations sociales, François Hollande a fait le choix tactique d'une méthode supposée plus indolore : on coupe, on rogne - partout. Indistinctement, ou presque, dans tous les services de **l'Etat**.

Cette politique présente au moins deux dangers. Elle prend le risque de dégrader de nombreux pans de **l'action publique**. Ce qui serait offrir **l'image** déplorable d'une administration paralysée et d'un **Etat** paupérisé.

Elle empêche, ensuite, toute reconfiguration d'un **Etat** moderne à **l'heure** de la mondialisation. La France n'a pas seulement besoin d'un **Etat** plus léger, mais d'une puissance **publique** plus agile, plus efficace et recentrée sur de grandes missions. Le refus du président d'engager une grande réforme fiscale, pourtant promise, ou encore de mettre fin au millefeuille administratif, tant de fois dénoncé, témoigne à la fois de sa prudence et des limites qu'il donne à son action réformatrice.

Le premier, François Hollande aura brisé **l'un** des tabous les plus puissants de la gauche en s'attaquant à la **dépense publique**. Mais, en préférant **serrer** tous les **boulons** plutôt que de reconcevoir la machine **publique**, il s'interdit, pour **l'instant**, tout grand dessein modernisateur.

## Bundestagswahl

### Das Mysterium AfD und das Geheimnis ihres Erfolges



Die Alternative für Deutschland ist keine Graswurzelbewegung, sondern das Projekt von Eliten. Sie ist eng verbunden mit der Wirtschaft - und gilt doch als Anwalt der Bürger. Wie macht sie das nur? Von [Günther Lachmann](#)



Foto: REUTERS AfD-Chef Bernd Lucke bei einer Wahlkampfveranstaltung vor dem Brandenburger Tor in Berlin [Bild teilen](#)

Wie ein Tsunami dringt die Alternative für Deutschland in das Bewusstsein der deutschen Wahlöffentlichkeit. Obwohl gerade mal vier Monate alt, zählt sie bereits über **17.000 Mitglieder**. Der [Nazi-Verdacht](#) gegen sie verfängt bei den Bürgern ebenso wenig wie der Vorwurf der Ein-Thema-Partei. Tätliche [Angriffe aus dem linksautonomen Lager](#) auf AfD-Wahlkämpfer machen die Partei nur noch interessanter.

In den Umfragen zur Bundestagswahl kommt sie zwar nur kurzzeitig über drei Prozent hinaus, dennoch mag kaum eine politische Talkshow heute auf sie verzichten.

Und wenn die Demoskopien ihre Vorhersagen für den Wahlausgang veröffentlichen, schauen inzwischen alle zuerst auf die für die AfD ermittelten Zahlen, weil ihr Einzug in den Bundestag die deutsche Politik gehörig durcheinanderwirbeln und am Ende möglicherweise gar Angela Merkel die Macht kosten könnte.

## Die AfD macht den Wahlkampf spannend

Kein Zweifel: Wenn überhaupt eine Partei diesen Wahlkampf spannend macht und den wahlmüden deutschen Wähler wachrüttelt, dann ist es die AfD. Landauf, landab kehren Christdemokraten, Sozialdemokraten, Liberale, Grüne und Linke ihren Parteien den Rücken, um sich der AfD anzuschließen – und formen so eine Organisation, die offenbar in der Lage ist, sowohl linke wie auch konservative Erwartungen gleichermaßen zu erfüllen.

Langjährige Wahlkreiskandidaten staunten in den vergangenen Wochen nicht schlecht, dass die neue Konkurrenz es schaffte, in Windeseile oft ein Vielfaches der für die Teilnahme an der Bundestagswahl notwendigen 2000 Stimmen zu erhalten.

Die AfD bezeichnet sich deshalb auch gern als Graswurzelbewegung, als politische Initiative, die gewissermaßen aus dem Bauch der Bevölkerung heraus entstanden ist. Damit will sie ihre enge Bindung an die Sorgen und Nöte der Menschen herausstellen.

Doch dieses Bild stimmt so nicht. Geboren wurde die AfD nämlich aus dem Protest von Ökonomen gegen die Euro-Rettungspolitik der Bundesregierung und der Angst von Unternehmern vor dem Zusammenbruch des Währungssystems.

Dabei verstehen sich die regierungskritischen Volkswirte und Staatsrechtler ganz selbstverständlich als Anwälte deutscher Vermögensinteressen. Wie eng beide Seiten miteinander verbunden sind, zeigt etwa die Nähe der Familienunternehmer zu der neuen Partei.

## Anfängliches Scheitern

Folglich kommt die AfD nicht aus der Mitte der Gesellschaft, sondern ist vielmehr ein Projekt von Eliten. Zu den Vorwehen der Parteigründung gehören die Klagen gegen die Euro-Rettungspolitik vor dem Bundesverfassungsgericht, eine von 189 Professoren unterzeichnete Stellungnahme gegen den Europäischen Stabilitätsmechanismus (ESM), ein Bündnis Bürgerwille und der Versuch, die finanzpolitischen Einwände gegen die Euro-Rettungspolitik über den Bundesverband der Freien Wähler in die Parlamente zu tragen.

Doch all diese Versuche scheiterten. Weil er sich damit nicht abfinden wollte, hatte der heutige AfD-Chef Bernd Lucke bereits vor seinem enttäuschenden Abschneiden auf der Liste der Freien Wähler bei der Landtagswahl in Niedersachsen die Wahlalternative 2013 ins Leben gerufen – und dort mit dem Publizisten Konrad Adam und dem früheren CDU-Staatssekretär Alexander Gauland erstmals auch prominente Nichtökonominnen als Mitstreiter gefunden.

Seither ist die Idee der politischen Alternative weltanschaulich klar konservativ verortet. Bis heute bilden die drei Männer den Nukleus der dann im Mai 2013 offiziell gegründeten neuen Partei.

## Gesellschaftliche Spannungen

Die Geschichte lehrt, dass es in der Regel gesellschaftliche Spannungen sind, die zur Gründung von Parteien führen. Im 19. Jahrhundert etwa war es das Spannungsverhältnis zwischen Arbeit und Kapital, aus dem über die Arbeiterbewegung letztlich die Sozialdemokratie und die kommunistische Partei hervorgingen. Aus dem religiösen Konflikt zwischen Staat und Kirche bildete sich die Zentrumspartei als Arm des politischen Katholizismus heraus.

Und in den 70er-Jahren des vergangenen Jahrhunderts wuchs aus der Vielzahl der von zumeist jungen Menschen gebildeten Gruppen gegen Atomkraft und Nachrüstung die Partei Die Grünen. In allen drei Fällen ist die politische Anbindung der Parteien an gesellschaftliche Milieus und Schichten augenfällig.

Bei der AfD ist dies auf den ersten Blick nicht der Fall, sieht man mal von der engen Bindung an Unternehmerkreise ab. Anders auch als in den Gründungstagen von Sozialdemokraten und Grünen gab es keine

breite gesellschaftliche Strömung, der die AfD ganz offensichtlich zugeordnet werden kann. Zwischen den Parteigründern und den Bürgern schien es anfangs so gut wie keine Berührungspunkte zu geben. Und als Konrad Adam im Frühjahr 2013 den Saal in Oberursel für eine erste Versammlung mietete, fürchtete er ernsthaft, dass kaum jemand seiner Einladung folgen würde.

## Protest und Zukunftsangst

Am Ende kamen rund 1000 Leute – weit mehr, als der Saal fassen konnte. Woran liegt das? Über die Jahre hat sich das Verhältnis zwischen Bürgern und Politik merklich verschlechtert. Umfragen drücken die Unzufriedenheit der Wähler mit der Politik und die Furcht der Bevölkerung vor den Folgen der Euro-Rettungspolitik aus. Immer mehr Deutsche glauben demnach nicht mehr daran, dass die etablierten Parteien die Euro-Krise in den Griff bekommen können. Im Ergebnis zeigen all diese Umfragen eine diffuse Zukunftsangst, eine Furcht vor dem Verlust von Wohlstand und sozialer Sicherheit in der Bevölkerung.

Auf diese Stimmung trifft der Protest einer neuen Partei, die von sich selbst behauptet, eine wirkliche Alternative zur Euro- und Europa-Politik der im Bundestag vertretenen Parteien anzubieten, und die sich so als einzige wirkliche Opposition zur Regierungspolitik darstellt. Innerhalb weniger Wochen gingen das Unbehagen in der Bevölkerung und der akademisch vorgetragene Protest der AfD-Spitze eine symbiotische Verbindung ein. Aus der ursprünglich elitären Idee entstand eine politische Bewegung, die schneller wächst als alle vorhergehenden.

Politiker von Union, SPD, FDP, Grünen und Linker müssen staunend und nicht ohne Neid zuschauen, wie sich da eine politische Kraft herausbildet, auf die sie bis heute weder in der medialen Debatte noch im Wahlkampf eine Antwort gefunden haben, und die nun gute Chancen hat, nur vier Monate nach ihrer offiziellen Gründung in den Bundestag einzuziehen. Das ist einmalig in der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik. Insofern ist die AfD bereits jetzt ein Phänomen in der deutschen Parteiengeschichte.

## Full-face veils aren't barbaric – but our response can be

The veil is a perfectly proper subject for debate in a liberal democracy – so long as Muslim women are not excluded

- [Maleiha Malik](#)
- [The Guardian](#), Tuesday 17 September 2013

83,112



'Should there be a general ban on British Muslim women who freely choose to wear the full-face veil? The French and Belgian experience suggests caution.' Illustration by Daniel Pudles

Should Britain follow France and Belgium in a general ban on wearing the full-face veil in public? Using threats and coercion to force a Muslim woman to adopt a full-face veil is already a criminal offence in the UK, and our schools, workplaces and courts already have wide powers to impose restrictions or bans if they deem it necessary – only yesterday a judge ruled that a [defendant should remove her veil in the witness box](#). So those who have detailed knowledge of the facts on the ground are already able to balance the freedom of Muslim women with other important interests such as the education of children, workplace efficiency and fair trial.

But should we go further? Should there be a general ban on adult British Muslim women who freely choose to wear the full-face veil? And if so, [should senior politicians lead this public debate](#), as some in Britain suggest? The French and Belgian experience suggests caution.

In Britain we need a debate within the Muslim communities. The Islamic tradition contains many routes rather than just one for women who want to preserve modesty or affirm their spirituality. Alternatives to full-face veils should be actively explored by responsible Muslim leadership with women's involvement, thereby shifting normative religious practices. Religious leaders could, for example, voluntarily introduce a ban on the full-face veil in Muslim schools to safeguard the interests of girls too young to give consent. A debate led by politicians will inhibit such a discussion.

Recent empirical evidence shows that very few French, Belgian and British women wear the full-face veil. Those who do have a range of reasons, and their decision changes with life experiences: sometimes the full-face veil goes on, but it frequently comes off again.

Crucially, the first-hand testimony of the women themselves confirms that they are not coerced, but freely adopt the full-face veil. They are often intelligent, autonomous and articulate. Yet French and Belgian politicians did nothing to listen to Muslim women before passing [criminal laws](#) that restrict their freedom. The French commission (led by the communist politician, Andre G erin) allowed just one Muslim woman to address them, but they also insisted she take off her full-face veil before doing so.



[Belgium, too, adopted a criminal ban](#) without any attempt to consult Muslim women, let alone invite them to participate in the creation of laws that would have such an impact on their personal freedom. French and Belgian Muslim women have bitterly complained that they experience this as a breach of their democratic rights and an example of double standards by politicians who urge them to be integrated as equal citizens. Rather than serving the goal of integration, the French and Belgian debates left these women feeling alienated, defiant and isolated from mainstream democracy.

In contemporary debates, the full-face veil is frequently presented as a medieval practice. And yet, in a supreme irony, the contemporary European response to the full-face veil can itself be seen as "medieval". Today's debates about, and treatment of, veiled Muslim women are akin to the way heretics, lepers and Jews were talked about and treated in medieval Europe when, according to the historian [RI Moore, Europe became a "persecuting society"](#).

In Moore's account, European identity was formed through the persecution of vulnerable groups, especially non-Christians such as Jews or heretics, who did not fit into emerging definitions of what it meant to be European. Even where no actual harm had been caused, or individual victim, and no anti-clerical sentiment overtly expressed, the governing authorities began to actively initiate prosecutions – thereby extending their reach deeper into the beliefs and private lives of "heretic" individuals and communities.

The response to the full-face veil in Belgium and France displays many of these features by extending a ban in specific spheres, such as schools, the workplace and courts, to all appearances in the public sphere, and by constructing certain Muslim religious practices as so "radical" as to be incompatible with full democratic citizenship and what it means to be a "European".

In medieval Europe, this legal shift towards persecution was supported by a false public rhetoric created by political elites rather than the populus. Moore shows that the production of false knowledge about the victims of persecution, such as heretics and Jews, as well as the destruction of their actual identities, was a crucial feature of Europe's "persecuting societies".

Again, there are parallels today. Post 9/11 and 7/7 discussions of Muslims in Europe have generated an anti-Islam ideology that has now been adopted by the far right throughout Europe. Political elites have exaggerated rather than alleviated understandable popular anxieties about Muslim religious difference in ways that often make reasonable debates impossible. French and Belgian politicians debating the full-face veil, for example, played a crucial role in legitimising far right ideologies and converting popular anxieties into criminal law. British political elites need to learn lessons here and take greater care in their discussion of Muslims.

In the case of Muslim women, gender equality has played a crucial role in the creation of a false identity that silences their voices, excludes them from democratic processes and leads to their persecution. On the one hand, Muslim men's treatment of "their" women is seen as a sign of their backwardness and barbarity. On the other, Muslim women are represented as a threat because of their refusal to take off their veils and adapt themselves to modernity. This paradoxical process represents Muslim women as victims of patriarchy who need to be rescued, but also – simultaneously – symbols of radical Islam who deserve to be criminalised "for their own good".

The full-face veil is a perfectly proper subject for discussion and legislation in a liberal democracy. The voices of Muslim women themselves, as well as non-Muslims who have understandable anxieties about the full-face veil, deserve to be heard. It is also right that the full-face veil should be regulated by local decision-makers like teachers or judges in certain situations, and Muslims must accept these reasonable limits on their freedom.

But it is crucial to distinguish such legitimate debate, and reasonable legal regulation, from political and legal responses such as those in France and Belgium that construct Muslim religious difference as barbaric – thereby targeting veiled Muslim women as the latest victims in Europe's long history of persecution.

## Sondage : les Français choisissent Merkel

- Par [Alain Barluet](#)
- Publié le 19/09/2013 à 18:03

83,114



Selon une enquête OpinionWay pour le Figaro-LCI, ils sont 63% à estimer que la France devrait s'inspirer du modèle allemand.

Non seulement l'Allemagne a la cote auprès des Français mais ceux-ci estiment très majoritairement (63 %) que notre pays devrait s'inspirer de son modèle économique et de ses performances. Aux yeux de l'opinion française, cette réussite est largement incarnée par [Angela Merkel](#): 56 % des personnes interrogées souhaitent que la chancelière remporte les législatives de dimanche, [selon les résultats du sondage Opinion Way pour le Figaro-LCI](#) (document pdf). Son adversaire du parti social-démocrate (SPD), [Peer Steinbrück](#), il est vrai, beaucoup moins connu des Français, n'est soutenu que par 25 % des sondés. Par delà l'élection, la chancelière bénéficie d'une image encore plus favorable (64 %), contre 27 % de mauvaise opinion. Une adhésion surtout vérifiée chez les électeurs de Nicolas Sarkozy (88 %) mais qui s'avère non négligeable (46 %) chez ceux de François Hollande. Si les Français choisissent Angela Merkel, c'est d'abord pour son leadership - sa capacité à faire preuve d'autorité (87 %). En outre, la chancelière défend bien les intérêts de l'Allemagne à l'étranger (pour 83 % des personnes interrogées) et elle sait prendre des décisions difficiles (81 %). Pour 75 % des Français, «Angie», comme on la surnomme familièrement Outre-Rhin, sait où elle va...

### «Merkel n'est pas une ennemie»

Des résultats qu'il serait tentant de lire comme témoignant, en creux, des attentes déçues des Français vis à vis de leur propre gouvernement. «Angela Merkel et François Hollande ont des qualités différentes, l'une est plus dans le leadership, l'autre davantage dans la proximité, analyse Bruno Jeanbart, directeur général adjoint d'OpinionWay. Or dans un contexte de crise, il y a une prime aux qualités de leadership.» En revanche, la chancelière est moins bien notée lorsqu'il s'agit de dire la vérité aux Allemands (53 %) ou de sortir l'Europe de la crise (50 %). De même, seule la moitié des personnes sondées (49 %) estiment que la dirigeante allemande est une alliée pour la France. Il n'empêche, d'après 53 % des personnes sollicitées pour l'enquête, Angela Merkel perçue de ce côté-ci du Rhin comme plus favorable pour l'intérêt de la France que son rival du SPD (28 %). Ce dernier bénéficie toutefois sur ce thème des «suffrages» des électeurs de Jean-Luc Mélenchon (62 %) et dans une moindre mesure de ceux de François Hollande, beaucoup plus partagés (49 %). D'une façon générale, «les Français ont le sentiment que Merkel n'est pas l'ennemie des intérêts de la France», contrairement à un certain nombre d'idées reçues.

En décalage, là encore, avec les clichés, le modèle économique allemand exerce un attrait véritable en France, malgré les critiques qu'il suscite parfois - tel est l'un des principaux enseignements de ce sondage. «Le pessimisme ambiant souligne en France l'attrait pour la réussite allemand», commente Bruno Jeanbart, d'OpinionWay. Clairement, les Français souhaiteraient s'inspirer des recettes allemandes pour redresser leur économie (63 %, contre 37 % qui s'y refusent). Toutefois, le modèle allemand demeure clivant: 90 % des

électeurs de Nicolas Sarkozy le plébiscitent, quand ils ne sont que 33 % des électeurs de Jean-Luc Mélenchon et 45 % des électeurs de François Hollande à vouloir s'en inspirer. Entre ces deux pôles, les partisans de François Bayrou sont, eux, très favorables à l'idée de tirer les leçons du modèle allemand (74 %).

A contrario, les Français s'interrogent fortement sur l'efficacité du couple franco-allemand. Seule une majorité réduite des personnes interrogées (52 %) considèrent que les deux pays restent le moteur de l'Europe, un relatif scepticisme peu ou prou partagé par les électeurs de Nicolas Sarkozy (52 %) et par ceux de François Hollande (55 %)

# Little Left to Cut

## Lower Interest Rates Won't Help Greece

An Analysis by [David Böcking](#)

83,116

**In August, Merkel's government admitted that Greece needs billions of euros in additional aid. Some have called for a cut to interest rates on emergency loans made to Greece. But with the rates already so low, it would be but a drop in the bucket.**

Compared with the Social Democratic Party's chancellor candidate Peer Steinbrück, the conservatives have sailed through the election campaign with relatively few problems. The closest the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) came to a real snafu was when Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble [admitted](#) in August for the first time that Greece would require further financial aid.

The admission immediately gave rise to the question of where this money is supposed to come from given that the German government has already categorically rejected the possibility of another debt haircut for Athens. The governor of the state of Hesse, Volker Bouffier, likewise a member of the CDU, offered an answer shortly after Schäuble's appearance, suggesting that the maturity on loans to Greece could be extended and interest rates lowered.

At first glance, reducing interest rates appears to be a reasonable idea. The Greeks would be given more time and room to maneuver and donor countries like Germany wouldn't lose any of the money they lent to Athens. But if you take a closer look, it's not such a great deal. A lowering of interest rates wouldn't have a major influence on Greece and it could also prove costly for creditors, just as a haircut would be. The problem is that interest rates are already so low that only certain elements could be reduced at all.

At best, a reduction of interest rates could save Greece a few hundred million euros a year -- far too little to cover the country's anticipated budget shortfalls. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is estimating a total of €11 billion in financing shortfalls during the next two years.

### How Much Money Are We Talking About?

So far, Greece has received two large bailout packages. The first aid package included €110 billion, and was first agreed to by the euro-zone member states and the IMF in 2010 (see table). Back then, the permanent euro bailout fund had not yet been established, so €80 billion of the loans provided at the time came from the individual euro-zone countries. But only €53 billion of these loans were actually paid out to Greece.

The remaining €24 billion was then pumped into the second bailout package, which was agreed to in 2012 and had a total value of €164 billion. By then, the euro zone had created the first euro backstop, the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF), through which the loans were disbursed. If you subtract the IMF's share of the fund, the sum of the loans provided by euro-zone states is €145 billion, of which €133 billion has already been disbursed to Athens.

### How High Are Interest Rates Now?

In terms of interest rate levels, the differences between the two bailout packages are significant. The interest rate on the bilateral loans are based on the three-month rate of the Euribor benchmark rate, which is currently at a level of around 0.2 percent. In addition, Greece was charged an initial premium of 3 percent. Despite this

already low premium, the euro-zone states repeatedly eased the conditions and it is now only at 0.5 percent. So currently, Greece is paying interest of about 0.7 percent.

Conditions imposed by the EFSF apply to the second bailout package. The backstop fund and its permanent successor, the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), do not disclose the exact interest rates applied to the loans they grant. According to information obtained by SPIEGEL ONLINE, the rate for Greece, as well as Ireland and Portugal, is currently under 2 percent.

At the moment, however, the interest rate doesn't really mean anything for Greece, anyway. At the end of 2010, a further easing of its burden was agreed to, and interest on the second aid package has been deferred for 10 years. A so-called guarantee fee of 0.1 percent that other euro bailout recipients are still being forced to pay was also reduced to zero.

### **What Would Extending the Loans' Terms Do?**

The CDU's Bouffier has proposed extending the terms of Greece's loans by 10 years. By being given an extension on the repayment of its aid loans, Greece would be given more time to get back on its feet. But this wouldn't eliminate short-term financing problems like the current €11 billion shortfall that is expected.

Besides, the loans provided are already very long-term loans. The first aid package was a 30-year loan. Initially, the EFSF loans had a maturity of 15 years. But at the end of 2012, those terms were doubled and the German Finance Ministry says, on average, they will expire in 32.5 years. Even under the most pessimistic estimates, this should actually already provide Greece with sufficient time for a recovery. Prime Minister Antonis Samaris himself believes that six years should suffice.

### **What Effect Would Lowered Interest Rates Have?**

As past experience has already shown, a lowering of the interest rate would be more effective than extending the loans. When the euro-zone countries reduced the interest rate for loans to Greece by one percentage point in the rescue package at the end of 2010, Athens was able to save a half a billion euros a year. The elimination of the guarantee fee at the same time will also save Greece €2.7 billion over the entire term of the loans.

But interest rates have already been lowered several times. And Athens is currently paying no interest whatsoever on the second bailout package, which comprises the lion's share of overall aid to Greece.

That leaves the €53 billion in bilateral loans from the euro-zone countries. The interest rate of approximately 0.7 percent that has been applied on those loans is already so low that it falls significantly below the current inflation rate. If the other euro-zone countries were to eliminate this interest rate entirely, Greece would save only about €370 million a year -- nowhere close to filling its budget hole.

Another lowering of the interest rate would also increase risks for Greece's creditors. So far, the loans provided in the first bailout package were a money-making business for Germany, and around €320 million flowed into the German government's budget from this source between 2010 and 2012. In the meantime, however, those interest payments have been reduced several times and then deferred altogether in the second bailout package.

In addition, there's another phenomenon on the debt crisis from which Germany has profited. As they search for a safe economic harbor, investors have been lending money to Germany essentially for free, which has enabled Berlin to pass those loans on to other countries very cheaply. It now appears, however, that this cycle of low interest rates is ending and that Germany will have to start paying higher rates. The situation is even more difficult for the other euro-zone countries that already must pay higher interest rates than Germany.

### **'Assumptions and Hypotheses'**

Interest rates for Greece could either be reduced or the period of payment extended, but the first step would do little to mitigate Greece's current budget shortfall problem, and significant costs could be associated with the latter. Politicians might be willing to hazard that risk given that rescuing Greece is a political goal for which the

euro-zone countries have so far only provided guarantees and not had to actually pay any cash. But the more honest and likely more effective alternative to lowering interest rates would be a debt haircut. Then, what Peer Steinbrück predicted in a SPIEGEL interview in 2011 would come true: "Of course the Germans have to pay."

It appears that Angela Merkel's government also has at best limited faith in changing the interest rate or extending the terms of the loans. Priska Hinz, the budget policy spokeswoman for the Green Party in parliament, recently submitted an inquiry to the Finance Ministry regarding the exact cash value of the measures adopted at the end of 2012 to ease Greece's burden. The answer: Such information would "only be possible with numerous assumptions and hypotheses."

And what does Hesse Governor Bouffier, who himself issued the latest proposal to reduce interest rates, have to say? Asked for a response by SPIEGEL ONLINE, his spokesman merely pointed to the sparse statements he made on the subject in an interview around three weeks ago. "Governor Volker Bouffier doesn't want to speculate on any further details."

## AfD Fans in Britain

### German Euroskeptics 'Extremely Impressive'

By [Carsten Volkery](#)

83,119

**The Alternative for Germany's anti-euro views are seen as extreme in Germany -- but not in the United Kingdom, where they've found high-profile fans among the governing Conservatives.**

When Bernd Lucke, the head of the euroskeptic party Alternative for Germany (AfD), visited the [United Kingdom](#) before the summer break, he was courted as an honored guest. Lawmakers from the governing Conservative Party met with him in private. The country's main news show, BBC's "Newsnight," brought him in for a prime-time studio interview. Instead of being berated as a right-wing populist, he was praised for his intelligence.

"He is an extremely impressive figure", says Douglas Carswell, one of the leading euroskeptics of the Conservative Party. "He's very highly thought of by conservatives."

The AfD's [election](#) results are eagerly awaited in the UK, where the anti-euro party is seen as an overdue new arrival on the German political scene. Conservatives like Carswell hope to find kindred spirits in Germany. While the AfD has been marginalized in the election campaign, the British don't see it as disreputable. "In Britain, Lucke would be a mainstream moderate Conservative," says Carswell. "He'd probably be a member of cabinet."

Bill Cash, a veteran euroskeptic who was part of the Tory rebellion against the Maastricht treaty in the early 1990s, describes the AfD as "the only realists in Germany."

### Praise for Breaking Taboos

In June, when Lucke was sitting in front of the black-red-gold flag in the "Newsnight" studio, moderator Jeremy Paxman described him as a taboo-breaker. There is a new party in Germany that is "ready to say what has been unsayable," said Paxman. Namely, that "the euro is nuts." Lucke laughed politely and answered the sympathetic questions in fluent English.

According to the conservative politics website ConservativeHome the AfD's policies are, from a British perspective, "wholly unremarkable." The site's Mark Wallace argued the party shouldn't be compared to the UK Independence Party, which wants a withdrawal from the EU. According to Wallace, the AfD's policies are much closer to the Tories', who also reject the euro and want to reform the EU. "In German eyes," he wrote, Prime Minister David Cameron's party "counts as a right-wing populist movement."

On the same site, conservative commentator Andrew Gimson wrote: "If I were a German voter, I think I would be infuriated by the refusal of the two main parties even to have a proper debate about Europe, and would be tempted to express my anger by voting AfD." Gimson also argued in the *Times* that, if the new party does well on Sunday, the election's big story could be that "an honest and eloquent group of euroskeptics has broken through Germany's stifling political consensus and entered the Bundestag."

The impact of AfD on German political debate could be big, argues Cash. "It's like us Maastricht rebels. We started out in a minority 20 years ago, and now we've won the argument."

But AfD sympathisers like Carswell and Cash sit on the back benches of the British House of Commons. The Conservative cabinet continues to bank on the governing Christian Democrats (CDU). Prime Minister Cameron hopes that, in her third term, Angela Merkel will help him get national powers back from Brussels.

### **AfD: 'Bad News' for Cameron?**

From Cameron's perspective, the rise of the AfD is a double-edged sword. On one hand, the pressure from the right could lead Merkel to sharpen her criticisms of the EU and support the British repatriation project in Brussels. London believes recent positive signs from the German government can be linked to the AfD.

On the other hand, the entry of the euro-opponents into the Bundestag would most likely prevent a governing coalition made up of the CDU and the liberal Free Democrats, and lead to a grand coalition between the CDU and the center-left Social Democrats (SPD). The SPD's inclusion in the government would scuttle hopes for German support of EU renationalization.

In a *Telegraph* blog post, Mats Persson of the euroskeptic Open Europe think tank argued an AfD win would be "bad news" for David Cameron because "Merkel will almost certainly have to rule with the SPD" and such a grand coalition would align itself more with Paris than London.

These kinds of tactical considerations aren't as important for Carswell, who's keeping his fingers crossed for Lucke's party: "We'd all benefit if Merkel was forced to take German euroskepticism seriously."



September 19, 2013

## Chancellor Merkel's Double Vision

By JAN TECHAU

83,121

Angela Merkel has a reputation as something of an enigma. Biographers, commentators and political opponents have created a cottage industry of Merkel astrology around a leader that everyone finds hard to read.

With a general election scheduled in Germany for Sunday, a poll at which the chancellor is likely to win a mandate for a third term, speculation is rife about Merkel's political course, especially on foreign policy.

But contrary to widely held beliefs, the chancellor's positions are in fact not all that difficult to identify. Merkel has basically made three fundamental decisions that have defined the structure of her foreign policy.

The first decision was to ensure that Germany rejected any kind of geopolitical ambition. The country has been a very useful enabler of the European Union's foreign policy in the Western Balkans, but it has shied away from strengthening Europe's diplomatic or military capabilities in more substantial, structural ways.

The same is true for NATO, where Germany has forwarded a number of initiatives on technical issues, but is seen as disengaged from the bigger strategic discourse on the future of the Western alliance in a changing global security landscape.

Merkel has, unenthusiastically, heeded old German military commitments in Afghanistan and Kosovo, but she has kept Germany firmly out of entanglements in the new type of crisis-management operation that is emerging from the crises in Libya, Mali and Syria. In all of this she can feel safely in agreement with the overwhelming majority of the German public.

In the absence of larger, more global ambitions, what matters most in assessing Merkel's foreign policy are her decisions in relation to Europe. This is where the crisis of the European single currency has forced her, against her instincts, to become a decisive player and a risk-taker. It is in this field that Merkel's other two fundamental foreign policy decisions fall, and it is here that her foreign policy legacy will be defined.

Her second decision was to turn the euro zone into a de facto "transfer union lite" by guaranteeing the currency's survival with pledges of billions of German taxpayer euros. In return, she has since been pushing for immediate structural economic reforms in the recipient countries, combined with medium- to long-term projects such as fiscal union and joint oversight instruments like the European Stability Mechanism.

A banking union is still in limbo but might complete the picture in the not-so-distant future. All of these efforts have one thing in common: more or less strict oversight over a nation's financial and economic policies. None of this would have been thinkable only a few years ago.

This means, in simple terms, that Merkel has presided over a substantial deepening of E.U. economic integration. With the measures she has taken to remedy the crisis now firmly in place, the European Union has integrated faster and more substantially than in any previous five-year period. True, most of this has not been wholly voluntarily. Much of it was dictated by the crisis. But in the end, it was largely Merkel who designed or enabled these great integrationist leaps forward.

Merkel's third decision is perhaps the most fateful one. The German chancellor has determined that she favors a politically less integrated Europe after the crisis. In August, she announced in a radio interview that now was the time to think about giving some powers back from Brussels to the member states.

She did not go into specifics, but added that Europe, from now on, would not necessarily require more common policies with decisions made by the Brussels-based institutions. Improved governance could be achieved through better coordination among member states.

This victory for Merkel's long-standing intergovernmental instincts over an age-old German pro-integration tradition is nothing less than revolutionary, particularly when compared with the ideology of Helmut Kohl, under whose tutelage she entered the political stage. Perhaps it is meant to counterbalance the enormous push toward closer economic integration. But it is clear that, again, Merkel has allied herself with the majority of Germans who think that Europe's economic side is great, but that its political side is increasingly sinister.

Merkel's third decision is risky. First of all, it rests on the flawed assumption that economic and political integration can be separated from each other, when the basic lesson of the euro crisis is that you can't have one without the other.

Second, it fatefully ties her to the politically weakened British prime minister, David Cameron, who shares her vision of "repatriating" many government functions and favoring intergovernmental deal-making over the E.U.'s classic community method, but whose inability to control his own party is causing him existential problems at home.

Third, Merkel's decision rips the very engine out of the entire integration idea: that Germany, Europe's historically problematic core country, underwrites the ever-fragile idea of European politics transcending the merely national.

Of Merkel's three fundamental foreign policy decisions, strategic abstention is understandable but unsustainable in the long run; her recipe to tackle the crisis is probably correct but could create severe collateral damage; and her intergovernmental turn revolutionizes the integration project by risking some of its historic achievements.

Expect Merkel's post-election foreign policy to be built around these three foundations. If it works out, which it could, it is pure genius. If not, generations from now, historians will wonder what drove that enigmatic woman.

*Jan Techau is director of Carnegie Europe.*

## Rebel-on-Rebel Violence Seizes Syria

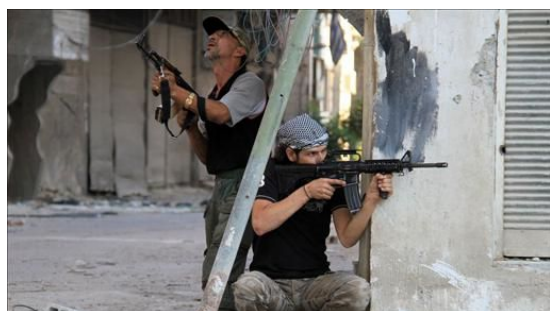


*Reuters*

Free Syrian Army fighters in Raqqa, in north-central Syria, on Friday. In mid-August, extremists from ISIS drove an FSA unit from the city

An al Qaeda spinoff operating near Aleppo, Syria's largest city, last week began a new battle campaign it dubbed "Expunging Filth."

The target wasn't their avowed enemy, the Syrian government. Instead, it was their nominal ally, the U.S.-backed Free Syrian Army.



A band of fanatical al Qaeda rebels are turning their guns on more secular rebels in an attempt to turn the struggle in Syria into a holy war. WSJ's Nour Malas joins the News Hub to explain. Photo: Getty Images

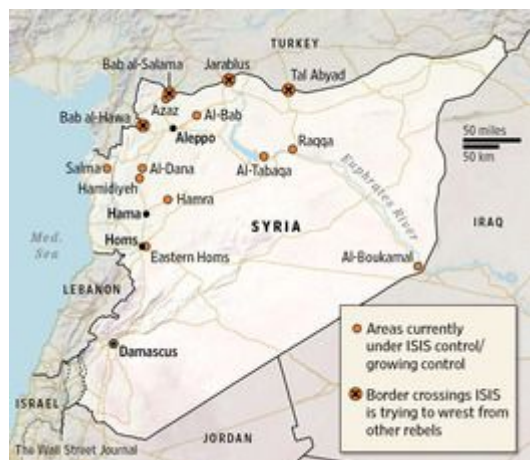
Across northern and eastern Syria, units of the jihadist group known as ISIS are seizing territory—on the battlefield and behind the front lines—from Western-backed rebels.

Some FSA fighters now consider the extremists to be as big a threat to their survival as the forces of President Bashar al-Assad.

"It's a three-front war," a U.S. official said of the FSA rebels' fight: They face the Assad regime, forces from its Lebanese ally Hezbollah, and now the multinational jihadist ranks of ISIS.

Brigade leaders of the FSA say that ISIS, an Iraqi al Qaeda outfit whose formal name is the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, has dragged them into a battle they are ill-equipped to fight.

Some U.S. officials said they see it as a battle for the FSA's survival.



In recent months, ISIS has become a magnet for foreign jihadists who view the war in Syria not primarily as a means to overthrow the Assad regime but rather as a historic battleground for a larger Sunni holy war. According to centuries-old Islamic prophecy they espouse, they must establish an Islamic state in Syria as a step to achieving a global one.

Al Qaeda militants from central command in Pakistan and Pakistani Taliban fighters have also set up operational bases in northern Syria, people familiar with their operations said.

The spread of ISIS illustrates the failure of Western-backed Syrian moderates to establish authority in opposition-held parts of Syria, some of which have been under rebel control for over a year.

The proliferation of the Sunni jihadists and extremists has brought a new type of terror to the lives of many Syrians who have endured civil war in the north. Summary executions of Alawites and Shiites, who are seen as apostates, attacks on Shiite shrines, and kidnappings and assassinations of pro-Western rebels are on the rise.



*Associated Press* Jabhat al-Nusra fighters celebrate gains over Syrian forces in January.

Estimates on the size of ISIS range from 7,000 to 10,000 fighters. Fighters from ISIS—though it shares the goal of toppling Mr. Assad's Shiite-linked Alawite regime—have frustrated Sunni communities that until recently embraced the military prowess and social services of Islamist rebels, local residents said.

The FSA's fight with extremists is spurring new rebel calls for Western help, after the U.S. put on hold what had looked like imminent strikes on the Assad regime. Instead, diplomacy has taken over, after a U.S.-Russian deal to disarm Syria's chemical weapons.

A parallel effort continues by Gulf states—and to a much lesser extent by the U.S.—to strengthen select rebel units viewed as moderate, according to Western officials familiar with the arms flow to Syrian rebels.

The FSA's Supreme Military Council, and other rebels who want the U.S. to intervene on their behalf, see the rise of ISIS as an opportunity to firmly separate themselves from al Qaeda militants, whose presence they believe is holding the U.S. back.

This account of the growing influence of ISIS and its backlash is based on interviews with FSA rebels fighting ISIS, Syrian jihadists who have fought alongside the al Qaeda group or are familiar with its operations, and Western officials.

Representatives of ISIS, a group also known as Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, and in Arabic as al-Dawla, couldn't be reached for this article.

"There's been a real shift in focus [among Syrians in the north]," a Western official working with the opposition said. "A sense of 'We can't get rid of the regime without getting rid of Dawla first.' "

U.S. officials said one reason for the delay in funneling small quantities of light arms to rebels, which began this month, is the difficulty of creating secure pipelines of delivery to intended recipients.

The chaos of the Syrian battlefield, where those fighting to overthrow Mr. Assad sometimes fight side-by-side with those who see Syria as a springboard for global jihad, has compounded U.S. concerns over this process.

U.S. and other Western officials said they were aware of a local backlash and localized FSA counteroffensives against ISIS. They welcomed FSA efforts to draw a line between al Qaeda fighters and the rebels who Western states back.

The extremists pose a threat to the ability of the political opposition, too, to gain legitimacy on the ground and better coordinate with the Free Syrian Army.

In the past half-year, as the Syrian Opposition Coalition, the main opposition body, deliberated over forming what it calls an interim government, extremists have gained ground across the north.

"It's an uphill struggle for the coalition's interim government to establish itself inside Syria in the face of threats from the regime, and extremists, but there is still an opportunity to be missed here," a senior Western diplomat said. "It's still the case that a majority of Syrians are not up for Talibanization. Given a moderate alternative, they will choose that."

The other alternative: A lawless north becomes a launchpad for jihadists, akin to areas of Pakistan and the Arabian peninsula.

"The roots of Waziristan, of southern Yemen have been planted in northern Syria," a Western official working with the opposition said.

The group has moved quickly. In mid-August, ISIS pushed a well-known FSA unit, the Ahfad al-Rasoul brigades, out of the city of Raqqa in northern Syria after tit-for-tat killings and bombings between their fighters.

On Wednesday, clashes broke out in the town of Azaz, near the Turkish border, between ISIS fighters and rebels from an FSA-allied group, leading to some casualties on both sides, opposition activists in the town said. Clashes continued past midnight, activists said.

Along Syria's border with Turkey, ISIS fighters are trying to wrest the four major crossings from other rebel units, in a bid to control supply routes, according to rebels battling the extremists, and Western officials.

In recent weeks, ISIS fighters have adopted a strategy of dropping back—taking rear positions—as rebels with the FSA alliance leave for front lines to fight government forces, allowing ISIS to build a presence in towns and villages left without security or services.

Some Syrians in the villages that dot the Turkish border have changed their lifestyles to dodge persecution by followers of ISIS's fearsome brand of Islamic extremism.

Local men grow beards to pass without scrutiny through ISIS checkpoints. Many Syrian activists and aid workers, wary of their affiliations with Western aid agencies and governments, now say they prefer to work in Turkey and avoid cross-border trips, many border residents and aid workers said.

These jihadists see a long-term mission in Syria. Foreign fighters have begun to move their families to Turkish border areas, locals said.

The trickle of families picked up after the possibility of a U.S. strike on Syrian government targets emerged late last month in response to an Aug. 21 chemical attack near Damascus. U.S. officials said they saw indications the militants hoped they could seize on a U.S. strike to shift momentum against the regime.

As the U.S. threat receded, emboldened ISIS militants ramped up efforts to win local support, said Hamid Ibrahim, a spokesman for FSA leader Gen. Salim Idriss.

"They are telling them: 'We told you that you can't depend on America for freedom. Don't be fooled—you only have us,' " Mr. Ibrahim said.

The Supreme Military Council, led by Gen. Idriss, has been the focus of U.S. efforts to bring a command-and-control structure to rebels—but has now lost to the Islamist extremists most of its ability to operate in some parts of the north.

ISIS fighters recently raided a council arms depot filled with lights weapons and ammunition, funded by the Gulf states and funneled to the council with the guidance of the Central Intelligence Agency, council members said.

From Idlib in the north to Deir el-Zour in the east, Syrian activists are looking for Western help to learn ways to push back against al Qaeda's influence.

In Aleppo and Hama, local rebel police forces are being trained with U.S. funds to put security in the hands of American allies.

The foreign jihadists have become a problem even for some of the hard-line Syrian Islamists who worked most closely with them on the battlefield. One such group is Ahrar al-Sham.

On Sept. 10, a gunfight that broke out at an ISIS checkpoint in Idlib killed a revered leader, Abu Obeida, as he accompanied Turkish and Malaysian relief workers on a distribution mission, unleashing criticism in Islamist rebel circles against ISIS.

ISIS members, posting on social-media networks, said the delegation was stopped because fighters confused the Malaysian flag for the American flag.

They deny intending to kill Abu Obeida, and said they aimed to shoot him in the legs only to keep him from running away after they had ambushed him and stuck him in the trunk of a car.

### *Gaining Ground*

The spread of Iraqi al Qaeda groups in Syria

**Late 2011** The Islamic State of Iraq, or ISI, al Qaeda's Iraq branch, moves operatives to Syria to set up a new affiliate, Jabhat al-Nusra.

**January 2013** Al-Nusra, led by Abu Muhammad al-Golani, announces itself as an official entity in online videos. In the months that follow, al-Nusra becomes a leading Syrian rebel fighting force, attracting thousands of jihadists, including foreigners. It also provides social services in parts of northern Syria—and ends up designated by Washington as a foreign terrorist organization.

**April** ISI leader Abu Baker al-Baghdadi changes the name of ISI to Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, or ISIS, in an attempt to swallow Jabhat al-Nusra into a broadened entity. Al-Nusra's leader, al-Golani, rejects the plan, pledging allegiance to central al Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri.

**Spring 2013** In the months that follow, the two groups separate. Syrian jihadists leave al-Nusra for ISIS. ISIS begins to attract thousands of foreign fighters to Syria.

**June 13** At conference in Cairo of regional Sunni clerics, over 100 prominent religious leaders sign a document urging jihad in Syria; more foreign fighters flock to the civil war.

**Aug. 15** ISIS pushes FSA unit the Ahfad al-Rasoul brigades out of the city of Raqqa, after detonating several suicide car bombs, including one that destroyed the brigades' headquarters there.

**Sept. 10** A leader of hard-line Islamist group Ahrar al-Sham is killed after a clash at an ISIS checkpoint in Idlib.

**Sept. 11** Al Qaeda chief al-Zawahiri urges Islamists fighting in Syria not to work with the secular opposition. He also calls for 'lone-wolf' or small-scale attacks to damage the U.S. economy.

**Sept. 11** Syrian government warplanes bomb a field hospital in al-Bab, a town in Aleppo under ISIS control. Residents and FSA fighters respond by attacking the ISIS headquarters in the town.

**Sept. 12** ISIS fighters take over a base in eastern Hama including a depot with dozens of rockets, rocket launchers and armored vehicles.

**Sept. 13** ISIS's eastern Aleppo unit declares war on its rivals in a campaign it named 'Expunging Filth,' identifying two FSA units by name.

**Sept. 18** ISIS and an FSA-allied unit clash in Azaz, an Aleppo town 2½ miles from the Turkish border. An opposition activist in the town said ISIS attacked the unit for trying to obstruct the al Qaeda group from arresting a German doctor working at an Azaz field hospital.

September 19, 2013

## Why Greece Is Not Weimar

By [ROGER COHEN](#)

83,128

ATHENS — The perfect political storm for violent extremism has descended on Greece. It consists of national humiliation, economic disaster, high immigration, political division and international tutelage. Look no further than Weimar Germany to understand its ingredients.

In the subdued streets of the Greek capital, where a vague menace hangs like a pall, tempers are frayed. The economy is turning slowly, after draconian cuts and [two bailouts totaling €240 billion](#), but not enough yet to be felt. The cry of the extreme right resounds: We, the fathers of civilization, have been sold out by the international loan sharks!

These are familiar insinuations. It is well known where they can lead. The neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party is rising, from a negligible fringe group in 2009 to what is almost certainly the country's third political force today, representing close to 15 percent of the vote, according to polls. If the most acute phase of Greece's economic crisis has passed, the most acute phase of its political trial is upon it.

I have little doubt that if Greece were not part of the European Union, with the protection and example afforded by this much maligned democratic club, it would have tumbled into catastrophe by now, much as a humiliated Germany did after 1918. Europe has been Greece's protector even as the single euro currency has been its tormentor.

A typical confrontation occurred the other morning. Alex Soutos, who works in the jewelry business, was in a shouting match. A graduate of Northeastern University who returned to Athens from Boston in 2009, he was making his way through a crowd of strikers outside the Ministry of Administrative Reform and E-Governance when he lost it.

"You should be working instead of blocking the road!" he screamed, his American work ethic boiling up. His business is in a downward spiral in an economy that has shrunk by a quarter.

A group of women screamed abuse back at him. At our age, they demanded, where can we find jobs? They are among the 2,000 "school guards" who were ousted as the government scrambled to find 12,500 public employees it could shift by the end of this month to meet a deadline set by Greece's international creditors. "We have bills," Vespina Papadopoulou shouted.

But as Kyriakos Mitsotakis, the minister responsible for the cuts, explained to me inside the besieged ministry, the message from the "troika" (the International Monetary Fund, the European Commission and the European Central Bank) is clear: "If you don't do it, no more money!" Europe's requirement is: Reform or else.

Greece, with an estimated \$3.3 billion shortfall in its social security fund this year and a larger financing gap looming over the next two years, still needs money, if much less than before. More urgently, it needs international understanding. The combination of the demands of the troika (widely seen by Greeks as a Trojan horse for Germany) and the frustration evident outside the ministry — Soutos's private sector has lost close to 1.5 million jobs as unemployment has reached 28 percent — is combustible.

I watched Antonis Samaras, the conservative prime minister, give an impassioned speech this week in which he spoke of the way "Democracy breeds its own enemy, which is basically extremism." He warned that Greece was in the "blind spot" before improvement is felt — a few "crucial" months that "are not the most difficult" but are "the most politically sensitive."



Golden Dawn has been on a rampage. The police say one of its activists was responsible for the [stabbing to death this week of Pavlos Fyssas](#), a leftist hip-hop singer who had denounced the party. In recent weeks Golden Dawn supporters have manhandled a mayor trying to honor victims of the Civil War and attacked Communist Party sympathizers, leaving nine hospitalized.

Samaras is squeezed between the demagoguery of this rampant right and the populism of the left-wing anti-austerity Syriza party, which is promising to restore most if not all of what has been lost since Greece, in the local phrase, fell from the clouds.

Troika officials will visit Athens next week. If they make further demands for cuts in wages and pensions they could push Greece over the edge. Germany has not yet learned to play the benign superpower. It is time; and after the German election this Sunday there may be a little more wiggle room. Toughness toward Greece has played well in Germany but, as Mitsotakis put it: “The country has been stretched to its limits. This needs to be very, very clear.”

In fact, of course, Germany has also saved Greece from bankruptcy. It did so for the European Union, which helped usher Germany from its cataclysmic “zero hour” of 1945. Through Europe, Germany came back. Through Europe, Greece has been saved from the fate of Weimar. At a time when pettiness surrounds thinking about the E.U., and the assumption is widespread that the Union’s peacemaking role is over, it is critical to recall that the Union is Europe’s surest safeguard against the Continent’s darkest hours.

## 2013 German elections: The problem is not Germany. It's Europe.

19 September 2013

[El País](#) Madrid

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[Patrick Chappatte](#)

**Europeans are placing more hope in the September 22 German general elections than in May 2014 European elections. But German politicians are right to care about their country's own problems first.**

[José Ignacio Torreblanca](#)

The political chart for Europe for 2013-2014 will begin to be drawn with the German general elections on September 22 and will close off with the elections to the European Parliament on May 25, 2014. In theory, the first should be of secondary importance and the latter should be crucial. But, in a paradox of European political life, the situation is rather the opposite: the first are crucial for the future of Europe, while the European elections will have only marginal importance.

Predictably, a large number of Europeans, who since 1979 have had the right to elect a parliament – and quite a powerful one, incidentally – will not bother going to the polling booths in May 2014; in the last European elections, in June 2009, the turnout was 43 per cent. However, aware of how important Germany has become for their own future, it is quite likely that, given the chance, many Europeans would indeed be interested in voting in the German elections.

All this speaks to us of a gigantic dissociation in the very organisation of the European Union: while goods and services, capital and people circulate freely throughout an enormous territory structured around a common currency, policy continues to be organised on the basis of a series of highly fragmented national units of very unequal size and capacity. This inconsistency between the boundaries of politics and economics is what led Emperor Marco Aurelio Antonino to extend citizenship to all inhabitants of the Roman Empire.

The edict of Caracalla, promulgated in the year 212, deployed an argument that would be rather topical today

The edict of Caracalla, promulgated in the year 212, deployed an argument that would be rather topical today: “For it is proper that the populace not only should be subject to all the burdens, but also should share in my victory”. This linking between taxation and the legitimacy of a political system is thus a constant in history and has survived down to this day in the form of a very simple rule: one should vote where one pays taxes, and finance with one’s taxes only those things that one can vote on.

## No path to federations

The problem is that, in the EU as it is today, things are exactly the reverse – or, at least from Germany’s point of view, they look very different. As surveys are bringing to light, a majority of Germans rejects any type of mechanism that involves taking on or pooling debts incurred by other countries. Hence, while a large proportion of Europeans would like the German elections to unleash a dynamic of changes that would lead to completing the monetary union by adding elements the Union currently lacks — Eurobonds, its own budget, a mechanism for shared management of banking crises, etc — the Germans appear to want at all costs that the elections not introduce any significant changes in their government’s current policy towards Europe. As the survey recently conducted by the Open Europe Institute points out, the Germans have zero appetite for policies that deepen European integration. On the contrary, the phrase “More Europe” is taken rather to mean “more control” over the rest of Europe.

As a result, the Germany that many would like to see emerge from the elections is simply not going to happen. With the polls in hand, it is quite probable that any possible future coalition government will have in it Angela Merkel, whose vision of Europe, Germany and the euro is crystal clear. With four more years in front of her, Merkel could loosen up on some policies, especially if her government will include the Social Democrats or the Greens, but it is hard to expect that this new government will take the lead in any initiative to reform the treaties that would set the EU onto a path towards a federation.

## No policy 180

The recent clash between Chancellor Angela Merkel and the candidate of the SPD, Peer Steinbrück, which led Merkel to tag the Social Democrats as “unpredictable” in their policy towards Europe, has made it very clear, as the SPD has reminded us, that Merkel has not only enjoyed the legislative support of the members of the SPD throughout the legislature in pushing ahead with the most controversial measures (such as the successive bailouts to Greece and implementing the so-called European Stability Mechanism) but that this support has sometimes made up for the lack of enthusiasm for these policies from within her own ranks. In any case, from the point of view of the Chancellor, of her party and a vast majority of members of Parliament and citizens, the austerity policies that Germany has insisted on are the right policies, and ones that are having positive and visible results in improving competitiveness and exports from the Eurozone members.

If Europe has problems, let them be resolved in the European elections

Consequently, very little or nothing of what Germany sees around it these days encourages it to think it ought to make a 180-degree turnaround in its policies. The issues that matter to the Germans (infrastructure, public services, pensions, etc) are domestic issues and have no clear connection with Europe. And so, while Europeans are getting worked up about Germany and its elections, the Germans are continuing on their way and, time and again, rejecting the requests of those who are asking them for fearlessness and leadership. All things considered, they are not wrong. If Europe has problems, let them be resolved in the European elections – not in the German elections.

# A Shooting in Nice Exposes France's Crime Problem

**A jeweler kills an escaping robber in Nice, and ignites a debate about how to handle crime in France.**

**By THEODORE DALRYMPLE**

"Revenge is a kind of wild justice," said Francis Bacon, "which the more a man's heart runs to, the more ought law to weed it out." But what if that law, far from weeding it out, fertilizes and irrigates it by excessive leniency towards criminals?

In France the current minister of justice, Christiane Taubira, is determined to reduce the number of law-breakers sentenced to imprisonment, despite a recent steep rise in burglaries. By no means does all of the French public approve. Many want severe and unequivocal punishment of criminals, in the absence of which they approve—with varying degrees of reluctance or enthusiasm—of victims taking the law into their own hands.

This was illustrated to perfection recently in the case of Stéphane Turk in Nice. Just over a week ago, the jeweler, of Lebanese extraction, shot dead one of the two armed robbers who had threatened him with what looked like an automatic weapon. Mr. Turk pulled the trigger as they were making their escape, having relieved him of money and jewels. Mr. Turk was subsequently arrested and charged with voluntary homicide.

A page was set up on Facebook in support of the jeweler, and within a week it had accumulated 1.6 million "likes." There has been nothing remotely like this in France before: Evidently the case touched a very raw nerve. Some of the Facebook messages of support of Turk have been startling in their vehemence. "He should be given the Légion d'honneur," writes one supporter. "One parasite less," observes another. "No justice for them, just a bullet in the head. Sick of being bothered by little s—." Also: "It's deplorable that we should have to kill these scum ourselves." "The only thing I reproach the jeweler with is that he didn't get the other," wrote another of Mr. Turk's supporters.



*Cyril Doderigny/Zuma Press*

If Asli had received a longer sentence, he would still be alive and Turk would not be under house arrest.

These supporters don't really care whether Mr. Turk killed in self-defense or from sheer vengefulness. The former would be a defense in law but the latter would not be. Mr. Turk told the police that he shot twice at the motor scooter in an attempt to immobilize it, and it was only when one of the robbers turned to him in a threatening way with his automatic weapon that Mr. Turk shot him dead.

Mr. Turk, who has no criminal record, had no license for the gun and therefore was on the wrong side of the law when he used it. And if he really believed that the robbers had an automatic weapon with them, surely it would have been foolish to shoot at all, *except* to kill. It seems more likely that he acted on an entirely

understandable angry impulse, which has now drawn strong support from jewelers and other shopkeepers from all over France, exasperated by such robberies, as well as the general public, who don't really care any longer about the niceties of the law.

For those on the other side of the leniency-versus-severity divide of the debate, Mr. Turk is a worse criminal than the initial robbers, for murder is a worse crime than robbery—even armed robbery. The left-wing newspaper *Libération*, having just reminded its readers that Mr. Turk's action was against the rule of law, did not hesitate in calling Mr. Turk a criminal and a murderer—though in the eyes of the law whose rule it had just extolled, he is still an innocent man.

The man whom Mr. Turk killed, Anthony Asli, would have been 20 in October. According to *Le Monde* he looked 16, and in the words of his understandably distressed father he was still "a little boy." But this little boy already had 14 convictions (which means that he must have committed at least 50 crimes), among them robbery with violence. He had, not long before his death, come out of prison for the theft of a motor scooter. Between coming out of prison and being killed, he had time to make his girlfriend, two years older than he, pregnant. The armed robbery he committed against Mr. Turk did not bode well for his future: If ever there was a murderer in the making, it was he.

Both sides of the leniency-versus-severity debate will draw comfort and sustenance from Asli's trajectory. According to his girlfriend, each time he came out of prison he was a little less light-hearted and more inclined to secrecy—in other words more determined than ever to pursue his life of crime. The justice minister, Christiane Taubira, will therefore see Asli's life history as precisely the kind of evidence that prison does not work, thus justifying her calls to reduce the use of prison as a punishment.

On the other side of the divide, of course, they will see the leniency of a system that releases a man with a history of violence only a short time after his 14th conviction as preposterous and even cruel. Fourteen convictions, including for violence, is surely enough to conclude that a young man is set on a criminal career, and that a long sentence would not in itself be unjust. If he had received such a sentence, he would still be alive and Stéphan Turk would not be under house arrest. A long sentence would have meant release in his 30s or 40s, at the age at which criminality almost always ceases spontaneously. He might even have had the opportunity to receive an education.

In other words, leniency is not necessarily generous and kind, nor is severity necessarily primitive and vicious. But the left in France characterizes those in favor of greater severity as virtually fascist; it is quite unable to see that its own policy brings about the very exasperation so manifest in the messages on Facebook.

President François Hollande said that he understood the anger of people like Mr. Turk, but that there must be justice and nothing but justice. Quite right: But was it just that Asli was at liberty to commit the armed robbery that ended in his death?

# Fed Decision Is Relief for Europe

## Decision Not to Reduce Bond-Buying Program Eases Pressure on European Recovery

By [BRIAN BLACKSTONE](#) And [JASON DOUGLAS](#)

The Federal Reserve's unexpected decision to keep its bond-buying program intact gives central banks in Europe more time to nurture still-fragile economic recoveries. Central banks in developing countries will face less pressure to raise interest rates to defend their currencies, but are unlikely to significantly alter their policy stances.

The U.S. central bank said Wednesday it would keep buying \$85 billion a month of Treasury and mortgage bonds, surprising many economists who had expected a reduction of as much as \$15 billion in monthly purchases.

Europe's main central banks have struggled in recent weeks to convince investors that their "forward guidance" promising the retention of low interest rates has teeth, in part because investors assumed tighter Fed policies would filter through to Europe. The Fed's decision to leave in place its current pace of bond buying changed that perception.

The decision helps the European Central Bank and Bank of England cement their verbal assurances that interest rates in Europe will stay at record lows in the near term, analysts said. "The fact that the Fed is now even further away from taking away the liquidity punch bowl obviously is going to make it easier for [the] ECB and BOE to manage rate expectations," said Nicholas Spiro, head of consulting firm Spiro Sovereign Strategy.

The Fed's decision to hold off reducing, or "tapering," its bond buying also takes some of the pressure off the ECB and other central banks in Europe to take additional action on interest rates and other stimulus measures, at least in the near term, economists say.

The Swiss National Bank on Thursday kept interest rates unchanged and made no changes to the floor it has set on the Swiss franc's exchange rate to the euro. Norway's central bank also held rates unchanged Thursday.

The fall in bond yields in Europe that followed the Fed announcement should help support the euro-zone economy, which is slowly emerging from 18 months of contraction that began in 2011.

German and U.K. government bonds, which both typically move in tandem with U.S. Treasuries, rose sharply. The yield on the 10-year German government bond, which moves in the opposite direction from prices, fell 0.14 percentage point to 1.81%, the lowest level in a month. The corresponding yield on U.K. bonds was 0.16 percentage point lower at 2.84%, the lowest level in two weeks.

With the Fed continuing full steam on its bond purchases, the ECB should, at a minimum, maintain its ultra-accommodative policy stance, analysts said. Unlike the Fed, the ECB isn't buying bonds to hold down long-term interest rates. While it has a bond-buying facility, this has yet to be used. The ECB's key interest rate is 0.5%, meaning it does have room to reduce rates if economic and financial conditions worsen.

The Fed move "strengthens the hands of the doves" on the ECB's 23-man Governing Council who tend to place more emphasis on spurring economic growth than bringing down inflation, since it brings market rates down and puts upward pressure on the euro-zone currency, said Christian Schulz, an economist at Berenberg, a private bank, in London.

Before the Fed's decision, central bankers in London had fretted that rising market rates could feed into higher borrowing costs for households and businesses in the U.K., potentially derailing an economic recovery that is beginning to gather speed. In an effort to keep a lid on domestic borrowing costs, the BOE, under its new governor, Mark Carney, pledged in August not to consider raising its benchmark rate from 0.5% until unemployment in the U.K. drops to 7%, a threshold officials doubt will be crossed until 2016.

Analysts said Mr. Carney was likely to greet the lower interest rates in Europe resulting from the Fed's decision with some relief. "From the point of view of the U.K., it takes off some of the pressure we were getting in terms of higher bond yields," said Carl Astorri, economic adviser to the Ernst & Young Item Club. "It's also good news that monetary conditions globally will be a bit looser."

The Fed hasn't, however, brought permanent calm to European financial markets and the economy. The euro's rise against the U.S. dollar will make it harder for exporters to sell their goods and services abroad, weighing on the euro zone's nascent recovery. In short, the Fed has, for the time being, solved one problem for the ECB—managing rate expectations—while creating another in the exchange rate.

The ECB is unlikely to lower interest rates when it meets in two weeks, said Carsten Brzeski, economist at ING Bank. However, ECB President [Mario Draghi](#) "will have to sound dovish, not to talk down [market interest rates] but to talk down the exchange rate," he said.

Despite Wednesday's decision, the Fed is still likely to begin slowly winding down its bond purchases in coming months, which could reignite volatility in financial markets and put central banks in Europe back where they were in the summer: struggling to get a handle on interest-rate expectations.

"The Fed has simply delayed the day of reckoning," Mr. Spiro said. "Short term it provides a boost, but it's going to make it much more difficult down the line for the ECB to make its forward guidance regime more credible," he said.

The Fed's decision will also come as a relief to developing-country central banks. Since June, investors have been pulling out of emerging markets in anticipation of a change in the Fed's bond-buying program, weakening many developing-country currencies, and threatening a pickup in inflation. A number of central banks have responded by raising interest rates and intervening in currency markets. That may no longer be necessary.

Central banks in emerging markets "should send flowers to Washington," said Benoit Anne, head of emerging-market strategy at Société Générale. "It reduces the need for them to be worried about their currencies."

## Pour sortir de la crise, sortons de l'euro

### Dissoudre la monnaie unique : une idée qui s'imposera

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Depuis la fin du printemps, un concert de « bonnes nouvelles » nous vient des pays d'Europe du Sud. La croissance reviendrait au Portugal et en Espagne, et même en Grèce. Les taux se maintiennent à un niveau considéré comme « raisonnable ». En bref, la crise de la zone Euro serait derrière nous. Pourtant, à mieux y regarder, on peut sérieusement douter de la réalité de ces affirmations.

#### Sommes-nous sortis de la Crise ?

Il y a beaucoup de manipulations, mais un peu de vérité dans ces affirmations. Commençons par le peu de vérité qu'elles contiennent. Oui, la crise est en train d'atteindre un plancher. C'est évident en Espagne où le chômage semble désormais stabilisé, quoiqu'à un niveau très élevé (25% de la population active). La crise ne semble plus s'aggraver ces derniers mois, mais ceci est loin d'être équivalent avec une sortie de crise. Ajoutons que des nuages plus que noirs s'accumulent à l'horizon : le crédit est toujours en train de se contracter (en particulier en Italie et en France), l'investissement se réduit toujours (et avec lui les perspectives de croissance future). Rien ne permet de dire que les pays d'Europe du Sud vont trouver dans les prochains mois le ressort d'une croissance leur permettant d'effacer la crise qu'ils connaissent. La perspective d'une nouvelle crise politique en Italie, venant s'ajouter aux difficultés économiques (notamment la montée des impayés dans le bilan des banques, indicateur très sûr d'une économie fragile), est une forte probabilité.

On peut d'ailleurs estimer que l'amélioration de la balance commerciale dans ce pays est liée à la chute des importations et non à une hausse des exportations. Compte tenu de l'importance de l'économie italienne, qui est la troisième économie de la zone Euro, il est donc clair que la zone Euro est loin, très loin, d'être tirée d'affaires.

Au mieux, la crise va durer au même niveau qu'aujourd'hui. Au pire, et c'est ce que l'on peut craindre quand on regarde l'évolution du crédit et de l'investissement, après cette pause provisoire, les résultats devraient recommencer à se dégrader dès la seconde moitié de 2014. D'ores et déjà, il est clair qu'il faudra un nouveau plan de sauvetage pour la Grèce d'ici la fin de 2013.

Ceci nous conduit aux manipulations, largement évidentes dans nombre de médias. On ne parle plus que de la « reprise » alors que l'ensemble des indicateurs reste très inquiétant. Il y a un consensus dans une partie de la presse, essentiellement pour des raisons politiques, qui conduit à proclamer ce retour à la croissance alors que tout le dément. On a eu un exemple de ces pratiques à propos des statistiques du chômage en France. Ceci est instructif, tant quant à l'état de certains médias en France que du point de vue plus général de l'attitude des élites sur ce problème. Alors que l'on continue de discuter de la crise de l'euro en Allemagne, en Italie et en Espagne, le thème semble avoir disparu en France.



## La crise en perspective.

La zone Euro a souffert de plusieurs maux : l'absence de flux financiers massifs pour égaliser les structures économiques des pays membres ; une Banque Centrale indépendante calée sur une politique inopérante ; et une politique de déflation salariale initiée par l'Allemagne, s'apparentant à une politique de « passager clandestin » – aussi qualifiée « d'opportuniste » ou de « non-coopérative » – qui a exacerbé les tendances préexistantes aux évolutions inégales des salaires et de la productivité.

Il faut ici rappeler que la crise de la zone Euro ne date pas des années 2010-2011, mais qu'elle a des racines bien plus anciennes. L'introduction de l'Euro impliquait aussi une politique monétaire unique pour les pays de la zone. Or, tant les conjonctures économiques que les déterminants structurels de l'inflation – les problèmes de répartition des revenus, mais aussi la présence de chaînes logistiques plus ou moins sensibles à des hausses de prix susceptibles de se reporter – entraînent des taux d'inflation structurelle différents selon les pays. Cette situation résulte de la présence de rigidités importantes dans l'économie, qui invalident la thèse d'une « neutralité » de la monnaie.

Cependant, dans le cadre d'une monnaie unique, les divergences d'inflation ne peuvent être trop importantes en raison des problèmes de compétitivité interne à la zone. Un certain nombre de pays ont alors dû avoir une inflation inférieure à leur niveau structurel. Cela les a, par suite, conduits à avoir un taux de croissance inférieur à leur taux de croissance optimal (Italie, Portugal). De fait, ces pays ont perdu sur les deux tableaux : en compétitivité et en niveau de croissance.

Si l'économie européenne va de langueur en récession depuis 2000, c'est bien à cause de l'Euro. Le fait que l'Allemagne ait tiré son épingle du jeu confirme cela, tant en raison des avantages comparatifs spécifiques de ce pays que de la politique qui y a été menée depuis 2002 (les « réformes » Harz-IV). L'Euro est au cœur du problème de l'Europe. Il condamne la majorité des pays l'ayant adopté à la récession ou à la crise, comme en Europe du Sud. L'Allemagne a « exporté » vers ces autres pays entre 4 et 5 millions de chômeurs.

L'option d'un fédéralisme européen, outre les problèmes politiques qu'elle introduit, se heurte à l'ampleur des flux de transferts que l'Allemagne devrait consentir au bénéfice des pays de l'Europe du Sud. L'Allemagne supporterait en effet 90% du financement de la somme de ces transferts nets, soit entre 220 et 232 milliards d'euros par an (ce qui équivaut à 2200 à 2320 milliards sur dix ans), entre 8% et 9% de son PIB. D'autres estimations donnent des niveaux encore plus élevés, atteignant 12,7% du PIB. Il convient donc d'en tirer toutes les conséquences : le fédéralisme n'apparaît pas comme une option réaliste pour les pays de l'Europe du Nord et en premier lieu pour l'Allemagne. Il est sans objet de la présenter comme une possible solution.

## La dissolution, seul horizon raisonnable ?

L'ampleur de la récession qui frappe de nombreux pays annonce un retour de la crise. La solvabilité des États n'est plus garantie. L'effondrement des ressources fiscales dans de nombreux pays constitue un accélérateur de la crise. Cette situation témoigne bien de la présence de défauts structurels dans la conception et dans la mise en œuvre de la monnaie unique. Ces derniers, trop longtemps niés ou minimisés, sont aujourd'hui en passe d'être reconnus

Une dissolution de la zone Euro ne serait pas une « catastrophe » comme on le prétend souvent, mais au contraire une solution salvatrice pour l'Europe du Sud et la France. C'est ce que montre l'étude « [Les Scénarii de Dissolution de l'Euro](#) », publiée au début du mois de septembre. On peut y lire, suivant les différentes hypothèses étudiées, non seulement l'effet très bénéfique des dévaluations sur l'économie française, mais aussi sur celles des pays aujourd'hui ravagés par la crise, comme la Grèce, le Portugal ou l'Espagne. Bien entendu, suivant les hypothèses retenues, à la fois sur le caractère plus ou moins coopératif de cette dissolution mais aussi sur la politique économique suivie, les estimations de la croissance divergent. Au pire, il faut s'attendre à une croissance cumulée de 8% la troisième année après la fin de l'Euro et au mieux une croissance de 20%. Pour l'Europe du Sud, la croissance cumulée est en moyenne de 6% pour l'Espagne, de 11% pour le Portugal et de 15% pour la Grèce *dans l'hypothèse la plus défavorable pour ces pays*. Une première leçon s'impose alors : la dissolution de la zone Euro ramènerait la croissance dans TOUS les pays d'Europe du Sud et provoquerait une baisse massive et rapide du chômage. Pour la France, on peut estimer la baisse du nombre de chômeurs de

1,0 à 2,5 millions en trois ans. Par ailleurs, cela rétablirait l'équilibre des régimes de retraites et de protection sociale. Dans le cas de la France, ce retour à l'équilibre serait très rapide (en deux ans). Il aurait des effets importants sur les anticipations des ménages dont l'horizon serait dégagé des inquiétudes que font peser des réformes à répétition. La consommation augmenterait, et avec elle la croissance, même si on ne peut estimer cet effet. Cette dissolution redonnerait à l'Europe du Sud sa vitalité économique, mais serait *aussi* profitable à l'Allemagne, car une Europe du Sud en expansion continuerait de commercer avec son voisin du nord après un réajustement des compétitivités.

Les inconvénients seraient très limités. Compte tenu des taxes, l'impact d'une dévaluation de 25% par rapport au Dollar sur les prix des carburants ne provoquerait qu'une hausse de 6% à 8% du produit « à la pompe ». L'Euro disparu, les dettes des différents États seraient re-libellées en monnaie nationale.

Une telle politique imposerait aussi des contrôles des capitaux dans chaque pays. Notons que c'est déjà le cas à Chypre ! Ces contrôles, outre qu'ils contribueraient à *définanciariser* ces économies, limiteraient considérablement la spéculation et permettraient aux Banques Centrales de viser des objectifs de parité. Une fois ces parités atteintes, un système de fluctuations coordonnées des monnaies, comme du temps de l'ECU, pourrait être mis en place. Historiquement, ce qui a sonné le glas de ce système a été la spéculation monétaire. Celle-ci supprimée, ou fortement réduite, le système pourrait à nouveau fonctionner.

### **De la « monnaie unique » à la « monnaie commune » ?**

Cette idée attire un certain nombre de personnalités politiques. Et elle est loin d'être absurde, bien au contraire. En fait, une monnaie commune aurait dû être adoptée dès le début.

De quoi s'agit-il donc ? On peut imaginer que le système monétaire européen reconstitué que l'on aurait à la suite de la dissolution de l'Euro débouche sur une *monnaie commune* venant s'ajouter aux monnaies existantes, qui serait utilisée pour l'ensemble des transactions (biens et services mais aussi investissements) avec les autres pays.

Cette dissolution de la zone Euro, si elle résulte d'un acte concerté de la part des pays membres, devrait donner naissance à un système monétaire européen (SME) chargé de garantir que la nécessaire flexibilité des changes ne tourne pas au chaos. Si un tel système est mis en place, il aurait nécessairement des conséquences importantes sur le système monétaire international.

Ce système correspondrait en réalité à l'existence d'une monnaie conçue comme une unité de compte venant s'ajouter aux monnaies nationales existantes. Cette situation serait très propice à la résurrection de l'Euro, mais sous la forme d'une monnaie commune

Ceci donnerait à l'Europe à la fois la flexibilité interne dont elle a besoin et la stabilité vis-à-vis du reste du monde. Un « panier de monnaie » étant intrinsèquement plus stable qu'une monnaie seule, cette *monnaie commune* pourrait devenir à terme un puissant instrument de réserve, correspondant aux désirs exprimés par les pays émergents des BRICS.

La dissolution de l'Euro, dans ces conditions, signerait non pas la fin de l'Europe comme on le prétend mais bien au contraire son retour gagnant dans l'économie mondiale, et qui plus est un retour qui profiterait massivement, tant par la croissance que par l'émergence à terme d'un instrument de réserve, aux pays en développement d'Asie et d'Afrique.

**Retrouvez l'article dans sa version originale sur [le blog de Jacques Sapir](#).**

## Eurokrise

### EU will Haushaltsdefizite kleiner rechnen

20.09.2013 · Krisenstaaten mit hoher Arbeitslosigkeit dürfen auf mehr Milde hoffen. Denn die EU will ihre Defizitzahlen drücken - indem sie die Rechenweise ändert.

Von [Hendrik Kafsack](#), Brüssel

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Es klingt technisch, hat aber enorme Auswirkungen. Die EU-Institutionen erwägen offenbar, die Methode zur Kalkulation der nationalen Haushaltsdefizite zu verändern - und zwar so, dass Krisenstaaten mit hoher Arbeitslosigkeit besser dastehen als bisher. Entsprechend könnten sie die Defizitziele der EU leichter erreichen. Das bedeutet: Spanien und andere südeuropäische EU-Staaten dürfen auf deutlich mildere Sparauflagen hoffen.

Der Sprecher von EU-Währungskommissar Olli Rehn bestätigte am Freitag in Brüssel, dass es technische Beratungen dazu auf Fachebene gegeben habe. Es sei aber noch keine Entscheidung gefallen. Das könnte jedoch schon in der kommenden Woche geschehen, hieß es in Brüssel. Dann müsste die Kommission die neue Berechnungsmethode wohl schon bei ihrer Herbstprognose anwenden.

Die Zustimmung der Finanzminister zu der Änderung sei nicht zwingend erforderlich, hieß es in Diplomatentreuen. Die Minister könnten die Entscheidung aber faktisch an sich ziehen. Damit werde die Position der Bundesregierung in den kommenden Tagen eine entscheidende Rolle spielen, hieß es weiter in Brüssel. Die deutsche Regierung war in die Überarbeitung der Berechnungsmethode auf Beamtenebene eng eingebunden und hat sich dem Vorhaben dem Vernehmen nach auch nicht entgegengestellt.

### So ändert sich die Defizit-Rechnung

Kern der Überarbeitung ist die Berechnung des sogenannten [strukturellen Defizits](#). Es gibt an, wie noch das Haushaltsdefizit eines Staats ist, wenn es um Konjunktoreinflüsse und einmalige Effekte bereinigt wird. Es darf seit der Reform des Stabilitäts- und Wachstumspakts maximal 0,5 Prozent der Wirtschaftsleistung betragen und ist damit die entscheidende Kennziffer für die Sparvorgaben an die EU-Staaten.

Um das strukturelle Defizit zu verringern, wollen die Mitglieder der federführenden Arbeitsgruppe die natürliche Arbeitslosigkeit klein rechnen. Die natürliche Arbeitslosenquote zeigt an, wie viele Arbeitnehmer selbst in guten Zeiten keine Stelle finden. Wenn diese Zahl hoch ist, wächst die Wirtschaft auch auf dem Konjunkturmehrpunkt nur begrenzt. Also ist auch das Defizit höher. Die Europäische Kommission macht darum Staaten mit hoher natürlicher Arbeitslosigkeit striktere Sparauflagen als anderen.

Spanien dringt vor diesem Hintergrund seit langem darauf, dass die Berechnung geändert wird, und hat dabei Unterstützung von anderen südeuropäischen Staaten. In Spanien liegt die natürliche Arbeitslosigkeit nach den Berechnungen der EU-Kommission nach der bisherigen Methode momentan bei klar mehr als 20 Prozent. Die EU-Behörde hat das auf die Verkrustung des Arbeitsmarkts zurückgeführt.

## Jung, gebildet, arbeitsscheu?

### Die Generation Y erobert die Welt

19.09.2013 · Wer nach 1980 geboren ist, hat bessere Chancen am deutschen Arbeitsmarkt als seine Eltern und kann deshalb auch mehr fordern. Kein typisch deutsches Phänomen.

Von [Roland Lindner](#), [Christian Geinitz](#), Benjamin Triebe, Carl Moses, [Christoph Hein](#)

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### Amerika: Die Generation Ich-ich-ich ackert nur am Smartphone

In Amerika hat die Zeitschrift „Time“ den Millennials gerade eine Titelgeschichte gewidmet. Eine junge Frau blickt dabei bewundernd auf ihr Smartphone, offenbar kurz davor, ein Foto von sich selbst zu schießen. „Faul, narzisstisch und mit großer Anspruchshaltung“, nennt das Magazin diese „Me Me Me Generation“, der es offenbar nur um sich selbst geht. Jason Dorsey, der Bücher über die Generation Y geschrieben hat und sich mit seinen 35 Jahren selbst gerade noch zu der Gruppe zählt, gibt zu, dass die Millennials für andere „frustrierend“ sein können. Etwa weil viele von ihnen nicht gut im persönlichen Gespräch sind, weil sie so sehr an elektronische Kommunikation gewöhnt sind. Oder weil sie ein übersteigertes Selbstbewusstsein mitbringen. Das heißt zum Beispiel: den Anspruch, einmal Vorstandsvorsitzender zu werden, aber nicht unbedingt die Bereitschaft, die nötigen Anstrengungen zu investieren. Dorsey sieht in der Generation „ein um drei bis fünf Jahre verzögertes Erwachsenwerden“, das sich darin zeigt, dass sie länger studieren und später Familien gründen. Viele amerikanische Millennials seien von wohlmeinenden Eltern verwöhnt worden, die wollten, dass ihre Kinder es leichter haben. Auch das erkläre die hohen Erwartungshaltungen. Andererseits beobachtet Dorsey bei der Generation Y eine höhere Bereitschaft, selbst Unternehmen zu gründen. Auch die „Time“-Geschichte hat am Ende eine versöhnliche Botschaft und lobt zum Beispiel den Optimismus und die Anpassungsfähigkeit der Millennials. „Sie werden unsere Rettung sein“, heißt das Fazit.

### China: Gedrillte Einzelkinder mit Hang zu Statussymbolen

Wie alles in China ist auch die Generation Y riesengroß, sie umfasst mindestens 200 Millionen Personen. In einer Studie hat der Autozulieferer Johnson Controls ermittelt, dass sich die jungen Leute fundamental von ihren Eltern unterscheiden. Sie kamen nach der Kulturrevolution zur Welt, haben wegen der Einkindpolitik zumeist keine Geschwister, genießen in der Ausbildung, im Arbeitsleben und im Privaten größere Freizügigkeit und mehr Auswahl. Aber sie werden auch früh gedrillt und getriezt, um gute Schulen und Universitäten besuchen zu können. Der Bildungsgrad ist viel höher als früher, aber viele Einzelkinder gelten als verhätschelt. Viele Junge lehnen das überkommene Arbeitsethos der Älteren ab, nach dem man viel arbeiten, sich bescheiden, sparen und gehorchen soll. Aber Geld zu haben ist den Nachwachsenden mindestens ebenso wichtig wie den Generationen zuvor. Junge Chinesen wollen so schnell wie möglich an die Spitze kommen, viel verdienen, das auch nach außen zeigen, etwa mit Statussymbolen wie schicken - zumeist deutschen - Autos, und sie streben ein hohes gesellschaftliches Ansehen an. Interessant ist, dass eine relative Mehrheit konventionelle Arbeitsabläufe vorzieht. Dazu gehören feste Arbeitszeiten und ein eigener Schreibtisch. Wie andere Untersuchungen zeigen, sind Anstellungen in Staatsbetrieben oder im öffentlichen Dienst äußerst begehrt. Das hat mit dem Sicherheitsstreben zu tun und damit, dass Millionen gut ausgebildeter Studenten in

China keine adäquate Anstellung erhalten. Es kommen aber auch Überlegungen ins Spiel, die in freien Ländern keine Rolle spielen. „Für mich ist prioritär, dass mir mein Arbeitgeber einen Pekinger Hukou besorgen kann“, sagt etwa eine 25 Jahre alte Absolventin des Studiengangs Personalwesen aus der Binnenprovinz Shanxi. Damit meint sie eine offizielle Haushaltsregistrierung in der Hauptstadt, eine Art Stadtbürgerrecht, ohne welches man Bürger zweiter Klasse bleibt. „Ein Staatsbetrieb ist irgendwie sicherer“, findet sie.

## **Russland: Freiheit gibt's nur zum Geldverdienen**

Russland hat viele Probleme, aber an Arbeitsplätzen mangelt es nicht - zumindest in den Metropolen wie Moskau und St. Petersburg. Schon wer dort frisch von der Universität kommt, kann zwischen verschiedenen Unternehmen wählen. Die werben um qualifizierte Berufseinsteiger mit so attraktiven Gehältern, dass internationale Unternehmen sicherlich nicht wegen niedriger Lohnkosten in das Schwellenland kommen. Auf dem Land, in den Provinzen ist die Lage wesentlich schlechter, auch wenn Russland im Durchschnitt eine mit offiziell unter 6 Prozent vergleichsweise niedrige Arbeitslosigkeit ausweist. In den Zentren ist es für gut qualifizierte 30-Jährige kein Problem, Geld zu verdienen. Die Probleme beginnen jenseits des Kontoauszugs: Außer der Freiheit bei der Entscheidung, was man konsumieren möchte, bleibt in diesem Land wenig Entfaltungsraum. Das politische System Putin ist zementiert. Bürokratie und Korruption legen jedem Vorhaben Steine in den Weg - ein Grund, warum so wenig Unternehmen gegründet werden und kein Mittelstand entsteht. Der Aufwand lohnt schlichtweg nicht. Die Unzufriedenheit mit der Entwicklung ist zwar spürbar, aber viele Russen wählen lieber den Rückzug ins Private: Für die aufstrebende Mittelschicht gehört der Erwerb von Statussymbolen aller Art dazu, vom schicken Geländewagen bis zum iPad. Mit Letzterem im Ersteren werden die ewigen Staus in den Stadtzentren wenigstens etwas angenehmer. Nichtmaterielle Selbstverwirklichung ist oftmals kein Thema: Dafür fehlt auf dem Land der Wohlstand und in der Stadt das Bedürfnis.

## **Argentinien: Rebellen auf der Suche nach dem Sinn der Arbeit**

Argentiniens zuvor sehr konservative Arbeitswelt erlebt unter dem Einfluss der Generation Y eine kleine Revolution. Verkrustete Hierarchien werden aufgebrochen, der Umgang wird lockerer, individuelle Freiheit und Verantwortung verdrängen disziplinierte Langeweile im Bürotrott. „Die Angehörigen dieser Generation wissen genau, was sie wollen“, erklärt Paula Molinari von der Personalberatungsfirma Whalecom. Besonders wichtig sei ihnen die freie Einteilung ihrer Zeit. „Die rebellieren, wenn sie das Gefühl haben, keinen sinnvollen Beitrag zu leisten“, sagt Molinari. Die Jungen fühlen sich an kein Unternehmen mehr gebunden und sind ständig auf der Suche nach dem Angebot, das am besten zu ihrem Lebensentwurf passt. Die Lage am Arbeitsmarkt kommt ihnen entgegen. Für Fachkräfte herrscht nahezu Vollbeschäftigung. Die Unternehmen müssen um gute Nachwuchskräfte buhlen. Da ist es nicht mehr tabu, gleich am Anfang nach flexibler Arbeitszeit, Telearbeit und Ferien zu fragen. „Meine Philosophie ist, zu tun, was mir guttut“, sagt die 24 Jahre alte Malu Golla. Die gelernte Chefköchin, Werbe- und Hotelfachfrau sucht schon wieder nach neuen Pfaden, während sie mit Gelegenheitsjobs ihren Lebensunterhalt bestreitet. „Zum ersten Mal ist die Attraktivität der Großunternehmen gesunken“, stellt Molinari fest. Nur noch einer von vier Suchenden bevorzugt die Konzerne. Die jungen Leute empfinden die Großunternehmen als „sehr bürokratisch“ und zögen die Arbeit in guten Klein- und Mittelbetrieben vor. Viele wollen am liebsten gleich selbständig werden.

## **Singapur: Entspannte Töne auf der Insel der Erfolgshungrigen**

David Chia hat es nicht wirklich eilig. Er muss es auch nicht eilig haben. Tagsüber verdient der 32-Jährige als Computerfachmann bei den Banken am Finanzplatz Singapur sein Auskommen. Zudem haben die Eltern wie die meisten Singapurere vorgesorgt und ein Haus, das auf der engen Insel Millionen von Dollar wert ist. Und David selbst hat mit Hilfe des Staates kostengünstig eine Wohnung kaufen dürfen. Abends verdingt er sich mit seinen Computerkenntnissen bei Privatleuten, oder vertreibt sich die Zeit mit Freunden. Karriere? „Warum?“, fragt er zurück. „Kaputtmachen will ich mich nicht.“ Es sind ungewöhnliche Töne für einen jungen Singapurere. Denn eigentlich ist die ganze Stadt auf Erfolg getrimmt - schon die Schulen bimsen den Kindern den Lehrstoff ein, damit sie vorankommen. Die Generation Y und ihre Entspanntheit werden damit zur Herausforderung für die streng organisierte Stadt. Auf einer Konferenz für Personalmanager in Singapur nannten die Fachleute die Haltung der Generation Y als größtes Risiko - neben dem Mangel an internationaler Erfahrung der jungen Singapurere. Denn die Generation Y der Asiaten bleibt für die Personalführer schwer einzuschätzen: „Wenn sie kündigen wollen, dann kündigen sie einfach“, klagt Eric Teng von der Straits Trading Company. Und der Chef

von Logistiker Fed-Ex, Khoo Seng-Thiam, sagt: „Das sind junge Manager, die selbst extrem umhegt werden wollen.“ Gerade dies aber ist für asiatische Gesellschaften ein unbekanntes Gefühl.

Quelle: F.A.Z.

## Europas Zukunft

### Weniger Macht für Brüssel

21.09.2013 · Im Wahlkampf wurde die Chance vertan, darüber zu reden, welches Europa wir wollen. Zu oft heißt es, der Nationalstaat habe ausgedient. Doch wer die Dezentralität lobt, ist kein schlechter Europäer. Ein Kommentar.

Von [Rainer Hank](#)

83,143



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Nach der Wahl ist vor der Wahl. Oft und zu Recht ist kritisiert worden, dass in diesem Bundestagswahlkampf, der jetzt zu Ende ist, die große Chance verschenkt wurde, mit den Bürgern über das Thema: „Welches Europa wollen wir?“ zu debattieren. Verpasst ist verpasst; da hilft alles Lamentieren nicht. Die nächste Chance lugt schon um die Ecke: Im Mai sind Wahlen zum Europaparlament; und danach gibt es auch eine neue EU-Kommission. Vorher muss – nach bald fünf Jahren Euro- und Europa-Krise – dringend über ein paar Dinge geredet werden.

Wo soll die Macht sein in Europa – bei den Mitgliedsländern oder bei der Zentrale in Brüssel? Das wollte der Thinktank „Open Europe Berlin“ vergangene Woche von den Deutschen wissen, und die Antwort ging eindeutig in Richtung Dezentralität; nur 26 Prozent plädieren für Zentralisierung (im Jahr zuvor waren es noch 37 Prozent). Kanzlerin Angela Merkel mit ihrer feinen Spürnase scheint das gerochen zu haben. Seit Wochen bereitet sie eine semantische Kehrtwende vor, welche die Nationalstaaten stärkt und das Geraune von „mehr Europa“, „Fiskalunion“, „europäische Wirtschaftsregierung“ und so fort zurücknimmt. Grund dafür ist gewiss auch Merkels bittere Enttäuschung über Kommissionspräsident Manuel Barroso, den sie einst selbst ins Amt gehievt hatte. Aber viel wichtiger sind eine Reihe systematischer Gründe, die eine Stärkung der Nationalstaaten und ihrer Parlamente als überlegene Strategie zur europäischen Integration ausweisen. Wer die Dezentralität lobt, ist kein schlechter Europäer.

### Der Bundestag auf dem Weg der Selbstentmachtung

Souveränität und Subsidiarität heißen die vergessenen Grundprinzipien Europas. Allzu lange wurde gedankenlos nachgeplappert, der Nationalstaat habe ausgedient, Souveränität müsse nolens volens abgegeben werden. Als ob der Nationalstaat per se böse oder irgendwie hinterwäldlerisch geworden sei. Als ob es irgendwo auf der Welt ein gelungenes Beispiel supranationaler Staatlichkeit gäbe. Es geht nicht um die Hingabe an deutsche oder französische Gefühlsduselei, sondern um ein in Jahrhunderten fein ausbalanciertes

System demokratischer Repräsentation und Machtdelegation, das den Bürgern maximale politische Mitbestimmungsrechte in ihrem Land offeriert.

Allzu viel Souveränität ist im Lauf der Krise faktisch schon an ad hoc geschaffene Brüsseler Fiskalinstitutionen (EFSF, ESM) abgegeben worden. Das neue deutsche Parlament sollte nachdenken, ob es diesen Weg der Selbstentmachtung in Richtung einer Fiskal- und Transferunion weitergehen will. Wenn Merkel jüngst zu Protokoll gab, man müsse über die Rückübertragung von Zuständigkeiten von Brüssel auf die Mitgliedstaaten reden, trifft sie den Punkt. Auch ein Kanzler Steinbrück, sollte er die Regierung bilden, könnte daran Gefallen finden.

### **Das Subsidiaritätsprinzip: ein Lob auf kleinere Gemeinwesen**

Neben der Souveränität ist es das Prinzip der Subsidiarität, das dringend gestärkt werden muss. Es stammt aus der (ebenfalls vergessenen) katholischen Soziallehre und lautet so: „Es verstößt gegen die Gerechtigkeit, das, was die kleineren Gemeinwesen leisten und zu gutem Erfolg führen können, für die übergeordnete Gemeinschaft in Anspruch zu nehmen.“ Seinen Widerhall findet dieses Prinzip in den Erkenntnissen der modernen Finanzwissenschaft, wonach der Nutzen öffentlicher Leistungen stets am höchsten und die Kosten am niedrigsten sind, wenn diese Leistungen dezentral bereitgestellt werden. Dezentrale Demokratie und lokale Fiskalautonomie gehören zusammen. Die holländische Regierung hat daraus jüngst den Grundsatz abgeleitet, wenn irgendwie möglich, müsse national entschieden werden; nur wenn es gar nicht anders gehe, sei Brüssel am Zug.

Es liege in der Natur des Systems staatlicher Wirtschaftskontrolle, nach Zentralisierung zu streben, schrieb der Liberale Ludwig von Mises Mitte der vierziger Jahre: „Die Bürokraten vermehren sich und sind eifrig bestrebt, die Handlungsfreiheit des einzelnen Bürgers einzuschränken.“ Ein wenig hat sich der Wind in den vergangenen Wochen zum Positiven gedreht.



September 21, 2013

## German Campaign, Amid Fiery Debate Abroad, Shuffles Toward Consensus

By [ALISON SMALE](#)

83,145

BERLIN — It would be easy to mock the political campaign that ends with Sunday’s national elections in Germany as a version of fiddling while Rome burns. It has lacked any heated debate over the nation’s role in maintaining the common European currency or addressing the crippling levels of unemployment among its southern neighbors.

The clashes over intervention in Syria that consumed the Britain, France, Russia and the United States for weeks barely made a political ripple here, underscoring how deeply Germans shun the use of force. Chancellor [Angela Merkel](#)’s center-right government and the left-leaning opposition remained largely united in supporting an ambitious and costly plan to wean the economy off nuclear power and carbon fuels. There was little talk of the demographic challenges of an aging population.

It was a showcase for the postwar German tendency toward consensus, and was all the more remarkable for the contrast it provided to the bitter ideological clashes playing out in the United States and many other big democracies. It could well yield an outcome almost unfathomable in peacetime Washington, Paris or London: a power-sharing agreement between the main parties of the left and right.

The relative comity between the major parties on the campaign trail does not mean that Ms. Merkel, assuming she emerges to lead the next government, can escape tough choices or that Germany can insulate itself from forces beyond its control: from the financial markets and the global economy to tumult in the Middle East and a Russia that is trying to reassert itself.

Welcomed by many Germans as stability at a time of prosperity, the mood may nonetheless disappoint Germany’s allies in the United States, who would love to see the country assert itself more in Europe, as well as its partners in the European Union who just want to end the bloc’s doldrums and look to Germany for bolder action.

Frustrating as it may be, this [Germany](#) of slow steps and consensus politics is precisely the one that the United States and its victorious European allies sought to forge in the smoldering ruins of [World War II](#). It is a structure that was reinforced as late as the country’s reunification after the fall of the [Berlin Wall](#) in 1989, when the old German question of how to tame the country’s undoubted power was solved by wrapping it still tighter in the bonds of a unified Europe, the very ones being tested today by a slow-grinding economic crisis.

It is also a system that has promoted steady and farsighted vision on big issues. More than in most Western democracies, German leaders, including Ms. Merkel, who is seeking a third term, have persuaded their people to endure short-term pains for longer-term gains — whether reunification, energy transformation or, a decade ago, the kinds of labor and economic overhauls that other European nations are still blinking at.

“We are the students very eager to learn the American re-education program,” said Jürgen Falter, 69, a professor at the University of Mainz and an expert both on the Nazi past and Germany’s complex electoral system. “And we have really fully internalized it — we go for pacifism, not belligerence, consensus rather than conflict.”

After 1945, the Allies deliberately built a federal structure that dispersed power from Berlin and scattered national institutions throughout what was then West Germany. In addition, they devised an electoral law virtually guaranteed to produce a coalition government; no chancellor since Konrad Adenauer in the late 1950s has been able to govern alone.

For proof, take Ms. Merkel of the Christian Democrats and her main rival, Peer Steinbrück of the Social Democrats. Numerous domestic and international observers have struggled to detect vibrancy in the back-and-forth between Ms. Merkel's camp and Mr. Steinbrück's over any range of issues — child allowance for nonworking mothers, how best to preserve generally good and cheap health care, and even what Berlin really intends for the 17-nation euro zone or the 28-member European Union.

The distinctions in their positions fall squarely into the two social groupings from which they spring: the Christian middle class in the case of the Christian Democrats, and the working class and trade unions for the Social Democrats.

The center-left is more open about the possible need to raise taxes, given the impoverished state of Germany's municipal and state coffers. By common agreement, the national infrastructure — road, rail, bridges and the broadband Internet — sorely needs attention and investment.

Yet virtually on the eve of the election, it remains uncertain what issues would block a deal if the parties are in fact pushed by fractured returns into negotiations to form a “grand coalition,” like the one Ms. Merkel headed from 2005 to 2009 — with Mr. Steinbrück her widely praised finance minister and partner in getting through the 2008 financial crisis.

This smudging of differences is abetted by both Ms. Merkel's character and her skill as a political tactician. The chancellor — who together with her current finance minister, Wolfgang Schäuble, has managed the euro crisis very much step by step — is skilled at floating ideas to test their resonance, then subtly shifting policy if needed.

Similarly, while no great orator, Ms. Merkel lays out arguments to listeners who feel invited to think along with her, and appreciate being included, Professor Falter suggested.

In this way, gradually over two terms, she has come to occupy a progressively larger share of Germany's political center, even nudging out the left. Domestically, this has allowed her, so far with Social Democratic support, to preserve the national consensus on helping needy European neighbors.

But in a new term, a doubling down on consensus politics could also reinforce the limits of German largess. There is broad agreement that the euro has been good for this export powerhouse, and the chancellor has told voters in this campaign that the overhauls in southern Europe are beginning to bear fruit.

Aware that Ms. Merkel floats ideas to see what sticks, some European allies — notably Britain, where Prime Minister David Cameron is under strong pressure from skeptics who do not believe in a united Europe — listened carefully when she used her first major interview after summer vacation to talk vaguely of returning some powers from Brussels to national governments.

What that might mean for politics and business was unclear. An article in Germany's major business daily, *Handelsblatt*, fleshed out the ideas in the past week, citing unnamed sources close to Ms. Merkel. In a familiar ritual, her spokesman, Steffen Seibert, then denied any such move was afoot.

Reading tea leaves like these will undoubtedly occupy diplomats and others in coming weeks, as the popular Ms. Merkel and whichever assortment of parliamentary parties assures her a majority, thrash out a new consensus in the form of a coalition pact.

The Social Democrats, aware that their share of the vote slumped to 23 percent in 2009 from 34 percent in 2005 after four years in partnership with the chancellor, will enter a similar union only with deep reservations, particularly aware of Ms. Merkel's knack for reaping the benefit from others' ideas.

But, by international comparison, the wonder is that the center-leftists would enter such a partnership at all. “Out of responsibility to the state,” one Social Democrat put it privately last week.

