

Jornal de Negócios - Portugal

### **Portugal's highest court torpedoed reforms**

Portugal's Constitutional Court has [once again torpedoed](#) the government's plans for austerity measures. On Thursday it rejected a series of changes to the legislation aimed at creating more flexibility on the labour market. Only once Portugal's creditors refuse to give the country another cent will the judges stop hindering state reform, the liberal business daily Jornal de Negócios believes: "Since yesterday the doubters know that the Constitutional Court will never give any government (not just this one) the chance to reform the country. ... The constitution gives leeway for certain reforms. But the judges must finally start to interpret it in a way that is in keeping with the times. ... This decision brings us to another dead end. ... The reforms necessary for modernising the country will only make progress on the day the creditors deliver a clear 'Reforms or money!' threat. Go on, troika! That's what we deserve." (27/09/2013)

Il Sole 24 Ore - Italy

### **Italy facing more than a government crisis**

Several Italian MPs belonging to ex-prime minister Silvio Berlusconi's PdL party announced on Thursday that they were resigning. They explained that that they were doing so in protest at the public's treatment of Berlusconi, who has now been definitively convicted of [tax fraud](#). This is above all an attack against President Giorgio Napolitano, who is seen as the [architect of the current government](#), the liberal business paper Il Sole 24 Ore criticises: "There is no sign of a government crisis but of a crisis of the institutions, of the state. Because the highest office in our country is being harmed in the process: the head of state. Up to now, apart from a few splinter groups everyone has accepted Napolitano in the role of impartial arbitrator. ... The fixed idea the conservatives have now got into their heads is shaking the very foundations of the state - starting with parliament. It is stoking a hostility within the party that seems above all directed against the head of state. An unprecedented step backwards at a time when Italy needs nothing more urgently than stability." (27/09/2013)

Lietuvos Žinios - Lithuania

### **FDP rout a warning for Europe's liberals**

In the [German parliamentary elections](#) the liberal FDP party suffered the worst defeat since it was founded over 60 years ago, and will not be represented in parliament. This is a warning for all liberal parties in Europe, the conservative daily Lietuvos žinios comments: "In the past decades radical right-wing parties have sprung up in Europe. Often they combine rather liberal ideas of the domestic market with [Euroscepticism](#) and conservative ideas on multiculturalism. They represent serious competition for everyone in the party system, but the ones they threaten the most are the small parties on the right of the political spectrum. ... The liberal parties in the West can now choose between two options: the Danish one (maintaining and strengthening [liberalism](#)) or the Austrian one (right-wing radicalism and [populism](#)). The decision between these two alternatives will not only determine the future of the liberals, but also that of Europe's entire party system." (27/09/2013)

## Griechenland

### Mafiöse Morgenröte

29.09.2013 · Die Führung der griechischen rechtsradikalen Partei wurde verhaftet. Nun stellt sich die Frage, wie der Staat mit ihren Wählern umgehen soll.

Von [Michael Martens](#), Istanbul

85,2



© AP Der Chef der rechtsradikalen Partei Goldene Morgenröte, Nikolaos Michaloliakos, wird in Athen abgeführt.

Schon in der Vergangenheit waren nicht nur die Mitglieder und Sympathisanten, sondern auch die Abgeordneten der rechtsradikalen Partei „Chrysi Avgi“ (Goldene Morgenröte, CA) immer wieder durch Gewalttaten aufgefallen. Statt mit Argumenten hantierten sie lieber mit Baseballschlägern. So verprügelte der CA-Abgeordnete und Parteisprecher Ilias Kasidiaris eine kommunistische Abgeordnete in einer Fernsehsendung. Zunächst waren vor allem Flüchtlinge aus Afrika und Südasien Opfer der Gewalt von Griechenlands parlamentarisch bestätigten Rechtsradikalen. Nachdem in der vergangenen Woche jedoch ein (linksradikaler) Grieche von einem Rollkommando der Partei erstochen wurde, reagierte der Staat mit einer Entschlossenheit, die er zuvor nicht gezeigt hatte.

Ministerpräsident Antonis Samaras sagte den „Feinden der Demokratie“ den Kampf an, es kam zu Razzien in Parteibüros und Wohnungen von CA-Funktionären, bei denen laut Polizeiangaben Waffen, Munition und Hinweise auf kriminelle Machenschaften gefunden wurden. Am Wochenende dann der vorläufige Höhepunkt: Parteichef Nikolaos Michaloliakos, sein Sprecher Kasidiaris und drei weitere Parlamentsabgeordnete sowie mehr als zehn Funktionäre und Aktivisten der „Morgenröte“, darunter auch ein Polizist und eine Polizistin, wurden festgenommen. Nach weiteren 12 Personen wird gefahndet, so nach dem stellvertretenden Parteichef Christos Pappas. Es ist das erste Mal seit dem Ende der Militärdiktatur 1974, dass in Griechenland ein Parteichef verhaftet wurde.

Die Staatsanwaltschaft bezichtigt die Verhafteten, eine kriminelle Vereinigung gebildet zu haben. Vom griechischen Nachrichtendienst abgehörte Telefongespräche mehrerer CA-Politiker sollen die Vorwürfe angeblich stützen. Es geht unter anderem um Tötungsdelikte, Schutzgelderpressung und Geldwäsche. Berichte, die Polizei habe auch im Haus von Michaloliakos in einem der nördlichen Vororte Athens drei (unangemeldete) Schusswaffen, Munition und 40000 Euro sichergestellt, deuten ebenfalls in diese Richtung. Nikos Dendias, Minister für Öffentliche Ordnung und Bürgerschutz, kommentierte die Verhaftungen jedenfalls so, als sei das Urteil schon gesprochen: „In Griechenland ist kein Platz für kriminelle Organisationen, die unter dem Deckmantel einer politischen Partei versuchen, das Leben unseres Landes zu erobern, die staatlichen Institutionen zu untergraben, zu ethnischem Hass aufzuwiegeln, Menschenrechte in Zweifel zu ziehen und den Frieden zu stören.“ Die Goldene Morgenröte habe versucht, die Stärke der Demokratie zu testen, „und jetzt erhält sie die Antwort vom Rechtsstaat“, sagte der Minister.

## Neues Parteiengesetz geplant

Eine weitere Antwort des Rechtsstaates ist dem Vernehmen nach ein neues Gesetz, das Parteien, deren Führer oder Abgeordnete krimineller Machenschaften überführt wurden, die staatliche Finanzierung, so die Wahlkampfkostenerstattung, entziehen soll. Doch werden sich die Vorwürfe, sollte es zu einer Anklage kommen, auch im Zuge eines fairen Prozesses beweisen lassen? Die jeglicher Sympathien für die Goldene Morgenröte unverdächtige Athener Zeitung „**Kathimerini**“ warnt bereits: **„Der Prozess muss deutlich zeigen, dass es Verbrechen sind, die verfolgt werden, nicht Ideen, wie fremd und geschmacklos sie unserer Gesellschaft auch sein mögen. Es muss auch klar sein, dass die Behörden ihre Arbeit gut machen, dass sie ihre Vorwürfe beweisen werden – sonst könnte das Vorgehen gegen die Goldene Morgenröte als politisches Pogrom angesehen werden und ihr sogar nutzen.“**

Vor einer Woche, am Tag nach der Bundestagswahl druckte die linkspopulistische Zeitung „**I efimerida ton syntakton**“ (Die Zeitung der Redakteure) einmal mehr ein Hakenkreuz auf ihrer Titelseite. Diesmal allerdings ging nicht in erster Linie um Angela Merkel, sondern eher um die erschreckende griechische Realität – an der die Kanzlerin nach Ansicht vieler Griechen freilich nicht ganz unbeteiligt ist. Die Karikatur auf der Titelseite zeigte Merkel, wie sie bei einem Spaziergang in Athen drei aggressive Hunde ausführt, den IWF, die EU und die EZB. Griechenlands Ministerpräsident Antonis Samaras führt sie auf einen roten Teppich in Form einer Swastika, den sein Stellvertreter, der Außenminister Evangelos Venizelos, eifrig ausrollt. Durch die von Merkel erzwungene Sparpolitik, das soll die Zeichnung aussagen, steuere Griechenland auf eine Diktatur zu.



Lupenreine Antidemokraten: Parteichef Michaloliakos (rechts) und ein Mitstreiter

## Verachtung für die Demokratie

Angesichts des Zuspruchs, den die rechtsradikale und offen gewaltbereite Partei „**Chrysi Avgi**“ (Goldene Morgenröte, CA) in der griechischen Bevölkerung genießt, ist die Sorge um die politische Stabilität des südlichsten Balkanstaates durchaus berechtigt. Während sie bei der Parlamentswahl 2009 weniger als 0,5 Prozent der Stimmen erhalten hatte, lagen ihre Umfragewerte zwischenzeitlich bei bis zu 15 Prozent, im Fall von Wahlen wäre sie damit drittstärkste Kraft in Griechenland. Die 18 Abgeordneten der Partei, die 2012 erstmals ins Parlament einzog, machen aus ihrer Verachtung für die Demokratie kein Geheimnis. Einige Abgeordnete und Funktionäre der Partei haben sich ihre politischen Ideale in Form von Hakenkreuzen in die Haut tätowieren lassen. Die Abgeordnete Eleni Zaroulia, Ehefrau des Parteichefs Nikolaos Michaloliakos, sorgte für Aufsehen, als sie Ausländer „**Untermenschen**“ nannte. Pikanterweise gehört sie zugleich dem Antidiskriminierungsausschuss der Parlamentarischen Versammlung des Europarates an.

Angesichts der Popularität der Partei stellt sich nun die Frage, wie der Staat auf die Wähler zugehen soll, die der Morgenröte zu ihrem Erfolg verholfen haben. Dass etwa ein Drittel der CA-Wähler angeben, die Partei nur aus Protest zu wählen, werten einige Demoskopien als gutes Zeichen, weil der Zuspruch zur Morgenröte sinken werde, sobald (oder wenn) die Krise des Landes überwunden sei. Andere sagen, Kirche, Armee und Polizei sollten sich als Institutionen in aller Schärfe von der Partei distanzieren, um sie zu schwächen. Besonders die Verbindungen zwischen Polizisten und den Rechtsradikalen geben zu denken. Das Innenministerium teilte mit, Ministerpräsident Samaras habe Ermittlungen „**in alle Richtungen**“ angeordnet. Samaras flog am Wochenende nach Washington zu Gesprächen mit dem Internationalen Währungsfonds, die sich für die Zukunft des Landes als mindestens ebenso bedeutsam herausstellen könnten wie der Kampf gegen die Partei des Nikolaos Michaloliakos und seiner Getreuen.

**Autriche : la coalition se maintient malgré une poussée de l'extrême droite**

(Titre avant 19heures : **L'Autriche échappe de justesse à l'extrême droite**)

Le Monde.fr avec AFP | 29.09.2013 à 17h19 • Mis à jour le 29.09.2013 à 19h26

85,4

**La grande coalition entre sociaux-démocrates et conservateurs en [Autriche](#) devrait se [maintenir](#) au [pouvoir](#) à l'issue des élections législatives de dimanche 29 septembre. Mais cette victoire annoncée ne peut [masquer](#) un revers cuisant, avec la forte montée de l'extrême droite.**

Selon des estimations des instituts de sondages ARGE et SORA, le Parti [social](#)-démocrate (SPÖ) du chancelier sortant, Werner Faymann, rassemble entre 26,4 et 26,7 % des suffrages. Son traditionnel allié gouvernemental, les conservateurs de l'ÖVP, accuse un recul similaire, entre 23,6 et 23,8 %.

Les deux partis enregistrent ainsi leur plus mauvais score depuis l'avènement de la deuxième République, après l'effondrement en 1945 de la dictature nazie. Depuis 68 ans, les Autrichiens ont privilégié des alliances entre ces deux formations, gage de stabilité dans le pays.

Les deux grands partis du [centre](#) devraient néanmoins [pouvoir](#) reconduire un gouvernement de coalition : selon SORA, ils rassembleraient 99 sièges sur les 183 que compte le Conseil national, la chambre basse du parlement autrichien.

## FORTE PROGRESSION DE L'EXTRÊME DROITE

Le scrutin est marqué par la forte progression du principal parti d'extrême droite FPÖ, qui gagne plus de quatre points (20,7 à 21,5 %), comparé aux 17,5 % de 2008.

Le FPÖ de Heinz Christian Strache, qui a prêché "*l'Amour du prochain*" – à condition qu'il s'agisse d'Autrichiens –, a mené une campagne sans surprise, axée sur le rejet du centralisme de Bruxelles et des attaques contre les demandeurs d'asile et les immigrants. "*HC*", comme il aime se [faire appeler](#), a profité de la campagne terne et clientéliste des deux grands partis et d'une perte de vitesse du parti du milliardaire austro-canadien Frank Stronach.

"*Aujourd'hui il y a trois partis établis en Autriche et le SPÖ ne peut plus prétendre à la domination*", a lancé le dirigeant âgé de 44 ans, à son quartier général à Vienne : "*On ne peut pas [former](#) une coalition de perdants*", a-t-il insisté, "*on ne peut plus nous exclure!*", a-t-il dit à l'adresse en particulier des sociaux-démocrates, qui ont toujours rejeté une alliance avec les "*Bleus*".

## UN BON BILAN ÉCONOMIQUE

L'équipe menée par le chancelier social-démocrate sortant Werner Faymann, dont ce sera le second mandat, peut se [targuer](#) d'un bon bilan économique, avec un taux de chômage contenu sous les 5 %. Mais les nombreux scandales de corruption de ces dernières années et les querelles internes synonymes de paralysie des réformes ont lourdement pesé sur sa popularité.

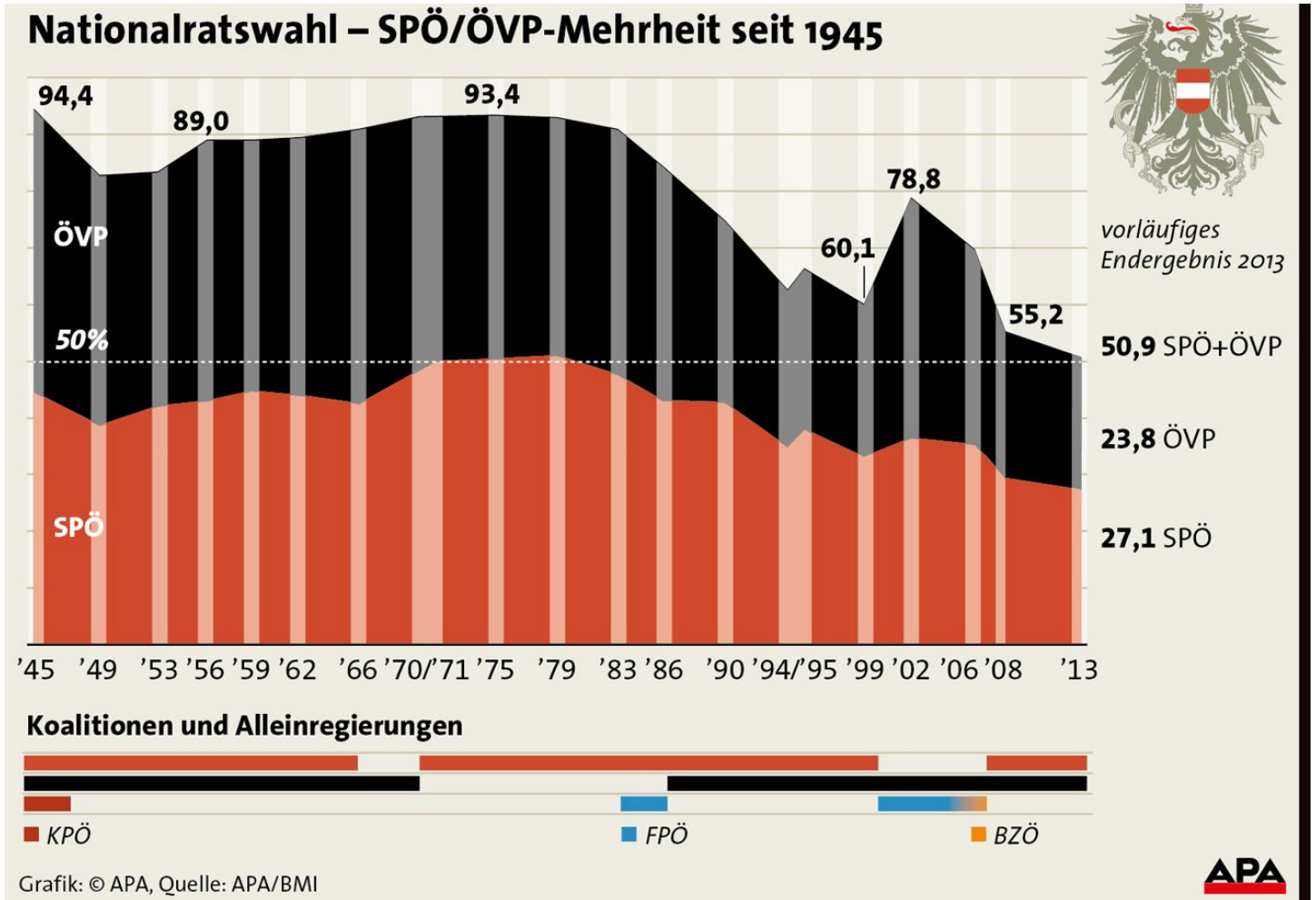
La liste du milliardaire austro-canadien euro-sceptique Frank Stronach entre au Parlement, mais avec un score (entre 5,8 et 6 %) loin des espoirs de ce nouveau venu en politique, crédité il y a encore six mois de 12 % des intentions de vote. Mais son arrivée sur l'échiquier [politique](#) autrichien a néanmoins permis de [brider](#) la progression du FPÖ.

## LE PARTI DE JÖRG HAIDER SORT DU PARLEMENT

Elle est aussi en partie responsable de la piètre performance du **BZÖ**, parti fondé à la suite d'une scission du **FPÖ** par le dirigeant populiste charismatique **Jörg Haider**, décédé dans un accident de voiture en 2008. Celui-ci échoue à [atteindre](#) cette barre, avec seulement 3,4 à 3,7 % des suffrages, et est donc éliminé du Parlement alors qu'il avait encore obtenu 10,70 % des voix en 2008.

La surprise vient d'un autre nouveau venu sur l'échiquier politique, le parti libéral NEOS, qui, avec 4,6 à 4,7 %, franchit la barre des 4 % nécessaires pour [avoir](#) des élus.

Les Verts, dans l'opposition, progressent, entre 11,2 et 12,0 % (10,43 % en 2008), mais en deçà de leurs attentes, leur objectif étant la barre des 15 %. La participation des 6,4 millions d'électeurs inscrits serait en chute, avec un à deux points de moins qu'en 2008 (78,82 %).





## Parlamentswahl in Österreich

### Menetekel in Wien

29.09.2013 · Der Trend des **Abschmelzens der beiden Volksparteien**, die in Wien lange gemeinsam regiert haben, setzt sich fort. Die österreichische Wahl passt zu **dem Bild, das man aus anderen Ländern Europas kennt**.

Von [Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger](#)

85,7

Die Rechtspopulisten sind gestärkt worden, von den beiden Parteien der großen Koalition lässt sich das ganz gewiss nicht sagen: Es ist kein gutes Ergebnis, das die sozialdemokratische SPÖ mit Kanzler Faymann und die christlich-demokratische ÖVP mit Vizekanzler Spindelegger erzielt haben, es ist sogar richtig schlecht. **Der Trend des Abschmelzens der beiden Volksparteien, die viele Jahrzehnte lang in Wien gemeinsam regiert haben, setzt sich fort – trotz einer, alles in allem, guten wirtschaftlichen Lage**, um die viele Leute in den europäischen Krisenländern die Österreicher beneiden würden. Vermutlich wird es dennoch reichen, dass SPÖ und ÖVP die Koalition fortsetzen und zwar so wie bisher: Die Konservativen bleiben der Juniorpartner. Im Nationalrat, dem mehr Parteien angehören werden als bisher, wird die Opposition künftig jedoch noch forscher auftreten. Gemütlich wird es für die alten und mutmaßlich auch künftig Regierenden nicht werden.

**Sie werden in die Zange genommen werden auf der einen Seite von den Grünen und auf der anderen von Rechten und Rechtspopulisten. Deren Lager ist größer geworden wegen der deutlichen Gewinne der rechten FPÖ – und weil der Truppe des euroskeptischen austrokanadischen Milliardärs Stronach der Einzug ins Parlament gelungen ist. Der hat jetzt dank seiner üppigen Wahlkampfmittel auch in Wien eine parlamentarische Plattform, um für „einen Euro für jedes Land“ zu werben.**

In Österreich beginnt nun die große Unübersichtlichkeit im Nationalrat. Man wird sich möglicherweise darauf einzustellen haben, dass in unserem Nachbarland in Zukunft ein paar lautere Töne angeschlagen werden. Die österreichische Wahl passt zu dem Bild, das man aus anderen europäischen Ländern bereits kennt: **Die traditionellen Parteien, die den politischen „Mainstream“ verkörpern, werden von immer mehr Wählern abgelehnt, denen die Einwanderungs- und die Europapolitik der Regierungen nicht behagt und denen vieles andere gegen den Strich geht. Man ahnt schon jetzt dunkel, wie sich diese Stimmung auf das Ergebnis der Europawahl im kommenden Jahr niederschlagen dürfte. Es gibt zu denken, dass ein knappes Drittel der österreichischen Wähler in Lager der Rechtspopulisten abwandert und/oder sich dort nach immer neuen Heroen umschaute, die das Einfache und die Rückkehr der guten alten Zeit versprechen.**

## Gastbeitrag

### Hausaufgaben für Deutschland

30.09.2013 · Deutschland steht vor zwei großen Herausforderungen: Die neue Bundesregierung muss Europa führen und den Wohlfahrtsstaat reformieren.

Von Dennis Snower

85,8

Nach der Bundestagswahl hat die neue Regierung wichtige Hausaufgaben zu erledigen. Denn Deutschland steht vor zwei großen Herausforderungen - einer externen und einer internen. Die externe Aufgabe ist die Lösung der immer noch schwelenden Euro-Krise. Die Bundesregierung muss einen Vorschlag machen, der Schuldern wie Gläubigern innerhalb der Eurozone weiterhilft. Deutschland ist auf einen wirtschaftlich gesunden Euroraum angewiesen - und hat das nötige politische Gewicht, um eine nachhaltige Lösung im Sinne aller Länder durchzusetzen. Intern muss sich Deutschland durch eine umfassende Reform des Wohlfahrtsstaates wettbewerbsfähiger machen. Der Aufstieg Deutschlands vom „kranken Mann“ zur „Lokomotive Europas“ geht nicht allein auf die Reformen der Agenda 2010 zurück, sondern vor allem auf die moderate Lohnentwicklung. Diese Phase ist nun vorbei. Nur durch Flexibilität und hohe Beschäftigungsraten kann Deutschland im weltweiten Wettbewerb bestehen.

Bereits im Wahlkampf war die Rede von einem neuen Rettungspaket für Griechenland. Darum wird man wohl nicht herumkommen, es zeigt aber vor allem eines: Die bisherige [Euro-Rettungspolitik](#), bestehend aus Banken-Rekapitalisierungspaket, ESM, Fiskalpakt und extrem großzügiger Geldpolitik, ist gescheitert, weil sie nicht nachhaltig wirkt. Sie wird daher durch ein neues wirtschaftspolitisches Konstrukt abgelöst werden müssen.

## Deutschland soll in Eurokrise Führungsrolle wahrnehmen

Europa braucht jemanden, der vorgeht und sich für alle Länder der Eurozone Gedanken macht. Die Regierung der Vereinigten Staaten macht Vorschläge, die allen Staaten weiterhelfen sollen - genau das ist auch in Europa notwendig. Diese Rolle kann nur Deutschland übernehmen. Bislang hat die Regierung vor allem eigene Interessen durchgesetzt - und die Schuldenstaaten so noch tiefer in die Krise gestürzt. Dieser Weg gefährdet die Zukunft des Projekts Europa. Daher muss die neue Regierung nun einen Vorschlag machen, der dem gesamten Euroraum weiterhilft. Deutschland sollte nachhaltige institutionelle Rahmenbedingungen von den Schuldnerländern einfordern, muss aber im Gegenzug Zugeständnisse machen.

Um solche Bedingungen zu schaffen, ist ein bindendes Regelwerk notwendig, das in dieser Woche auch auf dem [Global Economic Symposium](#) diskutiert wird. Ein wichtiges Element sind „atmende Fiskalregeln“, die eine langfristige Schuldenquote vorgeben, aber in Rezessionszeiten Mehrausgaben ermöglichen. Die Schulden müssen in guten Zeiten zurückgezahlt werden. Hält sich eine Regierung nicht daran, gibt es automatische Anpassungen in der Fiskalregel, etwa eine Mehrwertsteuererhöhung oder eine Kürzung der Staatsausgaben nach dem Rasenmäherprinzip.

Zugleich muss die Europäische Zentralbank (EZB) nachvollziehbare Solvenz Kriterien für Euromitglieder definieren. Überschuldete Länder müssen ein geordnetes Insolvenzverfahren durchlaufen und dürfen in dieser Zeit kein Geld von der EZB bekommen. Die finanzielle Ansteckungsgefahr wäre gebannt - schließlich könnten die anderen Staaten unter ihren Fiskalregeln die Solvenz Kriterien erfüllen. Zudem muss gewährleistet sein, dass Finanzinstitutionen, deren Pleite gesamtwirtschaftliche Probleme erzeugen würde, nicht mehr scheitern können. Eine Möglichkeit wäre, solchen Institutionen vorzuschreiben, ihre Schulden in Form von Wandelanleihen aufzunehmen. Werden die Eigenkapitalanforderungen nicht mehr erfüllt, verwandeln sich diese Anleihen in Aktien - und die Aktionäre müssten die Risiken schultern.

Im Gegenzug sollten verschuldete Staaten temporäre Unterstützung in Krisenzeiten erhalten. Statt ausufernder Transfers könnte für eine Übergangszeit von fünf Jahren ein Zinsausgleichsfonds ins Leben gerufen werden.



Dieser würde Zinsspitzen ausgleichen und so für einen limitierten Transfer sorgen - so lange, bis die Märkte sich auf die Geltung der Fiskalregeln eingestellt haben.

Verweigert sich die neue Bundesregierung diesem Weg, gibt es nur zwei plausible, allerdings wenig wünschenswerte Alternativen. Die erste ist Inflation: Je mehr sich der Euroraum bei der Stabilisierung der Finanzmärkte auf die EZB verlässt, desto weniger ist die Zentralbank in der Lage, sich ihrer ursprünglichen Aufgabe, der Inflationsbekämpfung, wann nötig zu widmen. Die zweite Möglichkeit wäre eine lang anhaltende Phase der Instabilität und Unsicherheit im Euroraum.

## **Ein Sozialkonto für jedermann**

Aber auch innerhalb Deutschlands besteht Handlungsbedarf. Wir dürfen uns nicht auf dem Erfolg der letzten Jahre ausruhen - sonst geht es schnell wieder bergab. Deutschland hat immer noch einen sehr rigiden Wohlfahrtsstaat, der radikal reformiert gehört: Die Kosten für Ausbildung, Arbeitslosenversicherung, Krankenversicherung und Rente sollten über Sozialkonten gedeckt werden. Statt Steuern und Abgaben zu zahlen, würde jeder einen nach Alter und Einkommen gestaffelten Beitrag auf sein Sozialkonto überweisen. Er wüsste, dass das dort eingezahlte Geld ihm zusteht, wenn er es braucht. Die Konten der Wohlhabenden könnten besteuert und die der weniger Wohlhabenden subventioniert werden - so kann jedes politisch vorgegebene Maß an Umverteilung gewährleistet werden.

Natürlich ist das nicht über Nacht zu schaffen. Um den demographischen Herausforderungen zu begegnen, sollte man daher mit einer Rentenreform beginnen. Ein vorgeschriebenes Renteneintrittsalter sollte es nicht mehr geben. Wer will, dürfte zwar wie heute in Rente gehen. Weiterzuarbeiten wäre aber auch möglich, jedoch ohne Kündigungsschutz. So ließe sich sicherstellen, dass man nur länger arbeitet, wenn es sowohl im eigenen als auch im Interesse des Arbeitgebers ist. Für jedes zusätzliche Arbeitsjahr würden die entgangenen Rentenzahlungen zu den künftigen addiert. Setzt man sich zur Ruhe, ist die Rente höher. So würde es niemandem schlechter gehen - einigen aber besser. Zudem würden die Pensionslasten der Regierung sinken, denn wer länger arbeitet, zahlt auch länger Steuern.

Deutschland hat die Chance, seine Erfolgsgeschichte fortzuschreiben, wenn die Lösung der Euro-Krise und eine Reform des Wohlfahrtsstaates gelingt. Auf die neue Bundesregierung warten wichtige Aufgaben. Packen wir es an!

Dennis Snower ist [Präsident des Instituts für Weltwirtschaft in Kiel](#).

Quelle: F.A.S.

## Regierungskrise

### Italien ist in Wirtschaftsfragen handlungsunfähig

30.09.2013 · Die Regierungskrise in Italien nährt Zweifel, ob es dem Land gelingen wird, rechtzeitig einen neuen Haushaltsentwurf auf den Weg zu bringen. Am Anleihemarkt gerät Italien bereits unter Druck.

Von [Tobias Piller](#), Rom

85,10

Noch bevor sich entscheidet, [ob in den kommenden Tagen die italienische Regierung von Ministerpräsident Enrico Letta überleben wird](#), erweist sich Italien in Wirtschaftsfragen schon als handlungsunfähig. In der Folge sind die Staatsanleihen an diesem Montag bereits unter Druck geraten. Die Rendite für zehnjährige Papiere stieg am Montagmorgen um 0,31 Prozentpunkte auf 4,73 Prozent. Der Zinsaufschlag zu den richtungsweisenden deutschen Anleihen kletterte auf 304 Basispunkte und erreichte damit den höchsten Stand seit Ende Juni.

Am Freitagabend hatte Ministerpräsident Enrico Letta in einer Ministerratssitzung entschieden, auf einen Beschluss über ein Paket von Umschichtungen im Haushalt, mit Steuererhöhungen und Steuersenkungen, zu verzichten. Während der gegenwärtigen Turbulenzen sei sehr unsicher, ob danach das Parlament einem Paket von sofort wirkenden Gesetzesdekreten innerhalb der vorgeschriebenen 60 Tage seine Zustimmung geben könne.

## Verschiebung der Mehrwertsteuer gescheitert

Aus diesem Grund stehen die Italiener nun vor einer Erhöhung der Mehrwertsteuer um einen Prozentpunkt auf 22 Prozent, die vom 1. Oktober an gelten soll. Dabei hatte die Regierung versprochen, die Mehrwertsteuer bei 21 Prozent zu belassen, und der Schatzminister hatte dazu am vergangenen Freitag eine Vorlage geliefert, mit der zumindest der Rest des Jahres 2013 ohne Steuererhöhung bleiben sollte. Die Mehrwertsteuererhöhung, die auf dem Papier 4 Milliarden Euro im Jahr bringen soll, wird von der Regierung Letta und zuvor von der Regierung des Ministerpräsidenten Mario Monti immer wieder im Quartalsrhythmus aufgeschoben. Beschlossen hatte 2011 die frühere Regierung von Silvio Berlusconi eine Mehrwertsteuererhöhung von 20 auf 22 Prozent, als es darum ging, den Finanzmärkten und der Europäischen Zentralbank ein überzeugendes Konzept zur Reduzierung des Haushaltsdefizits von 2013 auf null vorzulegen.

Ministerpräsident Mario Monti hatte dann beschließen lassen, dass die Mehrwertsteuer auf 21 Prozent steigt und eine weitere Erhöhung auf 22 Prozent bis zum 1. Juli ausgesetzt werde. Die Regierung Letta hat diese Erhöhung zunächst auf 1. Oktober verschoben und wollte nun wieder kurzfristig eingreifen, doch dieses Vorhaben ist wegen politischer Turbulenzen misslungen.

## Handlungsunfähig bis Juni 2014?

Ähnlich kurzatmig ist auch [der Umgang mit der Immobiliensteuer](#), die ursprünglich für alle gelten sollte, dann von der Regierung Letta für das erste selbstbewohnte Haus ausgesetzt wurde - allerdings zunächst nur für ein Halbjahr. Die Finanzierung der Steuervergünstigung für das zweite Halbjahr 2013 ist nun ebenfalls ausgesetzt. Diese Umstände lösen nun große Zweifel daran aus, ob es Italien gelingen wird, bis Mitte Oktober einen Haushaltsentwurf für 2014 vorzulegen und diesen dann auch zu beschließen. Die italienischen Gewerkschaften zeigen sich nun besorgt darüber, dass Italien in einem kritischen Moment für ehemalige Staatsunternehmen wie Alitalia, Telecom Italia und Finmeccanica oder während der Turbulenzen für die Stahlindustrie führungslos bleiben könnte.

Der Ökonom Tito Boeri von der Mailänder Wirtschaftsuniversität Bocconi sagte dazu, Italien riskiere, dass schon während der kommenden Tage die Staatsanleihen von den Ratingagenturen Standard & Poor's und

Moody's auf den Status von „Ramsch“ abgewertet würden. Womöglich sei wie in Griechenland eine Intervention der „Troika“ nötig, doch auch die brauche eine funktionierende Regierung als Partner für Absprachen um Hilfspakete und Sanierungsmaßnahmen. Womöglich bleibe Italien wegen Neuwahlen bis Juni 2014 ohne handlungsfähige Regierung, doch bis dahin müssten Staatstitel im Wert von 270 Milliarden Euro an den Märkten plziert werden.

Schon eine Erhöhung der Zinsen um einen Prozentpunkt bedeute kurzfristig Mehrkosten von 2,5 Milliarden Euro, langfristig von 20 Milliarden Euro. Eine Abwertung Italiens würde die Banken mit großen Beständen an Staatstiteln in Schwierigkeiten bringen.

## Italian politics

### Still a puppet master

# Silvio Berlusconi is keeping Italy on tenterhooks

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85,12



EPA Ladies, queue up

VITRIOLIC slanging matches in current-affairs talk-shows on Italian television mirror the country's politics. It is more turbulent than ever after the supreme court upheld the conviction for tax fraud of Silvio Berlusconi, formerly prime minister. In the eight weeks since the court confirmed a four-year jail sentence (which will in effect be just one year of house arrest or community service), Italians have been subjected to more verbal mudslinging than usual. And they have been kept on tenterhooks about the survival chances of Enrico Letta's fragile coalition government.

Ever the showman, Mr Berlusconi has recently monopolised front pages and television headlines. On September 18th, the day a commission of the Senate, to which he was elected in February, took a step towards his expulsion, he bashed the magistracy and the centre-left Democratic Party (PD) in a recorded television message lasting 15 minutes. He vowed to continue to lead his centre-right People of Freedom (PdL) party, a partner in the left-right coalition, even if expelled from parliament. Since then, logos in PdL offices have been changed back to Forza Italia (Go, Italy), the name of the movement he established in 1994 that brought him his first political success.

The name change is part of preparations for an election. So is the appeal against moves to expel him from parliament that Mr Berlusconi submitted this month to the European Court of Human Rights. Many Italians sympathise; but to others the appeal to the court is further proof that he has spent his time in politics working mostly for his own interests. Faced with a party led by a convicted tax fraudster, Mr Letta's PD ought to be performing strongly, but it is beset by wrangling over its leadership.

The hawks and doves around Mr Berlusconi are debating whether to pull out of the coalition, creating uncertainty over how Italy can be governed. Urgent business remains untackled, particularly the budget for next year, through which both sides of the coalition will try to gain points with voters. Mr Letta has said that he is not willing to be worn down by sniping from the PdL Fabrizio Saccomanni, his treasury minister, has hinted at resignation if his budget is undermined. On September 23rd Giorgio Napolitano, the president, called on politicians to avoid a rupture and to nurture feeble signs of economic improvement. Mr Napolitano has said that he will not dissolve parliament under the existing electoral law.

The slow pace of Italian justice is partly to blame for the uncertainty. In confirming the jail sentence, the supreme court referred back to a court of appeal the question of how long Mr Berlusconi should be banned from public office. The appeal court should decide in October. This will settle only part of the question about the future of the PdL leader.

## Wahl in Österreich

### Fast jede dritte Stimme geht an die Euro-Gegner

Ob FPÖ oder Team Stronach: Euro-kritische Parteien schnitten bei Österreichs Parlamentswahl sehr gut ab. Die eigentliche Überraschung war der Einzug einer neuen liberalen Partei in den Nationalrat. Von Elisalex Henckel, Wien



Foto: REUTERS Seine FPÖ sieht er als "kultivierte Zukunftskraft des Landes": Parteichef Heinz-Christian Strache jubelt über das starke Wahlergebnis

Der Jubel im Festzelt der rechtspopulistischen Freiheitlichen war groß: "Hey, wir wollen den HC sehen", skandierten die Anhänger von Parteichef Heinz-Christian Strache bierselig unter blauen Luftballons. "Die FPÖ ist die kultivierte Zukunftskraft des Landes", sagte dieser, nachdem er eine rot-weiß-rote Fahne schwenkend auf die Bühne getreten war, seine Fans dankten es mit einem begeisterten: "HC! HC! HC für Österreich!"

Die große Koalition in Wien ist bei der Parlamentswahl am Sonntag buchstäblich mit einem blauen Auge davongekommen. Ihre Mehrheit konnte sie gerade noch verteidigen; nicht verhindern konnten die Regierungsparteien SPÖ und ÖVP – die Österreich einst gemeinsam in die Europäische Union geführt hatten –, dass fast jeder dritte Österreicher eine Anti-Euro-Partei gewählt hat.

**Die FPÖ erreichte laut vorläufigem Endergebnis 21,4 Prozent der Stimmen und 42 der 183 Sitze im Parlament. Das Team Stronach blieb mit 5,8 Prozent unter den Erwartungen, darf sich aber über sechs zusätzliche Sitze im Parlament freuen. Und das von Jörg Haider gegründete Bündnis Zukunft Österreich (BZÖ) flog zwar aus dem Nationalrat, trug aber weitere 3,6 Prozent dazu bei, dass die EU-Gegner zu den großen Siegern des Wahlabends gehörten.**

Im österreichischen Parlament, dem 183 Mann starken Nationalrat, werden **künftig 53 Abgeordnete** sitzen, die sich unter anderem dem **Kampf gegen den ESM und für die Auflösung der gemeinsamen Währung** – oder beidem – verschrieben haben.

### "Nächstenliebe" der FPÖ nur für Österreicher

Die Europapolitik der FPÖ gilt neben ihren fremdenfeindlichen Parolen – in diesem Wahlkampf als "Nächstenliebe", allerdings nur für Österreicher, verpackt – als Hauptgrund dafür, dass kaum jemand den Freiheitlichen eine Chance auf eine Regierungsbeteiligung einräumt. Bundeskanzler Werner Faymann, dessen SPÖ Erste blieb, einer Koalition mit den Freiheitlichen am Wahlabend eine neuerliche Absage.



Sein derzeitiger Koalitionspartner Michael Spindelegger von der bürgerlichen ÖVP schloss ein Bündnis mit FPÖ und dem Team Stronach nicht aus. Ein solches Szenario galt am Sonntagabend jedoch noch als äußerst unwahrscheinlich. Zum einen hatte sich der starke Mann der Konservativen, Niederösterreichs Ministerpräsident Erwin Pröll, bereits mehrfach gegen eine Kooperation mit gleich zwei Populisten ausgesprochen. **Zum anderen hat die ÖVP immer noch einen Ruf als "Europapartei" zu verlieren.**

Die Europa-Politik hatte im Wahlkampf insgesamt eine untergeordnete Rolle gespielt, und Strache wie Stronach schienen ganz dankbar darüber, nicht allzu detailliert erklären zu müssen, wie genau sie aus ESM, Euro oder beidem aussteigen würden. Die europapolitischen Töne im Parlament könnten dennoch rauer werden.

## Der Kanzler kommt nicht zur "Elefantenrunde"

Eine proeuropäische Verfassungsmehrheit wird es aber wohl weiterhin geben. Die Stimmen der Grünen werden dazu künftig zwar nicht mehr ausreichen, da sie weniger zugelegt haben, als sie selbst erhofft und die Meinungsforscher ihnen prognostiziert haben. **Mithilfe der Neos dürfte es aber weiterhin eine proeuropäische Verfassungsmehrheit im Nationalrat geben.**

**Die Neos sind die große Überraschung der österreichischen Wahl:** Erstmals seit 2002 wird wieder eine liberale Partei in österreichischen Nationalrat einziehen. Dem Parteigründer Matthias Strolz, einem ehemaligen ÖVPLer, gelang es, auch mithilfe finanzieller und wahlkämpferischer Unterstützung des bekannten Bauunternehmers Hans Peter Haselsteiner, jahrelang **heimatlose Liberale, urbane Bürgerliche und pragmatische Grüne** um sich zu sammeln und eine vor einem Jahr erst 40 Mann starke Truppe zu einer Parlamentsfraktion auszubauen.

"Wir sind die proeuropäischste Kraft, die es gibt", sagte Strolz bei seiner ersten "Elefantenrunde" im ORF. Er nützte die Nachwahldiskussion auch, um den Regierungsparteien seine Mitarbeit anzubieten: "Ich glaube, es braucht einen Mediator in dieser Paarbeziehung."

Kanzler wie Vizekanzler blieben ihm die Antwort am Sonntagabend schuldig. Die Spitzenkandidaten der Regierungsparteien hatten offenbar genug vom verlustreichen Wahltag. Zur Elefantenrunde schickten sie jedenfalls ihre Fraktionschefs.

09/30/2013 01:10 PM

## 'Last Opportunity'

### ECB and Politicians at Odds Over Stress Tests

By Martin Hesse and Christoph Pauly

85,16

**The European Central Bank wants to impose rigid tests on financial companies in the euro zone before it assumes its new supervisory role. But even before the tests are set to begin, the ECB is already tangling with policymakers.**

Jörg Asmussen is introduced as someone who "was in the eye of the storm." After five years of the financial crisis, Asmussen, who is bald and walks with a slight stoop, is taking stock before the attendees of a conference at a Frankfurt hotel.

But Asmussen, a former state secretary in the German Finance Ministry, doesn't spend much time dwelling on the past. Today he is a member of the executive board of the [European Central Bank \(ECB\)](#), which is currently launching a large-scale project to finally clear away the toxic assets left over from the crisis and build a new firewall, the [European banking union](#). The first part consists of a balance sheet test. The ECB plans to put 130 major banks to the acid test before it assumes regulatory supervision of the institutions in the fall of 2014.

"This test is not a threat," Asmussen tells his audience. "But after two failed [stress tests](#), this is the last opportunity to reestablish confidence in the European banking system."

A comparison with the United States shows what bad shape the [industry](#) is in. US financial groups are reporting record profits, while banks in the euro zone have lost more than €80 billion (\$108 billion) in the last two years. The Europeans failed to adequately address their [banking crisis](#). In the United States, 10 times as many ailing banks were closed and balance sheets were more consistently relieved of bad debt than in the euro zone. The ECB stress test is intended to introduce a long-overdue spring cleaning in Europe.

Banks that do not do well in the test will have to establish a larger cushion of capital or jettison risks. The ECB has repeatedly made it clear that it will not take on rotten eggs.

### 'We Will Not Make the Test Soft'

But the balance-sheet test also plunges the new regulatory structure into conflict. On the one hand, the ECB will have to produce a strict test to be credible from the start. The member states don't want to be humiliated by the test and will do everything they can to make their banks look good. This is why Asmussen warns: "We will not give in to the temptation to make the test soft."

On the other hand, the ECB runs the risk of producing new turbulence in the banking system with a strict test. "The test could be the trigger of a new escalation of the crisis," says the head of a German bank. He notes that as soon as it becomes clear which criteria the ECB is applying for its test, European lenders will come under heavy pressure to raise money. The future regulator plans to reveal initial indications about the standards it will set in mid-October.

Initially, the ECB will want to obtain an overview as to whether the banks have viable business models and where their greatest risks lie. The assessment of balance sheets will follow in the first half of 2014. The regulators will check to determine whether banks have assigned the correct value to their loans and bonds. The actual stress test will likely begin at the same time. It consists of a simulation to determine whether the banks

would survive an economic crisis. The goal is to determine how much money the lenders lack by the fall of 2014. But the banks can't wait that long to raise capital, because the ones that lack capital will know earlier how much they need, and they will come under pressure from investors and rating agencies.

Estimates have already been made over the potential magnitude of the gaps the test will uncover. Deutsche Bank estimates that [Europe's banks](#) will need €16 billion in additional capital. Depending on which criteria the ECB applies in its tests, the gap could be much bigger. The Bundesbank, Germany's central bank, has just estimated that the seven largest German banks alone need an additional €43 billion in capital to satisfy the new international capital requirements.

These rules will only gradually take effect between now and 2019. Nevertheless, there is speculation in financial circles that the ECB is inclined to apply the stricter criteria in its tests early on. Large sums can already accumulate as a result of standardization of assessment standards, which currently differ among euro countries.

### **Ship Financing Loans in the Spotlight**

Among German banks, the regulators will be paying especially close attention to ship financing. Commerzbank alone still has €17 billion in ship loans on its books, of which it has classified €4.6 billion as troubled, meaning that some of these borrowers are likely to default. The bank has written off about €2 billion, but is that enough?

The bank has not classified many loans as troubled. Instead, it has accommodated borrowers in various ways, including lengthening repayment periods. If the ECB decides that these loans must also be written off, analysts believe that Commerzbank could be forced to make billions in further adjustments. This doesn't even account for additional cushions against a recession.

HSH Nordbank, whose government owners have just had to bolster their guarantee because of the problems with bad ship loans, will likely face even greater challenges. The state-owned bank Nord/LB could also need additional funds. "We do not anticipate additional capital needs following the balance-sheet analysis," CEO Gunter Dunkel says optimistically. But the additional capital burdens emerging from the stress tests will ultimately depend on how stringent the ECB's requirements are.

Nevertheless, German financial regulator BaFin takes a relaxed view of the issue of ship loans. Sources familiar with the supervisor's view say that the ship loans were regarded as being properly valued under existing regulatory criteria as of the end of June. This means that BaFin would have no legal right to demand more capital from the banks. Still, the ECB test could make capital increases necessary.

Studies by analysts have also identified a substantial need for capital among Italian, Spanish and Irish banks, and there are likely to be troubled candidates in almost every country. But what happens if the regulators discover a large gap? When pressed for time, many banks will have difficulty in finding investors on the market. The test could also prove some institutions not to be viable in the long run.

### **ECB Pushing for a Backstop at the National Level**

"Who pulls the ripcord?" Nord/LB CEO Dunkel, the president of the Association of German Public Banks, recently asked at a panel discussion in Brussels. If a bank that is too big to fail ran into difficulties, Dunkel said, the problems would have to be resolved within a weekend. "We're talking about ownership rights and taxpayer money," replied Peter Praet, the bearded chief economist at the ECB. The ECB, he added, could only provide advice to a resolution fund, "but certainly without voting rights." The European Commission wants to establish such a liquidation fund, but its efforts have been hampered by resistance from the German government, which doesn't want to be liable for other countries' banks.

The ECB is now pushing for a backstop, at least at the national level. It cannot assume supervision as long as it remains unclear who supports the banks when something goes wrong, ECB executive board member Yves Mersch said last week.

This means that euro-zone finance ministers will have to present a solution by October, so that the ECB can move forward with its plans to officially begin preparations for the joint bank regulatory agency in November. In [Germany](#), the Special Financial Market Stabilization Fund (SoFFin) could step up to the plate, but not all euro countries have comparable funds with adequate means.

In the end, it could boil down to a joint European fund being forced to help weak banks, which is why a game of political finger wrestling has begun behind the scenes.

The issue of government bonds illustrates just how much the ECB is running afoul of governments in establishing the criteria for its balance-sheet test. Government bonds make up a large share of the balance sheet at many banks, because they were long seen as a solid investment. But since the Greek debt haircut, every bank executive knows that these investments are also not free of risk.

### **ECB Faces Growing Political Pressure**

When the European Banking Authority (EBA) tried to quantify this risk in its stress tests in 2010 and 2011, it was initially hampered by resistance from European lawmakers, before default risks were partly taken into account in the second test. Nevertheless, banks are still not required to back up euro-zone sovereign debt with capital in their balance sheet.

A substantial dispute erupted in the ECB governing council last week over how to treat government bonds in the balance-sheet test. The heads of central banks from countries like France and Italy are opposed to writing down the value of government bonds to reflect their risk. They fear that this would mean that their banks would have to maintain significantly larger capital reserves to hedge against risk. Bundesbank President Jens Weidmann and a few allies, on the other hand, warned of the possible damage to the ECB's reputation. Will the ECB now bend to political pressure? If it did, market players would probably no longer take it seriously even before the stress tests begin.

The ECB has already had to agree to a compromise on the question of who checks the balance sheets. It had wanted to select outside auditors, but this might have produced poor results for some national central banks, which are responsible for bank regulation in many countries.

This led to a compromise: National regulators can continue to select the auditors themselves. The ECB will examine the results a second time with the help of consulting firm Oliver Wyman. Even that has been criticized, because the US-based company has advised banks like Belgium's KBC. "A different auditor will have to be assigned in such cases," says Sven Giegold, the Green Party's fiscal policy spokesman in the European Parliament.

In light of all the uncertainty, even the ECB is apparently not entirely convinced that the bank test will be accomplished without causing turbulence in the markets. To avert this, ECB President Mario Draghi hinted last week that it could provide banks with generous loans, as it did in the winter of 2011-2012.

## **Austrian Voters Shift to the Right**

**Austrians voted on Sunday to re-elect their current coalition government. But the country's two largest parties saw their worst nationwide election results since World War II while the right-wing populists made substantial gains.**

Austria's governing parties were voted back into office in national elections on Sunday, despite losses and an unmistakable shift to the right in the country.

Preliminary official results show Chancellor Werner Faymann's center-left Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) as the strongest in parliament, with 27.1 percent of votes. Its coalition partner, the center-right Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) scored 23.8 percent of the vote.

The right-wing populist Freedom Party (FPÖ) has once again secured its slot as the third biggest party in the National Assembly, the lower house of parliament, with 21.4 percent of the vote. The party also registered a 3.9 percent increase in votes compared to 2008 elections. The Green Party will be fourth largest, with 11.5 percent of the votes.

For the first time, Team Stronach -- a euroskeptic party founded by outspoken billionaire Frank Stronach -- will enter into parliament, with 5.8 percent of total votes. With 4.8 percent, the newly founded business-friendly NEOS also cleared the 4 percent hurdle for entering the Austrian parliament.

By securing seats in parliament, the right-wing populists have emerged as the big winners in the Austrian vote, particularly the FPÖ under party leader Heinz-Christian Strache. The FPÖ set the tone for the right-wing camp with its anti-foreigner sentiment. The camp also includes the Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ) and to some extent Team Stronach. Altogether, these parties secured more than 30 percent of all votes.

The SPÖ and the ÖVP, which traditionally govern together in a "grand coalition," each lost 2.2 percentage points, leading to the worst results for both parties since World War II. Back in the 1970s, the two mainstream parties were still able to capture 93 percent of the votes. But countless corruption scandals have eroded public support for both parties.

### **Two New Parties Enter Parliament**

Still, with close to 52 percent of all votes, the parties maintain a narrow, seven-seat majority that will enable them to form a government in the National Assembly.

This marks the first time that the newly founded Team Stronach and NEOS parties will be represented in national parliament. Team Stronach is already part of government coalitions in three Austrian states. During the campaign, Stronach posed shirtless in photos to show that, at the advanced age of 81, he is still in good shape. And at the beginning of September, he told the *Vorarlberger Nachrichten* newspaper that he wanted to reintroduce the death penalty, which Austria eliminated in 1950, for contract killers. The proposal immediately outraged members of other political parties.

With its 3.6 percent of votes, the BZÖ -- the party founded by Jörg Haider after he split from the further-right FPÖ -- failed to secure enough votes to remain in parliament. During the 2008 election, the party managed to garner 10.7 percent of votes.

The current government in Austria has been in office for five years, the country's standard term. Even prior to the election, Chancellor Faymann had said he would like to continue governing with the conservative ÖVP. Polls taken prior to the election indicated the race would be a close one.



## Autriche : l'extrême droite progresse aux législatives

Par [David Philippot](#)

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La grande coalition des sociaux-démocrates et des conservateurs remporte les élections de dimanche mais recule fortement.

Sans enthousiasme, l'Autriche a choisi la continuité. De justesse, la «grande coalition» dirigée par le chancelier social-démocrate [Werner Faymann](#) est reconduite pour un deuxième mandat mais le SPÖ et son allié conservateur ÖVP ont enregistré leur plus mauvais score historique. Avec respectivement 26,4 % et 23,8 % des voix, les deux partis accusent une baisse de 2,5 points de leurs résultats en comparaison avec les législatives de 2008. Un résultat en recul mais suffisant pour conserver la majorité absolue au Conseil national, la Chambre basse du Parlement. Sur 183 sièges, SPÖ et ÖVP ont obtenu, selon les dernières estimations, 5 sièges de majorité. Les deux partis qui ont exercé le pouvoir ensemble pendant quarante ans ont obtenu un nouveau quitus pour leur bonne gestion de la crise de l'euro. L'Autriche se prévaut du taux de chômage le plus faible d'Europe (4,8 %) et de ressortir indemne de la crise.

Mais les multiples scandales de corruption de ces cinq dernières années, touchant tous les partis sauf les Verts, n'ont pas rendu ce gouvernement particulièrement populaire. Les deux grandes formations du pays ont axé leur campagne - qualifiée de «terne» par la presse - sur la stabilité et l'économie. Au vu des résultats, le secrétaire général de l'ÖVP Johannes Rauch dit avoir «bien reçu le message très clair des électeurs que la grande coalition n'a pas fonctionné de façon optimale». La prochaine session du Conseil national devrait confirmer la réélection de Werner Faymann (53 ans), jugé pragmatique et lisse, au poste de chancelier.

Le scrutin aura été marqué par le bon score de l'extrême droite, renforcée comme principale force d'opposition. Le FPÖ de [Heinz Christian Strache](#) comptabilise 22,4 % des voix. Davantage que ne le prédisaient les sondages et [presque cinq points de plus que son résultat de 2008](#): 17,54 %. Celui qui aime à se faire appeler «HC» commentait dimanche soir «un miracle bleu», en référence à la couleur de son parti.

Ce succès électoral permet au parti nationaliste de se rapprocher à nouveau du pouvoir qu'il a déjà exercé aux côtés des conservateurs après son score de 27 % aux législatives de 1999. À côté des anathèmes récurrents contre l'Europe, la monnaie unique, [l'immigration et l'islam](#), le «Parti libéral» aura aussi ciblé sa campagne sur l'allègement fiscal des PME. Une campagne marquée par son lot de déclarations polémiques, Strache détournant le verset de la bible «Aime ton prochain... à condition que celui-ci soit autrichien». Scandale et succès assurés dans la très catholique Autriche.

En revanche, l'autre parti d'extrême droite BZÖ fondé par le défunt Jörg Haider n'a pas franchi la barre des 4 % nécessaires pour rester au Parlement. Un autre parti eurosceptique, la liste du milliardaire austro-canadien Frank Stronach, a obtenu 6 % des suffrages. Le nouveau parti libéral Neos et les écologistes, à leur meilleur historique (12 %), complètent ce nouveau Parlement autrichien.

## Greece is starting to look like Weimar Germany

By [Daniel Hannan](#) [World](#) Last updated: September 29th, 2013

[716 Comments](#) [Comment on this article](#)

85,22



Nikolaos Michaloliakos, leader of Golden Dawn (Photo: AFP/GETTY)

*Economic woes have led to the rise of Golden Dawn and provoked a crisis of democracy*

Economic collapse, mass joblessness, uniformed paramilitaries, street violence, political assassinations and, now, a round-up of opposition MPs. Euro-racked Greece is beginning to feel eerily like Weimar Germany.

The beleaguered Athens government has arrested five deputies and 15 other activists from the fascist party Golden Dawn, including the leader, Nikolaos Michaloliakos. The Greek constitution prohibits the outright banning of political parties, but the authorities have got around that by classing Golden Dawn as a criminal organisation and linking it to the murder 11 days ago of a Leftist musician.

We use the word “fascist” so loosely these days that it has almost lost its meaning. If you oppose immigration, you’re called a fascist. If you criticise the EU, you’re called a fascist. If you’re winning an argument with a Leftie online then, sooner or later, you’re called a fascist.

The tendency is not a new one, though it has perhaps been accelerated by the internet. George Orwell, writing at a time when there were actual fascist regimes in power, observed that “the word Fascism now has no meaning except in so far as it signifies 'something not desirable’ ”.

In consequence, we struggle to find adequate vocabulary to describe an unapologetic, bona fide neo-Nazi party such as Golden Dawn, the Greek political movement that took seven per cent of the vote in the two general elections last year.

Golden Dawn is a textbook fascist party, in its structure, its ideology and its behaviour. It is anti-democratic, favouring an authoritarian state led by a strong man. It looks back fondly at the Thirties dictatorship of General Metaxas, who banned political parties, outlawed strikes and censored the press. It blames Greece’s poverty on immigration – somewhat eccentrically, since the country is now a major net exporter of people. Several of its supporters engage in crude anti-Semitism: one of its MPs, wanted by the police after assaulting a female parliamentarian, defended himself by quoting from the Protocols of the Elders of Zion and alleging that he was the victim of a Jewish conspiracy.

Like all properly fascist parties, Golden Dawn loathes free markets and private enterprise. It flirted with paganism, dismissing Christianity as a debased and Judaic belief-system before switching tack and embracing the Orthodox Church belligerently. Its members have been involved in numerous acts of political violence and, like the Nazis in the Twenties, it seems to have established links with elements of the police and the armed forces. The party's emblem looks suspiciously like a swastika. Golden Dawn insists that the device is a "meander": one of those geometric motifs that you see around the border of classical mosaics and friezes. But ordinary party members are not so careful, frequently waving actual swastikas and Iron Crosses and making straight-arm salutes.

For more than 30 years, Golden Dawn crawled along as one of Europe's negligible Nazi movements, supported by a few hundred shaven-headed losers in their mothers' basements. It barely registered in elections, typically winning around 0.1 per cent of the popular vote. Then, in 2012, under the uncompromising slogan "We can rid this land of filth!", it secured nearly half a million ballots and became the third-largest party.

What happened? In short, the euro. For once, the metaphor of a Greek tragedy is precisely apt. Hellenes went through the hubris of easy credit years, when the markets treated Greek and German debt as interchangeable. Now they are suffering the nemesis: GDP down by an almost unbelievable 23 per cent from its peak; 28 per cent unemployment; middle-class Athenians rummaging in bins for food; farmers bringing supplies to urban cousins.

The catharsis, though, has been artificially stayed. Greece won't recover until it defaults, decouples and devalues, minting its own currency and pricing its way back into the market. A political class seen as closed and semi-hereditary has put the interests of the EU before everything else. The Brussels system has been very good, personally, for Greek politicians and officials who, even now, are shielded from the effects of the downturn.

We shouldn't be surprised if the rest of the country reacts by losing faith in the system. Such alienation is precisely what opponents of the euro warned against when the single currency was proposed.

The Arrest of the Five Members, as I can't resist calling it, addresses an unsightly symptom, but leaves the malady untreated. Closing down Golden Dawn won't reduce the appeal of its message, any more than closing down the Nazis in 1924 arrested their rise. Some Greeks will cheer, but others will see a remote political caste protecting its own interests. Asked for a comment on the arrests, the prime minister, a harassed-looking Antonis Samaras, replied: "Justice, stability, no elections." Those words might serve as the perfect Euro-slogan; they explain why so many Greeks were pushed into supporting the extremes in the first place.

Yesterday, Greeks were discussing the rumour that the arrests were an attempt to prevent the Golden Dawn MPs from resigning their seats and triggering a series of by-elections. The economic crisis has become a crisis of democracy.

Do you remember why the euro was launched? Its supporters made two claims. First, that it would make its users wealthier; and second, that it would make participating countries get on better. In the event, it has inflicted unnecessary poverty and emigration across southern Europe, and is now degrading democracy. How much more has to happen before the Brussels elites accept that they have got it wrong?

Updated September 29, 2013, 7:10 p.m. ET

## Italian Premier Pursues Last-Ditch Rescue of Government

### Italy's Letta Seeks Confidence Vote After Berlusconi Withdraws Support For Coalition

By GIADA ZAMPANO, MARCUS WALKER and CHRISTOPHER EMSDEN

85,24

ROME—Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letta launched a last-ditch effort to rescue his government from collapse after conservative leader [Silvio Berlusconi](#) pulled support for the government, plunging Italy into a fresh political crisis.

Mr. Berlusconi's gambit caps weeks of rising tensions within his fragile coalition with Mr. Letta's Democratic Party over his tax fraud conviction last month. The conservative leader called on Italian President Giorgio Napolitano over the weekend to dissolve Parliament and pursue a new vote just seven months after the previous general election.

But on late Sunday, Mr. Letta said he would seek a confidence vote Wednesday, apparently hoping that some members of Mr. Berlusconi's party—which is showing signs of a split—will still give his coalition enough support to carry on.

Italy's political chaos, which inflamed the euro-zone crisis two years ago, could be the biggest test so far of Europe's defenses against a revival of the financial panic that has afflicted the region in recent years. This time, faith in the European Central Bank's promise to safeguard stability is so strong that many political leaders and economists believe a full-blown run on Italy's bond market is unlikely.

[Enlarge Image](#)

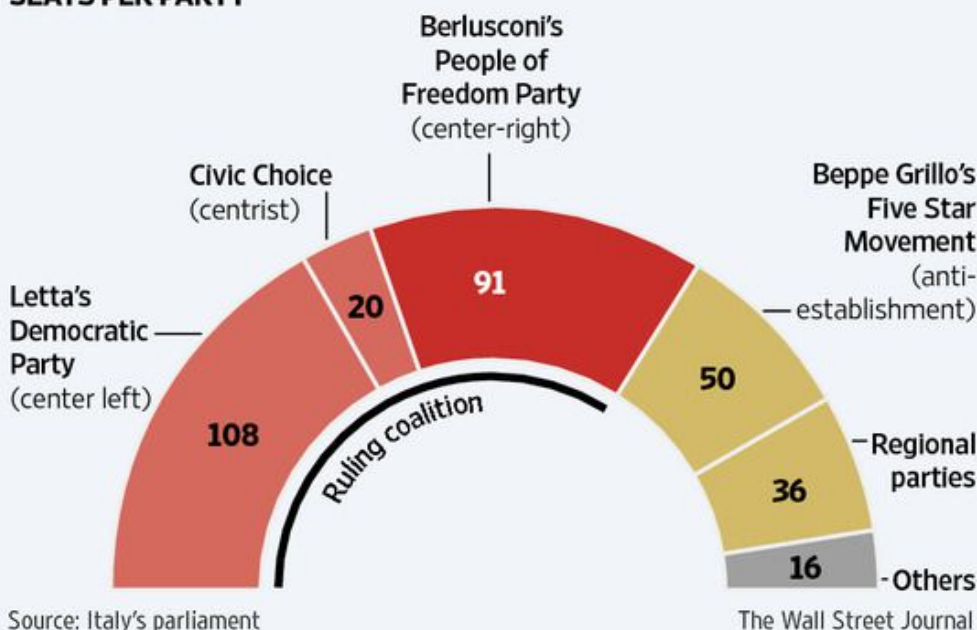


Italian President Giorgio Napolitano at a Jewish cultural event in Naples on Sunday opposes the new elections that Silvio Berlusconi called for and has signaled that he would try to piece together a new government if a confidence vote for Mr. Letta fails.

## Damage Control

Prime Minister Letta hopes a split within Silvio Berlusconi's party will provide enough parliamentary support to save his government.

### SEATS PER PARTY



If Mr. Letta loses Wednesday's vote, Mr. Napolitano, who has opposed calling new elections, has signaled he would try to piece together Italy's fourth government in two years, either headed by Mr. Letta or another figure. But that attempt is likely to take weeks.

"I have no intention to govern at any cost," Mr. Letta told Italian television Sunday evening. "If there is no confidence, I'll draw my own conclusions."

Mr. Letta faces a tough battle in winning a confidence vote amid the highly volatile political crisis. Mr. Berlusconi demanded a new vote even as more dovish members of his party suggested they might break with the three-time Italian premier. Beppe Grillo, leader of the antiestablishment Five-Star Movement, also called for fresh elections on Sunday. Their two parties together won more than half the votes cast in February's general election. While Mr. Letta's Democratic Party has a clear majority in Italy's lower house, it lacks one in the Senate, where he has relied on Mr. Berlusconi's support.

Mr. Napolitano has been determined to avoid another national vote just seven months after an inconclusive election produced a hung parliament. He assembled a government in April, forcing Mr. Berlusconi's People of Freedom Party into uneasy cohabitation with Mr. Letta's Democratic Party.

But tensions within the coalition have risen sharply since Mr. Berlusconi was convicted on tax-fraud charges in August. Because of the conviction—which included a ban on holding office for Mr. Berlusconi—Italy's Senate was due to vote this month to strip him of his seat, a prospect that triggered open conflict within the government.

Mr. Berlusconi, who turned 77 Sunday, told supporters Sunday that he was ready for a vote. "I'm not tired to fight," he said. "The only way out now is to go to elections as soon as possible. And all polls indicate that we're going to win them."

A survey published Friday by Italian pollster SWG showed 36.3% of the 1,500 people polled backed the center-right coalition—including Mr. Berlusconi's People of Freedom party, the separatist Northern League and smaller right-wing parties—while 33.8% supported a center-left coalition, formed by Mr. Letta's Democratic Party and the Left, Ecology and Liberty party.

The government crisis now threatens to thwart the recovery of the Italian economy, which is badly in need of reforms to help pull it out of a two-year recession and create jobs. While Mr. Letta passed some modest measures, his five-month government has been largely paralyzed by infighting.

Italy's government breakdown could put pressure on Europe's defenses against a new round of euro-zone jitters. So big is Italy's €2-billion (\$2.7 billion) government-debt market that renewed capital flight from the country could reawaken fears for the stability of Europe's financial system and its common currency. But until Friday, the looming government crisis hardly shook investors.

Italy's borrowing costs this year have been at an all-time low. Italy's 10-year bond yield hovers around 4.4%, lower than the 4.8% level after the February elections and far below the 7% crisis level two years ago, when Mr. Berlusconi was forced to resign as Italy's prime minister amid fears of national insolvency.

A fall of the Letta government wouldn't necessarily shatter the past year's stability in markets—unless investors lose faith in the European Central Bank's promise to intervene and buy bonds on a massive scale if bond markets need propping up.

Meanwhile, the absence of a government could actually lower Italy's budget deficit and bring it closer to the European Union-mandated limit of 3% of gross domestic product. That would happen because of existing measures that were to be scrapped, including an unpopular property tax on primary residences, a scheduled increase in the value-added tax rate and a tax amnesty for the gaming industry would remain on the books, bringing in more than €3 billion in revenue.

Even if Italy survives this latest political upheaval without reigniting bond-market turmoil, its current travails betray deeper problems that threaten Italy's longer-term solvency and ability to prosper inside the euro zone. Italy's political class has struggled to deal with the underlying causes of the country's malaise, including a loss of international competitiveness and the stagnant productivity of its business sector that began well before the European financial crisis of recent years.

The economy's meager growth rates have pushed up the national debt to over 130% of gross domestic product. The level of debt could become critical if investors conclude that Italy's long-term growth prospects are so poor that the debt will rise endlessly. Unlike other crisis-hit countries such as Spain and Greece, Italy has yet to implement major economic overhauls or to push down labor and other business costs to levels that would make its industries more competitive abroad.



## MAIN FOCUS

### Berlusconi sparks government crisis



Prime Minister Letta wants to ask parliament for a vote of confidence this week. (© picture-alliance/dpa)

The [Italian government](#) is facing collapse. All five ministers belonging to ex-prime minister Silvio Berlusconi's People of Freedom party resigned on Saturday in protest at plans to [exclude Berlusconi](#) from the Senate. Some commentators believe that Italy - and consequently the entire Eurozone - is being held hostage by an unscrupulous egomaniac. Others see new elections as a chance for the country to push through much-needed reforms.

[De Volkskrant - Netherlands](#)

### Cavaliere drags entire Eurozone down with him

The collective ministerial resignation only serves Berlusconi's narcissism, columnist Sheila Sitalsing writes in the left-liberal daily De Volkskrant: "This is political vandalism, and only serves the strictly personal interests of a vain, power-hungry, stuck-up 77-year-old twit. Poor [Prime Minister] Letta. He was just in the process of convincing the world that Italy is a normal, governable country that it is perfectly capable of saving itself, and was courageously struggling along the [path to reform](#). ... Things in Italy could only get better, and consumer confidence had just experienced a wondrous recovery. And then this. Of all the possible risks for the Italian economy - and consequently for the Eurozone - the International Monetary Fund had put political chaos at the top of the list. ... When Silvio B. goes he has to go with a big bang and drag the cabinet, Italy and the Eurozone down with him into the abyss." (30/09/2013)

[El País - Spain](#)

### Rome must free itself of Berlusconi

Italy must finally rid itself of Berlusconi even at the risk of having to hold new elections, the left-liberal daily El País concludes: "No country in modern Europe - much less the third largest economy in the Eurozone, currently struggling to pass its 2014 budget - can accept being [blackmailed](#) by an unscrupulous leader focused mainly on resolving his personal problems. ... With or without early elections, the government of a key EU state cannot allow Berlusconi to hold it hostage any longer. As important as it may be to avoid the economic impact of a new crisis in battered Italy, in the end this would be the lesser evil compared with the continued omnipresence of Berlusconi on the political stage." (30/09/2013)

## Ministerial resignations utterly pointless

After five ministers belonging to Berlusconi's PdL party announced their resignation on Saturday they expressed doubts on Sunday about the wisdom of their decision. They must now seize this last chance to [save the government](#) in a parliamentary confidence vote, the liberal-conservative daily Corriere della Sera demands: "The irresponsible decision of Berlusconi and his loyal supporters smacks of a desperate and ill-conceived gesture. It's pointless. It changes nothing in the legal situation of the Cavaliere and puts the country once again on the brink of disaster. ... If there is still a moderate wing that cares about the fate of families and companies and believes in the liberal values of the European People's Party, then this is the time for it to act. ... A party that calls itself Forza Italia ['Italy's strength', as the party has started [calling itself once more](#) at Berlusconi's behest] can't drag an entire country into the deadlock of the judicial nightmares of a leader who refuses to accept the fact that he lives in a state governed by the rule of law." (30/09/2013)

## New elections a chance for Italy

Since the [Italian government](#) has failed to reform the country in recent months, new elections could even be a major opportunity for Italy, the conservative daily Financial Times contends: "Italy needs a government that can pass the [reforms](#) required to bring back growth and restore voters' trust in a discredited political system. So far, the government led by Mr Letta has largely failed on both fronts, as it was entangled in vetoes by the coalition parties. The crisis offers politicians on both sides the possibility of a fresh start. In particular, parliamentarians from Mr Berlusconi's party have a last chance to show they have been elected to serve the Italian citizens, not their leader. If a new agreement proves to be impossible, then another election should not be a taboo. Markets would almost certainly give Italy a bumpy ride. But the hope must be that voters will punish Mr Berlusconi's party for the mess it has inflicted on Italy." (29/09/2013)

[Kurier - Austria](#)

## Grand coalition in Vienna must renew itself

The grand coalition in Austria was barely able to maintain its parliamentary majority in [Sunday's elections](#). In view of its lacklustre performance the liberal daily Kurier calls for thorough reforms in both parties: "Both Chancellor Faymann and Vice-Chancellor Spindelegger attained the worst results in the history of their parties. The power that they've only just managed to hold on to will bind them together. ... The omens are not good. The crisis of the [social democratic] SPÖ and the [conservative] ÖVP is clear for all to see. In the SPÖ there is traditionally more loyalty to the leader, while the ÖVP is no more than a group of regional parties with a governor at its helm. The two electoral losers must now free themselves from the stranglehold of their internal lobbies and 'strong men'. And perhaps they have finally understood that they should stop tossing millions to the free papers. Because even in the tabloids votes can't be bought with taxpayers' money. Once again: money is not everything." (29/09/2013)

[Hospodárske noviny - Slovakia](#)

## Austrians again prey to right-wing populists

Austria's right-wing populist Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) gained 21.4 percent of the vote in Austria's parliamentary elections, boosting its share by 3.9 percentage points and reaffirming its position as the third-largest party. The liberal business daily Hospodárske noviny takes a critical stance: "[Jörg Haider's](#) pupil [and FPÖ boss] Heinz-Christian Strache has supplanted and outshined his erstwhile mentor. He speaks a clear language, he attracts supporters without having to openly commit to neo-Nazism. Strache exceeded the 20-percent limit with ease. ... Austria has high living standards and one of the best social and healthcare systems in the world. So it's essentially predestined to be particularly tolerant. ... It is one of the twelve richest countries in the world. Yet almost a quarter of its inhabitants voted for an isolation that economically would be tantamount to suicide. This is the Austria that portrays itself as the 'victim' of the Nazism it never had to [come to terms with](#)." (30/09/2013)

## France public debt to hit record in 2014

France has said its public debt will hit a record 95.1% of GDP in 2014, above previous estimates, and up from 93.4% in 2013.

The figure was revealed as the country unveiled its budget for next year.

But it said debt should fall back in 2015, and repeated its aim to bring the public deficit below 3% that year, the EU's deadline for doing so.

The government also said there will be some tax increases for households, but other tax reductions for businesses.

In addition, the budget focuses on tightening public spending, with some 15bn euros (£12.6bn) in savings planned, as part of a plan to cut some 18bn euros off the deficit.

But debt servicing costs will rise to 46.7bn euros, compared with 45bn euros in 2013.

The 2014 budget is based on a growth forecast of 0.9%, lowered from a previous 1.2% forecast, with just 0.1% in growth forecast for this year.

'Recession'

But an economist has warned that next year's growth figure was no cause for optimism.

"We can't talk about a recovery as long as economic growth is around 1%," said Eric Heyer, an economist with the French Observatory for Economic Forecasts,

"Since today, we produce less than five years ago, we are still in recession. That's the real definition of a recession.

"The real rebound will be when we have a production level well above 2007 and when the economy has started to create jobs again. That's not in the government's scenario."

In other measures, there will be a change in corporate tax policy, with a new levy being introduced based on operating profits.

The much-heralded 75% tax rate on salaries of more than 1 million euros a year will be introduced.

However, this tax will be paid by firms rather than employees.

France is the eurozone's second largest economy after Germany.

Meanwhile, France will issue 174bn euros in medium and long-term debt in 2014, compared with an estimated 169 billion euros this year.

## Berlusconi 'propels us towards chaos'

30 September 2013

Presseurop

85,31

Corriere della Sera, La Stampa, Il Giornale, La Repubblica



[Bas van der Schot](#)

Italy is in the midst of a political upheaval after the September 28 resignations of five ministers from the coalition government led by the Democratic Party's Enrico Letta. Silvio Berlusconi's decision to ask his ministers to resign is criticised by nearly all the country's press.

The new government crisis created by People of Freedom leader Silvio Berlusconi comes a few days before a Senate vote scheduled to decide whether or not he should be stripped of his parliamentary immunity [due to his conviction for tax evasion](#). His official reason for calling for the resignations is his refusal to support several budget measures, including an increase in VAT.

The *Corriere della Sera* speaks for the "moderates" who form the bulk of its readers – and of Berlusconi's electorate – who, today are "outraged". [For the paper's editor-in-chief](#), Ferruccio de Bortoli –



The irresponsible choice made by Berlusconi and his faithful supporters [...] has the bitter taste of an inconsiderate and desperate action. It serves no useful purpose. It does not change by one iota \*Il Cavaliere's\* legal destiny, but it forces a country held hostage to the brink of a new precipice. The blow to Letta's government [...] causes untold damage in particular to Berlusconi's electorate which consists of families and businesses. [...] Il Cavaliere's explanation – an instinctive reaction to excessive taxes – is a nonsensical pretext. The cost of the Arcore [Berlusconi's home] proclamation, if it results in early elections, is quickly tallied: the modest signs of rebound will evaporate, major investors will become even more wary of a country they do not understand and in which they do not want to risk their capital. The cost of the debt is bound to rise. [...] Businesses will continue to die and many others will not benefit from the rustling of growth. [...] Jobs will

continue to decline. The 2014 budget [...] will be dictated by Brussels. The benefits gained last May, when excessive debt procedures were dropped, will disappear. The government that wins the next elections will probably be forced to sign an unconditional surrender to the troika – the EU, ECB and IMF.

*Stampa* editor-in-chief, Mario Calabresi, also [agrees](#) saying "basta" to a crisis seen as "useless and disastrous" –



Silvio Berlusconi's unexpected decision to have his ministers resign in order to make the government fall is a tough blow for our country. This humiliation propels us towards chaos, towards lack of credibility, which, in turn, puts us back under surveillance and confirms all the worse biases regarding Italians. This week, instead of discussing the fact that the country's primary telecommunication firm will shift to foreign hands or that Alitalia will soon no longer be our national airline company, we are drawn into one man's legal spiral of woe. [...] In two weeks, the 2014 budget must be presented, a key moment for those, like the rest of us, who's finances are fragile; on November 15, the EU evaluations will be made public; our debt is rising dangerously – the IMF noted the risk to Italy two days ago. And we, who desperately need a shield of protection and credibility, are left naked and disarmed.

In the press close to Berlusconi, however, the tone is completely different. The director of *Il Giornale*, Alessandro Sallusti, [accuses](#) Prime Minister Enrico Letta and his taxes of “bringing down the government,” while defending *Il Cavaliere*'s decision to protect his interests ahead of future elections —



Once again, both the politicians and the commentators could not be more wrong. To varying degrees, they thought, or feared or even wanted Berlusconi to bring down the government on the issue of his personal affairs. That has not happened. He was not motivated by sense of responsibility [...] but above all, because he did not want to endanger the only heritage he really values, apart from his children: his electorate. What would have happened to all of these voters if the People of Freedom (PDL) had endorsed a decision to empty Italian pockets? [...] We do not know what will happen once Letta has fallen. But today we have had confirmation: those who want to impose more taxes are incompatible with Forza Italia, Berlusconi's former party, which he has now revived.

It is Forza Italia, whose relaunch [was recently announced](#) by *Il Cavaliere*. This party – instead of the PDL, which was deemed too undisciplined – will be presented at the next elections. As sociologist Ilvo Diamanti, [notes in La Repubblica](#) —





Berlusconi still has the benefit of political consensus, and even more economic and media power. And he will make use of these advantages, if he cannot impose his choices, to block the choices of others, and to control dissent in his party, with one ultimatum after another. That is why Berlusconi will fight to the bitter end. Because he is fighting for his political survival and for Forza Italia. [...] That is why he wants a vote as soon as possible. Because ever since its foundation in 1994, up until the most recent elections in 2013, Berlusconi's "personal party" has always been at its best in general elections. And that is why he has transformed politics into an ongoing election campaign. And today, to guard against external threats and internal tensions in his party, he needs fresh elections — and the sooner the better.

## Golden Dawn weakened but not defeated

30 September 2013

[I Kathimerini](#) Athens

85,34



[Ilias Makris](#)

**The Greek authorities have struck a blow by arresting several leaders and activists from the neo-Nazi group, who are suspected of murder. But this crackdown does not solve the country's problems, which are driving the party's success**

[Nikos Konstandaras](#)

When it finally [acted against](#) the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn group, the government of Antonis Samaras surprised everyone with its speed and determination. The head-on confrontation was a long time coming; until [the murder of anti-fascist rapper Pavlos Fyssas](#) on September 18 by a man who confessed to being a member of Golden Dawn, the group had appeared to enjoy absolute impunity.

Now, however, we see that state authorities [have been keeping an eye on the group](#) for some time, and that over the course of the months its leaders and members have been implicated in a growing number of crimes.

The delayed action against Golden Dawn has come at a very high cost, including several murders in which GD members are implicated and the blackening of Greece's name, because our society appeared to tolerate bigotry and violence. On the other hand, when they did act, the government, the police and judicial authorities did so with speed and confidence. This shows political courage, because there had been strong arguments in [Prime Minister] Samaras's conservative New Democracy party in favour of going easy on the extreme right in a bid to draw supporters away from it. The confrontation also went a long way toward restoring faith in the country's institutions and the state.

### High stakes

The stakes are high. Democracy has to show that when it defends itself against those who would undermine it, it does so with justice and transparency. The process must clearly show that it is crimes that are being prosecuted, not ideas (however foreign and distasteful they are to our society, as is the case here). It must also be clear that the authorities are doing the job well, that they will prove their case, otherwise the move against Golden Dawn may be seen as a political pogrom and work in favour of the group once its supporters' initial shock wears off. The law must be enforced in every situation, and must be seen to be enforced, without exception. This is what society needs at this time of great uncertainty.

Regardless of its delay, the government acted with courage and competence; it shouldered its responsibilities and will have to deal with the consequences

The arrest of Golden Dawn's leadership is bound to trigger major developments in Greek politics. Regardless of its delay, the government acted with courage and competence; it shouldered its responsibilities and will have to deal with the consequences. It now remains to be seen how the opposition parties will act: will they show similar courage and responsibility, or will they do whatever they can for short-term political gain?

## **Shared responsibility**

Greece's crisis has uncovered many problems in our society. [The rise of Golden Dawn](#) is one of the most serious among these, but, more importantly, it has also represented a major distraction from the fundamental problems faced by our economy, public administration and society.

Enforcing the law, restoring the credibility of institutions, creating a sense that a serious government is in charge, are most valuable steps toward the future. But this is only the beginning. Greece's restoration is everyone's responsibility, from each citizen to the country's political parties. There is no more time for sideshows.

## Chaos in Rome

# Berlusconi Tricks Spark Fear in Europe

By Gregor-Peter Schmitz in Brussels

85,36

**Silvio Berlusconi has plunged Italy into another political crisis. It's a wake-up call for Europe and a reminder that, despite what the recent German election campaign suggested, the euro crisis is by no means over yet.**

When [Silvio Berlusconi](#) was still prime minister of [Italy](#), a telephone call was recorded between him and a tv starlet whose company he liked to keep. In it, the prime minister sighed that being the Italian leader and a politician was little more than a bothersome side job and that he would much prefer to just spend his time with *babes*.

Since this weekend, it is likely that many across Europe are wishing Berlusconi's interest in starlets would take up all of his attention. The resignation of five ministers belonging to Berlusconi's People of Freedom (PDL) party will, after all, mean more than just the collapse of the current government in Rome. The political trick is reminder of one of the greatest uncertainties of this [euro crisis](#): The political foolishness of member states. Berlusconi's transparent attempt to prevent his threatened expulsion from the Italian Senate -- as a result of his legally upheld conviction on tax evasion charges -- is a prime example of such political recklessness.

But this is about more than just Berlusconi. It also has to do with the failure of an entire crisis strategy. Brussels has made a serious effort to help stabilize the Italian political landscape following Berlusconi's departure. The purchase of Italian government bonds through the European Central Bank (ECB) helped to limit attacks by financial market speculators against Italy and to keep interest rates on loans to the country at a bearable level.

## Frustration over Chaos in Rome Is Great

The European Commission also officially closed deficit violation proceedings against the country, although it did repeatedly warn of how serious the situation is. Noting earlier this month an uptick in Italy's borrowing costs, the European Union's commissioner for economic and monetary affairs, Olli Rehn, said, "To my mind this is a warning sign to Italy to ensure political stability and fiscal sustainability."

There is thus great frustration in Brussels over the chaos in Rome. One [EU](#) official described it as "irresponsible" and a folly. Another recalled how difficult it is to force important tax reforms through in the country and that the level of Italy's new debt has once again climbed above the limit of 3 percent of gross domestic product, a development which could lead to new EU sanctions. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has already warned against any new holes in Italy's bank balance sheets.

More problematic, though, is that even with fresh elections, there is the threat that the standoff between Berlusconi's supporters and those of political anarchist Beppe Grillo and the Italian socialists could repeat itself. If Italy does not reform its complicated electoral law, there is the ongoing threat of political gridlock.

## Italy Not the Euro Zone's Only Construction Zone

This could have devastating consequences. In the euro zone, Italy is the state equivalent of a major bank that is so important to the financial system that it must not go under -- it's too big to fail. SPIEGEL ONLINE columnist Wolfgang Münchau recently wrote about the limits of the EU rescue measures: "For a protective

shield for Italy, it is not enough." In October, commissioner Rehn is set to review the Italian national budget, with financial markets already driving up interest rates for Italian government bonds.

But Brussels could really have done without the new troubles emanating from Rome; after all, Italy is hardly the only country in the euro zone resembling a building site. On the contrary, Italy is actually in a relatively good position with its competitive industry and high private wealth. Michael Hüther, head of the Cologne Institute for Economic Research, told the *Tagesspiegel* newspaper: "It's not perfect, but other countries concern me more."

Slovenia may soon require new aid, and Portugal too. A multibillion-euro third rescue package for Greece is as good as a done deal. New problems are on the horizon in Cyprus, perhaps even in Spain. And the latest about-face in Italy could also complicate the Herculean task of keeping France on the path to reform.

For more than a year, ECB head Mario Draghi has at least calmed the markets down with his massive purchases of government bonds. It has bought time, but has not eliminated the underlying causes of the euro crisis. Have the EU's policymakers actually made good use of the breathing space it afforded them?

No matter the make up of the new German government -- Merkel's conservatives will start talks on a possible grand coalition with the Social Democrats on Friday -- it must answer this question, and admit that the euro zone's demons are not yet defeated; they are just asleep.

In Berlin on Monday, the German government emphasized its interest in political stability in Rome. "Our hope is that the forces in Italy that are working toward a stabilization of the situation will find a solution," said government spokesman Steffen Seibert.

## Italian politics

### Berlusconi faces a mutiny

Sep 30th 2013, 15:01 by J.H. | ROME

85,38



INTERVIEWED on television as Italy was plunging into its latest government crisis, the prime minister, Enrico Letta (pictured), brought up the subject of the film "Groundhog Day". He said that when he saw it he was struck by the parallels between the plot and the political situation in Italy. In the 1993 [movie](#) the hero, played by Bill Murray, finds himself living through the same 24 hours over and over.

For almost 20 years now, Italy has also given an impression of never moving forward. And perhaps the most important reason for this sense of déjà vu is that, whenever you look to the right, you find Silvio Berlusconi.

When Mr Berlusconi launched his party *Forza Italia!* in 1993, George Bush senior had just left office; John Major was the leader of a Conservative government in Britain, and Helmut Kohl was the Christian Democratic Union's chancellor of Germany.

Since then, and depending on how one sees at it, nine different leaders have called the shots on the Italian left. But only one has been in charge on the Italian right.

This is the true anomaly of Italian politics: a conservative movement that is not so much led as owned by a single, immensely rich man; a right-wing party with limited internal democracy in which the preferences of its militants, officials and elected representatives can, and often are, overturned or ignored by its leader.

The crisis Mr Berlusconi unleashed on September 28<sup>th</sup> when he ordered his ministers out of Mr Letta's left-right coalition is cause for concern. It is by no means certain the prime minister can secure a majority when he seeks the backing of parliament on October 2nd. And the result could be either a snap election that could endanger the passage of the 2014 budget or a protracted round of negotiations as Giorgio Napolitano, the president, struggles to patch together a new coalition.

Political instability is the last thing Italy needs as it struggles to emerge from its longest recession since World War II. Because of Mr Berlusconi's insistence on the abolition of a tax on first homes, and his refusal to accept a compensatory increase in VAT (the ostensible reason for withdrawing his ministers), there is a growing chance the budget deficit will go back above 3% of GDP. That would have several serious consequences.

Italy has by far the euro zone's largest public debt in absolute terms. Another breach of the ceiling would rattle the markets and push up its borrowing costs. It would discredit Mr Letta, who has vowed to keep within the limit. And it would send Italy back into the euro zone 'sin bin', with a resulting loss of access to much-needed joint EU funding.

Still, there is reason for some guarded optimism about the latest developments. No less than four of the five ministers Mr Berlusconi withdrew have since questioned the wisdom of the move and/or the overall radicalisation of his party (which he has decided to rename *Forza Italia!* after several years as the People of Freedom). Their revolt comes after months in which there has been growing evidence of a split between moderates and radicals. And, most importantly, one of those who has murmured dissent is his once-super-loyal lieutenant, the deputy prime minister, Angelino Alfano.

In Italian politics though it is always as well to be wary of ruses and ploys, it may be that the Italian right is finally outgrowing Mr Berlusconi. Faced with last weekend's unprecedented challenge to his authority, the media magnate has wavered. On September 29<sup>th</sup>, he put out a [statement](#) in which he pledged external support for the Letta government if it did the things he wanted it to do.

It is worth bearing in mind that, like the central character in *Groundhog Day*, Italy has been here before. Three years ago, an earlier lieutenant, Gianfranco Fini, broke with Mr Berlusconi and founded a party of his own: a moderate, 'European' centre-right grouping. It is now virtually irrelevant.



<http://www.france24.com/en/20130918-interview-francois-heisbourg-chairman-of-the-international-institute-for-strategic-studies-in-london>

VIDEO-Interview

François Heisbourg, Chairman of the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London

85,40

The EU is plagued by a cancer and the current remission on the markets will be short-lived. That's the damning warning that François Heisbourg issues in his book, "The End of the European Dream", which has just been published in French. The French researcher believes it's high time to scrap the euro in order to save Europe and preserve the values of Europe's founding fathers.

September 30, 2013

# Beyond Berlusconi

By PIALUISA BIANCO

85,41

ROME — FOR those outside Italy who assumed that the era of Silvio Berlusconi was over, the latest crisis — in which he ordered five of his party's ministers in the coalition government to resign — must come as **a rude awakening to the realities of Italian politics**. But to Italians, the situation is **sadly predictable**, and **it speaks volumes about the sorry state of the country's political landscape**.

But while Mr. Berlusconi's death-rattle attempt to remain relevant may not surprise Italian observers, the moment is still important. The ministers' resignation will effectively bring down the government of Enrico Letta, the prime minister who hails from the center-left Democratic Party. **What happens in the coming months — whether a new, responsible center can emerge to reform the political system, or whether extremists continue to push it apart — will have repercussions across Europe for decades to come.**

Some people are watching these events with a half smile, hoping that Mr. Berlusconi has overplayed his hand and that the crisis may signal the end of his dominance over the nation's politics. Of course, that comes at the risk of stopping Italy's feeble recovery in its tracks, **threatening the entire euro zone and causing the Italian political system to implode**.

But the heart of the crisis is in **the center right itself**. Mr. Berlusconi has dragged his center-right party, the People of Freedom, into a game of chicken. What was once a moderate conservative majority is now experiencing **a drift toward extremism** and is beginning to look like a conglomeration of militant groups.

Since the ministers resigned on Saturday, several formerly loyal followers of Mr. Berlusconi have announced their opposition to the party's direction. But they must now summon up the courage to break away and take a piece of his party with them, or the Italian system will continue to totter dangerously over a precipice.

**If the Letta government falls, it will be almost impossible in the current Parliament to cobble together a new majority, which means yet another round of elections.** And if the recent history of Italian politics is any guide, **a new election would produce only fresh paralysis, if not chaos.**

Voters have cast aspersions on out-of-touch political elites, and there has been a backlash against them. **But the populist turn has been no less absurd than its target. The comedian Beppo Grillo's Five Star movement, which claimed a large chunk of the votes in the last election, is an uncooperative protest party, with little to add to the conversation.**

Italians are mindful that while **change may often come belatedly to Italy, when it does come it is always traumatic**. Writing off the political class would be just a short step away from writing off the institutions of democracy. But that doesn't stop them from venting their frustrations at the voting booth.

The problem is that even with a willing public and a fresh slate, **the two main parties** — the People of Freedom and the fragmented Democratic Party — **greatly distrust each other**, and yet are not strong enough to win alone. Recriminations will occur even as efforts are undertaken to build yet another coalition.

Both parties will have to scrape together the largest number of forces available, drawing in smaller parties, making an already complicated mix even murkier. **Piecing together a coalition always involves byzantine compromises, which sap the government's ability to act. The political establishment that emerges from such a fiasco is generally impotent. This time will be no different.**

Some people hope that **institutional reform — perhaps a presidential system similar to that of France — can fix Italy’s self-destructive system.**

But here we find a **still deeper reason for pessimism:** the inherent dysfunction of the political process itself. What exists now **is a classic Catch-22 — in order to get a government that can govern, you need to change the governing system. But you can’t change the system unless you can govern effectively.** Change is needed, but it is not clear where it will come from.

Some hope that the right will **spawn a modern pro-free-market party** that can rise from the ashes of “Berlusconism.” **But who could be its leader?** Mr. Letta’s predecessor, **Mario Monti, tried and failed.**

On the left, there is hope for a more realistic and fiscally responsible approach to the welfare state and business culture. **Matteo Renzi**, the mayor of Florence, has the best chance of forcing a shake-up and becoming an **Italian Tony Blair. But he still has a long way to go.**

Italians are waiting for a new leader capable of telling the truth and not pandering to their fears. But to be legitimate, **that leader must convince them of the need to break the deadlock with substantial reforms. Until** such time, the empty demagoguery and dangerous brinkmanship that is the order of the day will continue to both placate and fuel those fears.

Pialuisa Bianco is the founder of Longitude: The Italian Monthly on World Affairs and a strategic adviser to the Italian minister of foreign affairs.

September 30, 2013

# Greece: A Vow to Erase a ‘Shame’

By [RICK GLADSTONE](#)

85,43

Prime Minister [Antonis Samaras](#) of [Greece](#) suggested on Monday that he wanted to eradicate Golden Dawn, the neo-fascist xenophobic political party that is now facing a major government crackdown on charges it is a criminal organization involved in murder, attempted murder, blackmail and other crimes. Mr. Samaras, who was visiting New York for the meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, said in a reception sponsored by the American Jewish Committee that his government had no tolerance for the party’s anti-immigrant intimidation tactics and other fascist behavior. “We are dedicated in completely eradicating such a shame,” he said. “We must do it within the context of our democratic Constitution. But we have to go all the way and do whatever it takes.” His remarks appeared to go beyond previous statements about trying to curb the power of Golden Dawn, which has 18 members in Parliament. Over the weekend, the police arrested six of them, including the party’s leader.

September 30, 2013

## Portuguese Voters Punish Leader's Party for Austerity Policies

By [RAPHAEL MINDER](#)

85,44

MADRID — The main party in Portugal's governing center-right coalition suffered a heavy defeat in municipal elections over the weekend as voters punished the government of Prime Minister Pedro Passos Coelho for the tax increases and spending cuts it has carried out since coming to power two years ago.

After Sunday's vote, Mr. Passos Coelho said he recognized that his Social Democratic Party had to "pay a price" for pushing through unpopular austerity measures, even if such measures had largely been devised to meet the pledges that Portugal made in return for receiving a multibillion-dollar international bailout in 2011.

The Social Democrats won only 16.6 percent of the overall vote, according to provisional results released Monday.

While the main opposition Socialist Party made gains — winning 36.2 percent of the overall vote and keeping control of Lisbon, Portugal's capital — the elections also underscored the growing disaffection among voters with the main parties. The rate of abstention rose to a record 47 percent, up from 41 percent four years ago.

Moreover, independent politicians won in several cities, including Porto, the country's second-largest city.

## Daily chart

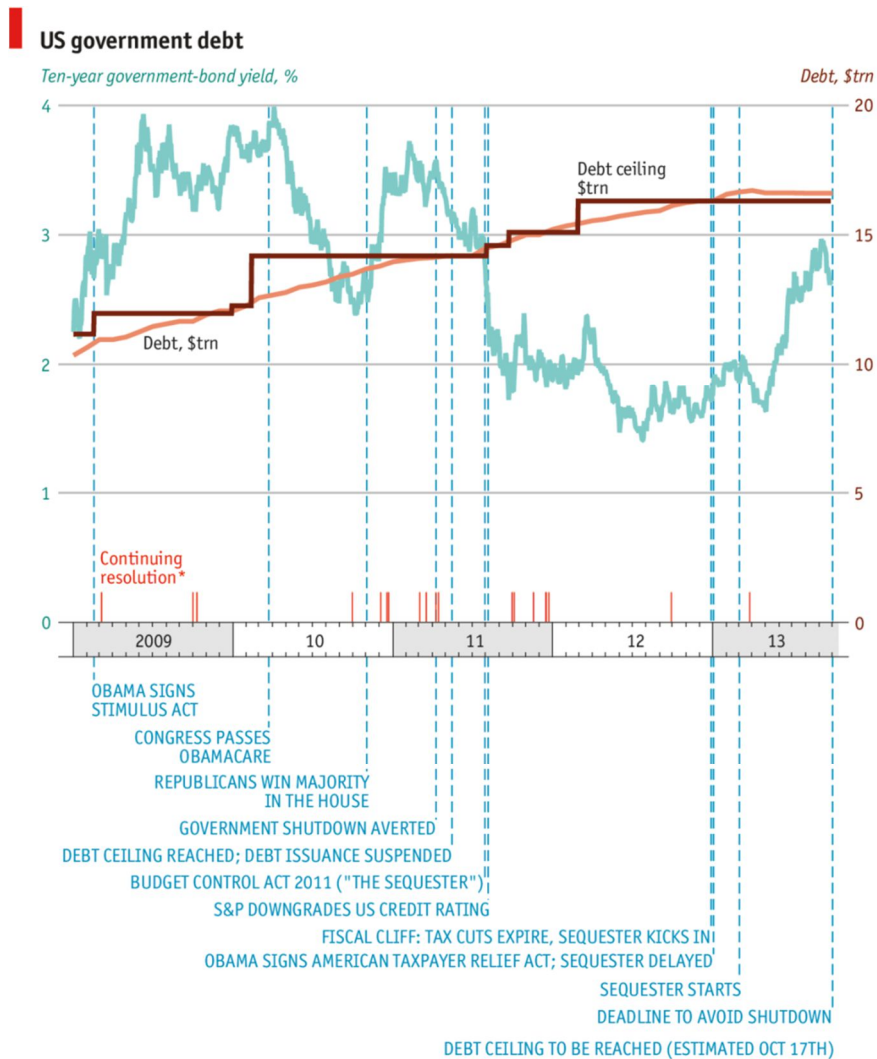
### Shutdown showdown

Sep 30th 2013, 17:40 by J.P., R.L.W, G.S. and G.D.

85,45

## America's path from fiscal improbity to political impasse

ONCE a stalwart of good governance, America looks like a rodeo clown. If the House and Senate cannot agree to continue funding for discretionary spending by midnight on September 30th, the federal government will experience one of its periodic shutdowns. There have been 10 such episodes since 1981, the date of the first one under the current budget-making rules, so a brief hiatus in government functions need not be frightening. Some non-essential services would be suspended and inconvenience caused—in addition to sending the US Treasury market into mild gyrations. Far worse is the idea that Congress might fail to authorise the raising of the debt ceiling in mid-October. Republicans in Congress have a shopping list of demands in exchange for allowing this; the president has said he will not negotiate. If America were in real danger of missing a debt payment it is likely that President Obama would find some constitutional justification for ignoring Congress rather than set off a financial meltdown.



Sources: Congressional Budget Office; Congressional Research Service; Library of Congress; Thomson Reuters

\*Stop-gap funding for government agencies

## Portugal: ‘Constitutional ban on government making civil service redundancies’

30 August 2013

Presseurop

### Diário económico



[Diário económico](#), 30 August 2013

85,46

On August 29, the Constitutional Court [rejected for a third time in a year](#), a government proposal to reduce the number of civil servants, deeming it unconstitutional.

The proposal was intended to save €167m a year, [adds \*Diário Económico\*](#), which believes the Constitutional Court decision will complicate the troika’s eighth review, due to start in September.



Diário Económico - Portugal

### **Voters pull brakes on Portugal's government**

Voters have punished Portugal's [centre-right government](#) for its stringent austerity policy in their first trip to the polls since it took power in 2011. In local elections held on Sunday, Prime Minister Passos Coelho's PSD suffered a bitter defeat which will make it even more difficult for the government to stick to its course, the liberal business daily Diário Económico predicts: "Now it will be difficult to reach the desired results in the negotiations with the creditors of the troika - particularly as regards the bid to renegotiate the deficit targets. ... These election results are a red card for the government. ... Portugal is at the centre of the euro hurricane and the [political crisis in Italy](#) is only masking our situation: we are moving closer and closer to a [second bailout package](#), as the mistrust of the markets and high yields indicate. The government is having problems keeping to the terms agreed with its creditors. ... And the political tensions within the government will return with the prospect of a second bailout package and the need for new elections." (30/09/2013)

Frühkritik:

## Hart aber fair Sie haben „entartet“ gesagt

01.10.2013 · Frank Plasberg hat in seiner Runde zuerst über Steuern, Eurorettung und gebrochene Wahlversprechen diskutiert. Dann machte er den AfD-Gründer Bernd Lucke wütend, als er ihm vorhielt, Nazi-Jargon zu verwenden.

Von [Tillmann Neuscheler](#)

85,48



© dpa Bernd Lucke

Steuern, Schulden, Eurorettung - werden wir jetzt abkassiert? So hatte Frank Plasberg seine Sendung betitelt und seine Gäste waren sich schnell einig. Sie antworteten mit einem klaren: Ja. Der SPD- Parteivorstand Ralf Stegner erklärte, warum Steuererhöhungen auch gut seien für den Bürger, und dass der Staat einfach mehr Geld für seine Aufgaben brauche. Die Linke Sahra Wagenknecht fand das sowieso, außerdem müsse man das Geld dort holen, „wo es sich stapelt“. Nur der ehemalige Umweltminister Norbert Röttgen (CDU) war sich sicher, dass es keine Steuererhöhung geben werde – oder er tat zumindest so.

Weil das inzwischen ein bisschen unglaublich wirkt und Frank Plasberg die Situation offensichtlich schon kommen gesehen hatte, hatte er einen Einspieler vorbereitet, der Norbert Röttgen in Schutz nahm. Das Filmchen präsentierte Röttgen als jemanden, der Wort hält. Es zeigte ihn im Wahlkampf 2005, als er höhere Mehrwertsteuern ankündigte. Weil das der CDU damals fast den sicher geglaubten Wahlsieg kostete, wollte Plasberg von Röttgen wissen, ob er damals gelernt habe, dass sich das Aussprechen der Wahrheit im Wahlkampf nicht lohne, was diesem sichtlich gefiel: Der Wahrheit zuliebe müsse man Stimmenverluste in Kauf nehmen, antwortete der Gelobte heroisch. Als ihm Plasberg später die Kosten der CDU-Wahlversprechen (Mütterrente, Kinderfreibetrag, Kindergeld, Lebensleistungsrente, Straßenbau etc.) vorrechnete, wurde er deutlich leiser. „Wenn Sie sagen, wir brauchen nicht mehr Geld, werden Sie keinen Koalitionspartner finden“, watschte SPD-Mann Stegner den früheren Umweltminister kurzerhand ab.

Eingeladen war auch AfD-Gründer Bernd Lucke. Er durfte kommen, obwohl seine Partei den Einzug in den Bundestag verpasst hat. Dass der Politik-Neuling mittlerweile schon einige Talk-Runden hinter sich hat, merkte man ihm zunächst an. Routiniert erläuterte er, dass seine AfD nicht „das Erbe der FDP“ antreten wolle, weil die FDP am Ende nur noch ein Schrumpfprogramm gehabt habe. Und dass man Europa politisch nicht auf einer wackeligen ökonomischen Grundlage aufbauen könne.

### Kann man jemanden so einfach als verkappten Nazi darstellen?

Dann versuchte sich die Plasberg-Redaktion an einer Sprachanalyse. Das Ganze dauerte nicht lange, aber es prägte doch den Eindruck der ganzen Sendung. Der Moderator zeigte in einem Einspieler, wie Bernd Lucke am Wahlabend in einer Rede das Wort „entartet“ verwendet hat. Sprache verrate etwas darüber, wo man herkomme, sagte Plasberg und machte Lucke damit ganz unverhohlen den Vorwurf, ein verkappter Nazi zu sein, der den Nazi-Jargon quasi mit der Muttermilch aufgesogen habe. Lucke hatte sich schon in einer anderen Talkshow gegen diesen Vorwurf wehren müssen. Dort hatte er gesagt, das Wort „entartet“ sei in einer

spontanen Rede gefallen, was er nun bei Plasberg wiederholte. Auf diesen Moment hatte der Moderator offensichtlich gewartet, um in einem weiteren Einspieler zu zeigen, dass Lucke das Wort auch schon zuvor mehrmals verwendet hatte.

Bernd Lucke machte das sichtbar wütend. Man sah ihm an, dass er sich ungerecht behandelt fühlte. Ja, er habe das Wort offenbar schon öfter verwendet, aber andere Politiker täten das auch, zum Beispiel Altkanzler Helmut Schmidt oder Finanzminister Wolfgang Schäuble. Zudem würden auch Mediziner und Informatiker den Begriff verwenden, ohne dass ihnen jemand Nähe zum Nationalsozialismus unterstellen würde.

Auch auf diese Antwort hatte Plasberg offenbar gewartet. Seine Redaktion habe einen Mediziner gefragt, der zwar bestätigte, dass Krebsforscher das Wort auch verwenden, aber nur bei „entarteten Zellen“, und eigentlich verbiete auch das der historische Kontext. Lucke wehrte sich weiter und sagte, er habe das Wort nicht in einem autoritären Sinne verwendet. Er habe – als er von „entarteter Politik“ sprach - lediglich darauf aufmerksam machen wollen, dass die Bundesregierung in der Eurokrise den Bundestag oft genötigt habe, über komplizierte Fragen viel zu schnell zu entscheiden. Dabei hätten die Parlamentarier länger darüber nachdenken sollen. Aber so genau wollte das plötzlich gar niemand mehr wissen.

Das war keine Glanzleistung der Plasberg-Redaktion. Kann man jemanden so einfach als verkappten Nazi darstellen? Oder ist das nicht billige Denunziation? Tatsächlich ist die Frage statthaft, ob oder wie rechts die AfD eigentlich ist. Noch in der Wahlnacht hatte Michel Friedman auf N24 die berechtigte – und bislang nicht gut beantwortete – Frage gestellt, ob bei der AfD ein bisschen „hellbraun“ dabei sei. Doch so einfach wie Plasberg kann man es sich nicht machen.

Lucke selbst – wie auch immer man über seine Thesen denken mag - macht jedenfalls keinen solchen Eindruck. Er hat in Interviews gesagt, wer vorher Mitglied der NPD gewesen sei, könne kein Mitglied der AfD werden, denn das sei Zeichen eines „eklatanten Mangels an Urteilsvermögen“. Ausländerfeindlichkeit, Islamfeindlichkeit und Antisemitismus werde in der AfD nicht toleriert.

Andererseits: Wer weiß schon ganz genau, was all die anderen, unbekanntenen Parteimitglieder sagen. Die Zukunft der AfD wird auch davon abhängen, ob der Vorwurf, sie sei „rechtspopulistisch“, eine Verunglimpfung ihrer politischen Gegner war oder ob da etwas Wahrheit dahinter steckt. Allein der Vorwurf ist keine Antwort. Inhaltlich konnte die Plasberg-Sendung nicht viel Erhellendes dazu sagen – und auch sonst niemand in der Runde. Und so blieben die Zuschauer vor ihren Geräten am Ende allein zurück.

## L'extrême droite en position de force dans le futur gouvernement norvégien

Le Monde.fr | 01.10.2013 à 19h03 • Mis à jour le 02.10.2013 à 06h51 | Par [Olivier Truc](#) (Stockholm, correspondance)

85,50



Siv Jensen, présidente du parti populiste norvégien, ne pouvait rêver plus belle victoire. Depuis mardi 1<sup>er</sup> octobre à 15 heures, elle négocie d'égal à égal avec Erna Solberg, la future première ministre conservatrice pour la formation du gouvernement minoritaire norvégien qui devra être annoncé au plus tard dans deux semaines. Le Parti du progrès (FrP), formation populiste et anti-immigrés, rentre ainsi pour la première fois au gouvernement, quarante ans après sa création.

Lundi soir, deux semaines après les élections du 9 septembre, Erna Solberg avait dû [admettre](#) à l'issue de douze jours de discussions qu'elle formerait un gouvernement minoritaire avec le seul FrP et donc sans les deux petits partis centristes, les libéraux et les chrétiens-populaires. Ces derniers ont certes signé lundi un programme commun dans lequel ils s'engagent à [soutenir](#) le gouvernement au Parlement, mais ils ont préféré [garder](#) leur liberté pour ne pas trop se [compromettre](#) avec les populistes.

Kjell Magne Bondevik, ancien premier ministre du Parti chrétien-populaire, qui a gouverné plusieurs années avec le soutien sporadique et pesant du FrP, s'est félicité du choix de son parti de se [tenir](#) hors de la coalition gouvernementale, estimant que l'écart [politique](#) et idéologique est trop important entre le FrP et les centristes.

### DURCISSEMENT DE LA POLITIQUE D'IMMIGRATION

Dans ce programme commun, les chrétiens-populaires ont réussi à [contenir](#) une influence trop extrême des populistes sur la future politique d'immigration qui va tout de même se [durcir](#). Mais les enfants demandeurs d'asile depuis plus de trois ans seront autorisés à [rester](#) à certaines conditions.

Si le FrP s'est suffisamment adouci pour [rassurer](#) les conservateurs, depuis que Siv Jensen a pris la tête du parti en 2006, il reste trop sulfureux pour [convaincre](#) les centristes. [Anders Behring Breivik](#), l'auteur du double attentat du 22 juillet 2011, qui a fait 77 morts, a été membre du FrP pendant dix ans.

Pour les conservateurs, qui étaient les grands vainqueurs le soir des législatives, la formation du gouvernement avec le seul FrP a un goût amer. Erna Solberg n'avait pas caché que sa préférence allait à une coalition à quatre, avec les deux partis centristes, pour au moins deux raisons : les centristes auraient permis de [contrebalancer](#) partiellement le poids des populistes au sein de la coalition et avec une majorité stable. Au lieu de cela, son gouvernement sera minoritaire et plus fragile, tandis que les travaillistes vont tout [faire](#) pour [courtiser](#) les partis centristes.

Pour le FrP, une coalition à deux avec les conservateurs est la solution idéale. Selon le quotidien *Klassekampen*, le FrP préférerait de loin cette alliance, car dans une coalition avec les centristes, il aurait fallu être d'accord avec eux sur tous les dossiers, ce qui semblait impossible.

October 1, 2013

## Europe Fears New Turmoil if Shutdown Reverberates

By [JACK EWING](#)

85,51

FRANKFURT — International financial markets reacted to the shutdown of the American government with remarkable calm on Tuesday. But there was also growing fear that the political impasse set the stage for a far greater problem later this month if Washington hits its debt ceiling and begins defaulting on Treasury bonds.

“It would be doom — it would be a lot worse than 2009,” when the financial crisis caused a sharp downturn in Europe and the United States, said Thibault Prebay, head of bond management at Quilvest Gestion, a French asset manager.

The turmoil in Washington comes as the global economy is already coping with an array of threats. If Congress cannot agree to raise the government’s borrowing limit, the repercussions would could derail a fragile recovery in the euro zone, exaggerate an ongoing slowdown in developing countries, and serve as another reminder of how dependent the rest of the world remains on the American economy, economists and analysts said.

The vast machinery of the federal government began grinding to a halt Tuesday after lawmakers failed on Monday night to agree on a new budget and refused to extend the current one. The Senate said it would not resume action until later Tuesday while the House took steps to open negotiations.

The White House spokesman, Jay Carney, warned again on Tuesday that as harmful as the shutdown might be to a slowly recovering economy, a default on government debt would be far worse.

“The consequences of that are unknowable, but they are catastrophic, without question,” he said on the cable channel MSNBC. “And what we see happening with this Republican strategy is a willingness to threaten the very foundation of the world’s greatest economic power — the economy that basically stabilizes the entire world economic system, and that is a very risky proposition.”

Any further upheaval from Washington will come as the rest of the planet has already been coping with plans by the Federal Reserve to begin tapering its economic stimulus program. The Fed last month postponed the easing of its bond buying program — after mere talk of such a move had earlier driven up market interest rates and provoked an outflow of capital from developing countries.

Now this.

“Once again there is an increase in uncertainty, which is the last thing we need right now,” said Horst Löchel, a professor of economics at the Frankfurt School of Finance and Management.

Unless Washington reaches a settlement, the government on Oct. 17 would technically be in default. Missed interest payments on Treasury bonds, even for only a few days, would undercut one of the fundamental assumptions of financial markets, namely that Treasury securities are the safest investment there is. Investors would then likely reassess their views of bonds issued by countries like Italy and Spain, driving up their borrowing costs to a level that would threaten government finances in those countries, which are already in deep recessions.

“Investors will become afraid,” Mr. Löchel said. “They will withdraw money from the United States and Europe. They will go into cash or gold or whatever but not sovereign debt,” he said. “Then we are back in the euro crisis.”

The consequences of an American default would be so grim, in fact, that many investors are convinced that it simply cannot happen. Despite grandstanding in Washington, the thinking goes, the parties will eventually find a compromise.

“You can’t default as a big country,” Mr. Prebay of Quilvest said. “You would kill everything — exports, industry. I don’t think it’s imaginable.”

Mr. Prebay said that at a lunch with investors on Tuesday, the talk was of tapering by the Fed and political turmoil in Italy, not the Washington shutdown. That is a sign that investors still expect Congress to step back from the brink. That faith in the ultimate reasonableness of the American people was reflected in European stocks and government bonds on Tuesday, which were little changed.

Because the markets look forward, investors had already baked the effects of a shutdown into the prices of stocks and bonds. But predicting how a default would play out is difficult, because America has never before reneged on its bonds. Furthermore, some Republicans are signaling that they are intent on avoiding a default and the Obama administration could come up with creative financing to make interest payments on Treasuries even if the government borrowing is capped.

Even without a default, a prolonged shutdown by the U.S. government could harm the world economy.

But it depends on how long the shutdown lasts.

The United States is Europe’s biggest trading partner. If the American economy slows because government workers are not receiving paychecks, contractors are not getting paid, and people are postponing vacations because the gates of Yellowstone National Park are closed, then Europe will also suffer. There would be less demand for European products, including everything from Italian Ferraris to French cosmetics.

In addition, the dollar could lose value against the euro, which would make European products more expensive in the United States.

Based on the previous shutdown in 1995, some economists thought the effect would be insignificant outside America.

Jean-Michel Six, chief European economist at Standard & Poor’s in Paris, said the 1995 shutdown, which lasted 21 days, had only a “very small” effect on the rest of the world. Assuming the current shutdown lasts no more than two weeks, he said, the effect would probably be insignificant this time, too.

But others were less sanguine. Hugues Le Maire, managing director of Diamant Bleu Gestion, a French asset manager, said economic circumstances were much different in 1995. The United States had less debt, lower unemployment and stronger growth. And there was no crisis in Europe.

“You should not compare the situation now with 1995,” Mr. Le Maire said. “We are in a fragile recovery. We have unemployment rates never reached before. To this extent I am quite worried. Nervousness can reappear very quickly.”

Political deadlock in Washington can only add to the uncertainty that is causing businesses to be extremely cautious about how much money they invest in expansion and improvements, and in how many new people they hire.

Investment, a key component of economic growth, is about 10 percent below the level of 2007 in France and Germany not counting spending on housing, according to HSBC. In Italy and Spain it is about 30 percent lower than at the end of 2007 — and still falling.

Unemployment in the euro zone remained stuck at 12 percent in August, with 19.2 million jobless people, according to official statistics published on Tuesday.



The situation in Washington puts pressure on the European Central Bank, which will hold its regular monetary policy meeting on Wednesday. The E.C.B. has succeeded during the past year in removing doubts about the euro's survival, but has struggled to restore the flow of credit to stricken countries in Southern Europe including Spain.

And now a new threat to euro zone stability has arisen in Italy. The government led by Enrico Letta was trying on Tuesday to survive a challenge by the former prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi. If the current government falls, it will raise questions about whether Italy is capable of making the changes needed to grow again and have a hope of paying its government debt.

Then the E.C.B.'s promise to support countries like Italy on bond markets might be tested.

“Up to now the very act of saying it has kept yields down,” said Peter Westaway, chief economist for Europe at Vanguard Asset Management. “We could get to a situation where they have to do something.”

October 1, 2013

## Internal Dissent Imperils Berlusconi's Long Reign Atop His Party

By [JIM YARDLEY](#)

85,54

ROME — For two decades, former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi has not just led Italy's powerful center-right political movement; he has practically owned it. A billionaire media mogul, he has bankrolled campaigns and vetted his party's candidates. His power has been so absolute that even at age 77, he still has not truly groomed a successor.

But now with Italy facing a new political crisis that could threaten the relative stability of the battered 17-nation euro zone, Mr. Berlusconi, who must begin serving a sentence for tax fraud this month, could be facing a full-blown rebellion. Crucial lieutenants are balking at his effort to bring down Italy's fragile coalition government, and Mr. Berlusconi's actions are increasingly viewed as those of a desperate man willing to do almost anything to save himself.

The showdown will come on Wednesday in Italy's Parliament, where Prime Minister Enrico Letta is expected to call for a government confidence vote after Mr. Berlusconi tried to bring down the government last weekend by ordering the five ministers from his party to quit the coalition. The ministers did so, but not happily, and Mr. Letta has since rejected the resignations. Now, several center-right lawmakers, including the five ministers, have signaled they will support the government in the confidence vote, but, in doing so, buck their leader, Mr. Berlusconi, who wants fresh elections.

"This is a major, major political development," said Franco Pavoncello, president of John Cabot University in Rome and an expert on Italian politics. "This is a split."

Italian politics has a turbulent, baroque flair even when little is at stake, but analysts agree that much is at stake now. European leaders are desperate to maintain stability and regard Italy with concern, since it has the third-largest economy on the Continent and is mired in a prolonged recession. Germany's prime minister, Angela Merkel, called Mr. Letta on Monday to offer her support, while Olli Rehn, vice president of the European Commission, also expressed concern.

"What happens in the country doesn't stop at its borders but is felt throughout the European Union," Mr. Rehn said, according to Ansa, an Italian news agency. "So my hope is for the return of political stability as soon as possible in order to take the decisions necessary for the return of growth and employment."

But also hanging in the balance is the long reign of Mr. Berlusconi in Italian politics. His charisma, money and political savvy have held the center right together for years, analysts say. He has said that he is now leaving the government because Mr. Letta has done too little to roll back a new value-added tax. But most analysts believe he is maneuvering to escape his latest and most serious legal troubles, which are threatening to end his career and endanger his business empire after two decades of largely dodging sex and corruption scandals.

His recent conviction on tax fraud means that he must begin a one-year sentence on Oct. 15 (he is expected to serve it under house arrest). On Friday, a special Senate commission will resume deliberations to expel him from his current Senate seat. And a court in Milan is expected to soon decide how many years Mr. Berlusconi will be banned from seeking public office, based on his tax fraud conviction. A fine of about 500 million euros was upheld against his financial empire.

His loyalists have blamed a politically biased judiciary for his troubles, but they have been divided on how to respond. Some party insiders say that Mr. Berlusconi is deeply concerned that should he be expelled from the Senate — and thus stripped of certain parliamentary privileges against prosecution — he would be more vulnerable to other investigations against him.

In ordering his ministers to step down last weekend, Mr. Berlusconi sided with hawks in his camp who have pushed him to remove his party's support from the coalition government and force new elections to win a public mandate. But another camp has been increasingly vocal that bringing down the government would be irresponsible and could lead to a trouncing at the polls.

By late Tuesday, it seemed likely that Mr. Berlusconi's followers would splinter, after a long meeting concluded with Mr. Berlusconi still pushing for a no-confidence vote, according to Ansa. Many of his supporters were signaling that they would back the government.

After meeting with Mr. Berlusconi earlier in the day, Angelino Alfano, a longtime ally and the deputy prime minister in the coalition government, announced on his Facebook page that he hoped the entire party would support the government. Others voiced similar sentiments, with predictions that Mr. Berlusconi might lose dozens of members of his party, or more.

Mr. Berlusconi had already met with leaders of his party on Monday night, seeking unity. Instead, fissures became obvious; when one party leader, Fabrizio Cicchitto, tried to voice dissent, Mr. Berlusconi ignored him, Italian news outlets reported.

"I hope that we will correct the political error we made withdrawing the ministers and that we go forward so that there is a government," Mr. Cicchitto said on Tuesday, according to Ansa.

The pressure on Mr. Berlusconi to reverse course — or for his followers to desert him — is coming from many directions. Business leaders have warned that the Italian economy could suffer another blow, even as new statistics show that industrial production is slumping and youth unemployment has topped 40 percent.

Moreover, Italy must complete a budget plan by the middle of month so that it can be submitted to Brussels for approval. Missing this deadline could bring serious penalties from European officials and damage Italian credibility.

Meanwhile, many of Mr. Berlusconi's supporters are conservative Roman Catholics, and the Vatican's newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, published a blistering front-page editorial that said provoking the crisis was "irresponsible" and could damage "the credibility of the entire Italian political class."

Mr. Berlusconi has almost never been challenged within his own movement. Gianfranco Fini, a former ally, left him three years ago to form a moderate party, but has largely disappeared, at least politically.

"On the center-right, you don't have a party," said Sergio Fabbrini, a leading political analyst in Rome. "You have a personal company."

September 30, 2013

## Britain Plans to Require Community Service for Long-Term Unemployment Benefits

By [STEPHEN CASTLE](#)

85,56

LONDON — Jobless Britons could be forced to do community work to keep their unemployment payments, Britain's top economics minister said Monday, announcing the latest in a series of moves to tighten benefits rules and crack down on "welfare dependency."

Under the plan, those out of work for more than two years could be required to take on tasks like cooking for the elderly or cleaning up litter to keep their payments. The initiative represents a significant hardening of policy in a country that once considered the idea of "workfare" taboo.

The minister, George Osborne, made his announcement in [a speech](#) at the Conservative Party's annual conference in Manchester. He also said he would try to freeze duties on fuel in an effort to ease the squeeze on incomes still being felt by many Britons, even as the economy is showing signs of a recovery.

He simultaneously outlined a long-term goal of building a budget surplus, suggesting that if the Conservatives win the next general election, due in May 2015, they will keep up the pressure to contain public spending.

Despite clear signs of an economic upturn, Mr. Osborne, the chancellor of the Exchequer, was careful to emphasize that a recovery was not yet secure and that there should be no sense of "a task completed or a victory won."

His most eye-catching pronouncement was on welfare — the latest such shift from the Conservatives, who head a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats and who have identified such "tough love" policies as popular with the electorate.

The plans outlined by Mr. Osborne would not require primary legislation, meaning no vote in Parliament, the Department for Work and Pensions said Monday. Instead, changes to regulations will be "brought forward shortly," the department said.

With an election less than 20 months away, the Conservative Party is trying to highlight the policy areas where it believes it has a lead in public opinion over the opposition Labour Party. Welfare is prominent among them.

The Conservatives are also trying to combat a threat to their right from the U.K. Independence Party, which campaigns against the European Union and immigration, and says it wants to "make welfare a safety net for the needy, not a bed for the lazy."

At the same time, Prime Minister David Cameron has faced internal dissent from some right-wing Conservative lawmakers who opposed his move to allow same-sex marriage and who want him to take a tougher line on Europe and immigration.

Already, the jobless can be sent on work placements, where they are required to do a month's full-time work to keep their benefits, and the government has introduced a cash limit on the amount per week that most people ages 16 to 64 can receive from the state.

But on Monday, Mr. Osborne went further when he said those unemployed for two years would be required to do "useful work putting something back into their community." Alternatively, they could be required to attend job centers each day, while those with problems like drug addiction would be on an "intensive regime of support."

“No one will be ignored or left without help, but no one will get something for nothing,” Mr. Osborne said, speaking from a platform that bore the slogan “For hardworking people.” “A fair welfare system is fair to those who need it and fair for those that pay for it, too.”

Mr. Osborne also accused the previous Labour government of making the “problem of welfare dependency worse.”

The issue remains divisive in Britain. While the right-leaning Sun tabloid praised the initiative, the left-leaning Daily Mirror wrote about Mr. Osborne’s proposal under the headline “[Back to the Workhouse](#),” a reference to the institutions that Britain’s unemployed were once forced into.

In [a statement](#), Rachel Reeves, an economic spokeswoman for the Labour Party, was critical of Mr. Osborne’s proposal and offered an alternate plan. “With Labour’s plans,” she said, “we would work with employers to ensure there are jobs for young people and the long-term unemployed — which they would have to take up or lose benefits.”

Under Mr. Osborne’s plan, she said, people will still be allowed “to languish on the dole for years on end without having a proper job.”

Earlier, in an interview with the BBC, Mr. Osborne ruled out any agreements between Conservatives and the U.K. Independence Party on which races to contest. Some Conservative lawmakers have called for a formal pact, warning that the U.K. Independence Party could draw votes away from them, possibly depriving them of an election victory.

In an announcement on Sunday, Philip Hammond, the defense secretary, said Britain would develop “a full-spectrum military cybercapability, including a strike capability.” In its statement, the Ministry of Defense said it would recruit hundreds of reservists as computer experts to work alongside regular forces in the creation of a Joint Cyber Reserve Unit.

“Increasingly, our defense budget is being invested in high-end capabilities such as cyber and intelligence and surveillance assets to ensure we can keep the country safe,” Mr. Hammond said.

10/01/2013 01:34 PM

## Iran Nuclear Talks

# Europe's Unsung Chief Diplomat

By Gregor-Peter Schmitz and [Christoph Schult](#) in Brussels

85,58

**The European Union's foreign policy apparatus is often written off as trivial. But its leader, Catherine Ashton, is the one whose tenacious diplomacy has brought the West and Iran back to the table to negotiate Tehran's nuclear program and related sanctions.**

The title she puts on her official business card -- "High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy" -- has an illustrious ring. But, in reality, [Catherine Ashton's](#) job is rarely glamorous. After she was appointed to the position in 2009, the British diplomat had to endure being called the "fourth choice" in the press -- and even a "garden gnome." And while her counterparts from the United States and Asia zip around in their own jets to summit meetings, Ashton has to patiently wait for commercial flights because the [EU](#) doesn't treat her to an official aircraft.

But now the 57-year-old baroness is suddenly at the center of world diplomacy. And whenever she is mentioned, she earns praise for her hard-nosed negotiating skills, her stamina and her diplomatic talents. It is said that US Secretary of State John Kerry has much faith in her. "She is discrete and perceptive, but also tenacious. That makes her an ideal negotiator," says Alexander Graf Lambsdorff, the head of Germany's business-friendly Free Democratic Party (FDP) in the European Parliament and a member of its Committee on Foreign Affairs.

What's the cause for all this enthusiasm? After negotiations about the Iran nuclear issue appeared on the brink of collapse, the main parties are finally [returning to the table](#). The next round of talks is scheduled for Oct. 15 in Geneva. The West's aim at the meetings in Switzerland is to test whether the Iranians are actually "serious about their willingness to abide by international norms and international law and international requirements and resolutions," as US President Barack Obama said Monday evening after meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House.

The word in diplomatic circles is that this diplomatic renaissance can primarily be attributed to Ashton. In recent months, she has spoken on the phone four times with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif, who studied in the United States and gives the impression of being effectively pro-West.

Ashton was the one who came up with the idea of bringing Zarif together with representatives of the P5+1, the international group in charge of negotiating with [Iran](#) about its nuclear program that is made up of Germany and the five permanent member states on the UN Security Council -- China, France, Russia, the UK and the US. As a result, the often quarrelling group has embraced Ashton as its chief negotiator.

She, in turn, is doing her part to see that the new Iranian government focuses on fostering better relations between Iran and the European Union. "One of the main objectives of the new Iranian foreign policy is to put aside misunderstandings and to begin a new political era via a better understanding," Iranian President Hassan Rohani recently wrote to Martin Schulz, president of the European Parliament.

## Chances of a Thaw in Relations?

Leaders in Tehran welcomed the fact that, in early September, the European Court of Justice stated that some of the EU [sanctions](#) against Iran should be lifted. The court ruled to annul the 2011 acts of the European Council



that froze the funds in Europe of seven Iranian companies and one Iranian national, all of which had been identified as being involved in nuclear proliferation, on the grounds that its allegations hadn't been sufficiently substantiated and that there had been certain procedural errors.

Of course, it has already happened many times that official talks have begun on Iran's nuclear program and ended in stalemate. But representatives with the P5+1, also known as the Group of Six, claim to have the impression that the new Iranian government is serious about things this time around. What's more, the West assumes Rohani has secured the blessing of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme religious leader, to launch his diplomatic charm offensive.

Iranian negotiators have let it be known they want to resolve the nuclear dispute within six to 12 months. Furthermore, during the election campaign, Rohani pledged to his supporters that he would improve Iran's economic situation, which can only happen if international sanctions are lifted.

Hard-liners in Tehran, who oppose any compromises related to the nuclear program, are keeping a close eye on Rohani. This has prompted him, for example, to turn down President Obama's offer to meet on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly currently being held in New York. Indeed, Rohani already sparked fiery protests at home after speaking on the phone with Obama in what was the first official contact between Iranian and American heads of state since 1979.

Likewise, the new Iranian government has yet to make any substantial concessions. But time is running short for the West, and a report published in August by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), stating that Iran is continuing to pursue its uranium-enrichment activities unabated, has only increased the pressure. At the White House on Monday, Netanyahu repeated his warning that the West should not let itself be hoodwinked by Tehran's charm offensive, stressing that: "Iran is committed to Israel's destruction." President Obama also struck a tough note, saying: "It is absolutely clear that words are not sufficient."

EU diplomats have ruled out lifting the sanctions against Iran before the country at least agrees to halt uranium enrichment. European Parliament member Alexander Graf Lambsdorff, for example, is wary. "Rohani finds himself in a situation that is similarly complex to that of the new pope, Francis," the foreign affairs expert says. "Both are trying to break up an encrusted system. And, at this point, no one knows whether they will succeed or whether those backing the status quo will prove to be too powerful."

## L'Allemagne et l'UE: nouveau cycle?

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85,60



*Jacques Delors, Antonio Vitorino et Yves Bertoncini, Président fondateur, Président et Directeur de Notre Europe - Institut Jacques Delors*

Le [verdict des élections législatives allemandes du 22 septembre](#) 2013 contribue à clarifier l'horizon politique européen, qu'il semble important d'aborder de manière constructive, sur la base des trois constats complémentaires suivants.

### **1. La nouvelle coalition devrait être plus engagée sur les enjeux européens**

Le résultat des élections allemandes est d'abord un gage de continuité pour la politique européenne de ce pays, puisque le score du parti d'Angela Merkel apporte un soutien populaire aux options qu'elle a défendues lors des Conseils européens de ces dernières années. Il rappelle aussi que le peuple allemand est attaché à l'euro et à l'UE, puisque le nouveau parti eurosceptique "Alternative für Deutschland" n'a obtenu que 4,7% des voix, et le parti d'extrême droite NDP seulement 1%. La nouvelle coalition qu'Angela Merkel est amenée à diriger devrait être plus pro-européenne que la précédente, dès lors que les Libéraux du FDP en sortent et que le SPD est appelé à la rejoindre. Elle devrait aussi être beaucoup plus large, et donc en mesure d'adopter des décisions structurantes, voire de modifier la Loi fondamentale si nécessaire.

Plus important, au même titre que les autorités françaises, les autorités allemandes ont désormais devant elles 4 années sans élections nationales. Conjuguée au renouvellement mi-2014 des membres du Parlement européen et de la Commission, cette nouvelle donne politique est propice à une réflexion approfondie et à des initiatives ambitieuses s'agissant du fonctionnement et des politiques de l'UE et de la zone euro. Il est à espérer que, forte de sa victoire, Angela Merkel pourra souligner encore plus clairement que les avancées de l'intégration européenne et l'approfondissement de l'UEM servent l'intérêt national de son pays, afin de battre en brèche des stigmatisations et polémiques en rupture avec l'esprit européen.

Il ne faut certes pas en déduire que les nouvelles autorités allemandes vont radicalement changer de politique européenne. D'abord parce qu'Angela Merkel a déjà beaucoup évolué ces dernières années afin d'engager son pays dans des plans de sauvetage, de s'accommoder de la politique novatrice de la BCE et d'accepter le principe d'une union bancaire européenne. D'autre part parce que, si elle perdure, la pression moindre des marchés financiers peut leur faire perdre le rôle d'aiguillon qu'ils ont joué au plus fort de la crise de la zone euro. Il semble néanmoins possible que la politique européenne de l'Allemagne connaisse des inflexions importantes, surtout si ses partenaires appréhendent mieux ce que sont ses attentes et ses intérêts, y compris à la lumière des récentes élections.

### **2 - La position de force des autorités allemandes doit être mieux appréhendée**

Il est souvent souligné que la victoire d'Angela Merkel va conforter la position de force qu'occupent actuellement les autorités allemandes : au-delà de la taille de ce pays (plus de 20% du PIB de l'UE) et de ses capacités de prêt aux Etats en difficulté, une telle position de force découle de ses meilleures performances en matière de croissance (près de 1,5% en 2013) et de chômage (5% environ). Elle provient aussi du rôle clé qu'il

joue dans la réponse européenne au défi central de la période, la crise de la zone euro - alors que l'Allemagne est par exemple beaucoup plus en retrait sur le front des interventions militaires.

Cette position de force de l'Allemagne sur le registre économique et social renvoie aussi et surtout à la faiblesse des autres Etats membres, parmi lesquels les "pays sous programmes", l'Italie, mais également la France. C'est parce que les autorités françaises continueront à œuvrer pour améliorer les performances de leur pays en matière de croissance et d'emplois qu'elles retrouveront une influence comparable à celle de l'Allemagne sur ces enjeux, et que l'UE toute entière pourra bénéficier d'une entente franco-allemande plus équilibrée.

L'avènement d'un nouveau cycle politique européen passe cependant aussi par une meilleure prise en compte des inquiétudes de l'Allemagne, souvent sous-estimées par ses partenaires. Sans doute connaissent-ils bien les inhibitions liées au poids de l'histoire de ce pays, même si c'est parfois pour les brocarder, et dont découle son rejet de l'hégémonie. Mais prennent-ils suffisamment la mesure des inquiétudes nées de la perte de confiance générée par les dérives budgétaires et économiques de nombre d'Etats membres depuis le lancement de l'euro, et qui portent désormais sur leur capacité réelle à les corriger dans la durée ? Appréhendent-ils comme il se doit les craintes suscitées par les conséquences de la sortie du nucléaire et de la transition énergétique sur la compétitivité des entreprises et le pouvoir d'achat des consommateurs ? Mesurent-ils bien l'angoisse liée à l'évolution démographique de l'Allemagne et à ses aptitudes à maintenir son dynamisme productif et à financer ses dépenses de protection sociale et d'investissement ?

### **3 - Les autorités allemandes et européennes pourraient contribuer à plusieurs avancées pour l'UE**

L'avènement d'une nouvelle coalition à Berlin et une meilleure prise en compte européenne des forces et des faiblesses de l'Allemagne sont de nature à créer les conditions favorables à de nouvelles avancées pour l'UE.

D'abord via un ajustement de l'équilibre rigueur-croissance mis en place pour faire face à la crise, et qui a conduit à des politiques d'austérité trop drastiques. Les douloureux efforts engagés par les pays sous programmes et le surcroît de sérieux budgétaire de la plupart des pays de la zone euro semblent désormais suffisamment tangibles pour justifier de mettre davantage l'accent sur le soutien de la croissance, au bénéfice même de l'Allemagne. Cela devrait conduire à de nouvelles dépenses d'investissement, aussi bien au niveau national qu'au niveau communautaire, par exemple en matière de formation des jeunes. La campagne électorale récente et l'avènement d'un Bundestag majoritairement à gauche devraient par ailleurs déboucher sur la généralisation à toutes les branches et à toutes les régions du principe d'un salaire minimum : outre ses vertus sociales, elle soutiendra utilement la demande domestique tout en atténuant les critiques dénonçant la concurrence salariale déloyale pratiquée par les entreprises allemandes dans certains secteurs.

De nouveaux progrès devraient aussi intervenir pour la zone euro, conformément aux orientations du document pour la stabilité et la croissance adopté par Angela Merkel et François Hollande le 30 mai 2013. Réalisation d'une union bancaire complète, qui constituera un authentique "saut fédéral" ; coordination accrue des politiques économiques et fiscales, y compris sur la base d'arrangements contractuels ; renforcement de la dimension sociale de l'UEM, notamment pour favoriser la mobilité des travailleurs ; amélioration de la gouvernance de la zone euro, qui a vocation à reposer sur des organes spécifiques.

De nouvelles avancées pourraient enfin intervenir dans le domaine énergétique. En annonçant sa sortie du nucléaire, l'Allemagne s'est engagée dans une transition énergétique que conduisent également les autres pays de l'UE. Voilà un défi européen à relever en commun à l'horizon 2020, notamment s'agissant de l'essor des énergies renouvelables : cela suppose notamment davantage d'investissements dans des infrastructures d'intérêt commun et la mise en place de mix énergétiques complémentaires, dans la perspective d'une authentique "Communauté européenne de l'énergie".

Il est somme toute positif que les élections allemandes aient captivé le reste de l'Europe : c'est bien parce que l'Allemagne et ses partenaires se sentiront partie prenante d'une même communauté de destin, notamment symbolisée par l'union monétaire, que l'Union européenne pourra entrer résolument dans un nouveau cycle politique, économique et social.

Gegen „Politik der verbrannten Erde“

## So will Paris Firmen bestrafen, die rentable Werke schließen

02.10.2013 · In Frankreich müssen Unternehmen künftig Geld zahlen, wenn sie gewinnbringende Fabriken dichtmachen. Die Wirtschaft findet das Gesetz katastrophal, die Linkspartei zu lasch.

Von [Christian Schubert](#), Paris

85,62



© AFP Nach dem ehemaligen Arcelor Mittal-Werk Florange ist das neue Gesetz benannt.

Wer in Frankreich künftig eine rentable Fabrik schließen will, muss erst drei Monate lang nach einem Käufer suchen. Die Nationalversammlung hat am Dienstagabend ein Gesetz genehmigt, das gegen die „Politik der verbrannten Erde“ gerichtet sein soll, wie sie die sozialistische Regierung einigen Unternehmen unterstellt: Manche Arbeitgeber würden aus strategischen Gründen Werke lieber dichtmachen als sie einem Konkurrenten zu überlassen - das Nachsehen hätten die Beschäftigten.

Durch [das neue Gesetz](#) sollen auch die Chancen für Arbeitnehmer-Initiativen steigen, ihre eigenen Werke zu übernehmen. Alle Unternehmen mit mindestens 1000 Beschäftigten sind betroffen.

Wer nicht ernsthaft nach einem Käufer sucht, kann eine Geldbuße von bis zu 28.000 Euro je betroffenem Arbeitnehmer erhalten. Mehr als 2 Prozent seines Umsatzes soll aber kein Unternehmen berappen müssen, heißt es in dem Gesetzentwurf. Außerdem soll ein rechtsbrüchiges Unternehmen alle Subventionen der vergangenen zwei Jahre zurückzahlen. Der Senat muss dem Gesetzentwurf jetzt auch noch zustimmen, doch das gilt als gesichert.

### Unsinniger Gesetzesname

Der französische Präsident François Hollande erfüllt damit ein Versprechen, das er im Wahlkampf 2012 am Stahlstandort Florange ausgesprochen hatte. Dort schloss der indische Unternehmer Lakshmi Mittal entgegen früherer Versicherungen zwei Hochöfen. Allerdings konnte er zeigen, dass die Anlage keine Gewinne erwirtschaftete. Angesichts der Stahlüberkapazitäten in Europa fand sich auch kein Kaufinteressent. Obwohl man das Gesetz „Loi Florange“ taufte, würde der „Fall Florange“ also gar nicht darunter fallen.

Auch anderswo ist es nicht leicht, Werksschließungen zu finden, die dem Gesetz entsprechen. Die Sozialistische Partei verweist auf die Papierfabrik M-Real im Département Eure, die mit ihren 330 Mitarbeitern im vergangenen Jahr still gelegt wurde. Das Unternehmen konzentriert sich heute auf die profitablere Kartonherstellung und schloss auch schon Werke in Deutschland und Finnland. Auch das Mittal-Stahlwerk in Gandrange, das schon vor Florange schloss, würde heute unter das Gesetz fallen, meinen die Sozialisten.

Die Arbeitgeberseite entgegnet jedoch, dass der Beweis von Verlusten an diesen Standorten leicht zu führen sei. Dennoch nimmt der Unternehmerverband das Gesetz nicht auf die leichte Schulter, denn es erzeuge eine abschreckende Wirkung auf Investoren im In- und Ausland. Zudem erhöhe es den bürokratischen Aufwand und damit die Kosten, weil bei der Käufersuche auch der Betriebsrat regelmäßig informiert werden muss.

## **Wahlversprechen eingelöst**

Die Regierung hatte zuerst auch geprüft, ob sie Unternehmen zum Verkauf von Werken zwingen kann. **Doch der französische Staatsrat wies dieses Ansinnen Mitte Juli als verfassungswidrigen Eingriff in die Eigentumsrechte zurück.** Daher müssen die Unternehmen jetzt nur nachweisen, dass sie sich ernsthaft auf die Suche begeben.

Unklar bleibt dabei, was passiert, wenn es Übernahmeinteressenten gibt und der Eigentümer aber nicht verkauft, weil der gebotene Preis zu niedrig ist. Solche Fälle werden künftig voraussichtlich vor den Gerichten ausgetestet – **ein weiterer Beitrag zur Erhöhung der Rechtsunsicherheit, wie die Arbeitgeber befürchten.** Für sie ist das Gesetz das Ergebnis **eines populistischen Wahlkampfversprechens**, das sich in der Realität kaum durchsetzen lässt. Am Ende entstehen nur neue Vorschriften, die der Rechtsklarheit schaden und die Unternehmerfreiheit einschränken.

## **Frankreichs Linkspartei findet das Gesetz zu lasch**

Das neue Gesetz enthält in einem zweiten Kapitel auch Maßnahmen, um feindliche Übernahmen zu erschweren. So sollen die Stimmrechte aller Aktionäre verdoppelt werden, wenn sie ihre Aktien mindestens zwei Jahre lang gehalten haben. Die Betriebsräte müssen frühzeitig und umfassend über Übernahmeangebote informiert werden. Gleichzeitig hat die Regierung aber von ihrem ursprünglichen Wunsch Abstand genommen, die Schwelle für ein Übernahmeangebot an alle Aktionäre von 30 auf 25 Prozent zu senken.

Das Gesetz wurde in der Assemblée Nationale mit den Stimmen der Sozialisten und der Grünen mit einer Mehrheit von 285 gegen 214 Stimmen verabschiedet. Die konservative Opposition und die Zentrumsparterie UDI stimmten dagegen. Auch die französische Linkspartei lehnte das Gesetz ab, aber deshalb, weil es nicht genügend Biss gegen die Unternehmen habe.

## EU elections 2014: Let's vote for a European people

1 October 2013

[El País](#) Madrid

85,64



Cristina Sampaio

**Since there is no clear concept of solidarity among the nations of the European Union, it is time to create a nation based on a common political project, according to a Spanish philosopher. The 2014 European elections should be the first step. Excerpts.**

[Mikel Arteta](#)

Because Spain is not an ethnic nation, nationalism believes it has an open door for founding its own political nation. Similarly, we hear that, since there is no European "people", it would be better not to go any deeper into the project of the Union. Certainly, a state without a common language and culture will find it more difficult to govern itself; but to idealise a common language and culture to fever pitch was never a good idea.

To use in somewhat tortuous fashion the cosmopolitan image of concentric circles, nationalism would restrict solidarity to your own kind: through family, friends and acquaintances, sympathy would be limited to the "big family" of your fellow countrymen – to those who, sharing the same language, would shape a [particular vision of the world](#).

In summary: the naturalist thesis that empathy/altruism develops in concentric circles is wrong and to extend/stop solidarity to and at the "people" who are with me is absurd. But all of this is based on a worse fallacy: "a linguistic community is so different from the rest that it must govern itself politically." The lack of a shared language – in Europe, at least – makes fluid and instant public deliberation difficult. Well, we're working on it. It is also true that we benefit from a language without which we cannot think about the world. But, more than conforming to a microcosm that fragments the social reality, language opens us up to language itself, that instrument that allows us to communicate and reflect on our many-faceted cultural conditioning. Learning second languages, translation, or honouring human rights prove that, in any language, we do think of a shared social world, because we all must cope with the practical problems that grow out of that world.

Now let's tackle the corollary of the twice-flattened premise: as we are different and altruism is limited, we must restrict questions of justice to our own kind. This charade sidesteps all the democratic norms: if the problems affecting us are supranational, the politics to tackle them must be supranational.

### Political integration

We can conclude that, to recover its battered popular sovereignty, the EU must integrate politically, artificially creating a [new demos](#)

We can conclude that, to recover its battered popular sovereignty, the EU must integrate politically, artificially creating a [new demos](#). In turn, this should then lead to the cosmopolitanisation of international law; that is, the

process by which international law – which today is a match for the strongest states – becomes a right that is also formed by and for the citizens of the world. But what to do with an EU that is going under for lack of foundations that would let a transnational democracy of quality emerge?

We resort to the law to shape the social reality intentionally. Habermas says that “every element of human culture, including speech and language, is a construction. Although most of it has not seen the light intentionally, (...) the legal agreements are the most artificial of those [constructions]”.

As well, to overcome the cultural structures that govern us (borders, institutions, codes, language, etc) and to arrive at transnational solidarity, it seems necessary to give [more power to parliament](#) – so promoting the citizenry to co-legislate together with the Council (States), and create true European political parties.

The influences of a burgeoning European civil society would help along this transnationalisation of the various public spheres, which will help amalgamate individual interests within a shared policy framework

We would thus resuscitate a shared project that we only look to today to see what advantage my country, or myself, can gain from it. To vote for European parties would lead to discussing and legislating democratically on the many common problems; the media would translate and broadcast into every public sphere the fundamental technical information and the interests that are at stake. The influences of a burgeoning European civil society would help along this transnationalisation of the various public spheres, which will help amalgamate individual interests within a shared policy framework.

## **Forging solidarity**

Because Europeans will be the citizens with whom we will create this pact, along with accountability and responsiveness there will arise ties of solidarity, the sense of co-membership typical of all democratic self-government. It will not cost so much for those who already share a lot (from the world wars up to enlightened reasoning in facing problems in a practical way: tolerance, rule of law, democracy, etc), which is a basis on which to shape a broader and more abstract collective identity, one substantial enough for a German to pay the taxes of a Greek.

In addition, to vote for European parties with genuine legislative – and executive – capacity would quash criticisms that the EU must face up to today over its bureaucratic and mercantilist functioning; and by its intergovernmentalism (nationalism), which forces the weak to submit to the designs of the strongest. Only if there are alternatives and rotation will we see the EU not as an elitist project, but as a political project whose current drift we reject. A project that has not been kidnapped, but directed by a few parties that must be accountable to us if they do not wish to be relegated to the opposition benches.

Better redistribution and effective popular sovereignty will expand the demos. For that, the political left should oppose not the European political project, but its current monolithic character.



## Portugal: The troika saves us from ourselves

1 October 2013

85,66



**The International Monetary Fund, European Commission and European Central Bank are back in Lisbon to evaluate the results of the 2011 bailout plan. This is good because otherwise Portugal would make the same mistakes that led to the crisis in the first place.**

[Helena Matos](#)

I have to admit, I fear the day the troika will stop landing on Lisbon to verify our accounts, to remind us of our commitments and to sign cheques. This fear grips me a little tighter each time I read what is promised on campaign posters by candidates for local elections [held on September 29]: free school text books; free medication; free retirement homes; free vaccinations, etc... There is a sort of madness for free things "right now" which culminated with a martial arts school's promise (free, that goes without saying) to combat crime in a northern town [Vila Nova de Gaia] and, in the south, with an equally fallacious guarantee of local programmes to fight unemployment.

Knowing that the local authorities will neither cut their expenses or their complex bureaucracies, these programs will never turn into reality. Or worse still, they will result in additional new jobs in these bureaucracies themselves or municipal enterprises – a practice which led to the need for an [emergency appeal](#) for help from the troika in 2011.

Because local authorities have abandoned neither their reckless spending habits nor their complex bureaucracies, neither these programmes will ever see the light of day.

Fear grips me even tighter when I hear [Socialist Party leader] António José Seguro say that he will not accept further budget cuts but fails to explain that this is not possible without raising taxes even higher, and when I realise at what point the PSD [Social Democrat Party] and the CDS [Christian democrats] are impatient to be free of the tyranny of external control in order to immediately freely pursue new promises of things that are "free, right now".

## Déja vu

I was born in Portugal in the 1960s. This is the third time I find myself in a country under external assistance and that is why I think my generation is especially thankful to the creditors who, in 1977, in 1983 and in 2011, were ready to place their money here

I was born in Portugal in the 1960s. This is the third time I find myself in a country under external assistance and that is why I think my generation is especially thankful to the creditors who, in 1977, in 1983 and in 2011, were ready to place their money here. What sensible person would have wanted to raise a family in Portugal without this outside help? Of course, we paid interest, but much less than if we had not been this protectorate so abhorred by [Deputy Prime Minister] Paulo Portas or if our political leaders had to trawl the world seeking those who would lend us the most money.

I fear the day when Portugal will, in effect, cease to be a protectorate and when these political leaders return to brandish the verbs "give" and "invest" (if they want to invest so much, why do they not do it with their own funds and start a business?) in the great mystification they call a "positive discourse" on the nation. There are things that, when you live them over and over again, become grotesque.

For it is more than certain that someone will soon appear, as [did former PM José Sócrates] in 2009, to lead Portugal in a madcap rush forward – presented as a proactive and innovative approach. One can count on the vested interests who defend their personal privileges and those of their businesses, to claim that the country can no longer stand austerity when this austerity is imposed, not by creditors, but by the ruin into which we have plummeted in our effort to protect the corporations, the state as a partner of the private sector, and rights, acquired on paper, which public finances are no longer capable of ensuring.

## **Blame games**

Finally, there will be the losers and their speeches about the great men of the past, about the great policies of bygone days, in times when there were leaders who, due to their greatness, their wisdom and their noble principles, led us three consecutive times to poverty in just 35 years, yet still prefer, while failing to see the influx of funds they provide, to blame the creditors rather than themselves.

After three outside interventions, I am sure not only that the troika will be back, but also that it will find Portugal in much worse shape. In effect, each time we become a protectorate; rather than questioning our inability to govern ourselves we favour this irrepressible urge to repeat all the errors that made us beggars to begin with.

That is why, if I live as long as the statistics say I will, there is no doubt I will see more troikas landing in Lisbon. And that the times in between will see the flowering of all sorts of demagoguery.

October 2, 2013

## European Central Bank Holds Steady on Rates

By [DAVID JOLLY](#) and [JACK EWING](#)

85,68

PARIS — The European Central Bank left its benchmark interest rate unchanged at a record low on Wednesday, but indicated it was ready to take steps if needed to protect the euro zone from political turmoil in the United States.

“The U.S. budget shutdown is a risk if protracted,” Mario Draghi, the central bank president, said at a news conference. But he added that he did not expect the shutdown to last a long time.

Mr. Draghi deflected a question about what would happen if the United States defaulted on its debt because of the deadlock in Washington. He emphasized, though, that the European Central Bank was poised to intervene if needed.

“We have a vast array of instruments,” Mr. Draghi said. “And we exclude no option.”

But no immediate moves were announced. Meeting in Paris, the central bank’s governing council kept its main interest rate at 0.5 percent, where it has been since May.

In his news conference, Mr. Draghi repeated his assurance that the central bank would continue holding rates down, citing continued low inflation. He said the governing council had discussed a rate cut but remained divided on whether one was warranted.

Although the euro common currency is no longer under siege, tension in the euro zone has risen in recent weeks. There had been questions about the survival of the Italian government before Wednesday, when the opposition leader Silvio Berlusconi said he would support the government of Prime Minister Enrico Letta in a vote of confidence.

Asked about Italy, Mr. Draghi said the restrained reaction of financial markets to recent events in Rome showed that the euro zone had become more resilient. While political instability can hurt growth in countries where it is taking place, he said, “it doesn’t really hurt the euro zone as it used to do a few years ago.”

But the partial shutdown of the American government, depending on how long it continues, could undercut demand from the United States, the euro zone’s most important trading partner. Moreover, the political impasse in Washington raises the risk that the United States will hit the debt ceiling and begin defaulting on its debt. Analysts agree a default would be catastrophic for the world economy.

The euro zone has emerged from a recession that lasted a year and a half, but it is a feeble recovery that could easily be derailed by an external shock. “We view this recovery as weak, as fragile, as uneven,” Mr. Draghi said.

Europe has also been affected in recent months by expectations that the Federal Reserve in Washington would soon begin reducing its economic stimulus program — a move that, when it comes, is likely to push up market interest rates at a time when many European countries are already experiencing severe shortages of credit.

Last week, Mr. Draghi said the European Central Bank would consider a fresh installment of unlimited three-year loans to banks at the rock-bottom official interest rate. The low-cost loans are the closest thing that the European Central Bank has to the “quantitative easing” employed by the Fed, and it helps make sure that banks have plenty of cash. On Wednesday, though, Mr. Draghi declined to be specific about when such a move might be coming.

A government shutdown in the United States affects Europe because it unsettles financial markets, and because it reduces demand in the American market that is crucial for European exports — everything from Italian Ferraris to French cosmetics.

“While the direct economic damage will probably be limited if government offices will be allowed to resume business after a couple of days, the political standoff will take its toll on sentiment,” Asoka Wöhrmann, co-chief investment officer of Deutsche Asset and Wealth Management in Frankfurt, said in an e-mail. “It is a bad harbinger for the upcoming — and potentially more serious — debt ceiling decision” in Washington.

In addition, the shutdown could weaken the dollar. That tends to hurt European exporters because their products become more expensive in dollar terms and have a more difficult time competing in the United States or other foreign markets. On Wednesday, prompted in part by Mr. Draghi’s resolve to keep rates low, the euro rallied to its highest level against the dollar since February, reaching a peak of \$1.3606.

There has been speculation that if the European Central Bank issues another round of three-year loans, the money would come with strings attached to ensure that banks lend it to businesses and consumers. Mr. Draghi would not confirm whether that would be so.

In the past, many banks hoarded their cheap central bank loans or used the cash to buy government bonds and profit from the difference in interest rates. That practice helped governments in Italy and Spain to borrow at lower rates, but did little to help ease a severe credit crunch.

Jens Weidmann, president of the German Bundesbank and a member of the European Central Bank’s governing council, indicated this week that risk in the euro zone had risen because weak banks had loaded up on government bonds.

“The more vulnerable banks are, the more they expose themselves to sovereign debt,” Mr. Weidmann wrote in *The Financial Times*. His remarks suggested he would push for restrictions on banks’ use of central bank loans to buy government bonds.

The European Central Bank has plenty of room to maneuver on monetary policy. Annual inflation in the euro zone fell to 1.1 percent in September, its lowest level in three and a half years and well below the bank’s target of about 2 percent.

The central bank is sworn to defend price stability above all else, and in theory it should be considering ways to increase inflation slightly. There remains a risk, however slight, that the euro zone could experience deflation, a broad decline in prices that undercuts corporate profits and investment and is associated with economic depression. Deflation can be more destructive than inflation, because it is very hard to reverse.

Mr. Draghi said inflation was in line with expectations and gave no indication the central bank was pondering measures to push inflation higher. “Inflation expectations for the euro area remain firmly anchored,” he said.

October 2, 2013

# Filling the Gaps in the Flow of Renewable Energy

By [KATE GALBRAITH](#)

85,70

SAN FRANCISCO — The biggest problem with solar panels and [wind turbines](#) is that they do not produce energy all the time.

So what is the solution?

Batteries. And other technologies that store energy to be released when it is needed.

As renewable energy becomes increasingly commonplace, interest in energy storage technologies is growing around the world. Researchers in Germany, Japan, the United States and elsewhere are finding governments increasingly willing to support their ideas, although many projects are in the early stages. Cheap, large-scale energy storage is considered the holy grail of renewable power because it would allow wind and solar farms to provide constant energy to the electric grid.

Energy storage “was a kind of Cinderella topic until a few years ago — no one really paid much attention to it,” said Peter Bruce, a chemistry professor at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. Now, “there is a huge interest in this across the world.”

A big focus of the research is on advanced batteries. Traditionally, a chief limitation of batteries and supercapacitors — electrical systems that charge and discharge power quickly — has been that they do not last long enough, just as a laptop battery may degrade over time, according to Valeria Nicolosi, a research professor at Trinity College in Dublin. Today, tiny substances called nanomaterials are emerging that “can hold mechanical distress much much better,” she said. Dr. Nicolosi is working on such technologies with a grant from the European Research Council.

Britain just connected its first large-scale battery, rated at 2 megawatts, to the grid in August, in the Orkney Islands. The system resembles several cargo containers and can store more than 10,000 times as much energy as an iPad battery. In Texas, the utility company Duke Energy recently began using an even more powerful battery, rated at 36 megawatts, at a remote wind farm.

Stranger-sounding ways to store energy are also getting a fresh look. Air that is compressed and stored in places like caverns during times of excess electricity production can be released to create power when it is needed, via turbines. Projects using this technology are moving forward in New Hampshire and Germany.

The energy storage method most widely used today on power grids involves huge hydropower systems, in which water gets pumped uphill with extra electricity and then released through turbines when the energy is needed. Such projects are hard to build because they are so large, but a new system of this kind is under consideration in Wales.

Governments are putting up money. In Germany, where nuclear power is gradually yielding to renewables, the government is devoting €200 million, or \$270 million, to energy storage research, according to Eicke Weber, who directs the Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems ISE in Germany.

The German government also announced this year that €50 million would be available in subsidies for systems that pair batteries with solar panels, so that residents could use both at their homes. However, only a modest amount has been spent so far, said Dr. Weber, who recently founded the German Energy Storage Association.

“We have done a good job in developing the renewable energies,” he said. “We have not done an equally good job in making sure we have enough storage.”

Japan, which is also eager to use more renewable energy in the aftermath of the Fukushima nuclear crisis, made money available last year to support small-scale energy storage systems that can be paired with solar panels, according to Abigail Ward, a market analyst at IHS, a global research group.

In California, regulators are expected on Thursday to require electric utilities to add energy storage capacity, in the first policy of its kind in the United States. In July, U.S. electricity regulators approved a rule that supports energy storage by addressing some accounting issues.

But finding an energy storage technology capable of revolutionizing the power grid will take time, experts caution. Batteries have been around a long while, but progress has been relatively limited when it comes to inexpensive, large-scale, durable applications.

“There’s got to be a recognition that there is no quick fix — that it is going to be a longer haul, partly because, yes, we should have done more before in this area,” said Dr. Bruce, of the University of St. Andrews. “You can only accelerate so fast.”

Dr. Nicolosi, of Trinity College, said that advances in storage technologies like batteries may not be obvious for several years. “We are in that sort of time frame where research has been productive but has not yet been developed and implemented in a commercial project,” she said.

Some say that the recent investments are baby steps and that governments should be doing much more.

“In the last 10 to 15 years, the total amount of money that goes into really cutting-edge energy-related research is far too low,” said Donald Sadoway, a professor of materials chemistry at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. “That means you don’t have a large enough community of scientists working on the problem.”

Dr. Sadoway and his team invented a liquid metal battery, which sandwiches molten salt between two common molten metals that serve as electrodes. They are working to commercialize it, but the project will need considerably more than the \$15 million acquired in a round of funding last year. He hopes to have an industrial prototype ready in about a year and envisions running tests with the military or in remote places like Alaska or the Caribbean Islands, where high prices for diesel-generated electricity make renewable energy attractive.

“The whole field of electrochemistry is ripe for discovery still,” Dr. Sadoway said. “We just haven’t made the investment.”

## Eurokrise

### Gefährliche Entspanntheit

02.10.2013 · Die Eurokrise hat sich entspannt. Zu sehr, meint die Rating-Agentur S&P. Angesichts der immer noch angespannten wirtschaftlichen Situation gefährde das die geringen Erfolge.

Von [Martin Hock](#)

Den Rating-Agenturen wird mitunter ein [gerüttelt Maß an Mitschuld an der Eurokrise gegeben](#). Das hat dazu geführt, dass sie Änderungen von Bonitäts-Ratings in der Regel nur noch zu festgelegten Terminen bekannt geben dürfen. Das lässt sich natürlich durch Einschätzungen umgehen, die keinen Bezug zu konkreten Rating-Änderungen haben. So kann man die jüngste Veröffentlichung der Rating-Agentur Standard & Poor's verstehen, in der diese sich besorgt über die jüngsten Entwicklungen in der Eurokrise warnt.

Es sei eine gewisse Entspanntheit (complacency) mit Blick auf die Staatsschuldenkrise im Euroraum eingetreten, konstatieren die Analysten. Diese könne angesichts bestehender wirtschaftlicher Risiken zu einer weniger konsequenten Politik führen und in der Konsequenz auch zu weiteren Senkungen von Bonitätseinstufungen.

### Keine Rede mehr vom „Grexit“

Die Ankündigung der EZB, um jeden Preis den Euro retten zu wollen, habe die Investoren beruhigt und deren Bereitschaft erhöht, Staatsanleihen aus Italien, Irland oder Spanien zu kaufen. Das habe die Renditen und mithin die Zinsen für neue Anleihen deutlich fallen lassen. Bei der Gelegenheit merken die Analysten an: Google-Suchabfragen nach „Grexit“ oder „Euro collapse“ gebe es nicht mehr, nachdem sie 2011 und 2012 sehr häufig waren.

Auch ökonomisch sieht die Lage freundlicher aus: Die Arbeitslosigkeit steigt nicht mehr, mit Ausnahme Griechenlands liegen die Leistungsbilanzen im Plus und die sogenannte Target2-Salden im Euro-Zahlungssystem, die vor allem deutschen Ökonomen so viel Kopfzerbrechen bereitete haben, haben sich deutlich angeglichen.

### Wettbewerbsfähigkeit gestiegen

Wichtig sind für S&P vor allem die Leistungsbilanzen. Denn für die Agentur liegt die Wurzel des Übels nicht in überhöhten Staatsausgaben, sondern in einem extern finanzierten Wachstum der weniger wettbewerbsfähigen Staaten in der Phase als die Finanzierungskosten für Privatunternehmen und Verbraucher niedrig waren.

Als in der Finanzkrise die grenzüberschreitenden Finanzierungsströme zum Erliegen kamen, konnten diese ihre Leistungsbilanzdefizite nicht mehr finanzieren und gerieten in schwere Rezessionen, aus denen sich die meisten Staaten durch Arbeitslosigkeit und ein Fallen Lohnkosten wieder befreit hätten. Eine Ausnahme hierbei sei Italien.

Seitdem seien die Exporte der Peripheriestaaten, nicht zuletzt nach Deutschland gestiegen, weil die Lohnkosten vielerorts auf das Niveau der Neunziger gesunken seien. Dagegen sei das Leistungsbilanzdefizit Frankreichs gestiegen, dem der Anpassungsdruck gefehlt habe.

### Gefährliche Altlasten

Während also die Dynamik positiv sei, schleppten die Staaten aber enorme Altlasten mit sich, die es zu beseitigen gelte. So befinde sich etwa die Nettoauslandsverschuldung in Staaten wie Spanien oder Portugal auf Rekordhöhe. Die Verschuldung des privaten Sektor in Portugal ist seit 2008 von weniger als 300 auf 350



**Prozent des Bruttoinlandsprodukts gestiegen.** Auch in Slowenien wächst sie noch und Spanien hat erst ein Einfrieren auf hohem Niveau geschafft.

Das liegt zum Teil am **Bruttoinlandsprodukt selbst, das in Irland, Italien, Portugal, Spanien und Slowenien rund 8 Prozent unter dem Niveau von 2007 liegt, in Griechenland um mittlerweile 20 Prozent.** Das hat großen sozialen Sprengstoff geschaffen, der nicht zuletzt auch ein Problem der Staatshaushalte ist. **Auch in Hinsicht auf den Abbau der Target2-Salden sei nur ein geringer Teil des Weges geschafft.**

### **Potentielle Schulden-Abwärts-Spirale**

Was aber die Wirtschaft im Süden weiter behindert, sind deutlich **höhere Kreditkosten** von immer noch rund 2,5 Prozentpunkten etwa für spanische gegenüber deutschen Unternehmen. **Dabei verhielten sich die Banken der Peripherie opportunistisch und investierten mit Billigung der eigenen Regierung billiges Zentralbankgeld in immer noch hoch verzinsliche Staatsanleihen aus dem Heimatland.**

Darin sieht S&P eine potentielle **Abwärtsspirale:** Machten die Banken mit den Anleihen Verluste, könne das zu Kapitalspritzen führen, die ihrerseits wieder die Ausgabe von Staatsanleihen erforderlich macht. Das würde die Anleihenkurse drücken und den Banken neue Verluste bringen.

### **Magere Jahre voraus**

Insgesamt erwartet S&P in den kommenden Jahren ein weiter **anämisches Wachstum der Binnennachfrage in den Peripheriestaaten, derweil die Verschuldung des privaten und öffentlichen Sektors abgebaut werde.** Das Kreditangebot werde eingeschränkt bleiben, derweil die Geldpolitik keine große Wirksamkeit entfalte. Dieser Mix könne **zu sozialen Verwerfungen führen, auch weil Auswanderung für eine zu großen Teilen fremdsprachenunkundige Bevölkerung nicht in Frage komme.**

In diesem Szenario sieht S&P **eine Gefahr durch zu große Entspanntheit;** diese könne aufgrund eines verfrühten Sicherheitsgefühls **dazu führen, dass die Reformbestrebungen nachlassen oder solche zurückgedreht werden.**

## Retraites : les députés assouplissent les conditions de départ

- Par [Guillaume Guichard](#)
- Publié le 02/10/2013 à 19:45

85,74

Sous le regard attentif de [Marisol Touraine](#), les députés socialistes ont remis la plupart de leurs ambitions au vestiaire lors de l'examen de la [réforme des retraites](#) en commission des affaires sociales, qui s'est achevé mercredi midi. Il n'était pas question de remettre en cause «l'équilibre atteint au terme d'une longue consultation avec les partenaires sociaux», les avait prévenus la ministre des Affaires sociales, présente lors des travaux parlementaires. À la poubelle, par exemple, la prise en compte des années d'études et des stages dans le calcul de la retraite.

Les élus de la majorité se sont en fait attachés à adoucir les conditions de [départ anticipé dans le cadre du futur «compte pénibilité»](#), qui pourraient bénéficier à un salarié sur quatre ou cinq. Ce dispositif permettra aux salariés soumis à des conditions de travail difficiles d'accumuler des points afin de se former pour changer de travail, de bénéficier d'un temps partiel subventionné et surtout de partir plus tôt à la retraite. Avec les dispositions prévues initialement, ils avaient la possibilité d'accumuler assez de points pour avancer de deux ans leur départ. Grâce à un amendement écologiste, ils pourront partir en retraite anticipée dès 59 ans, soit trois ans avant l'âge légal.

## Comptes plombés en 2025

Les élus socialistes ont aussi voulu se montrer plus généreux que l'exécutif envers les salariés qui seront proches de la retraite lorsque le dispositif entrera en vigueur, en 2015. Le gouvernement avait prévu de doubler les points accordés à ceux âgés de 57 ans au moins. Un dédommagement au titre des périodes passées de travail pénible, techniquement impossibles à retracer aujourd'hui. Les élus socialistes ont abaissé cet âge à 52 ans. Ce sont donc cinq générations supplémentaires qui pourront accumuler assez de points pour partir plus d'un an et demi plus tôt que prévu à la retraite. Cette disposition devrait peser sur les comptes du système de retraite à horizon 2025, en plein papy-boom.

En revanche, conformément au souhait de Marisol Touraine, l'équilibre de la réforme à court terme n'a pas été rompu. Et pour cause, les élus socialistes ont renoncé à leur amendement le plus coûteux: exclusion plus de retraités du minigel de six mois de leurs pensions, ce qui aurait amputé les 800 millions de recettes attendues de ce report de la revalorisation des pensions du 1er avril au 1er octobre 2014. Au final, seuls les bénéficiaires du minimum vieillesse seront épargnés, comme le gouvernement l'avait prévu. «Ce n'est pas dans la réforme des retraites que nous allons apporter des réponses au pouvoir d'achat des plus modestes, mais dans le cadre du [budget de l'État pour 2014](#)», s'est justifiée Marisol Touraine devant la commission des affaires sociales. Les députés ont toutefois inscrit dans le texte que les futurs excédents financiers dégagés par le système de retraite, s'il y en a, n'iront pas assainir la dette mais seront utilisés «prioritairement au profit du pouvoir d'achat des retraités les plus modestes».

Le projet de loi sera examiné la semaine prochaine dans l'Hémicycle. Pour mettre la pression sur les députés, les syndicats contestataires CGT, FO, la FSU et Solidaires, ont appelé à une série de manifestations d'ici au 15 octobre, jour où le texte devrait être adopté en première lecture à l'Assemblée.

## Marine Le Pen conteste l'étiquette «extrême droite» accolée au FN

Par [Julien Licourt](#) Publié le 02/10/2013 à 18:44

85,75



La présidente du Front national indique qu'elle n'hésitera pas à aller devant les tribunaux, comme son parti l'a déjà fait dans le passé, contre ceux qui utiliseraient ce qualificatif.

«Nous ne sommes absolument pas un parti de droite, ceux qui le pensent font une erreur d'analyse totale», a déclaré Marine Le Pen devant journalistes et analystes réunis mercredi au journal *L'Express*. «Je m'élève encore plus contre la formulation d'extrême droite», a-t-elle dit, menaçant d'«actions en justice».

La question du **positionnement** du Front national sur l'échiquier politique n'est pas nouvelle. Les protestations de la famille Le Pen non plus. Dans les années 1990, Jean-Marie Le Pen avait déjà [gagné des procès sur cette question](#). Depuis son accession à la tête du parti, en 2010, [Marine Le Pen rappelle régulièrement son opposition à cette catégorisation](#). Fin 2012, le FN interpellait même directement les universitaires utilisant le terme d'extrême droite pour le dépeindre, sur les réseaux sociaux, tel l'historien Nicolas Lebourg:

Ou encore le sociologue Sylvain Crépon:

Le politologue Alexandre Dézé, auteur de l'ouvrage *Le Front national: à la conquête du pouvoir?*, évoque une problématique «historique» au FN: «comment ne pas être associé à cette famille (politique, NDLR) considérée comme sulfureuse.» Il souligne que cette catégorisation sera toujours débattue et remise en question. Pas moins de 60 termes existeraient pour définir les partis considérés comme proches du FN en Europe. «Il existe un vrai débat sur ce que sont ces partis, il n'y a pas de consensus. Mais, en général, la catégorie la plus utilisée est celle d'extrême droite.»

**Alexandre Dézé explique qu'il existe trois critères généralement utilisés pour qualifier un parti d'extrême droite.** Premièrement, établir son positionnement spatial sur une échelle gauche-droite par des électeurs, des intellectuels, des spécialistes des sciences politiques. Deuxièmement, voir comment se positionne le FN lui-même par rapport à la famille politique de l'extrême droite. Troisièmement, déterminer ce qu'est une idéologie d'extrême droite et voir si le FN y correspond, en se référant notamment à des critères tels que le nationalisme, la xénophobie, l'équivalent de la préférence nationale, l'État fort et une attitude anti-système.

### Amalgame

«Dans le même sac, on met Breivik, Aube dorée, on secoue bien et on se dit qu'il y aura une bonne image bien crade» du Front national, a poursuivi Marine Le Pen, pour étayer son propos. Un amalgame avec l'extrême droite radicale qu'il faut bien se garder de faire, selon **l'historien Nicolas Lebourg**, auteur d'une [Histoire des numéros 2 du FN](#), qui rappelle que «le FN n'a rien à voir avec les fascismes». Néanmoins, il rappelle que l'extrême droite «est une catégorie politique installée dans notre vie politique depuis la fin du XIXe: **l'utiliser, c'est se référer à une réalité structurelle, non jeter un anathème**». Pour éviter une catégorisation trop vague, il classe [le FN parmi les partis nationaux-populistes](#).

Quant à savoir dans quelle proportion ces éventuelles poursuites seront menées, le FN n'a pas souhaité nous répondre.

## „Wir brauchen das Gymnasium für alle“

03.10.2013 · Werden es die Kinder noch so gut haben wie wir? Und wie sollen wir sie dafür ausbilden? Viele Eltern bewegt diese Frage. Ute Frevert, Direktorin des Max-Planck-Instituts für Bildungsforschung, hat viele Ideen dazu. Ein Interview.



© Jens Gyarmaty / F.A.Z. Die Historikerin Ute Frevert ist Direktorin am Max-Planck-Institut für Bildungsforschung in Berlin.

### **Frau Frevert, kann die Hoffnung auf sozialen Aufstieg für Kinder heute noch in Erfüllung gehen?**

Bei Akademikern kursiert eher die Furcht: Werden es die Kinder noch so gut haben wie wir? Es geht darum, die Position zu halten. Und nicht darum, dass die Kinder noch einen draufsetzen. Die Wahrnehmung ist: Wir haben das Ende der Aufstiegsspirale erklommen. FRAGE: ANTWORT: Die Vorstellung, dass sich die eigenen Kinder für den Stuserhalt unglaublich anstrengen müssen, setzt in vielen Familien eine negative Dynamik in Gang: Eltern üben massiv Druck auf ihre Kinder aus.

### **Sollten sich die Eltern nicht besser entspannen - in Zeiten, in denen viele Firmen händeringend nach Arbeitskräften suchen?**

Das ist ein frommer Wunsch. Gerade wenn es sich für einen selbst gut gefügt hat, möchte man doch, dass es den Kindern zumindest nicht schlechter geht. Im Übrigen können und wollen längst nicht alle Akademikerkinder wieder Akademiker werden - selbst wenn das oftmals der Fall ist.

### **Entspannt waren auch die Eltern nicht, die ihren Kindern einst den Bildungsaufstieg ermöglichten.**

Das ist etwas anderes. Sicher hatten auch damals viele Probleme damit, ihr Kind in eine fremde Welt zu entlassen. Als bildungsferne Mutter überblicken Sie ja gar nicht, welche Fertigkeiten das Kind für die nächsthöhere berufliche Position braucht. Da können Sie keine Ratschläge geben. Aber darin liegt auch ein Element von Freiheit: Das Kind kann dieses Neue selbständig erarbeiten, die Eltern reden ihm nicht hinein. Die heutigen Mittelschichtseltern wissen dagegen ganz genau, was man tun muss, und geben ihren Kindern das eigene Muster vor.

### **Sind wir eine durchlässige Gesellschaft?**

In den sechziger und siebziger Jahren hat sich unsere Gesellschaft unbestritten enorm geöffnet, vor allem durch eine höhere Bildungsbeteiligung. Ungleich mehr Eltern als damals haben heute einen Hochschulabschluss, und natürlich wollen sie, dass das auch ihren Kindern zugutekommt. Daraus folgt eine neue Form von Abschottung. Aber doch auf einem sehr hohen Niveau sozialer Teilhabe!

### **Für die anderen wurde der Weg nach oben schwerer?**

Das sehe ich nicht so. Der Wechsel zwischen den Schulformen ist heute leichter möglich als in den Sechzigern, die Durchlässigkeit der Institutionen höher. Das Problem ist, den Sprung dann tatsächlich zu machen und zu wagen.

### **Fehlt es heute am Aufstiegswillen?**

Es gibt zweifellos Familien, in denen sich Bildungsarmut von einer Generation auf die andere vererbt. Aber es gibt auch solche, vor allem unter Migranten, die für ihre Kinder einen Bildungsaufstieg wünschen und sie zum Sprung ermuntern. Allerdings ist ihre Frustrationstoleranz geringer: Gibt es Schwierigkeiten auf dem Gymnasium, wird das Kind schnell wieder abgemeldet. Dahinter stecken Unsicherheiten, aber auch eine Angst vor dem Scheitern. Und davor, dass ihnen die Kinder verlorengehen. Eltern fürchten, dass sich ihr gebildetes Kind irgendwann für sie schämt: Wir sind nicht so gekleidet, wir sind nicht so eingerichtet, wir lesen die falsche Zeitung und schauen die falschen Filme.

### **Diese Ängste gab es in den sechziger Jahren mindestens genauso?**

Aber die gesellschaftliche Ermutigung und der allgemeine Drive waren größer. Allen, die sich davon anstecken ließen, winkte eine bessere Zukunft, und das konnte angesichts der mageren Ausgangslage jeder erkennen. Höhere Bildung für alle, die wollen und können: Das war ein starkes Versprechen für sozialen Aufstieg, und es hielt die Ängste damals in Schach.

### **Jetzt heißt es, in Spanien haben zu viele junge Leute studiert. Der deutsche Lehrling gilt als Vorbild.**

Viele Wissenschaftler sehen das anders. Internationale Organisationen wie die OECD halten es sogar für erstrebenswert, dass 60 Prozent eines Jahrgangs studieren.

### **Haben diese Experten denn recht?**

Meines Erachtens bewerten sie akademische Ausbildung über. Das geht an den gesellschaftlichen Erfordernissen vorbei, und es überfordert die Universitäten. Professoren haben es dann mit Studierenden zu tun, die für ein wissenschaftliches Studium nicht geeignet sind und sich auch nicht dafür interessieren. Da sollten wir schärfer trennen. Ich möchte die Universitäten als Orte wissenschaftlichen Nachdenkens erhalten. Wer eher berufsorientierte Bildung sucht, ist an einer Fachhochschule besser aufgehoben.

### **Sind gute Schulen für die Aufstiegschancen nicht viel wichtiger?**

Sicher. Aber auch hier gilt: Wenn man Kinder aus bildungsfernen Schichten wirklich fördern will, darf man bei der Qualität keine Abstriche machen. Wer das Niveau des Schulunterrichts senkt, vergrößert nur den Bildungsvorteil für Akademikerkinder, die das alles von zu Hause mitbringen.

### **Sollen etwa weniger Schüler aufs Gymnasium gehen?**

Ganz im Gegenteil. Kinder lernen immer auch von anderen Kindern, von positiven Beispielen, von anderen Lebensumständen. Eine längere gemeinsame Schulzeit bietet sich daher auf jeden Fall an.

### **Wie lange?**

Ich habe sehr gute Erfahrungen mit dem amerikanischen System gemacht. Dort werden die Kinder bis zum Schluss nicht institutionell getrennt, selbst in den oberen Klassen nicht. Aber es gibt eben auch keine Klassenverbände. Schüler werden in jedem Fach nach ihren Stärken und Schwächen eingestuft. ANTWORT: Das ist so fein differenziert, dass sich jeder und jede individuell hocharbeiten kann. Am Ende machen alle zusammen ihren Abschluss, aber jeder hat ein anderes Diplom in der Tasche.

### **Auf Deutsch gesagt, wollen Sie eine Gesamtschule?**

Wenn Sie es so nennen wollen, dann ist das eine Gesamtschule. Man muss aber wissen, dass man sich damit von der allgemeinen Hochschulreife verabschiedet.

### **Dann verlangen Sie die Abschaffung des Gymnasiums?**

Diese Chance wurde in den siebziger Jahren vertan, als man auf Druck von Eltern und konservativen Lehrerverbänden das Gymnasium beibehielt und die Gesamtschule zur Restschule verkam. Jetzt geht es nur noch umgekehrt: dass man das Gymnasium zu einer Schule für alle umbaut, nach dem Vorbild der amerikanischen High School.

### **Auch viele Amerikaner beklagen allerdings, dass die Versprechen der Aufstiegsgesellschaft nicht mehr eingelöst werden.**

Aber aus einem anderen Grund: Viele öffentliche Schulen, vor allem solche in ärmeren Kommunen, sind grottenschlecht und heillos unterfinanziert. Eltern, die es sich leisten können, schicken ihre Kinder auf Privatschulen. Dagegen helfen nur massive Investitionen in das öffentliche Bildungswesen - oder Flaggschiffe wie etwa die New Yorker Stuyvesant School, die ihren Schülern Spitzenleistungen abverlangt. Hier sind übrigens die Kinder der weißen Mittelschicht mittlerweile in der Minderheit, kluge Einwandererkinder schnappen ihnen die begehrten Plätze weg.

### **Wenn es strikt nach Leistung geht: Dann fällt es den Bildungsbürgern nicht mehr so leicht, mit ihrem Nachwuchs ganz kuschelig unter sich zu bleiben?**

Unbedingt. Deshalb ist für mich Leistung die einzig legitime Kategorie für die Auswahl künftiger Eliten. Wenngleich ich weiß, dass sie von sozialen Voraussetzungen nicht unabhängig ist: In das, was wir als Leistung definieren, gehen viele Vorannahmen und Vorentscheidungen ein. Da geht es auch um soziale und kommunikative Fähigkeiten, die deutsche Schulen viel zu wenig fördern. Oder einfach nur um ein freundliches, zivilisiertes Auftreten.

### **Sie leiten ein Institut für Bildungsforschung und forschen über Gefühle. Welche Rolle spielen Emotionen für sozialen Aufstieg?**

Über Ängste sprachen wir schon. Das andere ist die Ökonomie der Wünsche und Sehnsüchte. Wir sollten uns klarmachen: Was wollen Schüler, Lehrer, Eltern überhaupt? Welche Art von Bildung sollen Schulen eigentlich vermitteln? Da kommt mir das alte Wort von der Herzensbildung in den Sinn, wie man im 18. Jahrhundert sagte: Einfühlungsvermögen, Neugier, Offenheit, auch moralisches Empfinden.

### **Sie verlangen doch nicht etwa ein Schulfach Glück?**

Gott bewahre! Glück kann man nicht lernen, es ist ein rares Gut, ein Geschenk, für das es keine Berechtigungen gibt. Aber die Schulen haben sich durch die Pisa-Debatte zu sehr auf abfragbare Standards ausgerichtet. Sie sollten mehr in kulturelle Bildung investieren, in Philosophie, Ethik, Kunst, Musik und richtig gute Literatur.

### **Hören wir Kritik an Ihrem Kollegen Jürgen Baumert, dem Chef der deutschen Pisa-Studie?**

Der sieht das ganz genauso. Es war ja überhaupt nicht verkehrt, mathematisches Wissen abzufragen oder die Lesekompetenz zu erfassen. Aber darüber wissen wir jetzt Bescheid. Künftig brauchen wir mehr Forschung auf anderen Feldern: Wie steht es um Fremdsprachen und kulturelle Bildung, Geschichte und Politik, Kunst und Musik? Daran müssen wir in Zukunft arbeiten.

## Palmarès des écoles et universités : la France chute encore

Par Quentin Blanc Publié le 02/10/2013 à 18:36

85,79

Les classements mondiaux des universités continuent globalement à bouder la France. Celui dévoilé par le [Times Higher Education](#) ce mercredi 2 octobre ne déroge pas à la règle, se révélant même plus sévère encore que celui de son rival QS, [paru début septembre](#). L'École normale supérieure (ENS), établissement français le mieux classé dans les deux cas, émergeait en effet à la 28<sup>e</sup> place chez QS. Avec le *Times Higher Education*, la voilà... 65<sup>ème</sup>, perdant 6 rangs au passage. Le reste est à l'avenant.

Polytechnique, 62 l'an passé, chute à la 70<sup>e</sup> place. L'université Pierre-et-Marie-Curie glisse du 81<sup>ème</sup> au 96<sup>ème</sup> rang, et l'université Paris-Sud du 92<sup>e</sup> au 114<sup>ème</sup> rang. Au total, ce sont huit établissements français qui arrivent à se glisser dans ce palmarès, mais seuls les quatre classés au-delà de la 150<sup>e</sup> place (sur 200) sont en progression. L'université Grenoble-1 est 155<sup>e</sup>, l'ENS de Lyon est 156<sup>e</sup>, Paris-Diderot est 178<sup>e</sup> et Mines ParisTech intègre pour la première fois le top en accrochant la 193<sup>e</sup> place.

## La domination anglo-saxonne est sans partage

Au-delà de la France, c'est l'Europe toute entière qui souffre dans ce classement. Les Pays-Bas, deuxième pays européen derrière la Grande-Bretagne avec 12 pays classés, l'Allemagne, la Suisse, les Pays-Bas, la Russie, la Belgique, l'Irlande, l'Autriche: tous voient leurs établissements chuter. Sur le vieux continent, seule la Scandinavie semble tirer son épingle du jeu. Cinq [universités suédoises](#) se distinguent, dont le Karolinska Institute, 36<sup>e</sup>, ainsi que 3 facs danoises et une finlandaise.

Au niveau mondial, c'est le California Institute of Technology qui décroche la palme [pour la troisième année consécutive](#). L'américaine Harvard, quatrième l'an dernier, grimpe de deux places et partage désormais la deuxième marche du podium avec la britannique Oxford. La domination anglo-saxonne sur ce classement est sans partage, puisque le top 10 est complété par 5 institutions américaines (Stanford, MIT, Princeton, Berkeley et Chicago), et 2 anglaises (Cambridge et l'Imperial College).

## La Chine ne compte que deux universités dans le classement

Au total, parmi les 200 meilleures universités du monde, plus de la moitié sont anglo-saxonnes: on y dénombre 77 établissements américains et 31 britanniques. Il faut attendre la 14<sup>e</sup> place pour trouver trace d'une université d'un autre pays, une performance à mettre au crédit de la Suisse et de l'institut technologique fédéral de Zurich (ETH).

L'Asie, de son côté, compte 17 universités classées, soit une de moins que l'an dernier, mais la plupart de ces établissements progressent, confirmant la dynamique positive des universités orientales observée dans les autres palmarès. L'université de Tokyo confirme [sa domination continentale](#) en se classant 23<sup>e</sup>. Singapour, 26<sup>e</sup>, la talonne de près tandis que l'université de Melbourne, 28<sup>e</sup> l'an passé, n'est plus que 34<sup>e</sup>. La Chine et ses 1,3 milliards d'habitants ne compte que deux universités dans le classement. Quant aux autres continents, ils sont une fois de plus aux abonnés absents: Israël hisse deux établissements dans le palmarès et l'Afrique du Sud un seul. Le Brésil, seul pays sud-américain honoré l'an dernier, voit sa seule fac classée disparaître du classement. A l'heure où [des heurts entre professeurs et policiers](#) secouent le pays, cela ressemble fort à une mauvaise nouvelle.























# Les 20 meilleurs établissements du monde

RANG 2013-2014

PAYS

VARIATION 2013/12

RANG 2013-2014	NOM	PAYS	VARIATION 2013/12
1	<b>CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY</b>	ÉTATS-UNIS 	→ =
2	HARVARD UNIVERSITY	ÉTATS-UNIS 	↗ +2
	<i>ex æquo</i>		
	UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD	ROYAUME-UNI 	→ =
4	STANFORD UNIVERSITY	ÉTATS-UNIS 	↘ -2
5	MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY	ÉTATS-UNIS 	→ =
6	PRINCETON UNIVERSITY	ÉTATS-UNIS 	→ =
7	UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE	ROYAUME-UNI 	→ =
8	UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY	ÉTATS-UNIS 	↗ +1
9	UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO	ÉTATS-UNIS 	↗ +1
10	IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON	ROYAUME-UNI 	↘ -2
11	YALE UNIVERSITY	ÉTATS-UNIS 	→ =
12	UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES	ÉTATS-UNIS 	↗ +1
13	COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY	ÉTATS-UNIS 	↗ +1
14	ETH ZÜRICH – SWISS FEDERAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY ZÜRICH	SUISSE 	↘ -2
15	JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY	ÉTATS-UNIS 	↗ +1
16	UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA	ÉTATS-UNIS 	↘ -1
17	DUKE UNIVERSITY	ÉTATS-UNIS 	↗ +6
18	UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN	ÉTATS-UNIS 	↗ +2
19	CORNELL UNIVERSITY	ÉTATS-UNIS 	↘ -1
20	UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO	CANADA 	↗ +1

Source : Times Higher Education

02/10/2013

Infographie **LE FIGARO**

## Learning the Wrong Lessons About Austerity

By [THE EDITORIAL BOARD](#) Published: October 2, 2013

85,81

After a deep, three-year recession, the economy of the 28 countries that make up the European Union collectively grew 0.4 percent in the three months that ended in June, the best quarterly figure since early 2011. That is hardly a cause for celebration for most Europeans who have experienced little to no discernible change in their lives in recent months. The union's [unemployment rate](#), for instance, was 10.9 percent in August, and has not budged since May.

Even so, some European policy makers are insisting that this faint recovery shows that their austerity policies — cutting government spending and raising taxes — are working. In a [speech](#) last month, George Osborne, the British chancellor of the Exchequer, said that economists who had called for a more gradual reduction in his country's fiscal deficit "have lost the argument." Wolfgang Schäuble, the German finance minister, [insists](#) that "the euro zone is clearly on the mend both structurally and cyclically."

They're wrong — and, worse, wrong in a way that can only hurt the prospects of millions of Europeans who are struggling to find work. Even under the best case economic scenarios envisioned by most analysts, the unemployment rate will fall only very gradually if the continent's governments do not change their policies. More than one-fifth of Europeans younger than 25 are unemployed and many will likely remain jobless for years.

Opponents of austerity, including this page, never argued that growth would never return under those policies. Rather, they asserted that governments that tried to cut their budget deficits too much and too fast in the middle of a deep recession would unnecessarily prolong and exacerbate the downturn.

Recent economic data provide plenty of reason to believe that that is exactly what has happened in Europe. Britain and the countries that use the euro have recovered much more slowly in the last five years than the average recovery of developed countries after recessions and major financial crises since 1960, according to a [recent analysis](#) by two senior officials at the Bank of England. Not surprisingly, neither Britain nor the euro zone has returned to the production levels that they achieved before the crisis in 2008.

October 2, 2013

## Mutiny Halts Italian Gambit by Berlusconi

By [JIM YARDLEY](#)

85,82

ROME — He seemed stunned, if immaculately tailored in a dark suit that sheathed him like armor. But the Silvio Berlusconi who stood before the Italian Senate on Wednesday was no longer invincible. His brazen attempt to bring down Italy's coalition government had provoked a mutiny in his own party. Most startling, Mr. Berlusconi, the powerful former prime minister, was reversing himself and bending to the rebellion.

For all the Shakespearean elements of pride, betrayal and hubris displayed on Wednesday during the political theatrics, the government survived a confidence vote with unexpected ease. The more significant news was that moderates promising deep reforms scored an unusually decisive victory in the most unstable of the euro zone's big economies.

At a time when several major countries, notably including the United States, are paralyzed by partisan political warfare, the defeat for Mr. Berlusconi was greeted by many as a welcome, if still tentative, sign that Italy could carry out long-delayed changes to its political system and take steps to revive its sclerotic economy. "We are seeing the long twilight of the Berlusconi era," said Roberto D'Alimonte, a political analyst in Rome.

Mr. Berlusconi's attempt to bring down the government was intended to resuscitate his endangered political career as he faces a pending prison sentence, analysts say. Instead, it fractured his center-right movement in Italy, which was threatened with a wave of defections. Standing in the Senate, Mr. Berlusconi, 77, was forced to reverse himself and pledge his party's support for the same government that he had failed to topple.

Political instability is considered one of Italy's most endemic bugaboos, commonly blamed for the country's inability to undertake difficult but critical economic and electoral changes. European officials are especially worried about instability in Italy, one of the largest and most important economies in the euro zone, and fretted that new elections might unleash populist anger and threaten the tentative recovery under way on the Continent.

Now the question is whether Italy's newly validated government can approve sweeping changes to a flawed electoral system that seems designed to produce splintered results. The government was formed five months ago after inconclusive results in national elections; it is an awkward, midwifed partnership between Italy's competing center-left and center-right parties.

The country's youthful prime minister, Enrico Letta, was often regarded as a doomed figure: sober and well intentioned but trapped by an unworkable political marriage. On Wednesday, Mr. Letta, 47, made a forceful plea on behalf of the government, warning lawmakers that Italy was emerging from its worst economic slump since World War II and that dissolving the government would only deepen the crisis.

Mr. Letta's top priority is rejuvenating Italy's cumbersome electoral system and streamlining the country's multiple and costly layers of government. Currently, Italy's Parliament has nearly 1,000 members in the Senate and the Lower House, a figure that lawmakers concede should be sharply reduced.

Moreover, the Parliament is under pressure to pass structural changes in how elections are conducted, so voters can more directly select their representatives, rather than the current system that uses complicated formulas to calculate vote shares.

On the economy, Mr. Letta has promised to cut taxes on employers and workers and to push steps to make Italy more competitive. On Wednesday, he also promised to crack down on tax evasion and emphasized the need to reduce a jobs crisis that has pushed youth unemployment to 40 percent.

He also made clear that Italy's fate is intertwined with that of Europe, and that Italian lawmakers needed to prove they were responsible stewards, willing to tackle tough issues. He said that the political roller coaster that had consumed Italy this year was no longer tenable, and that the government needed a strong confidence vote as an endorsement to push through big changes and send a signal of stability to businesses and investors.

"Courage and confidence is what I am asking of you," he said. "Give us the confidence to fulfill our goals, for all that we have accomplished and started in these few months."

Beneath such lofty statements, though, was a complicated political fight provoked unexpectedly last week when Mr. Berlusconi ordered his party's government ministers to resign from the shaky coalition, in hopes of forcing new elections.

It was a gamble influenced by Mr. Berlusconi's own legal troubles: On Oct. 15, he will begin serving a one-year prison sentence, most likely under house arrest, for his recent [tax fraud conviction](#). A commission of the Italian Senate on Friday will resume deliberations to strip him of his Senate seat. A court in Milan will soon rule on how many years he is to be banned from seeking any public office, again based on the tax conviction.

Mr. Berlusconi is such a dominant figure over his party, People of Freedom, that internal challenges have been almost unheard-of. But with his future unclear, many of his lieutenants unexpectedly rebelled against his order to bring down the government. Most surprisingly, Angelino Alfano, the deputy prime minister and considered one of Mr. Berlusconi's closest protégés, publicly challenged him on Tuesday, vowing to support the government, even as other center-right lawmakers talked openly of forming a new party.

All those fissures were publicly exposed on Wednesday: Mr. Berlusconi met with his party leaders before the parliamentary vote and apparently decided to oppose the government. One center-right lawmaker, Renato Brunetta, announced this decision in the Senate. But it quickly became clear that a bloc of moderates led by Mr. Alfano would support the government and possibly form a new party. Meanwhile, Roberto Formigoni, another center-right lawmaker, also spoke about forming his own party.

"We have the numbers," Mr. Formigoni said. "Those who called us traitors will now see us as farseeing pioneers."

With his movement fracturing, Mr. Berlusconi unexpectedly appeared in the Senate at 1:30 p.m. At times covering his eyes with his hands, Mr. Berlusconi eventually stood and pledged his support to Mr. Letta's government.

"Putting together the expectations and the fact that Italy needs a government that produces institutional and structural reforms, we have decided to vote for the confidence motion, not without internal pain," Mr. Berlusconi said.

Analysts said Mr. Berlusconi's reversal, if embarrassing, was his only option, given his failure to topple the government. If he can reorganize his forces for future elections, analysts said, he can tell voters that he acted in the nation's interests. It was also an attempt to corral his mutineers and possibly keep his party together.

By Wednesday evening it remained unclear how center-right lawmakers might follow through on their threats to form new parties. Some of those lawmakers compared the episode to a family spat and predicted that the party would remain intact.

But there seemed little doubt that Mr. Berlusconi is a diminished figure. To many pro-Europe advocates, this will come as good news, since he has often been unpredictable and, at times, critical of European integration.

"Berlusconi is the big loser," said Mario Sechi, a political commentator with Radio 24. "He has been made lame. He can only try to recover the party, but that will be very difficult."

Elisabetta Povoledo and Lucia Magi contributed reporting.

October 2, 2013 (with VIDEO)

## Case Against Greek Far-Right Party Draws Critics

By [LIZ ALDERMAN](#)

85,84

NIKAIA, Greece — For over a year, 30 Kaisareias Street bustled with activity. Burly, black-clad members of the neo-fascist Golden Dawn party converted part of the nondescript white building into a headquarters, holding frequent meetings and fanning out for military-style neighborhood patrols armed with batons and heavy poles wrapped in the Greek flag.

Then, last week, the group disappeared overnight. A regular in the office, Giorgos Roupakias, was accused of killing an anti-fascist activist in a crime that shocked the nation, and the government began an effort to “eradicate” the group, as Prime Minister Antonis Samaras put it.

But already, serious questions have been raised about the planning and effectiveness of [the crackdown](#), and whether it may actually boomerang against the government and end up generating sympathy for Golden Dawn, one of Europe’s most violent far-right groups.

“If it is not handled properly, you could get a kind of a bounce back of Golden Dawn,” said George Katrougalos, a constitutional law professor at the Democritus University of Thrace. “If they appear to be victims of the establishment, that may broaden their appeal.”

Questions are already being raised about the legality, even constitutionality, of the government’s methods.

On Wednesday, in a surprise decision, a magistrate ordered three prominent Golden Dawn lawmakers, among 35 people associated with the party who were arrested in a sweep last Saturday, to be released pending trial. After more than 17 hours of testimony, one of the men, the party’s spokesman, Ilias Kasidiaris, strode from the court, called reporters “bums” and pushed photographers out of his way.

However, a fourth Golden Dawn lawmaker, Yannis Lagos, was remanded to custody after the judicial authorities deemed that evidence linking him to criminal activities — including murder, attempted murder and blackmail — was strong.

The legal wrangling pointed to the rising conviction of the government and many others here that Golden Dawn has been run less as a political party than as a mafia. But it also underlined concerns that the government’s case might be riddled with legal holes and procedural missteps in the investigation. Golden Dawn’s supporters say the government is basing its case against party members in large part on wiretaps that lacked the required judicial approval.

Mr. Samaras has made it clear that he sees no place for Golden Dawn in the Greek political system. “We must do it within the context of our democratic Constitution,” he said in a speech in New York this week. “But we have to go all the way and do whatever it takes.”

Doing so will not be easy. Because the government cannot ban political parties, it is trying to undermine the group by dismantling its leadership and cutting its financing. Prosecutors are charging members with participating in a criminal organization, a move that would effectively outlaw the group.

In court testimony, the Golden Dawn spokesman, Mr. Kasidiaris, said his group was the victim of a politically motivated persecution aimed at discrediting the party before local elections next spring. He and the others denied the government’s accusations.

Golden Dawn’s popularity has slipped since Mr. Roupakias admitted to the killing of the activist, Pavlos Fyssas, a Greek rapper whose lyrics inveighed against rightist extremism. But questions have swirled around

why the government is only now pursuing an organization whose violence and Nazi ideology have been well documented.

Included in the 31 charges are cases that have been pending for years, involving murder, extortion and money laundering — none of which were previously pursued by Mr. Samaras's government. The Greek ombudsman cited nearly 300 cases of recent racist violence involving Golden Dawn members that also received no judicial attention.

"It is obvious that there was an inertia toward Golden Dawn by the state and other authorities until now," Mr. Katrougalos, the law professor, said.

In the working-class neighborhood of Keratsini, where the killing took place, anti-fascist graffiti was scrawled on buildings near banners calling for rallies against Golden Dawn. Rap music thumped from cars, and groups of young people packed cafes on Tsaldari Street, where Mr. Fyssas was stabbed.

On the spot where he died, a makeshift shrine was erected with candles, red roses and a white cross. An anarchist symbol — the letter "A" enclosed in a circle — was spray painted on a doorway next to several scrawled homages, including one that read: "Safe travels my brother. Vengeance has already begun."

At the Ouzo cafe in Nikaia, near the group's shuttered offices, people were elated that Golden Dawn had scattered. "It's already better," said Giorgos, 61, a retiree who would give only his first name. "These people were like thugs, with their flags and poles, wearing their black shirts and army pants and boots. If you saw them up close, you'd be scared."

He added that Mr. Roupakias was known in the neighborhood for attending Golden Dawn meetings, and had run the cafe in the group's offices.

Many here were angered that Golden Dawn had come to the Keratsini neighborhood from Nikaia. "This is a working-class area that resisted the Nazis, who rounded up people and shot them," said another retiree, Stavros, 56, as he sipped coffee. "The mass grave is still there. So it's a disgrace that this neighborhood was then occupied by fascists."

But no one thought Golden Dawn or the grievances that vaulted it to power would be easily overcome.

"They cut the head of Golden Dawn," said Artemis Sarafoglou, 21, a resident who frequently encountered Golden Dawn members patrolling the streets. "But this may be like the Hydra, where something new can grow in its place." He said that several of his friends had voted for Golden Dawn, helping it win 18 seats in Parliament last year, and that their support for the group had not wavered.

"The reasons why Golden Dawn came to power have not been erased," Mr. Sarafoglou said, looking at a party banner that still fluttered from a balcony. "It's truly possible that they could rise again."

In Keratsini, Eleni Batziopoulou, 24, a philosophy student, said that she and her friends had no real hope that Golden Dawn would become truly enfeebled. Instead, the clampdown raised a more profound question.

"Is this the end of Golden Dawn, or is it really just the beginning?" she asked. "I want to believe it's the end, because I want to have hope in the future. But if it's not, then it's the start of a wave of trouble."



## Austria: Well-off, but uneasy

2 October 2013

[The New York Times](#) New York

85,86



"Happy Wien" - Detail from a SPÖ party billboard for the 1959 local elections

### Matthaeuswien

**After the September 29 general election, Austria's grand coalition will remain in power, despite a drop in support for the country's two largest political parties, who gained little credit for the outgoing government's good management of the financial crisis and unemployment.**

[Alison Smale](#)

Palpably prosperous Austria is one of Europe's winners: It boasts [the continent's lowest unemployment](#) and despite world financial crisis and Eurozone turbulence is still eking out growth, attached as it is to Germany's robust economy and profiting as it does not just from the European Union but especially from the opening of its erstwhile Hapsburg hinterlands after the Iron Curtain fell in 1989.

Yet in elections last weekend, parties who embrace a peculiarly Austrian strain of rightist populism still notched up [more than a quarter of the vote](#) — slightly down from 2008, when the rightist Jörg Haider, who died just two weeks later in a car crash, retained sway, but significant nonetheless of Europe's malaise.

It was a sobering message for the pro-Europe government — the two biggest parties are partners in a centrist marriage of left and right that [has governed for much of the last 30 years](#). Although they have navigated Europe's economic crisis with some acknowledged skill, they got no credit and each posted their worst result since 1945.

View from Germany

## In Austria, it's not only the anti-Europeans who have prevailed

Despite the good showing of the populist parties in the [legislative elections of September 19](#), "Austria has not fallen into the populist trap," [writes Die Welt](#). According to the German daily, the leader of the Team Stronach



party, contrary to the conventional wisdom, is not a xenophobe and therefore cannot be compared to the OPS, the party of the extreme right that came third in the elections.

*Die Welt* also welcomes the success of the new neo-liberal party

It is still unclear how this party, which immediately won 4.8 per cent of the vote, will evolve [...] But these are, apparently, different liberals [to those who have [failed in Germany](#)]: young and mobile. Enthusiasts, they wave the flag of liberty. With them, a pro-European Liberal party is being represented for the first time since 2002 in Austria's parliament.

## Syrian refugees: 'Every other European country is better than France'

2 October 2013

[Libération](#) Paris

85,88



A prefabricated house in Calais, which used to be home to 40 Syrian refugees waiting to go in the UK

### [DR Vibrations migratoires](#)

**Syrian refugees pass through France towards the UK. They hope to be treated better there than at Calais, where they roam the streets after they were recently ejected from their squat. Sweden, which has granted official refugee status to Syrians, is another coveted destination.**

[Stéphanie Maurice](#)

There is no shelter in Calais for the Syrian refugees. Their squat was emptied on September 5, explains the prefecture, for reasons of security and improper sanitation. Since then they have been wandering the streets in small groups. The pressure from the police to keep them from squatting again in an abandoned building never lets up. It's impossible to relax, to lay out their personal effects. "They are truly in an intense process of ever deepening homelessness," worries Cécile Bossy, Coordinator of the Coastal Migrant Programme of the Doctors of the World organisation. The NGO, along with five other organisations, has launched a call for better reception of Syrian refugees in France.

On the eve of being deported, Youssef, a 25-year-old English student, was furious. "We're getting by here without anyone's help. There's no water, no toilets, it's completely rotten, all we have is a roof. Why do they want to throw us out?"

Dishes were washed over a drain, and socks dried on the fence that surrounds the industrial wasteland. Things had been precarious, but organised, in this old wholesale warehouse that everyone calls the "Beer House" near the port of Calais. Several tons of full beer cans had been abandoned there, past their sell-by-date back in 2007, and the entire neighbourhood had shown up to help themselves to this lucky windfall.

## Hospitality rules remain

Today the big depot, where a hundred Sudanese once lived, is walled off. The 20 or so Syrians had preferred to stay away, and kept to an old prefabricated building gathering dust next to it. On its side they drew an British flag, never to forget the purpose of their trip. Inside, camping mattresses and blankets littered the floor over three levels. The rules of hospitality, though, were honoured, including sharing an impromptu meal with the handful of visitors, journalists, activists from the No Borders movement, volunteers of the *Marmite aux Idées* association of Calais, and members of Doctors of the World. Olives, white cheese, tuna in oil.

Punitive strikes on the Syrian regime? The Syrians shrugged, disbelieving, and for good reason. "It's been a long time since the Europeans have done anything," says Youssef. "There's no hope." It's the voice of a

fatalist. It cracks only when he is asked for news of his parents and his brothers and sisters, still back in Syria: he has had none. They fled to a village, he said, to a safer place. Youssef has been on the move for six months.

When his house was destroyed by missiles, he decided to head abroad. The tall man loves to show off his greying temples: “The white hair is because of Bashar”

In Calais there are always between 30 and 50 Syrian refugees, trying to cross the Channel. “They arrived this winter,” says Philippe Wannesson, from the [Marmite aux idées](#). A steady stream from Damascus, Homs, Deraa, near the Israeli border. “These are people who had just enough money to make it so far.” Youssef paid \$7,500 dollars (€5,500) to get to France. The passage to the UK? Between €1,000 and €2,000. Hassan, 30, a painter and decorator, joins the discussion. When his house was destroyed by missiles, he decided to head abroad. The tall man loves to show off his greying temples: “The white hair is because of Bashar”, he thunders in Arabic, while his companions try to translate into English. He has been here 70 days, tempting fate every night, and he has lost count of how many times he has been arrested by the border police – at least 20, he says.

## ‘Asylum? No, thank you’

Each time he was released: and yet it’s impossible for him to go back to a country at war. Apply for asylum in France? He shakes his head. He knows what happened to the Sudanese. Many have filed an application for asylum, which normally entitles them to a place to stay in a reception centre for asylum-seekers (Cada) – but there aren’t enough beds, and they live in the same conditions as the others.

“After two years of the asylum application process, they say ‘No, thank you’.” “Usually”, notes Philippe Wannesson, “they have a family waiting to follow them. Those who come to Calais, and see what’s happening, won’t stay in France.” In England the refugees are housed right away. [Sweden](#) is even better: “It just decided to give a three-year transitional refugee status to all Syrians who show up,” says Philippe Wannesson, and with possible family reunification. And that is just what’s behind Youssef’s *cri de coeur*: “Every other country in Europe is better than France.”

## Crises in America and Italy

### When not in Rome

Oct 2nd 2013, 19:32 by Lexington

85,90



IT IS not often that Italy looks like a democratic role model. But Lexington has been pondering the political crises rocking both Washington and Rome this week, and wondering if lessons can be drawn.

On paper, the stories have little in common. The government shutdown over Obamacare on October 1st is a logical outgrowth of America's constitutional system, and the careful separation of powers that places the presidency at the helm of the ship of state, setting the broad course of government work, while handing the power of the purse to Congress.

From Rome, in contrast, come headlines bringing news of the (latest) crisis to hit a wobbly and fractious Italian coalition, as individual parties and factions within parties assess whether their self-interest lies in propping the government up, or bringing it down.

In America, though the weapons being used to wage the Obamacare fight are alarmingly irresponsible, the central conflict is a serious one, revolving around the role of government and the place of safety nets in a market economy. This week's Italian squabbles look less lofty. In essence, a disgraced former prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi (pictured, left), stands accused of trying—apparently [without success](#) this time—to hijack the government to protect his narrow personal interests.

Yet Lexington—a recovering EU correspondent, who spent several years writing about Euro-politics in between assignments to America—would argue that the two crises have elements in common.

A big dynamic driving this week's Washington shutdown is surely this: the parties on each side of this stand-off believe that they have the electoral advantage. Most Democrats think that lots of voters will, on balance, blame Republicans for the shutdown. They point to the government shutdown of 1995-96 and the re-election of Bill Clinton later that year, and crow about conservatives who have forgotten the lessons of history.

On the other side, a critical mass of conservative Republicans in the House of Representatives—egged on by such outside groups as the Club for Growth and Heritage Action—think that the conventional wisdom is wrong, and that in 1996 Republicans caved on the shutdown too soon. This time, on balance, they think that they can gain electorally from a pitched battle over Obamacare.

The warring parties cannot both be right. We shall know more after the mid-term elections of 2014. Lexington, for what it is worth, has a hunch that both may be wrong, and that this shutdown fight may simply cause partisans on each side to dig in still more deeply while independents and those with a limited interest in politics declare a plague on all their houses.

The European papers are full of [scornful reports](#) about American dysfunction.

Yet the dispute roiling Washington this week should not be so unfamiliar. America not only enjoys government by cohabitation, as the French call divided government. Deep down, the two-party system in Congress is really a form of coalition politics, even if a first-past-the-post voting system prompts the different coalition factions to band together under Republican and Democratic banners.

In European terms what is happening in the House of Representatives is a split in the Republican coalition, as the Tea Party walks away from such uneasy allies as the Business Party, the National Security Party and the Christian Values Party.

Were this Italy, say, the country would now be moving to a snap election, allowing the various factions to test their belief that they are winning the argument over Obamacare. As it is, all sides will have to wait another 13 months to resolve their dispute by a vote of the American people.

That is the American tradition, as Barack Obama has repeated several times in recent days, arguing that voters were invited to repeal Obamacare by his Republican opponent in 2012, and did not take it. In the president's words: "One faction of one party, in one house of Congress, in one branch of government doesn't get to shut down the entire government just to refight the results of an election."

Your columnist is not going to argue with a former constitutional law professor. And Lexington hesitates to recommend taking lessons in democracy from Europe. But if this government shutdown drifts on and collides with the debt ceiling, there are days when he wonders if a snap election would look so very much worse.

September 5, 2013

## Going to Syria with France

Posted by [Alexander Stille](#)

85,92

Americans have been somewhat surprised that our most eager ally in taking punitive military action against the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad is not the United Kingdom, our partner in the so-called “special relationship,” but the France of the Socialist François Hollande. Do you remember when we were mad enough at them to put Freedom Fries on the menu?

President Obama’s decision to delay action by turning to Congress caught the French off guard—they were reportedly ready to act immediately. Now Hollande finds himself in a somewhat awkward position—out in front of everyone else, with a debate in his own parliament. The respected satirical newspaper *Le Canard Enchaîné* (the Chained Duck) described Hollande’s position as like that “of a kid whose buddies have pushed him forward to join a fight and now that he’s there, do not follow him.”

So why should stalwart Britain—headed by a conservative government, no less—say no to Syria while the untrustworthy and independent-minded French say yes? The simplest answer is that the British suffered through ten years of Iraq and Afghanistan and have had enough of getting involved in Middle Eastern civil wars with us, while the French, having sat out Iraq, are in a very different mood. President Nicolas Sarkozy’s support of the Libyan rebels was seen as a foreign-policy triumph—Islamists in Benghazi didn’t murder the French Ambassador. Hollande’s decisive move to oust Muslim extremists in Mali was one of the few dramatic successes of his brief and uninspiring tenure. He has found that quick military excursions are much easier than reforming the pension system or getting France’s teachers to give up their traditional Wednesday afternoon off.

But the different reactions of our chief allies should give us some pause as we contemplate future action in Syria. The French affirmation may not be entirely reassuring.

It is possible that limited military action to punish Syria for its presumed use of chemical weapons is the least bad of the few terrible options facing the Obama Administration—the others being a full-blown military commitment to overthrow the Assad regime or doing nothing in the face of tragedy. What seems worrisome, however, is the reasoning behind the Administration’s approach, which seems to be dictated primarily by concerns about reputation and by a negative logic—we cannot not do something—rather than by an attempt to articulate what it actually hopes to accomplish in making a military strike.

Here in France, the country’s most famous humanitarian hawk, Bernard-Henri Lévy, a major proponent of the intervention in Libya, has joined the list of American neocons (from William Kristol to Karl Rove and Elliot Abrams) who have signed an open letter to President Obama urging a greater commitment to the Syrian opposition than a limited, punitive strike. In an editorial in *Le Monde*, Lévy wrote, “The peace of the world depends, in great part, on the dissuasive capacity of America—and an America that bends today before Assad will have no credit tomorrow to dissuade Iran from pursuing nuclear weapons or North Korea from using those it already has.”

What is notable is Lévy’s focus on America, and also on the impact of weakened American credibility in countries such as Iran and North Korea. He hardly talked about France. In fact, much of the language being used to justify a military response has almost nothing to do with the situation in Syria itself. Foreign-policy experts and commentators are concerned with American credibility, the risk of eroding American power in the world.

Similarly, Secretary of State John Kerry said, in a recent speech, “History would judge us all extraordinarily harshly if we turned a blind eye to a dictator’s wanton use of weapons of mass destruction against all warnings.” He seemed to see the move as important to national identity: “This crime against conscience, this crime against humanity... this matters to us, and it matters to who we are, and to leadership and credibility in

the world. It matters here if nothing is done.” Kerry said, “This is about Hezbollah, North Korea, and every other terrorist group. Will they remember that the world stood aside and created impunity?”

So far, we are hearing about why this matters everywhere in the world but where it would seem to matter most: Syria. But should foreign policy—especially the use of lethal force—be about identity, our image abroad, internal or external political pressures? Shouldn’t the question be, simply: Will a military strike against Syria make the terrible situation there better?

The reason this question is avoided is that we have very little idea. Would a military strike sufficiently weaken the capacity of the Assad regime to tip the balance in favor of the opposition? Would it harden the determination of the regime and its supporters? If the Assad regime fails to react in some appreciable way to missile strikes, do we leave it at that, or proceed with some other military action? If we help bring down Assad, will this increase our influence with rebel groups, which, as the conflict escalates, include increasing numbers of Islamists who are unlikely to become champions of Western-style democracy in Syria?

Curiously, the American public is far less convinced of the necessity of military action in Syria than our foreign-policy establishment and journalistic commentators. It is still smarting from the three-trillion-dollar quagmire in Afghanistan and Iraq. Research shows that it is relatively easy to manipulate the public when it knows little about a subject, but much more difficult to do so when it has experience of a problem. (See, for example, the work of [Robert Y. Shapiro](#), at Columbia.) And so it was far easier for the George W. Bush Administration to whip up support for the invasion of Iraq—about which it knew little—than to privatize Social Security, a program it knew well. After America had experienced a few years of chaos and civil war in Iraq, public opinion turned decisively against our involvement, and has not budged much since.

The French, unlike the Americans and the British, do not have Iraq fatigue. While each situation should be judged on its own merits, one might hope that we had learned a few things from Iraq. In foreign policy, we might consider a version of the Hippocratic Oath: first, do no harm—that is, don’t act unless you have a clear, obtainable objective and feel that you have a better than even chance at achieving it. Decisive action is much more satisfying for policymakers than doing nothing—it seems to offer a solution to a troubling problem. But, as we saw with Iraq, it’s not so simple. And acting for the sake of political catharsis, or in the name of “credibility” as measured in foreign newspapers, leads to poor policy. Obama seems to have understood this, and has generally shown a kind of wise passivity in dealing with some of the world’s thorniest problems. He has been criticized for “leading from behind,” but he has produced some genuine accomplishments and avoided, so far, any real disasters. Syria has the potential to change that.

Decisive generally plays well in the short term. George W. Bush’s poll numbers went through the roof at the beginning of the Iraq war. And Hollande, in France, has had a small bump in his abysmally low poll numbers since coming out in favor of action in Syria. But those numbers fade quickly if things on the ground don’t go as planned.

“Our biggest problem is ignorance; we’re pretty ignorant about Syria,” Ryan C. Crocker, a former Ambassador to Syria and Lebanon, who has also held the post in Iraq and Afghanistan, and who is the dean of the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University, said in a recent *Times* interview. One might have thought that, after twelve years of bloody and expensive military ventures in the Middle East, we had learned some humility, to know what we don’t know—and what our most supportive friends don’t know, either.

*Above: French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault speaks during a debate about Syria on Wednesday. Photograph by Patrick Kovarik/AFP/Getty.*



## Francois Hollande Misreads France's Thoughts on Syria

by Michel Gurfinkiel

[PJ Media](#)

September 13, 2013

85,94

Back in 1807, Hortense de Beauharnais — Emperor Napoleon's beautiful stepdaughter and the puppet-queen of French-occupied Holland — composed a lyrical song called [Partant pour la Syrie \(Departing for Syria\)](#). In a typical French way, it mixes religious, military and erotic motives. While ostensibly about Dunois, a French knight about to leave for the Crusades, it alludes to the stunning French military achievements of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic age, including the 1798-1801 campaign in Egypt and the Holy Land. The first stanza deserves to be quoted in full:

*Going to Syria*

*The young and handsome Dunois*

*Went to ask the Virgin Mary,*

*His heroic deeds to bless,*

*Make it so, immortal Queen*

*He said on his leaving,*

*That I love the most beautiful woman*

*And be the bravest.*

A very popular song throughout the first half of the 19th century, and even an unofficial national anthem under the Second Empire (1852 to 1870), *Partant pour la Syrie* has remained a classic of French military music to this day. Indeed, it has contributed in no small way to modern France's infatuation with the Orient, and the popularity of wars of colonial conquest or "pacification" in North Africa, the Balkans, and the Near and the Middle East.

In line with the 1916 Sykes-Picot agreement, the French occupied present-day Syria and Lebanon in 1920 and ruled them as a League of Nations mandatory power until 1946. France has been back in the area since 1978 as self-styled "protectors" of Lebanese independence, and as a permanent part of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) — a largely decorative role.

However, Queen Hortense's music may finally have run out of its magic.

The prospect of French participation in an American-led coalition against the Assad regime, as outlined by President François Hollande, is largely unpopular. According to a BVA/*Le Parisien* poll released on August 30, [64% of the French oppose](#) such a move. An IFOP/*Le Figaro* poll on September 6 [turned out exactly the same figures](#). This is a sharp rise from earlier polls: for about six months — from February to the first weeks of August — opposition to war amounted to an average 40% of the public opinion, and never went above 49%.

An [LH2/\*Le Nouvel Observateur\* poll released on September 9](#) is shedding more light. The Left as a whole is more supportive than the Right: 49% to 27%. Followers of Hollande's Socialist Party are much more supportive than the other groups composing the Left: 57% to 47% of the neocommunist Left Front followers and 39% of the Greens.

Among the Right, followers of Nicolas Sarkozy's conservative party are slightly more supportive than followers of Marine Le Pen's National Front: 29% to 21%.

Clearly, political affiliation is a factor: the more sympathetic one is to Hollande, the more one supports prospective operations in Syria. By that token, the president's fortunes do not run high outside his own party. A

confirmation of the very low global approval rate he currently enjoys: a bare 32% according to an AFP/*Le Monde* poll released on September 3.

But there is more than political affiliation behind the French reluctance to go to Syria: many citizens think the war is ill-conceived and may backfire. According to the BVA/*Le Parisien* poll, 37% think Western military operations will pave the way to a radical Islamic takeover of Syria, 35% are concerned operations may trigger a broader regional war and 22% are skeptical about the outcome for the local population in terms of improved safety and human rights.

As for Hollande's (and Obama's) main rationale for military action — the "moral duty" to punish the Assad government for using chemical weapons against fighters and civilians alike in rebel areas — the French find it too reminiscent of the charges leveled ten years ago against the Saddam Hussein regime. The French largely opposed the second Iraq war, and have tended to believe ever since then that the entire case against Saddam's non-conventional armaments was a deliberate American hoax.

The contemporary French are quite ambivalent when it comes to war. Along with Britain, France is the only European country with a real military potential (nuclear weapons, a rapid deployment force, a navy, a large armament and space industry) and is intent on keeping it that way (an impressive "French Pentagon" is currently under construction in South Paris). Successive administrations, both conservative and socialist, have engaged in military or peacekeeping operations abroad over the past forty years with or without an international warrant: in Subsaharan Africa, from Chad in the early 1970s to Mali earlier this year; in Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya from the late 1970s to today; and in Bosnia and Serbia in 1995 and 1999. As long as military deaths are kept comparatively low or non-existent, civilians are not harmed, and risks are seen as minimal, there is almost no criticism or dissent.

The French enjoy feeling like a Great Power, and being a military power is evidently part of that deal. On the other hand, the French realize that they are only a Little Great Power, just like the British, and that their military potential is in fact quite limited.

Their defense budget ranks sixth in the world, and is less than one tenth of the U.S. defense budget (\$59 billion to \$682 billion). Subsaharan Africa is probably the only place where France can act alone, and even there, the latest operation — against Islamists in Mali — was backed in many ways by the United States. Everywhere else, they have no choice but to be America's junior partners, unless they drop from the scene altogether. They have been uneasy about this dilemma; it has elicited much resentment. Jacques Chirac's desistment from the second Iraq war in 2003 — a rare instance where the French asserted their Great Power status by *opposing* an American operation — was very popular for that reason.

Hollande decided to join forces with Barack Obama on Syria on several assumptions. First, he thought that France could not stay away from a momentous U.S. intervention in the Middle East without relinquishing its status as a Great Power with special authority on Middle Eastern issues. Second, he thought that backing the Obama administration would be more popular than just backing America, especially among his own voters, and that "protecting Muslims" in Syria would please the French Muslim vote, which overwhelmingly supports the Left. Third, since he had slightly benefited from the successful Mali campaign last spring in terms of personal popularity, he was looking for at least a similar boost in the case of a Syrian campaign.

Hollande may have misread the situation on all accounts. What was supposed to be Obama's major show of force has been marred with dithering and shilly-shallying and a fierce political debate at home. Obama's popularity is waning everywhere, including among his erstwhile liberal and radical supporters. And if the whole Syrian charade ends up with a Russian diplomatic victory, Hollande may be criticized for not having emulated Chirac's move on Iraq in some measure.

François Fillon, who was for five years Nicolas Sarkozy's conservative prime minister and may run for president in 2017, has seen a window of opportunity here. [He said on September 8](#) that he "would have more actively negotiated with the Russians," and would vote, should the case be raised at the UN, against military intervention. Neocommunist Jean Luc Mélenchon, the leader of the Left Front, not only welcomed Putin's

diplomatic move but [insisted that the United States and France should exert similar pressures on Egypt ... and Israel](#).


There is a modicum of solace for France and the French president, however, in the fact that the status of all Great Powers is being questioned in the wake of the Syrian crisis. France and Britain may be Little Great Powers, but Russia is not much more in spite of its diplomatic virtuosity, and Russia may have overstretched itself in challenging the United States on this issue. China may be a formidable potential player in international affairs, including in the Middle East, but China still lacks a global military capacity. As for the United States, it still is the only Super Power, but its global reach, under the Obama administration or any similarly inadequate leadership, may quickly evaporate.

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## Gauck ermutigt Deutschland zu mehr Engagement in der Welt

03.10.2013 · In seiner ersten Festrede zum Einheitsfeiertag hat Bundespräsident Gauck die Deutschen dazu aufgerufen, sich stärker in der Welt zu engagieren: „Unsere Welt ist keine Insel.“



© dpa  „Wir bewegen uns nicht schnell genug“: Gauck in Stuttgart

Bundespräsident Joachim Gauck hat am Tag der Deutschen Einheit die kommende Bundesregierung zu mehr Engagement in einer Welt voller Krisen und Umbrüche ermutigt. „Unser Land ist keine Insel“, sagte die Staatsoberhaupt am Donnerstag beim Festakt in Stuttgart. Deutschland müsse sich stärker an der Lösung politischer, wirtschaftlicher und militärischer Konflikte beteiligen. Zwar dürfe Deutschland andere Länder nicht bevormunden. „Ich mag mir aber genau so wenig vorstellen, dass Deutschland sich klein macht, um Risiken und Solidarität zu umgehen.“

Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel (CDU) äußerte, dass es auch 23 Jahre nach der Wiedervereinigung noch zu große Unterschiede zwischen Ost und West gebe. „Es bleibt einiges zu tun.“ Im Osten seien die Gehälter niedriger und die Arbeitslosigkeit höher als im Westen. Die Ost-Ministerpräsidenten Christine Lieberknecht (Thüringen, CDU) und Erwin Sellering (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, SPD) forderten die Anhebung der Ost-Renten auf Westniveau. Sachsens Regierungschef Stanislaw Tillich (CDU) dankte für die Aufbauhilfe der alten Länder.

Der Bundespräsident trug der nächsten Regierung auf, die digitale Revolution und die Folgen der alternden Gesellschaft zu meistern. „Wenn die Gesellschaft der Wenigeren nicht eine Gesellschaft der Wenigeren werden soll, dann dürfen keine Fähigkeiten brach liegen.“ Sozial Schwächere müssten eine gute Bildung erhalten. Die Politik habe sich zwar auf den Weg gemacht. „Aber sie bewegt sich nicht immer schnell genug.“ Krippenausbau und die Verbesserung der Pflegesysteme gingen zu langsam voran. Die Einwanderungspolitik müsse moderner werden.

Gauck äußerte, dass sich das Gesicht Europas gewandelt habe. „Ohne Zweifel ist das Europa in der Krise nicht mehr das Europa vor der Krise. Risse sind sichtbar geworden.“ Kräfte und Mehrheiten hätten sich verschoben.

Nationale Regierungen bestimmten wesentlich die Agenda. Dennoch sei die Einheit nicht in Gefahr. „Ein starkes Band aus Mentalität, Kultur und Geschichte hält Europa zusammen.“

## **„Datenschutz muss so wichtig werden wie Umweltschutz“**

Angesichts der „digitalen Revolution“ forderte der Bundespräsident den Erhalt der Privatsphäre ein. „Wir brauchen also Gesetze, Konventionen und gesellschaftliche Verabredungen, die diesem epochalen Wandel Rechnung tragen.“ Datenschutz müsse so wichtig werden wie Umweltschutz. Abzuwägen sei, was ein Staat im Geheimen tun dürfe, um seine Bürger zu schützen - aber lassen müsse, um nicht die Freiheit der Sicherheit zu opfern. Der ehemalige Bundesbeauftragte für die Stasi-Unterlagen sagte: „Wir wollen die Vorteile der digitalen Welt nutzen, uns gegen ihre Nachteile aber bestmöglich schützen.“

Gauck erinnerte in seiner Rede an die Ohnmacht in der DDR und den Freiheitswillen der Ostdeutschen. Für ihn selbst sei die deutsche Wiedervereinigung und der Weg dorthin die „beglückendste Zeit meines Lebens“ gewesen, sagte der ehemalige Bürgerrechtler. Kretschmann bezeichnete die Wende als „historischen Glücksfall“, die eingebettet gewesen sei in das Zusammenwachsen Europas. „Es war eine Sternstunde deutscher Geschichte“, sagte der Grünen-Politiker.

Merkel dankte allen, die sich für die Wiedervereinigung eingesetzt haben. Explizit nannte sie Bürgerrechtler in der früheren DDR. Der Vorsitzende der Bischofskonferenz, Robert Zollitsch, sagte bei dem Gottesdienst am Morgen, der 3. Oktober mahne, „das Geschenk der Einheit nicht als etwas Selbstverständliches zu betrachten“.

## **Kretschmann: Müssen Finanzbeziehungen neu regeln**

Die Einheitsfeiern unter dem Motto „Zusammen einzigartig“ richtete in diesem Jahr Baden-Württemberg aus, da Ministerpräsident Winfried Kretschmann (Grüne) den Vorsitz im Bundesrat innehat. Zu dem Bürgerfest in Stuttgart kamen Hunderttausende Menschen. Gauck, Merkel und Kretschmann nahmen nach einem Gottesdienst ein Bad in der Menge.

Kretschmann nannte als wichtige Aufgabe für die neue Regierung eine Reform der Finanzbeziehungen zwischen Bund und Ländern. Die Bundesländer müssten ausreichend finanzielle Mittel haben, um ihre Aufgaben gut erfüllen können. Mit einer Reform des Finanzausgleichs müsse dafür gesorgt werden, „dass Nehmerländer sich kräftigen und weiterentwickeln und Geberländer nicht dauerhaft überfordert werden“. Kretschmann warnte zudem vor zu viel Zentralismus in Europa. Im zusammenwachsenden Europa müsse mehr föderal gedacht werden.

October 2, 2013

# Does Scotland Want Independence?

By DENISE MINA

85,99

GLASGOW — IN just under a year, Scotland will hold a referendum on whether to become an independent country. The issue is already so divisive that the comedian Susan Calman had to call for an end to the “name-calling, swearing and death threats” she received after making jokes about it on a radio show. It’s so controversial that it would be bad manners to bring it up with anyone who doesn’t agree with you already.

Without unpacking any of the issues of nationhood, belonging or identity, we’re stuck in a rut and things are getting nasty. Each side blames the other. Fervor has enormous social currency. The capacity to listen to people we disagree with is framed as indecision.

I recently appeared on a radio program to discuss the referendum. I was billed as “undecided,” and there were three men on the panel, one pro, one con, and one an academic political analyst. Two of them had a brutal falling out before the discussion even began — in fact, it was over the group e-mail chain giving us directions to the studio. It made me nostalgic for the ’80s; it had been so long since I had seen anyone called a Communist Stalinist.

Anyway, during the course of the show I outed myself as not “undecided,” but sick to death of the debate’s simplistic binary framing. None of you are listening, I said; voters are tuning out. Referendums have to be framed as yes or no because nuance makes terrible law, but the discussion needs to be expansive because independence is such a complex proposition.

It went down quite well. The rivals finally made eye contact. I felt, quite deeply, that in shifting the agenda from an adversarial one, I had won. Outside on the pavement we stood together and the rivals apologized for their manners. I felt like Gandhi, except with his foot on the chest of a toppled British Empire, his little walnutty face laughing triumphantly at its sobbing widows. Take that, binary discourse.

Then the Yes man took me aside and asked, how would I like him to seem to be listening? If he seemed to be listening, would that sway my vote?

He confided that he’d made contact with people through the Yes campaign that he simply couldn’t have met otherwise. His contact book was bulging. First-name terms. Good for business. That was creepy.

I had a tip for him. During the program he had suggested that independence would be more popular if every person in Scotland knew they would be £500 — about \$800 — better off every year if we became independent. As a writer, I’d made a mental note to counsel him that £500 was a bad number, too round, £478.43 was more believable. But in the end I didn’t say anything.

The truth is, we don’t really know what Scottish people want, let alone what independence will mean for us. We know that Scotland votes in a different pattern from the rest of Britain: the current coalition government is dominated by the Conservatives, who have a single Scottish M.P. (and Margaret Thatcher never won a national election here). But we don’t know whether this is a result of genuine political difference or of protest votes, cast in the assumption that they won’t do anything dangerous.

If Scotland leaves Britain, will we be allowed to remain within the European Union? Accepting an independent Scotland might set a precedent for Catalan separatists in Spain and the Walloons in Belgium. It could lead to the atrophy of an already tremulous European project.

Rumors abound that the castles of the Highlands are being bought by Spanish, Greek and Russian millionaires in anticipation of the enormous tax cuts independence could bring.

The Scottish first minister, Alex Salmond — head of the Scottish National Party, whose *raison d'être* centers on independence — has been cozying up to Rupert Murdoch and Donald J. Trump. There's been much talk of an Ireland-style business-friendly environment. Before that Mr. Salmond's model was Iceland. Imagine all the small nations of the world saying a collective prayer that Alex Salmond doesn't mention them in a speech and jinx their economy.

Some people, very laudably, hope that as a smaller country we will be able to take a lead in eco-tech, developing sustainable energy sources and electric cars.

But sadly, we're not really discussing any of these things. We're discussing yes or no.

The rest of Britain is baffled, but senses the anger. Nigel Farage, a British member of the European Parliament who roughly equates with America's own dear Rand Paul, except really smug and annoying, was chased out of Edinburgh earlier this year by an angry mob. He put it down to "anti-English" feeling, despite the protesters' making their objections very clear in their chants of "racist" and "homophobe." He tried to escape in two different taxis, both of whose drivers asked him to get out.

So, let's hurry up and blame the media: adversarial debate is full of drama and arrives at a conclusion in time for the adverts. Tweets are short and good for the rhythmic call and response of angry debate.

Make no mistake, the only clear side of this debate is that intelligent public discourse matters, and that we're not getting any of it.

At an event on cultural identity at the Edinburgh College of Art, I recently witnessed a room of art-hipsters cower as an elderly man in a kilt walked in. Everyone mistakenly thought he was an angry nationalist who had come to disrupt the event. Actually, he was an eccentric Englishman. He made a great contribution by talking us through his outfit and sitting with his legs open.

That's more than you can say for most of our elected officials and cultural commentators.

[Denise Mina](#) is the author, most recently, of the novel "God and Beasts."



October 3, 2013

## Treasury Says Mere Prospect of Default May Harm Economy

By [ANNIE LOWREY](#)

85,101

WASHINGTON — The debt-limit impasse could cause credit markets to freeze, the dollar to plummet and interest rates to rise precipitously, the Treasury Department said in a report released Thursday. A default might prove catastrophic, the report said, and could potentially result “in a financial crisis and recession that could echo the events of 2008 or worse.”

“As we saw two years ago, prolonged uncertainty over whether our nation will pay its bills in full and on time hurts our economy,” said Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew in a statement urging lawmakers to act. “Postponing a debt ceiling increase to the very last minute is exactly what our economy does not need – a self-inflicted wound harming families and businesses.”

The report shows that the Congressional debt-limit standoff in 2011 hurt consumer confidence, small business confidence, household wealth and the stock market, with ramifications for lending and the economic recovery.

“A precise estimate of the effects is impossible,” the report says, “and the current situation is different than that of late 2011, yet economic theory and empirical evidence is clear about the direction of the effect: a large, adverse, and persistent financial shock like the one that began in late 2011 would result in a slower economy with less hiring and a higher unemployment rate than would otherwise be the case.”

Economic officials have privately indicated that they are worried Washington’s repeated flirtations with budgetary and financial crises have inured the markets to the real possibility of missed or delayed payments, or even default. By mid-October, the Treasury expects to have only \$30 billion in cash on hand, meaning that on any given day it might have too little money to pay all the government’s bills.

The stock market has slid for the past two weeks. But the Dow Jones industrial average, for instance, is about 2 percent higher than it was a month ago and up about 13 percent this year.

There are signs the markets are starting to wake up. One-month Treasury yields have jumped to their highest level in nearly a year.

Wall Street “should be concerned,” President Obama told CNBC yesterday. “When you have a situation in which a faction is willing to potentially default on U.S. government obligations, then we’re in trouble.”

He added that it is “important” for Wall Street “to recognize that this is going to have a profound impact on our economy and their bottom lines, their employees and their shareholders.”

## Fondsmodell

### EU will, dass Berlin für Europas Arbeitslose zahlt

Die EU schlägt eine europäische Arbeitslosenversicherung vor: Länder mit einer hohen Erwerbslosenquote sollen die Hälfte der Kosten aus einem Fonds ersetzt bekommen. Deutschland ist strikt dagegen. Von Jan Dams und [Florian Eder](#), Brüssel/Berlin

Die Bundesregierung wehrt sich gegen Pläne der EU-Kommission zur Einführung einer europaweiten Arbeitslosenversicherung. "Wir waren im vergangenen Jahr dagegen und sind es immer noch", heißt es in Regierungskreisen recht unverblümt. Die Diskussion über dieses Instrument sei völlig verfrüht – und doch findet sie statt, in Reaktion auf einen [Vorschlag der EU-Kommission](#), die die "soziale Dimension der Währungsunion" stärken will.

Damit gibt es neben den Details der Bankenunion ein weiteres Streitthema zwischen Brüssel und Berlin, noch dazu eines, das bereits beerdigt schien. EU-Sozialkommissar Laszlo Andor hat nun aber die Idee einer Arbeitslosenversicherung für die Euro-Zone erneut vorgebracht.

Er bringt laut einer aktuellen [Mitteilung](#) eine Regelung ins Spiel, nach der Mitgliedsstaaten aus einem gemeinsamen europäischen Fonds die Hälfte ihrer Sozialleistungen an Arbeitslose ersetzt bekommen könnten. Dies stünde "unter der Bedingung, dass die Arbeitslosenquote ein bestimmtes Niveau erreicht und weiter steigt", heißt es in dem Papier des ungarischen EU-Kommissars.

### "Viele schauen nur auf das Geld"

Natürlich wolle Berlin eine bessere Koordinierung wichtiger nationaler Politiken, sagen Regierungsvertreter. Dazu gehöre auch die Arbeitsmarktpolitik, und gegen das Ziel, die Widerstandsfähigkeit des Arbeitsmarkts gegenüber schlechten wirtschaftlichen Entwicklungen zu stärken, könne niemand etwas haben. Aber erst wenn sich die EU-Länder auf dringend notwendige nationale Reformen verständigt und verpflichtet hätten, könne man diese auch finanziell unterstützen. "Viele in Europa schauen dagegen wieder nur auf das Geld", so das ernüchterte Fazit aus Berlin.

Das Versicherungssystem, das Andor vorschwebt, solle "die Risiken ökonomischer Schocks vergemeinschaften und so Fluktuationen in den Nationaleinkommen reduzieren" – wenn es einem Land schlecht geht, sollen also die anderen seinen Sozialsystemen aushelfen. Die Mittel dazu soll ein Fonds bereitstellen, ein "von der Euro-Zone selbst verwaltetes Budget, das sie mit einer fiskalischen Kapazität zur Unterstützung der Mitgliedsstaaten bei der Abfederung von Schocks ausstattet".

Das ist eine komplizierte Formulierung für eine ebenso einfache wie umstrittene Idee: Angesichts der schweren wirtschaftlichen Probleme in einem Mitgliedsstaat – wie etwa seit Langem in Griechenland oder auch in anderen Ländern, die europäische Hilfe bekommen – soll die Euro-Zone "asymmetrische Schocks" gemeinsam abfedern, obwohl Sozialpolitik laut den EU-Verträgen eine Aufgabe der Mitgliedsstaaten ist.

Der Begriff der "asymmetrischen Schocks" meint die Tatsache, dass der Zustand der jeweiligen Staatsfinanzen, der Rahmenbedingungen für Unternehmenstätigkeit und auch der Sozialsysteme die EU-Länder unterschiedlich gut auf die europaweite Wirtschaftskrise vorbereitete.

### Große Unterschiede bei der Arbeitslosenquote

Derzeit kämpft sich die EU zwar aus der Rezession, die Wirtschaftsleistung ist aber noch in allen südeuropäischen Ländern weit vom Vorkrisenniveau entfernt – was sich in hoher Arbeitslosigkeit auswirkt. Die

Quote lag im August [nach den jüngsten Zahlen des EU-Statistikamtes Eurostat aus dieser Woche](#) in den 17 Euro-Ländern wie schon im Juli bei zwölf Prozent.

Mit großen Unterschieden: Während die Quote in Griechenland fast 28 Prozent und in Spanien mehr als 26 Prozent betrug, lag sie in Deutschland bei 5,2 Prozent. Mehr als 19 Millionen Menschen waren in den Euro-Ländern insgesamt ohne Arbeit. Die jüngsten Zahlen zeigten, "dass eine robuste wirtschaftliche Erholung noch nicht Realität ist", sagte Andor dazu. Europa müsse den Arbeitssuchenden durch "engere Koordination von Arbeits- und Sozialpolitik und durch mehr Solidarität" helfen.

Bereits im vergangenen Jahr war die Idee der europäischen Arbeitslosenversicherung auf höchster Ebene aufgekommen. Ratspräsident Herman Van Rompuy hatte sie den Staats- und Regierungschefs als Teil seiner Reformpläne für die Währungsunion präsentieren wollen – und damit Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel (CDU) tief verärgert. Die Wiedervorlage zeigt: Kursiert ein Vorschlag erst einmal, dann ist es für seine Gegner nicht leicht, ihn endgültig vom Tisch zu wischen.

## **CSU-Politiker spricht von Vertragsbruch**

Das Argument der Kritiker einer solchen Versicherungslösung war im vergangenen Winter dasselbe wie heute: "Damit schaffen wir keinen Anreiz für nachhaltige Reformen in den Sozialsystemen der Mitgliedsstaaten, sondern unterstützen mit Geldsegen aus Brüssel die offensichtlichen Probleme in den Mitgliedsstaaten", sagte der CSU-Europaabgeordnete Markus Ferber.

Europa dürfe nicht "auf Pump die Arbeitslosenquote drücken wollen". Sozialpolitik sei Angelegenheit der Nationalstaaten, sagte er und warf Andor gar versuchten Vertragsbruch vor: "Wer eine europäische Arbeitslosenversicherung fordert, verstößt gegen die Verträge."

Die Auslegung des EU-Vertrags war zuletzt schon bei der Frage der Bankenaufsicht und -abwicklung ein Anlass für Streit zwischen Brüssel und Berlin. Andor hat die Versicherungsidee innerhalb seiner Mitteilung gegenüber einem früheren Entwurf weiter nach hinten geschoben, und der Kommissar schreibt selbst, dass dafür eine Änderung der EU-Verträge nötig wäre. Da dies im Rat der Regierungschefs einstimmig beschlossen und dann in allen Ländern ratifiziert werden muss, stehen die Chancen dafür denkbar schlecht.

## **Grüne halten Versicherung für sinnvoll**

Der Grünen-Europaabgeordnete Sven Giegold aber verweist auf ein von ihm in [Auftrag gegebenes Gutachten](#), das zeige: "Eine grundlegende europäische Arbeitslosigkeitsversicherung ist aber auch jetzt schon mit den EU-Verträgen vereinbar."

Für sinnvoll hält er sie zudem: Es gehe nicht um einen dauerhaften Nettotransfer von heute Reichen zu heute Armen: "Auch wohlhabende Länder würden im Fall einer Arbeitsmarktkrise von einer europäischen Arbeitslosenversicherung profitieren", sagte Giegold. Das Instrument könne "das Auf und Ab der Konjunktur glätten, ohne zu einer Transferunion zu führen". Die EU-Kommission hat nur in geringem Maße tatsächliche Gesetzgebungskompetenz in der Sozialpolitik. Dort, wo sie aus eigener Kraft schon heute etwas anstoßen könnte, blieben Andors Vorschläge blass, sagte Udo Bullmann, Vorsitzender der SPD-Abgeordneten im EU-Parlament.

"Die soziale Schieflage in Europa lässt sich nur wirksam bekämpfen, wenn für die Mitgliedsstaaten tatsächlich die Pflicht besteht, die Arbeitslosigkeit und Armut zu reduzieren." Dafür müssten sozialpolitische Ziele verbindlich für alle gemacht und von der Kommission ebenso überwacht werden wie die Einhaltung der Defizitziele. Damit aber konnte sich Andor innerhalb der EU-Kommission nicht durchsetzen.

## Parteien

# Frankreichs Extreme attackieren Deutschland

**Jean-Luc Mélenchon und Marine Le Pen wettern gegen Deutschland und die EU.** Sie haben gute Chancen, immer stärker zu werden. Bald schon werden sie zur realen Gefahr. Was Berlin dagegen tun könnte. Von Wolf Lepenies



Foto: AP Wahrlich keine Heilige: die Vorsitzende des rechtsextremen Front National, Marine Le Pen, bei einem Auftritt in Marseille im September 2013 [Bild teilen](#)

**In Frankreich drohen die politischen Extreme mehrheitsfähig zu werden.** Mitverantwortlich dafür ist der Mann, der [François Hollande](#) zur Präsidentschaft verhalf und heute zu seinem erbitterten Gegner geworden ist: **Jean-Luc Mélenchon.** 2012 erhielt der Kandidat der Linksfrente im ersten Wahlgang elf Prozent der Stimmen, vier Millionen Franzosen wählten ihn. **Mélenchon rief seine Anhänger dazu auf, im zweiten Wahlgang für Hollande zu votieren, weil dieser versprach, zu Hause den Sozialstaat auszubauen und in der EU gegen die Sparpolitik Angela Merkels ein Wachstumsprogramm durchzusetzen.** Hollande, so Mélenchon heute, habe beide Versprechen gebrochen.

Bei Mélenchon, dem wiedergeborenen Jakobiner der französischen Politik, ist der Zorn ein Dauerzustand. In seinem Blog "Politique à Gauche" wettert er vor allem gegen Deutschland und gegen Angela Merkel. **Mélenchon hat sich zum Ziel gesetzt, das "Deutsche Modell" als Mythos zu entlarven.** Von ihm erfährt der Leser, dass **die Bundesrepublik vor dem Kollaps steht: Die Auslandsinvestitionen nehmen ab, die Staatsverschuldung wächst, das Wachstum wird geringer, die Arbeitsproduktivität lässt nach, die Arbeitslosigkeit steigt.**



Foto: AFP Ein großer Merkel-Hasser, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, der Vorsitzende des sehr linken Blocks "Politique à Gauche" bei einer Demonstration in Paris Ende September 30 in Paris

Wie kommt es, dass Deutschland dennoch vielen in Europa als Vorbild gilt? Ganz einfach, so [Mélenchon](#): Im Schönreden statistischer Daten sind die Deutschen weit geschickter als die Griechen! Eine Kennziffer aber können sie nicht manipulieren: **die Geburtenzahl.** Dies ist Mélenchons Trost: **Bald wird es mehr Franzosen als Deutsche geben.** Gegen den **Vorwurf der Deutscheindlichkeit** verwehrt sich der Chef der Linkspartei. Nie

habe er, wie Daniel Cohn-Bendit behauptet, von den "Boches" gesprochen. Stolz sei er auf seinen "deutschen Bruder": Oskar Lafontaine.

## Mélenchons Wutanfälle

Das Ergebnis der Bundestagswahl hat Mélenchon zu einem Wutanfall provoziert: **Der Triumph Angela Merkels sei Ausdruck des nationalen Egoismus und ein Desaster für die europäische Zivilisation. Die "Medienpapageien", so schimpfte Mélenchon, würden jetzt noch stärker als bisher die Übernahme des "Deutschen Modells" in ganz Europa propagieren.**

Der EU stehe eine **"neoliberale Orgie"** bevor: Es drohe die Rente mit 70, Arbeiter müssten sich in Zukunft mit einem Stundenlohn von einem Euro begnügen, die Griechen würden das Meer, die Portugiesen die Luft verkaufen, um ihre Schulden bezahlen zu können. **Die Europäer, die seit Jahren unter der eisernen Faust der Deutschen litten, würden auch in Zukunft die Berliner Erniedrigungen und Beleidigungen gehorsam ertragen:** "Tout va très bien, Madame la Marquise!"

De Gaulle und Adenauer gesteht Mélenchon zu, im Verhältnis von Frankreich und Deutschland auf strikte Egalität geachtet zu haben. Seitdem aber habe Deutschland seine eigenen Interessen zum Schaden Europas immer stärker durchgesetzt. Die deutschen Sozialdemokraten und eine schlappe französische Linke ("La Gauche molle") hätten mitgeholfen, ein Europa der Banken und der Bosse zu bauen, das heute vor einer politischen und sozialen Explosion stehe. Die größte Verantwortung dafür trügen Angela Merkel und ihre "greisen Groupies", die eine Politik ohne Vision, ohne Zukunft und gegen die Jugend betrieben. Die Politik Merkels nütze einer einzigen Gruppe: den alternden Deutschen. Europa stehe heute vor der Wahl zwischen Reaktion und Volksfront.

## Links- und Rechtsfront

**Jean-Luc Mélenchon ist kein Politclown. Er agiert am linken Rand des politischen Spektrums, aber es wäre fahrlässig, ihn nicht ernst zu nehmen, denn er ist dabei mitzuhelfen, in Frankreich die Extreme mehrheitsfähig zu machen. Frankreich steht vor Kommunalwahlen und dann kommt die Europawahl.** Am Ergebnis wird sich die politische Stimmung bei unseren Nachbarn ablesen lassen. Die Kommunisten und die Linkspartei Mélenchons streiten noch über die Form ihres Zusammengehens.

Zu erwarten steht, dass die Kandidaten der Linksfront noch mehr Stimmen erhalten werden als Mélenchon bei der letzten Präsidentenwahl. Anders als 2012 werden sie nicht wie selbstverständlich Bündnisse mit den Sozialisten eingehen. **Profitieren wird der rechtsradikale Front National, dem es unter der raffinierten Führung von Marine Le Pen, der Tochter des Parteigründers, gelungen ist, für weite Teile des bürgerlichen Spektrums respektabel und wählbar zu werden.** Geholfen hat dabei der frühere Ministerpräsident François Fillon, der es nicht mehr ausschließt, dass die bürgerliche Rechte mit dem FN koalitiert. **Aus den französischen Kommunalwahlen kann der Front National als stärkste Partei hervorgehen.**

Dadurch wird zunächst weder die Mehrheit der regierenden Sozialisten in der Nationalversammlung noch die Präsidentschaft Hollandes gefährdet. **Was in Frankreich aber droht, sind eine Radikalisierung des politischen Klimas und die Herausbildung einer europafeindlichen Mehrheitsstimmung. Denn der Front National und die Linksfront, die sich wechselseitig verteufeln, sind in ihrer Ablehnung der "politique germano-bruxelloise" ein Herz und eine Seele.**

## Merkel muss helfen

Wie Mélenchon wirft [Marine Le Pen](#) den französischen Sozialisten und den Konservativen vor, sich dem "Diktat" Brüssels und Berlins zu beugen. Wie Mélenchon wettet Marine Le Pen gegen Angela Merkel, die in Europa die Austerität als dominante, "alternativlose" Ideologie durchgesetzt habe. **Wie die Linksfront fordert der Front National einen "ökonomischen Patriotismus" und einen "vernünftigen Protektionismus". Les extrêmes se touchent.**

Mélenchon ist in seiner Kritik an Angela Merkel unmäßig, sein Deutschlandbild ist ein Zerrbild. **In einem Punkt aber hat er recht: Auf Dauer wird eine Politik der Austerität die Probleme Europas nicht lösen.** Wenn sie die Chance dazu erhält, muss Angela Merkel eine dritte Amtszeit nutzen, um mit Haushaltsdisziplin eine vernünftige Wachstumspolitik durchzusetzen, die vor allem den Ländern Südeuropas die Chance zur wirtschaftlichen Erholung gibt und die Schande der hohen Jugendarbeitslosigkeit tilgt.

Sie würde damit auf Präsident Hollande zugehen, der eine solche Politik seit langem fordert. In Frankreich würde die politische Mitte gestärkt. **Jean-Luc Mélenchon wie Marine Le Pen verkörpern die Gefahren, die Europa von einem Frankreich drohen, in dem die Extreme mehrheitsfähig werden. Es liegt im ureigenen deutschen Interesse, dies zu verhindern.**



America's government shutdown

## No way to run a country

The Land of the Free is starting to look ungovernable. Enough is enough

Oct 5th 2013 | [From the print edition](#)

85,107



AS MIDNIGHT on September 30th approached, everybody on Capitol Hill blamed everybody else for the imminent shutdown of America's government. To a wondering world, the recriminations missed the point. When you are brawling on the edge of a cliff, the big question is not "Who is right?", but "What the hell are you doing on the edge of a cliff?"

The shutdown itself is tiresome but bearable. The security services will remain on duty, pensioners will still receive their cheques and the astronauts on the International Space Station will still be able to breathe. Some 800,000 non-essential staff at federal agencies (out of 2.8m) are being sent home, while another 1.3m are being asked to toil on without pay (see [article](#)). Non-urgent tasks will be shelved until a deal is reached and the money starts to flow again. If that happens quickly, the economic damage will be modest: perhaps 0.1-0.2% off the fourth-quarter growth rate for every week the government is closed. The trouble is, the shutdown is a symptom of a deeper problem: the federal lawmaking process is so polarised that it has become paralysed. And if the two parties cannot bridge their differences by around October 17th, disaster looms.

Battles over spending are nothing unusual—indeed, Congress has not passed a proper budget on time since 1997. But this battle represents something new. House Republicans are blocking the budget not because they object to its contents, but because they object to something else entirely: Barack Obama's health-care reform, a big part of which started to operate this week (see [article](#)). Their original demand was to strip all funding from Obamacare. In other words, they wanted Democrats to agree to kill their own president's biggest achievement. That was never going to happen. As the deadline for a budget deal approached, Republicans scaled back their demands. Instead of defunding Obamacare, they said that its mandate for individuals to buy health insurance (or pay a fine) should be delayed for a year.

The bane of budgetary brinkmanship



That may sound more reasonable, but it is not so, for two reasons. First, delaying the mandate could wreck the whole reform. Obamacare sits on two pillars. Everyone is obliged to have insurance, and insurance firms are barred from charging people more because they are already ill. If only the second rule applies, the sick will rush to buy insurance but the healthy will wait until they fall ill before doing so. Insurers will have to raise premiums or go bust, making coverage unaffordable without vast subsidies. Obamacare will enter a death spiral and possibly collapse. For some Republicans, that is the goal.

The second reason is that Republicans are setting a precedent which, if followed, would make America ungovernable. Voters have seen fit to give their party control of one arm of government—the House of Representatives—while handing the Democrats the White House and the Senate. If a party with such a modest electoral mandate threatens to shut down government unless the other side repeals a law it does not like, apparently settled legislation will always be vulnerable to repeal by the minority. Washington will be permanently paralysed and America condemned to chronic uncertainty.

It gets worse. Later this month the federal government will reach its legal borrowing limit, known as the “debt ceiling”. Unless Congress raises that ceiling, Uncle Sam will soon be unable to pay all his bills. In other words, unless the two parties can work together, America will have to choose which of its obligations not to honour. It could slash spending so deeply that it causes a recession. Or it could default on its debts, which would be even worse, and unimaginably more harmful than a mere government shutdown. No one in Washington is that crazy, surely?

Step back from the edge

America enjoys the “exorbitant privilege” of printing the world’s reserve currency. Its government debt is considered a safe haven, which is why Uncle Sam can borrow so much, so cheaply. America will not lose these advantages overnight. But anything that undermines its creditworthiness—as the farce in Washington surely does—risks causing untold damage in the future. It is not just that America would have to pay more to borrow. The repercussions of an American default would be both global and unpredictable.

It would threaten financial markets. Since American Treasuries are very liquid and safe, they are widely used as collateral. They are more than 30% of the collateral that financial institutions such as investment banks use to borrow in the \$2 trillion “tri-party repo” market, a source of overnight funding. A default could trigger demands by lenders for more or different collateral; that might cause a financial heart attack like the one prompted by the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008. In short, even if Obamacare were as bad as tea-party types say it is (see [Lexington](#)), it would still be reckless to use the debt ceiling as a bargaining chip to repeal it, as some Republicans suggest.

What can be done? In the short term, House Republicans need to get their priorities straight. They should pass a clean budget resolution without trying to refight old battles over Obamacare. They should also vote to raise the debt ceiling (or better yet, abolish it). If Obamacare really does turn out to be a flop and Republicans win the presidency and the Senate in 2016, they can repeal it through the normal legislative process.

In the longer term, America needs to tackle polarisation. The problem is especially acute in the House, because many states let politicians draw their own electoral maps. Unsurprisingly, they tend to draw ultra-safe districts for themselves. This means that a typical congressman has no fear of losing a general election but is terrified of a primary challenge. Many therefore pander to extremists on their own side rather than forging sensible centrist deals with the other. This is no way to run a country. Electoral reforms, such as letting independent commissions draw district boundaries, would not suddenly make America governable, but they would help. It is time for less cliff-hanging, and more common sense.

## Le PS et l'UMP redoutent une vague FN

Par [Anne Rovan](#), [Jean-Baptiste Garat](#) Publié le 03/10/2013 à 19:32

85,109



Selon Christophe Borgel, secrétaire national aux élections du PS, le parti d'extrême droite pourrait recueillir « 10 à 15 points » de plus que les 17,9 % du premier tour de la présidentielle.

La menace FN? Elle est prise très au sérieux à droite comme à gauche, et jusqu'au sommet de l'État. François Hollande y a fait allusion mercredi, au cours du Conseil des ministres, lorsqu'il a recadré le gouvernement pour mettre un terme à la polémique sur les Roms. «Vous connaissez les menaces qui nous entourent et qui nourrissent la défiance», a-t-il lancé. «Aujourd'hui, nous sommes autour de cette table, a-t-il ajouté. Mais nous savons qui peut être autour de cette table...»

Les socialistes ont beau répéter, comme le sénateur Luc Carvounas, que des «hommes politiques de premier plan» UMP «ont fait tomber les digues», ils redoutent la progression de Marine Le Pen. «Aux prochains scrutins, beaucoup de gens voteront FN», admet Christophe Borgel, le secrétaire national aux élections du PS. Selon lui, le parti d'extrême droite pourrait recueillir «10 à 15 points» de plus que les 17,9 % du premier tour de la présidentielle. «On sent bien cette tentation FN sur le terrain. Elle a commencé à monter pendant les législatives partielles et elle s'installe», confie le député d'Indre-et-Loire Laurent Baumel, leader de la Gauche populaire.

Si la prise de conscience a bien eu lieu, les socialistes divergent sur la stratégie à adopter. Faut-il, comme l'a fait jeudi le député de Paris Jean-Christophe Cambadélis, marteler à l'envi que le FN est bien «un parti d'extrême droite»? «Il faut mener le combat moral. Mais ce combat ne suffit pas. Du reste, il a montré ses limites», estime Baumel, qui appelle depuis plusieurs mois à «une inflexion de la politique économique et sociale du gouvernement en faveur des classes moyennes et du pouvoir d'achat». Un discours qu'une autre partie du PS n'est pas prête à entendre, convaincue que seule l'unité dans le parti et dans la majorité permettra de limiter les dégâts.

«Marine Le Pen progresse malgré le silence assourdissant de ses propositions contre le chômage, les impôts, la crise du logement»

Roger Karoutchi, sénateur des Hauts-de-Seine

À droite, on n'est pas tant surpris par la progression du FN que par «les œillères» d'une majorité au bord du gouffre. «Marine Le Pen progresse malgré le silence assourdissant de ses propositions contre le chômage, les impôts, la crise du logement, estime le sénateur des Hauts-de-Seine Roger Karoutchi. En fait, elle profite en creux de toutes les fautes du gouvernement.» «Il y a longtemps que le Front national pose problème à la droite», estime Jérôme Lavrilleux, le directeur de cabinet de Jean-François Copé à l'UMP. Mais la vraie nouveauté, c'est que Marine Le Pen progresse fortement à gauche.»

Avec quel impact sur les élections à venir? Les analyses divergent. Beaucoup à droite veulent croire que le PS pâtira le premier d'une poussée du FN, sous l'effet d'une démobilisation de son électorat et d'un morcellement de la majorité. Le tout profitant globalement à la droite. Roger Karoutchi ne partage pas cet avis. «Ce ne sera

pas aussi simple que cela, ne nous illusionnons pas. Si nous ne sommes pas capables de tenir un langage de vérité, de nous montrer fermes, nous souffrirons également. L'Histoire nous l'a montré.»

## Une école musulmane anglaise contrainte de fermer

o Par [Thomas Féat](#) Publié le 03/10/2013 à 22:00

85,111

Des élèves et enseignants de l'école primaire Al-Madinah auraient été victimes de ségrégation sexuelle et confessionnelle au nom de l'Islam. Le fait divers relance la polémique des *free schools* outre-Manche.

Depuis mardi, les élèves de l'école primaire Al-Madinah de la petite ville de Derby ne se rendent plus en classe. L'établissement, ouvert en septembre 2012, est soupçonné d'avoir instauré des pratiques ségrégationnistes entre filles et garçons au nom de préceptes coraniques, et d'avoir forcé des membres non-musulmans de son encadrement à porter le Hijab, le voile islamique. Une enquête de l'Ofsted, organisme non-étatique chargé de l'inspection des écoles outre-Manche, est en cours. L'école, indique le directeur G.S Wilson sur [son site Internet](#), devrait rester fermée jusqu'à la conclusion de l'enquête.

L'Ofsted s'est penché sur le cas de cette école suite à des témoignages dans la presse d'anciens membres du personnel. Selon eux, les filles étaient obligées de s'asseoir derrière les garçons durant les classes et de leur céder la place dans les files d'attente de la cantine. Le port du foulard islamique devait être adopté par tous, y compris les non-musulmans. En sus, la lecture des grands classiques de la littérature anglaise et l'apprentissage de chants du répertoire national, considérés comme incompatible avec l'islam, étaient prohibés.

Jane, une ancienne professeur, a été forcée de quitter l'établissement un mois après son ouverture. Interrogée mercredi par le *Daily Times*, cette femme d'une cinquantaine d'années a révélé que l'administration l'avait renvoyé car elle jugeait sa tenue «abjecte». Or sur des photos qui auraient été prises ce jour-là par son mari, elle est vêtue d'un tailleur gris sobre, de collants noirs et surtout d'un foulard noir noué sur la tête. «J'ai eu le sentiment que l'école se préoccupait davantage de la tenue des professeurs que du bien-être de ses élèves», a-t-elle confié.

## Les Anglais plus durs avec l'Islam

Le retentissement de ce fait divers dépasse aujourd'hui largement les frontières de la petite ville de Derby. Il relance le débat sur les «free schools», ces écoles financées par l'État mais entièrement administrées par des associations, des professeurs ou des parents libres de choisir le type d'enseignement à prescrire.

Instaurées en 2010 par le gouvernement Cameron, ces écoles au nombre d'une centaine à travers le pays, dont 16 islamiques, s'attirent les critiques d'une partie de l'opinion qui y voient des vecteurs de ségrégations sociale ou de dérive confessionnelle. Les plus virulents affirment même qu'elles servent de terreau propagandiste à des organisations terroristes.

A ce stade pourtant, aucun élément ne permet d'affirmer que l'établissement a enfreint la loi avec ses règles rigoureuses, les écoles libres, a fortiori confessionnelles, pouvant édicter leur règlement intérieur comme bon leur semblent. **Néanmoins, l'affaire souligne l'affermissement des autorités et de l'opinion sur les questions d'intégration. Fin septembre, un sondage du *Times* révélait que 66% des Britanniques étaient favorables à l'interdiction du voile en public, un chiffre considérable pour le plus multi-culturaliste des pays d'Europe.**

October 3, 2013

## Silvio Berlusconi Undone

By [THE EDITORIAL BOARD](#)

85,112

Silvio Berlusconi's two-decade-long spell over Italian politics seems to have finally broken this week. His attempt to bring down Prime Minister Enrico Letta's coalition government by withdrawing his party's support collapsed when many of [Mr. Berlusconi's closest political allies refused to go along](#).

Their decision to put Italy's stability, and their own political interest, ahead of the machinations of Mr. Berlusconi — who faces a year's house arrest, expulsion from the senate and a ban on running for office for his recent tax-fraud conviction — is the most encouraging political development Italy has seen in years. Neither Mr. Letta's survival nor Mr. Berlusconi's eclipse, however, are enough to assure the deeper changes the country needs.

The Letta government, an unnatural coalition between the anti-Berlusconi center-left and the pro-Berlusconi center-right, was built after February's deadlocked election. Its lack of political coherence — and the need to keep Mr. Berlusconi's support — made mere survival its most immediate goal.

With the Letta government surviving a confidence vote on Wednesday, another round of inconclusive elections has been avoided, as well as a likely new spike in Italy's borrowing costs. Rome's European partners are grateful for an interlude of relative political stability.

But this news will not be enough to revive an Italian economy that has not known robust growth for more than a decade and whose lack of competitiveness predates the 2007 financial crisis and the euro-zone debt crisis. The European Union's self-defeating austerity policies have not helped, and Angela Merkel's re-election as German chancellor probably means they are unlikely to change soon.

Italy will have to help itself. It needs to rationalize and recapitalize its wobbly banks to get more credit flowing to businesses and consumers. It needs to reform its electoral laws to weaken party bosses and deliver governing majorities to top vote-getters. It needs to end overly restrictive commercial regulations and create a fairer tax system less prone to evasion and less burdensome for wage-earners, small businesses and family homeowners.

The center-right politicians who stood up to Mr. Berlusconi this week need to acknowledge that there can be no sustained recovery without these reforms. Mr. Letta's center-left party also has to stop resisting changes opposed by its union allies, like more decentralized wage bargaining and more flexible rules for hiring and firing employees. This week's victory offers a chance to start building a serious program for recovery.

October 3, 2013

## France Takes Aim at Amazon to Protect Local Bookshops

By REUTERS

85,113

PARIS — French lawmakers on Thursday took aim at Amazon to protect local bookshops by voting through a law that bars online booksellers from offering free delivery to customers on top of a maximum 5 percent discount on books.

The law is part of France's broader regulation of book prices and curbs on discounting, which was passed in 1981 by the Socialist government at the time to protect small bookshops from supermarket chains.

In the past decade, online outlets have challenged physical bookstores, prompting French publishers to lobby for a change in the law to stop what they call Amazon's "dumping" and "unfair competition".

According to a French parliamentary report, online book sales rose to 13.1 percent of total book sales in 2011 from 3.2 percent in 2003. The country is still home to more bookstores than most countries with 2,000-2,500 in a country of 65 million people, compared with 1,000 in Britain, which has roughly the same-sized population.

**"The (book pricing) law is part of our cultural heritage,"** said conservative lawmaker Christian Kert who sponsored the bill.

France's lower chamber, with the support of the Socialist government, passed the law unanimously. It will now go to the Senate, which is expected to pass it by the end of the year.

For its part, Amazon said the law would have the perverse effect of hurting sales of books from the back catalogue and from smaller publishing houses, which were often bought online.

"All measures that aim to raise the price of books sold online will curb the ability of French people to buy cultural works and discriminates against those who buy online," it said.

**The proposed law is only the latest example of France taking aim at U.S.-based Internet giants.**

Last week the country's data protection watchdog **moved closer to fining Google** for the way it stores and tracks user information after the search engine ignored a three-month ultimatum to bring its practices in line with local law.

**France has called on the European Union to regulate global Internet companies such as Google, Amazon and Facebook more aggressively, to counter their growing dominance of online commerce and services.**

It is pushing within the OECD and G20 organisations to **tighten tax rules to make sure that Internet companies cannot avoid tax by locating their headquarters in low-cost EU countries.** Amazon and Google are subject of ongoing tax audits in France.

September 18, 2013

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

By *NIKI KITSANTONIS*

85,114

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."

## The Economist explains

### What is Golden Dawn?

Oct 3rd 2013, 23:50 by E.H.

85,116



ON SEPTEMBER 28TH Nikos Michaloliakos (pictured), the leader of Golden Dawn, was arrested along with four other MPs and 14 party supporters in Greece. It followed the stabbing on September 18th of Pavlos Fyssas, a left-wing anti-fascist rapper, allegedly murdered by a Golden Dawn member. Mass rallies gathered against the group and its approval rating in opinion polls dropped from 15% in September to about 6% now. But who is behind [Golden Dawn and what does it stand for?](#)

Mr Michaloliakos started the far-right party in the 1980s and registered it as a political group in 1993. Characterised by anti-Semitism, homophobia and racism, its neo-Nazi members are prone to bouts of violence. Scores of immigrants have spoken of being attacked by mobs. In a televised debate during the 2012 election Ilias Kassidiaris, an MP and spokesperson for the group, attacked a female panellist and threw water in the face of another woman. Earlier this year Mr Kassidiaris [claimed that the Holocaust did not happen](#). Allegations against the Golden Dawn leadership—and the basis for the current arrests—include murder, attempted murder, setting off explosions and robbery. The report by a prosecutor claims that Golden Dawn's structure is parallel to a military-like force whose members attack mainly immigrants, and that the group's hierarchical structure means the party leadership knows of every attack.

Having been a small fringe fascist group for decades, Golden Dawn really came to prominence in 2011, amid the euro crisis. In the 2012 election it won 7% of the vote and 22 seats in Greece's 300-strong parliament (it now holds 18). Although its torchlit parades, swastika-like logo and bands of black-clad hooligans alienate many Greeks, the party consistently came third in opinion polls for many months. Several reasons accounted for the surge of support. Greece has been in recession for five years. [Public-sector jobs are being cut](#). The party frequently gives out food (though only to Greeks), in a bid to increase approval. It runs "National Awakening Sessions", providing lectures on Greek history with a fascist slant, and has tried to whip up support among teenagers and [children at primary schools](#). Such tactics have boosted its profile.

Many hope that the crackdown on September 28th will change this. During a trip to New York on September 30th Antonis Samaras, the Greek prime minister, spoke of eradicating the "shame" of Golden Dawn. On the same day his government drafted a law to cut state support for the party (Golden Dawn is due to receive around \$1.2m in state funding this year). If the allegations that Golden Dawn is a criminal organisation can be proven then Mr Samaras's government might be able to claw back some support. Mr Samaras might even be able to call an election next spring, in the hope of getting a stronger result for New Democracy, his party. If the allegations founder, however, then Mr Samaras runs the risk of looking undemocratic and heavy-handed—which would be an unhappily ironic result, given the tactics of his opponents.

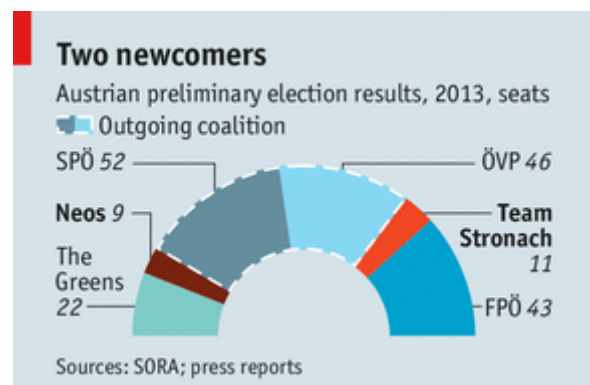
## Austria's election

### The Eurosceptics' victory

# Austrians flocked to populist parties

Oct 5th 2013 | VIENNA | [From the print edition](#)

85,117



AT FIRST sight, Austrian voters chose business as usual in the election on September 29th. The Social Democrats (SPÖ) and centre-right People's Party (ÖVP), which have governed the country together for all but seven years since 1986, retained their majority, albeit with fewer seats. Even though a coalition between the ÖVP and two right-wing groups is theoretically possible, another left-right coalition seems more likely.

Yet a closer look at the result reveals signs of turmoil in Austrian politics. Due to a larger-than-ever protest vote, the two main parties saw their combined share of the vote fall to just over 50%, down from 55% in 2006 and 78% in 2002. A whopping 30% went to the Eurosceptic far right, split between the xenophobic Freedom Party (FPÖ) with 21%, the more centrist Alliance for Austria's Future, which fell just short of the 4% threshold to enter parliament, and Team Stronach, led by Frank Stronach, an Austro-Canadian entrepreneur, which got nearly 6%.

Although Austria boasts the lowest unemployment in the European Union and has weathered the financial crisis since 2008 better than most, there is a groundswell of anger and frustration among voters, says Peter Filzmaier, a political scientist at the Donau-Universität Krems. Supporters of these parties "see themselves as the economic losers", he says. Blue-collar workers deserted the SPÖ for the FPÖ. Fear of immigration and anger about bank bail-outs and euro-zone bail-outs swelled the protest vote.

Young, urban voters mostly supported the Greens, which received 12%, and Neos, a new centrist party that gained a surprisingly strong 5%. The only groups that strongly supported the coalition parties were the elderly and, in the case of the ÖVP, farmers.

With 27% of the vote, the SPÖ remains the largest faction ahead of the ÖVP, which got 24%. Werner Faymann, the chancellor and SPÖ leader, wants to form the next government with the ÖVP, which has started a desperate search for alternatives. The ÖVP has a traditionally strong pro-European outlook and would find it hard to co-operate with the Eurosceptic fringe as it did between 2000 and 2006. The FPÖ has become even more extreme and Team Stronach seems unfit to govern due to the erratic octogenarian Mr Stronach.

By resisting calls for a new "grand coalition", ÖVP grandees are probably just trying to drive up the price for a new pact. Coalition talks could drag on for weeks or even months. And once the partners get back together, the marriage is unlikely to be much happier than before.

Charlemagne

## It's the politics, stupid

**Italy's turmoil shows the danger, and necessity, of national politics**

Oct 5th 2013 | [From the print edition](#)

85,118



IN HIS showdown with Silvio Berlusconi this week, Italy's prime minister, Enrico Letta, invented his own indicator of political risk. Since 1992, he noted, there had been 14 governments in Italy, while Germany had seen just three chancellors. This "spread", as Mr Letta put it, helps to explain the spread in the yields between Italian and German debt. Between 1968 and 1992, Italy had 24 governments, and the public debt more than doubled "as electoral support was bought by loosening the state's purse-strings". Successive Italian governments have been too short-lived to institute lasting reforms, fearing unpopularity in the short term.

This is an overly simplified account of Italy's woes. But it underlines an important fact about the state of the euro zone in the fourth year of its debt crisis. The greatest danger is no longer that an acute financial crisis is about to break up the single currency. Rather the risk is that political instability or paralysis will block the reforms that are needed. Italian politics, with its particular operatic quality, is a case in point. The louche and monied patriarch, Silvio Berlusconi, tries to bring down the government to keep himself out of jail. But he is betrayed by his own devotees. So in the end he swallows his pride and decides to embrace earnest Mr Letta after all, and sheds a tear. In the background, the choir of the markets rises and falls with each twist of the drama, cheering on the young prime minister.

**Signs of political fragility** are apparent beyond Italy, in debtor and creditor countries alike. In Portugal the ruling Social Democrats took a battering in local elections on September 29th: the vote was a backlash against austerity. On the same day in Austria, a country boasting the lowest unemployment rate in the European Union, the once-dominant "grand" coalition of centre-left and centre-right only just scraped a majority, whereas the anti-immigrant, Eurosceptic Freedom Party showed strong gains.

**There are two interpretations of such events.** One is that the euro crisis is an acid corroding the support for mainstream parties. As well as turning against their hapless political class, voters are rejecting the European elite that spawned the misbegotten euro. **A surge of Eurosceptics** in next May's elections for the European Parliament would reverberate back into national politics.

**Another view** is that, in the face of the worst economic situation since the end of the second world war, the system has proven remarkably resilient. Mainstream parties remain in power (sometimes in grand coalitions). Populists are noisy but have not changed fundamental policies. In the Netherlands and Denmark they are no longer kingmakers. Greece and Cyprus have remained in the euro; others still want to join. Even in maddeningly ungovernable Italy, venal politicians have had a fit of conscience and sorted their mess out faster than America has.

Bond spreads never blew out. That other soft-spoken Italian, Mario Draghi, head of the European Central Bank, is so far keeping bond markets calm with his promise to prevent the break-up of the euro. **Europe's politics lies somewhere between inevitable doom and complacent optimism.** Voters are running out of patience, but they are still ready to give traditional parties the benefit of the doubt, and put up with much pain, so long as they think their leaders are competent. In Germany Angela Merkel will return for a third term as Germany's chancellor, after her Christian Democrats alliance took nearly half the lower-house seats.

Yet for all the hopes of economic stabilisation, much remains to be done. Troubled countries need a credible programme to bring down deficits and debt in the medium term. They also need to boost growth through reforms of labour and product markets. The EU should deepen the single market (particularly in services) and liberalise trade. And it must fix the broken financial system with a proper banking union. Yet structural reforms are often harder than austerity, and mutualising risk is more unpalatable for creditors than loans with strings attached. Moreover, the fear of imminent catastrophe has abated. How to maintain reforms?

Olli v all

The European Commission has acquired greater powers to oversee the budgets and economic policies of national governments. As well as the sanctions they face for excessive deficits and imbalances, euro-zone governments must for the first time this year submit budgets to Brussels before they go to national parliaments. The idea is that the commission's judgment, to be delivered next month, should exert pressure on politicians to stick to the fiscal rules. As some Eurocrats admit, many national politicians have little idea how much power they have conceded to Brussels. Though the commission tries to tread lightly, and has often stretched out fiscal targets, there have already been skirmishes over "economic governance". François Hollande, the French president, told the commission it had no right to "dictate" reforms. In Italy, the deputy president of the Senate, Maurizio Gasparri, denounced Olli Rehn, the commissioner for monetary affairs who had questioned the wisdom of repealing a housing tax, as "a Mr Nobody".

Central rules and sanctions may be tolerable in a time of crisis but cannot, on their own, be a lasting solution. The system risks being discredited if a big beast like France chooses to ignore the commission. A bigger danger is that the EU will be seen to hollow out democracy. If elected national politicians cannot set economic policies, and if voters cannot hold to account the appointed bureaucrats who make the choices, both national and European elites will become the object of rightful anger. As Mr Letta put it recently in Brussels, the response to excessive technocracy is populism. National politics may often be ugly, but it remains the only means of forging consent for the process of reform.

## Bootsunglück vor Lampedusa

### Napolitano: EU-Flüchtlingspolitik überdenken

04.10.2013 · Nach der Schiffskatastrophe vor Lampedusa sind bislang mehr als 100 Tote geborgen worden, dutzende Bootsflüchtlinge werden noch vermisst. Italiens Staatspräsident hat nun gefordert, den Kurs der europäischen Flüchtlingspolitik zu ändern. Sein Land brauche Hilfe bei der Bewältigung des Migrantenstroms.

Von Maria Wiesner

85,120

Einen Tag nach der Flüchtlingskatastrophe vor Lampedusa mit über hundert Toten haben führende Politiker Italiens gefordert, die europäische Flüchtlingspolitik zu überdenken. Staatspräsident Giorgio Napolitano forderte die EU und die internationale Gemeinschaft auf, seinem Land bei der Bewältigung des Zustroms zu helfen. Papst Franziskus machte die Gleichgültigkeit vor der Not anderer Menschen für das neuerliche Unglück verantwortlich. „Heute ist ein Tag des Weinens“, sagte er am Freitag in Assisi. Bundespräsident Joachim Gauck rief dazu auf, angesichts des Flüchtlingselends nicht wegzuschauen. „Leben zu schützen und Flüchtlingen Gehör zu gewähren sind wesentliche Grundlagen unserer Rechts- und Werteordnung“, sagte Gauck am Freitag in Berlin.

Italiens Innenminister Angelino Alfano forderte eine gerechtere Lastenverteilung in der Flüchtlingspolitik: „Wir werden laut unsere Stimme in Europa erheben, um die Regeln zu ändern, die die ganze Last der illegalen Einwanderung auf jene Länder abwälzen, in denen die Einwanderer ankommen.“ Er kündigte an, in Brüssel mit EU-Innenkommissarin Cecilia Malmström über das Thema zu sprechen. Doch aus Sicht der EU-Kommission ist jetzt Rom am Zug. „Kann man mehr tun? Ja, aber das ist eine Sache der Mitgliedsstaaten“, sagte der Sprecher von EU-Innenkommissarin Cecilia Malmström am Freitag in Brüssel. Die Kommission handle nur auf Bitte aus betroffenen Ländern. Die EU helfe bereits, beispielsweise beim Grenzschutz im Mittelmeer. Auf Antrag Italiens werden sich die EU-Innenminister bei ihrem Treffen am Dienstag in Luxemburg mit dem tödlichen Schiffsunfall befassen.

## Bisher mehr als 100 Tote geborgen

Am Donnerstag waren bei einem [Brand auf einem Flüchtlingsschiff vor der süditalienischen Insel Lampedusa laut jüngsten Angaben mindestens 111 Menschen ums Leben gekommen](#). Unter den Toten befinden sich laut Angaben italienischer Medien auch zwei schwangere Frauen und mindestens vier Kinder im Alter zwischen zwei und sechs Jahren. Insgesamt sollen rund 500 Menschen an Bord des Schiffes gewesen sein, das mutmaßlich von der libyschen Küste aufgebrochen war und nun in etwa 40 Metern Tiefe vor der Küste Lampedusas liegt. Im Rumpf des Wracks werden noch Dutzende weitere Leichen vermutet.

Auf der Mittelmeerinsel Lampedusa bleiben die Geschäfte am Freitag geschlossen. Ministerpräsident Enrico Letta ordnete am Freitag Staatstrauer an. Diese Entscheidung sei nicht nur ein Ausdruck der Aufmerksamkeit für die Opfer des Flüchtlingsdramas, sondern auch für die Insel Lampedusa selbst, teilte der Ministerrat am Donnerstag mit. Ministerpräsident Letta hatte die Bürgermeisterin von Lampedusa, Giusi Nicolini, noch am Donnerstagabend angerufen, um ihr persönlich für ihr Engagement „am heutigen Tag und in der Vergangenheit“ zu danken.

Auch in Italien löste das Drama eine Debatte über den Umgang mit Flüchtlingen aus. Staatspräsident Napolitano rief laut Presseberichten zu einer Überarbeitung des Einwanderungsgesetzes auf. Italien müsse rasch überprüfen, „welche Regeln die Aufnahme behindern, die unseres Landes würdig ist und den Grundprinzipien von Menschlichkeit und Solidarität entspricht“.

Unterdessen machte der Gründer der Lega Nord, Umberto Bossi, die frühere Sprecherin des UN-Flüchtlingshochkommissariats in Italien und derzeitige Senatspräsidentin Laura Boldrini sowie die im Kongo geborene Integrationsministerin Cécile Kyenge für das Unglück verantwortlich. Durch ihre Forderungen nach



Solidarität und nach einer Aufweichung des Einwanderungsgesetzes gäben sie Anreize für die Überfahrten nach Lampedusa. Der Rechtspopulist Bossi hatte als Minister für Reformen vor einigen Jahren mit der Forderung für Schlagzeilen gesorgt, die Schiffe mit Flüchtlingen von der italienischen Marine mit Kanonen beschießen zu lassen.

Auf Lampedusa wurde die Suche nach den Vermissten noch in der Nacht trotz stürmischem Seegang fortgesetzt. Der italienische Innenminister Angelino Alfano war an den Ort des Unglücks gereist. „Wir haben 150 Personen gerettet, aber ich habe viele Tote gesehen“, sagte Alfano am Donnerstagabend vor Journalisten auf Lampedusa. In einem Interview mit dem italienischen Sender „Canale 5“ forderte Alfano, Lampedusa für den Friedensnobelpreis vorzuschlagen. Damit solle die Solidarität und Humanität, die die Bewohner der Insel gezeigt hätten, gewürdigt werden.



## Democratic Deficit

# Is Germany's Parliamentary Hurdle Obsolete?

By Melanie Amann, [Thomas Darnstädt](#) and Dietmar Hipp

**Last month's election saw nearly 7 million Germans voting for parties that ultimately fell short of the 5 percent hurdle required to win seats in parliament. Political scientists are arguing for the threshold to be lowered or eliminated to ensure democratic legitimacy.**

Bernd Lucke, head of the Alternative for Germany (AFD) party, is a man of ideas. His suggestions about why Germany should abandon the euro brought his splinter party within a hair's breadth of winning seats in the Bundestag, Germany's parliament. A week after the election, Lucke is putting forward another idea.

The German electoral system, says this newcomer on the political scene, needs to be reformed. Parties falling narrowly short of the 5 percent hurdle required to enter the Bundestag should still be allowed to take seats in parliament, he believes, albeit without voting rights. This new category of parliamentarian, says Lucke, should be given "the right to speak and ask questions, and to take part in committee work."

Lucke's proposal is unlikely to resonate with Germany's Constitutional Court, however, which strictly enforces the equal status of all members of parliament. But Lucke is not the only one to criticize the country's electoral laws for excluding parties unable to attract 5 percent of the vote. An increasing number of politicians and constitutional experts are questioning whether the clause -- introduced in reaction to the chaotically fractured party politics of the Weimar Republic -- remains practical in modern-day politics.

Never before in Germany's postwar history has the ruling, which was introduced to ensure the functionality of parliament, created such a democratic deficit. For the first time, two parties -- the AFD and the business-friendly [Free Democratic Party \(FDP\)](#) -- fell narrowly short of the 5 percent hurdle. The result: More votes than ever before will remain unrepresented in parliament.

As a result, 6,855,044 citizens' votes have been lost, making it as if an entire state even larger than Lower Saxony had opted to sit out this election altogether. Put another way, 15.7 percent of votes will not be represented in parliament during this legislative period -- that's a parliamentary group the size of the FDP at its most popular.

"From a democratic perspective, this is alarming," says the Green Party's Hans-Christian Ströbele, adding that he has always been opposed to the 5 percent hurdle. Many experts on the German electoral system agree that it is unconstitutional for millions of votes to be disregarded. The proportional representation system, which was introduced in 1952, is supposed to guarantee that every vote is equally weighted. If millions of votes simply fall by the wayside, they believe, this egalitarian principle is violated.

The fact that the 5 percent hurdle has remained in place for so long is partly due to the Constitutional Court's fear of "too much" democracy. Its concerns are linked to the fractured party politics of the Weimar Republic and its subsequent downfall, which ushered in the Nazi dictatorship in 1933.

After World War II, there was a strong consensus among Germany's mainstream political players that splinter parties should never again be able to inhibit the formation of a functioning government. The Constitutional Court decided in favor of a 5 percent hurdle, concluding that the democratic deficit created through a potential loss of votes was a small price to pay for democratic stability. The court concluded that a lack of admission

control "could result in a failure to form large political parties, which would instead break apart into a vast number of non-functioning splinter groups."

### **Outdate Worries?**

According to Ströbele, however, these concerns are "vastly outdated." Some constitutional experts agree that the court's fears are obsolete and do not warrant the exclusion of such a large number of voters. Dieter Grimm, a former judge and professor of law, says that since Germany has enjoyed "decades of great political stability," the danger of fractured party politics is relatively small.

Grimm also argues that the exclusion of "pesky competitors" could lead to complacency among the established political players. "Considering that the most important mobilizing factor in the political system is competition, a lowering of the admission hurdle could promote the openness among political parties that our constitution calls for," he says.

Many experts agree that the 5 percent hurdle is too high. Hanover-based law professor Hans-Peter Schneider, for example, considers "a lowering of the admission requirement to 4 percent constitutionally viable." Ströbele, meanwhile, is making more drastic demands, saying that a 2 or 3 percent hurdle is required to avoid a democratic deficit.

### **Calls for Reform**

An analysis of election results shows that the majority of splinter groups remain far below the 5 percent hurdle. Of the 30 parties that competed in last month's election, 20 secured significantly less than 1 percent of the vote. A 2 percent threshold, therefore, would have enabled no more than three additional parties -- the AFD, the FDP and the Internet activist [Pirate Party](#) -- to win seats in parliament.

In Lucke's view, safety precautions such as the 5 percent hurdle represent an excessive and unconstitutional encroachment on voter rights. He seems to have a point. For example, Speyer-based party critic and constitutional expert Hans Herbert von Arnim thinks there are other, more moderate ways of ensuring the functionality of parliament. Indeed, Constitutional Court judges have acknowledged the fact that changes in the political landscape need to be continually evaluated, and that electoral law should -- if needed -- be adapted to reflect them.

In response to a complaint Armin filed in 2011, the Constitutional Court decided to lift the 5 percent hurdle required to enter the European Parliament after concluding that the danger of fractured party politics did not exist at the European level.

### **Not the Right Time?**

Unlike the Bundestag, the European Parliament is not required to form a government that has to maintain a permanent majority. But are democratic conditions in Berlin really so much more complicated than in Brussels? The German government cannot be removed by parliament, as was the case during the Weimar Republic. Under the current system, the chancellor remains in place until a majority in the Bundestag agrees on a successor.

Despite the criticism, the desire for political stability in Berlin is greater than ever. Heidelberg-based political scientist Dieter Nohlen, an influential election expert, pointedly warns that a change to the parliamentary admission hurdle is not advisable at a time like now, when "solutions for urgent political problems are needed and a grand coalition provides the best conditions," referring to a government made up of the center-right Christian Democrats and the center-left Social Democrats, the two largest parties in Germany.

Indeed, the greater the number of parties represented in parliament, the harder it is to reach consensus. And it only gets harder the smaller those parties are -- and the more they dig their heels in on what is often the only point on their platform.

## Minimizing Drawbacks

This is the price that comes with Germany's proportional representation system, which is supposed to represent as many political movements as possible in proportion to their popularity. The system can be dangerous, though: If every interest group, no matter how narrow or self-centered its agenda, were to be represented in parliament, there would not be a force strong enough to assume responsibility for the common good.

It seems that if Germany doesn't want to replace its proportional system with a majoritarian one, the 5 percent hurdle is the lesser of two evils. There should, however, be regulations to ensure that the loss of votes is kept to a minimum. For years now, Chemnitz-based professor of politics Eckhard Jesse has been advocating the introduction of an "additional vote" (*Nebenstimme*) that would allow voters to choose an alternative party in the event that their first choice doesn't make it into parliament.

Such a ruling would eliminate the state of affairs that voters -- especially supporters of extremist parties -- find so unfair. As things stand, when their chosen party fails to win seats in parliament, other parties -- in some cases those whose policies they strongly oppose -- often benefit. "That is doubly unfair," says Armin, the political pundit.

## Immigration: ‘Lampedusa is the failure of Europe’

4 October 2013

85,125

Presseurop

Corriere della Sera, Der Spiegel, El País & 4 others



[Mauro Biani](#)

The October 3 shipwreck of a boat carrying African migrants, which left at least 120 dead and almost 300 missing off the coast of the Italian island, has sparked a wave of emotion in Europe and reopened the debate on the EU's migration policy and the member states.

“Immigrant slaughter, Italy in mourning”, [headlines the Corriere della Sera](#). In a [leader in the Milan daily](#), journalist Gian Antonio Stella recalls the large number of people who have drowned while trying to cross the Mediterranean since 1988: at least 19,142, according to immigration blog [Fortress Europe](#). Stella also notes that shortly before the tragedy, the Council of Europe [accused Italy](#) of being a magnet for immigration because of its inadequate dissuasion systems, while other EU institutions regularly criticise “dissuasive” policies.



The same Europe that every day wants to meddle in our choices because they concern everybody is not eager to share with us the burden of southern frontiers. [...] Italian xenophobic claims are groundless. For every 1,000 people, nine of them are refugees in Sweden, seven in Germany, 4.5 in the Netherlands and just one in Italy. But these human waves cannot just be an Italian problem. They're everyone's business. [...] Brussels should come to Lampedusa and count the dead. They're also theirs.

For the German weekly [Der Spiegel](#), the sinking off Lampedusa is "the failure of Europe" –

The scenes must have been apocalyptic: 500 people leaping from a boat on fire, many of them unable to swim. What happened on [October 3] off the coast of the Mediterranean island of Lampedusa has made all of Europe tremble. [...] The small island feels abandoned, and not for the first time. Since 1999 more than 200,000 people from Africa and Asia, fleeing war, hunger and poverty, have washed up there. Estimates of how many have died trying to make the crossing run from 10 to 20,000. Since January 2013, 22,000 refugees have come ashore on Lampedusa. The island is a symbol – of the failure of the European immigration policy.

Taking a similar tone, *El País* headlines with “Illegal migrants’ tragedy shames Europe”. [The Spanish daily reports](#) that most of the sunken ship’s passengers were from Somalia and Eritrea and were fleeing due to hunger and war. Survivors declare that despite the SOS calls, three ships went by without changing their route to help them. For *El País*, “the crisis of people displaced [because of wars or hunger] shakes Europe” –



Just when there is a big shipwreck – and this last one is one of the biggest ever recorded – eyes turn to the 5,000 inhabitants on the island, whose mayor, fed up with deafness of Italian and European authorities, last February sent a letter to the European Union where she demanded to know: ‘How big does my island’s graveyard have to be?’

Under the headline “Lampedusa’s drowning”, [Gazeta Wyborcza notes](#) that the “Sicilian strait has become a grave for Africans who dreamed of European paradise.” The daily suggests a solution to ease pressure on Italy and Greece, also flooded with immigrants, would be to fast track immigrants to centres in other EU countries, where their applications could be examined. However, when such a proposal was floated recently in Brussels, non-Mediterranean states including Poland “would not hear of it.” *Gazeta* concludes that –



We Europeans are not doing enough to prevent such tragedies [...] Neither Italians nor other Europeans want illegal, uneducated and poor immigrants. Making the Mediterranean Sea monitoring system, which is supervised by Brussels, more effective in order to save drowning people is an uphill struggle.

In *De Volkskrant*, columnist Sheila Sitalsing, describing the hypocrisy that reigns in Europe, deplores the fact that the EU's immigration policy boils down to –



Argue, deny any responsibility, and look away. The countries of southern Europe have been trying painstakingly for many years to get their huge problems of immigration onto the agenda of Brussels, warning: "We cannot continue to welcome them, we cannot let them more of them die, and we cannot send them back – so help us!" And the countries of the north replied: “In any event, we must fend them off, for God’s sake!” Certainly, we find the war in Syria abominable, as we do the sometimes unpleasant events on the African continent, and we support the Arab Spring. But above all, we do not want this to be interpreted as an invitation to settle en masse in Amsterdam, Paris or Berlin.

“More than 100 dead in boat tragedy at ‘gates of Europe’”, [headlines The Guardian](#). Condemning the fact that, “These days, it takes a blockbuster tragedy for migrant boats to reach the front pages,” the London daily’s foreign correspondent Jack Shenker argues there is a split between those people who believe Europe’s top priority should be to save the lives of would-be migrants, and those who believe the priority to be border enforcement.



There still remains an absence of political will when it comes to ensuring that vulnerable migrants don't fall through the cracks of an intricate set of border and rescue policies and overlapping regions of legal jurisdiction.

In its editorial, Lisbon daily [Público](#) uses the headline: “Lampedusa and Europe’s shame”. It continues –



The Mediterranean, a sea which has been a crossroads and centre of civilization since ancient times, was turned into an extermination camp. On its banks, the Pope once said that only indifference grew. Indifference to death and tragedy. ‘There is no miracle solution,’ said Italian Foreign Affairs Minister Emma Bonino. There is no miracle. But a Europe wracked by fear and crisis that closes itself off to others will no longer be Europe if it fails to understand that this death on the Mediterranean is its own death.

## Refugee drama off Lampedusa's coast

More than 130 refugees drowned on Thursday morning in the waters off the Italian Island of Lampedusa when the boat carrying them caught fire and capsized. Around 200 people are still missing. Commentators see the tragedy as a symbol of the EU's [selfish policy of sealing itself off](#) and call for more humane and united asylum legislation.

Wiener Zeitung - Austria

### Asylum policy fails on the Mediterranean

Europe bears its share of the responsibility for the refugee tragedy off the coast of the Italian island of Lampedusa, the state-owned liberal daily Wiener Zeitung observes: "These refugees are often at the mercy of unscrupulous smugglers who put them on boats that are unseaworthy. But Europe too needs to ask itself whether it has the right answer to the thousands of refugees pouring in from Africa. Because Europe always [seals itself off](#), shuts its borders. True, Europe has the right to decide its own immigration policy and grant asylum only to those who are genuinely entitled to it. However the current policy boils down to trying to make it as hard as possible for the refugees to get to Europe and apply for asylum in the first place. The Lampedusa tragedy has once again proven how ineffective this policy is and what fatal consequences it has. Because those who see the journey on a wooden boat to Lampedusa as their last chance will make that journey - no matter how dangerous it may be. Sealed-off borders won't save people's lives." (03/10/2013)

Il Sole 24 Ore - Italy

### Refugees' suffering concerns all EU states

The refugee disaster must teach Europe to show more solidarity, the liberal business paper Il Sole 24 Ore demands: "Perhaps the high number of victims will convince everyone - above all our European partners - that the tragedy of the people fleeing ethnic purges or 'just' interminable poverty is a problem that cannot only affect the country in whose waters the final tragic act plays out. The geography of death is global. ... There are no miracle solutions to such a tragedy. But we can at least learn something from it. Europe must understand that belonging to the House of Europe is not just a useful concept for [scolding the Greeks, Spaniards or Italians](#) when they fail to keep their budgets in order. A community concept also includes the EU states showing solidarity with each other: a solidarity that is necessary above all towards people trying to escape hardships that are inconceivable to most of us." (04/10/2013)

Aftonbladet - Sweden

### People should not die at borders

The EU urgently needs to change its refugee policy to prevent more tragedies like that off the coast of Lampedusa, the left-liberal tabloid Aftonbladet admonishes: "Europe has [long since](#) closed off its borders for refugees. There are hardly any legal means left for them to get to Europe. So people are forced to resort to illegal methods and take boats that wouldn't be seaworthy even with a normal burden. The EU's border policies are to blame for the tragedy we are witnessing. With every day that passes without changes to EU policy the risk increases of such a tragedy repeating itself. We have the moral obligation to help people fleeing war, poverty and persecution. The EU must open up more channels for people to come to Europe legally. The border policy must be reformed and made more humane. Today people are dying on Europe's borders. This cannot be allowed to continue." (04/10/2013)

Polityka Online - Poland

### A disgrace for rich Europe

Pope [Francis](#) has called the refugee tragedy off the coast of Lampedusa a 'disgrace'. The left-liberal news portal Polityka Online agrees and criticises Europe's policy of sealing itself off: "The sinking of the refugee boat in the waters near Lampedusa is truly a disgrace for rich, well-fed Europe. It appears that 500 desperate people from Eritrea or Somalia were on the ship when it went down. It makes no difference that the refugees apparently set fire to the boat themselves. Far more important is that Europe is unable to cope with the refugees that cross - and disappear in - the sea any better than Australia or the US. We treat them like a scourge that causes a host of problems and try to [stop them](#). By [building walls](#),



for example. ... But in fact Europe could give political and financial support to countries like Somalia and Eritrea without any problem." (04/10/2013)

## European citizenship (1/2): ‘We are seeing a fundamental clash’

3 October 2013

[Trouw](#) Amsterdam

85,130



The EU's biggest challenge, is to acknowledge Europeans' need to feel at "home" and manage their own issues while pooling their resources to tackle transnational problems, according to Dutch writer Geert Mak in this first part of his speech at a conference organised by Trouw. Excerpts.

[Geert Mak](#)

Each and every one of us is familiar with the feelings that I have for Jorwerd, the small town where I live – even though the sentiment can change from language to language, ranging from the cosy “Home” to the proud “Lieu” to the historically-burdened “Heimat” [due to its associations with Hitler and the Third Reich]. Yet we are all referring to the same thing: the “place” where we feel at home. “Space”, on the other hand, stands for dynamic opportunities, but also for the risks and chaos that go hand-in-hand with venturing down new, uncharted roads.

Place and space, “*place et espace*”, was once an important theme of the French scholar Michel de Certeau, which was later elaborated upon by the European thinker– also chairman of the European Council – Herman Van Rompuy. Europe has long embodied and continues to embody the concept of space, with its aspiration to achieve the free movement of goods, people, services and capital, the removal of borders, the creation of new opportunities – but this these ambitions also risk causing unrest.

### Diabolical, bloody weakness

Europe has for centuries known tension between place and space. A day's drive in Europe can easily take you through at least four regions that are completely different in terms of language and culture. While that enormous diversity has long been our strength, the resulting rivalry has also proven to be our eternal, diabolical and bloody weakness.

You know the story: to escape from that fate, the European Coal and Steel Community – an historical experiment with supranational government – was launched in 1951. And indeed, during at least five decades the European project proved very successful. It still is in many respects. We should never forget that. Just ask the opinion of the Polish, Estonians or other former eastern Europeans. But elsewhere, storms and fires have raged since 2010, with no end in sight, and if the Union survives this onslaught, then it will do so much weakened.

The Europe of today is so closely and deeply entwined that the member states are compelled in various ways to concern themselves with one another's internal politics and attitudes

The Europe of today is so closely and deeply entwined that the member states are compelled in various ways to concern themselves with one another's internal politics and attitudes. Let us not ignore the fact that the internal weakness of some member states have on occasion brought the Union to the edge of the abyss. But how can the notion of "space" exert influence on the interpretation of "place"?

## **Cronyism and patronage**

Can one, for example, make the totally distorted relationship between state and its citizens in the former eastern European countries disappear overnight, as if by magic? And does that same principle not apply all the stronger to the deeply rooted traditions of [cronyism](#) and patronage in most of the southern European countries? Worded differently: does the European mix of reprimands, subsidies, deductions and rarely imposed penalties exert any control over the phenomenon of "place"? Especially if you, like in Greece, think that you can modernise an economy by predominantly imposing [austerity and cutbacks](#), with the result that the victims once again become completely dependent on the patronage of friends and family.

And how should we view our self-acclaimed [debt morality](#), the morality of punishment and cutbacks that has in the past years determined the public mood in Germany and the Netherlands, the morality that our government parties still embrace with smug ignorance, but which is viewed with disbelief by the rest of the world – including the IMF – as it delays, if not completely blocks, the recovery of the Eurozone.

The price that will have to be paid for this is high, especially in the south. We know this, also here in the north, even if you hardly ever hear this admitted by a Dutch politician. And never mind the enormous moral price of a [generation of youngsters who have lost all faith](#).

## **Integration, at least in Brussels**

So what influence does all this have on our European 'space'? And on the relationship between "space" and "place" within hard-struck Europe, the relationship between [my home town] Jorwerd and Brussels?

We have in the past five years experienced two large crises of confidence: a bank crisis in 2008 and 2009, followed by, since early 2010, a monetary crisis that, although having calmed down somewhat since last year, is by no means over.

Looking at the consequences from Brussels' perspective, one sees that the Union's institutions have survived all this adversity amazingly well, responding with measures and the creation of structures that until recently were regarded as unattainable. True, the concluding *pièce de résistance*, the European [banking union](#) is not yet in place, but all in all, the crisis has led to increased integration. In Brussels at least.

We are witnessing with our very own eyes the emergence of a Europe of two, three or perhaps even more speeds

Things are very different in the world outside, where a reverse process is underway, a process of disintegration. For example, in the euro economy, where interest rates for an Italian entrepreneur are currently twice as high as for his German counterpart. We are witnessing with our very own eyes the emergence of a Europe of two, three or perhaps even more speeds.

## **Unstable balance of power**

That disintegration is also clearly evident in the European political debate: the differences in opinion on how to tackle the crisis reflect the essence of the different political and economic cultures. The French and Italians, who have always relied on devaluation to whittle away their debts, can't understand the primal fear that Germans have for inflation.

This disharmony is disrupting the European balance of power. The motor of European unification, the Paris-Berlin axis, is sputtering. France threatens to become the next problem hotspot, after Spain and Italy. Germany must lead, a task that it cannot and dare not assume. The burden of its past still weighs too heavy.

In the meantime, citizens are fast losing faith in the European experiment. The outcome of the forthcoming [European elections](#) will reflect that distrust: polls show that the already unwieldy European Parliament will increasingly be populated by representatives of anti-European [extreme right](#) parties.

In short, what we are seeing is a fundamental clash, not only between political forces, but also between deeply rooted European traditions. Only rarely has Europe – in all its many configurations – witnessed such instability as is apparent now in the balance between “space” and “place”. Would a return to the 19th Century system of nation states restore that balance?

#### **EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP (2/2)**

### **‘This crisis will be followed by a European Renaissance’**

**In the second part of his speech at a recent conference organised by Trouw, the Dutch writer Geert Mak says that the political and institutional crisis in Europe will trigger the emergence of a new balance in the relationships between European institutions themselves, and the EU and its citizens. Excerpts.**

More than 130 years ago, on March 11, 1882, the French philosopher and polemist [Ernest Renan](#) gave a speech at the Sorbonne that was to have a long lasting impact. It was entitled, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*, or “What is a nation?”. “A nation is [...] a great solidarity constituted by the feeling of sacrifices made and those that one is still disposed to make”.

There are still European philosophers and politicians, especially in Brussels, who would prefer to brush away the nation state as an obsolete and even dangerous 19th Century myth. They see the crisis as a means to now finally making a great leap forwards; they still dream of a [European federation](#). If you apply Renan’s clear account to our continent, however, then – even half a century later after laying the foundations of the EU – there is still little to be seen of such a European nation. If anything has been damaged by the crisis and the subsequent extreme austerity drive, then it is that very solidarity and willingness to continue a common life that Renan stressed.

## **Well-intentioned Brussels regulations**

The problem with all those great European dreams is that in rejecting the nation state, the importance of the “place” factor is also generally disregarded

That is not all, though. The problem with all those great European dreams is that in rejecting the nation state, the importance of the “place” factor is also generally disregarded. The semi-illegal unpasteurised cheeses at the market in Dieppe, the smoky café without any toilets in the Hungarian village of Vasarosbec, Bruges’ chocolate, the solar panels in Neukirch, the metro construction in Amsterdam... what has not been suffocated in the hailstorm of [well-intended regulations from Brussels](#)?

They are, each and every one, symptoms of a European federation that has got completely out of balance in recent decades. Too many issues that a normal federative bond, such as the United States of America, leave to member states – cheese and chocolate, for example – are governed from Brussels. On the other hand, in Europe, too many policy areas that are more or less centrally managed in all federations – such as the financial sector, foreign policy and defence – are still managed by the national capitals. European citizens feel that very keenly. If anything undermines support for the European Union, apart from the lack of democracy, then it is this.

## **Introduction of a European senate**

Should we restore the nation state to its full glory, as some are arguing? Do we then, as Europeans, have to mutually manage, without the EU, a thousand and one affairs varying from fishing quotas to financial agreements and the energy policy? Not to mention the climate issues that have rapidly descended upon us in the 21st Century. Has the world itself not long outgrown national bonds?

Whether we like it or not, we have to find specific, democratically-controlled forms of that omnipresent European “space”

Whether we like it or not, we have to find specific, democratically-controlled forms of that omnipresent European “space”. It will be difficult and fraught with problems, but there is no way we can go back to 1956.

Where the nation state could acquire a new place is within European democracy. You can therefore justifiably plead for the introduction of a European senate, which, as in the US, reinforces that national element within the European Parliament and European democracy. At least as important is the change in the national ideal from the 19th Century “blood, language and soil ideal” to the more political ideal, as the Americans have. That process is now in full swing in Europe, too.

## European Renaissance

This crisis will be followed by a European Renaissance. Of one form or another. From the sorely tried European Union, we will have to recover a European space in which every European feels, in some way, at home. Driven less by dreams and idealism, I fear, and more by bitter necessity. Not triumphant, but realistic and modest.

First and foremost by taking far more account in European regulations and institutions of the values associated with the concept of “place”. By respecting, fostering and, where possible, protecting all that goes along with those values against the already too-massive European and global aggression.

That space also has to be created within the political debate, if only by not simply dismissing all those who no longer feel at home in their own spot in the world as populists or nationalists. These are, indeed, feelings that are always exploited by the ultra-right. But that has everything to do with the fact that progressive, and liberal-conservative movements have systematically paid far too little heed to the human need for a home, a place and everything that goes along with that.

## Parallel economies of local networks

Secondly, that balance can be restored by devoting far more attention to what local elements can contribute to Europe. Everywhere, but especially in the south, we are seeing how, driven by necessity, parallel economies are springing up, based on local knowledge and [products, local networks](#) – that is to say, without any distributive trade – local credit extension, local confidence.

Finally, the balance can be restored by the expansion of the concept of “place” that has been taking place over the past few decades, in particular. You increasingly see how the concept of “place” is exceeding those national contexts; sometimes it is the region – which often crosses borders – sometimes the village, increasingly the town.

It is currently, for example, primarily the cities where creativity and innovation are flourishing, despite all the pessimism, where migrants come and go, where town councils are breaking down national barriers and reaching out to one another, all over the world. We have been in the midst of a lengthy, difficult process, since before the crisis and since its advent. By trial and error, we are heading towards a Europe made up of people, rather than a Europe made up of states.

## What Happened to European Inflation?

WSJ October 4, By Alen Mattich

85,134



European Central Bank President Mario Draghi

Not only haven't the European Central Bank's various monetary interventions triggered hyper-inflation, but the balance of current risks seems to tilt towards deflation.

Following the financial crisis, the big fear had been that relentless central bank activism would trigger old-style inflation in the single currency region. Big government deficits were being matched by massive monetary operations—in the past, a recipe for rampant price spirals. Indeed, many of the euro zone's struggling countries had long histories of inflating and devaluing their way out of economic difficulties.

It was a particularly big worry for Germans, the single currency's most determined hard money constituency.

So there's no small irony that one of Germany's leading business newspapers has a big spread out this week titled "Where Is Inflation?"

Not in Germany. Consumer prices rose just 1.6% there on the year to August, down from 1.9% a month earlier. What's more, there doesn't seem to be much in the pipeline either. August producer prices came in weaker than expected, dropping 0.5% on the year.

Yes, German labor costs have been growing. But the most recent labor market report also showed a slight uptick in German unemployment, which, at the very least, could prove a modest check on further wage pressures.

In fact, [inflation isn't to be found anywhere in the single currency region](#). Overall euro-zone consumer prices rose just 1.1% on the year to September, continuing a broad downtrend of the past year. Recent softness in global commodity prices and strength in the euro are merely likely to exacerbate this trend.

Even some of the upward pressure on inflation is ultimately self defeating. A one percentage point rise in Italian value added tax to 22% will feed through to prices over the near term but is also likely to dampen demand, which is bound to show up in lower inflation later on.

The ECB has shrugged off the recent inflation trend as down to temporary factors, but the fact remains that prices are well below the bank's 2% target. Inflation has averaged exactly 2% since the start of 2008, but since 2009, it's been just 1.7%.

What's more, a substantial slice of that inflation during the past few years was down to consumption tax rises as governments tried to get their deficits under control. Stripped of that factor, annual inflation would have been as



much as 0.6 percentage points lower some months. Indeed, inflation excluding consumption tax rises would be around 0.2% lower this year and next, according to Danske Bank research from the summer.

The drop in euro-zone inflation comes amid tightening credit conditions in the single currency region. Growth in loans to euro-zone companies has been on a downtrend for nearly two years and has registered an outright contraction since the summer of 2012. The latest figures show credit down some 3% year on year.

This contraction has accompanied a fall in long term refinancing operation (LTRO) loans made by the ECB to the single currency's banking sector. These have dropped by some 40% since the peak in early 2012.

All of which suggests the pressure on the [ECB to do more will grow over the coming months](#)—strategists are forecasting another LTRO operation—unless credit growth, inflation, or economic growth pick up over the coming months, and probably all three.

What's more, resistance from Germans to further monetary operations could also melt away if German price trends remain downward.



## Our finance editor says goodbye

### The end of the affair

Oct 4th 2013, 10:47 by A.P.

85,136

I HAVE been on the receiving end of Bob Diamond's brand of optimism (they used to call it "Bobtimism" at Barclays). I can testify to the extraordinary whiteness of Jamie Dimon's shirts. I have seen Ken Lewis's teeth. No more. This is my last week as *The Economist's* finance editor, after four years in the post\*. Add in a couple of years before then as the banking correspondent, and I have spent more than half a decade in finance without seeing it function normally.

That had not been my expectation. When I was offered the banking beat, my reaction was one of apprehension. Grappling with the ins and outs of bond markets and bank balance-sheets was not just going to be unfamiliar ground, technically. I assumed that it was also going to be boring as hell.

The job was offered to me in the early summer of 2007. Plenty of people inside the financial industry had an idea things were going badly wrong: the American housing industry had begun to turn downwards in early 2006. But as far as I was concerned this was an industry that remorselessly piled on the profits. The previous few years had seen an epic expansion of bank returns. The largest 1,000 banks in the world reported aggregate pre-tax profits of almost \$800 billion in fiscal year 2007-08, almost 150% higher than in 2000-01. Total returns to shareholders in big banks in America, Britain and the euro area rose by 150% between 2002 and 2007. Banking boasted the largest profit pool in the world in 2006, according to McKinsey, at 11% of the global total.

My professional life was about to consist of interviewing people who made money hand over fist, and would presumably continue to do so for as long as I wrote about them. They might be greedy, they might be arrogant but they certainly knew what they were doing. I didn't realise it at the time but I was already thinking like a financial regulator.

Fears of a life of tedium turned out to be a bit misplaced. My very first week in the job coincided with a deposit run at Northern Rock, a British lender which came unstuck when it could no longer fund itself in the markets. Some of my earliest interviews on the beat were with people dusting off the manual on how to deal with bank runs. Organising guide-ropes inside bank branches was one tactic: better that than have people spill out onto the street, signalling to others that they had better join the back of the queue. One HSBC veteran happily recounted stories of the Asian financial crisis, in which tellers were instructed to bring piles of cash into view to reassure people that banks were overflowing with money.

Tales of chaotic improvisation from Asia were not supposed to be relevant to the West's ultra-sophisticated financial system. But far worse was to come. A chain of events was under way that would lead in time to the collapse of Lehman Brothers, state ownership of swathes of the rich world's banking systems, a deep global recession and the euro-zone debt crisis.

The crisis would lead to a complete reversal in attitudes to the financial industry. The decade leading up to the crisis was one in which finance was lionised. Policymakers applauded the march of new techniques, such as securitisation, that appeared to send risk away from the banks and spread it more evenly through the financial system. Belief in the efficiency of markets was so pervasive that the sceptics were both few in number and easily dismissed. Within financial institutions, too, there was the same catastrophic consensus. Finance had created its own moral universe before the crisis, in which high pay in one institution justified high pay elsewhere, in which serving clients was seen as the equivalent to serving society, in which people genuinely believed high returns and high bonuses were the marks of a meritocratic system.

Make no mistake. There was corrupt and criminal behaviour, too. The manipulation of the LIBOR rate, a vital interest-rate benchmark, by traders at a variety of banks and brokers is the most shocking example. But as a rule, bankers were not plotting deviously to take on absurd risks in the expectation that the state would bail

them out. The truth is less sinister and more demeaning. Some of the world's brightest minds were just balling things up on a grand scale.

The sinuous, multiple threads leading up to the crisis were bound together by this pre-crisis groupthink. Such entrenched beliefs are hard to dismantle. I don't hold much truck with the idea that pay caused the crisis, but in its aftermath it was clear that a revised social contract between banks and the rest of us would need to address the issue of pay. Yet many, many bankers still don't understand the fury pay arouses. No one talks about greed being good, but the differences in wealth inevitably create a wall of incomprehension. I recall talking to an incredibly smart European banker about the waves of job cuts then sweeping the industry. "If things carry on like this, I'll have to go and live on my olive farm in the south of France," he said anxiously. Thank God for the safety net.

Plenty of very senior people in the industry still refuse fully to recognise the help they had got from the state during the crisis. When Mr Diamond told British politicians in 2011 that "there was a period of remorse and apology for banks...I think that period needs to be over," he committed the cardinal error of thinking bankers could decide for themselves when they stopped saying sorry.

However hard it is for financiers themselves to change their *Weltanschauung*, the events of the past few years have shattered the belief of outsiders in finance's infallibility. But when things go so badly wrong, the pendulum almost inevitably swings too far in the other direction. Another type of consensus has emerged, one in which finance is demonised; in which bankers are generally bad; in which there is a "socially useful" bit of the industry, that doles out loans to individuals and businesses, and the rest of it is dangerous, unnecessary gambling.

Such anger is understandable. But the good that finance can do has been lost sight of. The industry has become conflated with crisis, bail-outs and bonuses. Finance embraces all sorts of activities, from insurance to asset management to exchanges. The people who work in the industry are not all bonus-laden investment bankers: the most common occupation in finance and insurance in America is the teller: there were more than 500,000 of them in 2012. The industry's most dynamic areas, from the rise of peer-to-peer lending in developed markets to the spread of mobile banking in emerging ones, are not beset by anguished discussions about implicit subsidies and liquidity ratios. Indeed, the more regulation binds the behemoths, the more lively and important the innovation that goes on elsewhere in the industry. Finance is not just about the vampire squids.

Even if it was, finance would still be worth defending. A narrow conception of what constitutes acceptable finance has taken hold since the crisis. A reasonable ambition to protect taxpayers from bailing out banks has led to an unreasonable emphasis on the banking activities that are most familiar to taxpayers. Deposits are a "good" source of funding, even though they can be taken out in an instant and get a giant subsidy in the form of deposit insurance. Commercial banks that lend directly to homeowners and small businesses count as a utility-like business; investment banks that help clients raise money via the capital markets are commonly described as "casinos". The financial instrument that causes more trouble than any other, the residential mortgage, is socially useful; derivatives markets that enable banks to manage the interest-rate risks associated with extending mortgages over long periods of time are weapons of mass destruction. And so on.

Oversimplifications also dog the debate over how to make finance safer. Solutions designed to make the system more stable end up imposing a cost. This is not an argument for doing nothing. Having more equity in the system is a good thing. More transparency in derivatives markets is a good thing. Forcing losses onto bank creditors rather than taxpayers is a good thing. But there are always trade-offs to weigh up. Driving up equity tends to reduce returns on equity, which makes it harder for banks to attract investors. Making it harder for banks to fund themselves with short-term funding reduces the opportunity for lenders to get at their money quickly. Squashing down on risk in one part of the system elevates it somewhere else. Standardised derivatives fit a bit less snugly with the risk being hedged. Lending that remains on banks' balance-sheets increases the size of their balance-sheets. And an increased cost of capital for financial institutions will be passed on to customers. If you don't want them to pass on that cost, you can try to regulate their prices and charges, which makes it likely that they will withdraw services from less profitable customers.

Many critiques of banks look wistfully back to a golden age of finance, when the bank manager was the gateway to credit, when institutions held much more capital to protect themselves from danger, when judgment prevailed over equation-filled models. This was a world of conservatism and integrity, where taxpayers slept easy in their beds and bankers were more Jimmy Stewart than Gordon Gekko. God knows, there is a lot wrong with the modern version of finance, and with the big banks in particular. But the question to ask about the past is why so much changed if it was so great.

\* As part of an extended farewell to the industry, I'm off to write a book on the seething minds of finance, its creativity and its craziness, before joining a new section at the start of next year.

## Déliaisons dangereuses

L'édito d'Elisabeth Lévy

Publié le 04 octobre 2013 à 8:30 dans PolitiqueSociété

85,139

Mots-clés : [Alain Finkielkraut](#), [Claude Askolovitch](#), [Immigration](#), [Islam](#)



Il doit exister quelque part un monde enchanté où les cultures dialoguent harmonieusement, où les différences s'enrichissent mutuellement, où les peuples se métissent naturellement. Dans ce monde, tout homme est un frère parce que tout homme est un Autre. Dans ce monde, l'immigration est toujours une chance, l'existence humaine un perpétuel mouvement et l'identité un plébiscite de chaque instant. Tout le monde aime tout le monde, on s'entr'invite pour Noël, Ramadan et Kippour, on échange des recettes pleines de miel. Ça s'appelle la « diversité ».

Bon, peut-être qu'on s'enquiquine ferme dans ce Club Med abrité des cauchemars de l'Histoire. De toute façon, on n'est pas près de le savoir. Parce que le territoire de ce royaume se limite à quelques cerveaux choisis – et aussi, ce qui n'est pas sans conséquence, à une proportion notable des salles de rédaction d'Occident.

Dans le vrai monde, l'Autre, c'est parfois l'enfer<sup>1</sup>. Ce n'est peut-être pas très glorieux mais, qu'on soit Papou ou Américain, on a spontanément tendance à penser que la façon dont on vit, aime, mange, s'habille et élève les enfants est infiniment supérieure à celle qui a cours dans le patelin d'à côté. On est facilement agacé par les croyances et les mythes des autres. Ça ne devrait pas empêcher de vivre en bonne intelligence. L'âge démocratique et la culture des droits de l'homme nous ont appris à conjuguer le souci de l'égalité et le respect de la pluralité humaine. Et nous avons fini par croire que les différences n'étaient que d'amusantes fanfreluches pour campagnes de pub ou de plaisants moyens d'engager la conversation avec son voisin – et plus si affinités. Surtout en France, où on pensait avoir appris à les raboter ou, à tout le moins, à les tenir en respect. Après, on a dit « intégrer », ça sonnait plus gentil.

Tout ça marchait plutôt bien tant qu'il y avait des frontières. Pas pour s'enfermer, ni pour se séparer, plutôt pour se *distinguer*. Ou s'*identifier*. Les communautés humaines étaient inscrites dans une continuité historique jalonnée de solides repères, d'« heures les plus noires de notre histoire » et d'œuvres glorieuses. Elles n'étaient pas pour autant fermées, frileuses ou crispées, au contraire, la conscience naturelle qu'elles avaient d'elles-mêmes leur donnait l'énergie de se transformer sans se renier. C'est encore un peu à cela que ressemblait la France de mon adolescence. Elle était « black-blanc-beur », mais ce n'était pas un sujet. Les enfants d'immigrés défilaient pour l'égalité et on râlait parce que ça n'allait pas assez vite. On ressentait encore une sorte d'évidence de la culture, donc de l'identité française, et ils voulaient en être. On disait « nous » sans y penser et

il n'y avait pas de « eux ». Bien sûr, il y avait des ratés. Mais nous ne savions pas que nous vivions la fin de la France d'avant. D'avant quoi, c'est ce qu'il faut chercher à savoir.

Il suffit d'allumer un poste de radio pour savoir que cet heureux bricolage national n'est plus de saison. Il n'est plus question de black-blanc-beur, mais de Français de souche et d'immigrés, de voile et de racisme, de burqa et d'islamophobie, de campements roms et de violences urbaines. Sans oublier la colonisation, l'esclavage et tout le reste.

Dans ce méli-mélo d'histoires et de mémoires concurrentes, non seulement on ne sait plus ce que signifie « être français », mais ce n'est pas marrant tous les jours de l'être. Pour comprendre d'où viennent les embarras de notre identité, il faut lire le beau livre d'Alain Finkielkraut, plonger avec lui dans le roman national pour y repérer les petits riens et les grandes choses qui tissent une conscience collective. On ne racontera pas ici cette exploration qui le mène loin dans le passé pour éclairer notre présent. Observons simplement qu'à l'issue de cette lecture, il apparaît que le noyau dur de l'identité française, ce qui n'est pas négociable ou, en tout cas, ne l'était pas jusque-là, tient en deux mots : les femmes et les livres – plus précisément une grammaire spécifique des relations entre les sexes et l'amour des œuvres et des auteurs du passé, qui implique la responsabilité de les transmettre.

Les malheurs de l'identité ont donc des racines profondes. Mais ils se sont aggravés avec l'effacement des frontières. Dans le tourbillon permanent et planétaire d'êtres humains jetés sur les routes de la mondialisation, on ne sait plus très bien distinguer l'Autre de soi, ce qui veut dire qu'on ne sait plus qui on est. C'est précisément ce que souhaitent les partisans d'une société métissée, d'un grand brassage dans lequel les identités anciennes, à commencer par l'identité majoritaire, s'effaceront au profit d'une culture nouvelle, enrichie par la diversité de ses branches. L'ennui, c'est que, dans la réalité, ce beau projet ne peut avoir que deux issues, aussi contrariantes l'une que l'autre : d'un côté, le hall de gare planétaire, où les territoires deviennent des « lieux » interchangeable et les peuples des groupes de touristes ; de l'autre, la disparition de ce qu'on appellera, faute de mieux, l'identité traditionnelle de la France – dont il faut immédiatement préciser qu'elle n'a rien à voir avec la couleur de la peau, l'origine et même la religion, si on s'en tient à une acception étroite.

Au contraire, l'identité française a – ou avait, on ne sait – la particularité d'être structurellement partageuse, dès lors qu'elle peut accueillir quiconque souhaite l'adopter. Sauf que, pour les nouveaux arrivants, il ne s'agit plus tant d'adopter que d'adapter. On se récriera qu'il n'y a plus, ou très peu, d'arrivants depuis belle lurette et que ceux que nous appelons « immigrés » sont français depuis plusieurs générations. Certes, et, comme individus, ils bénéficient évidemment des mêmes droits que n'importe quel citoyen. Mais l'égalité des droits entre les individus n'implique pas nécessairement l'égalité des droits entre cultures. Dans le modèle multiculturel, il n'y a plus de culture d'accueil et de culture d'origine. Toutes sont, en quelque sorte, placées à égalité. Cette organisation particulière de la vie collective, fondée sur la double reconnaissance des individus et des groupes (ou communautés) a sa légitimité, et peut-être est-elle la plus adaptée à une société menacée de fragmentation. Mais dès lors qu'elle rompt avec la tradition républicaine d'intégration individuelle, il faudrait au moins en discuter collectivement. En effet, on dirait que nous l'avons adoptée sans le savoir, donc, sans l'avoir choisie. Or, si la France n'a aucun problème avec le fait d'être banalement multi-ethnique, il semble qu'elle résiste au multiculturalisme radieux qu'affectionnent ses élites, protégées qu'elles sont contre les difficultés de la coexistence par d'invisibles frontières culturelles.

Inutile de tourner autour du pot : ce qui a changé la donne, ce sont les flux migratoires massifs qui, en quelques décennies, ont vu s'installer et faire souche des millions d'immigrés venus du Maghreb et d'Afrique subsaharienne. Pour les âmes sensibles et les odorats délicats, évoquer la question du nombre est déjà inconvenant. N'importe qui peut comprendre qu'on ne s'intègre pas de la même façon quand on débarque en solo et quand on arrive au sein d'une communauté déjà structurée.

Cela nous amène à l'entêtante question de l'islam et de son acculturation en France, devenue le révélateur et l'accélérateur du malaise identitaire. En simplifiant outrancièrement, on dira que deux camps s'affrontent. Pour le premier, ici représenté par Claude Askolovitch, qui publie ces jours-ci *Nos mal-aimés, ces musulmans dont la France ne veut pas*, la France est musulmane, que cela lui plaise ou non, et elle doit se débrouiller avec toutes

les différences, y compris celles qui la chatouillent le plus, comme le port du voile, de plus en plus répandu dans les rues de ses villes. Dans ce contexte, demander à des « immigrés » nés sur le sol français de s'intégrer est tout simplement « islamophobe », terme fort discutable qu'on ne discutera pas ici. « *Nous sommes nés ici, nous n'avons pas à nous intégrer* », proclament régulièrement les Indigènes de la République et autres groupuscules spécialisés dans la dénonciation de la vieille identité française.

L'autre camp, dont le champion pourrait être Alain Finkielkraut, estime au contraire que l'islam, dernier arrivé dans le paysage culturel, doit s'adapter à la règle commune au lieu de réclamer qu'on la change pour lui et se conformer à la discrétion laïque au lieu de revendiquer une visibilité croissante. Difficile de nier, en effet, que certaines expressions de l'identité musulmane sont problématiques, notamment quand elles contreviennent à l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes ou encore quand elles sont le vecteur d'une hostilité à la France. Répétons-le : nés ici, les musulmans sont des citoyens aussi égaux que d'autres. Mais quand certains affichent leur détestation des valeurs libérales occidentales, on peut comprendre que les « Gaulois » s'inquiètent. Tout comme on comprend que les millions de musulmans à la papa qui se sont fondus dans la masse, puissent se sentir injustement dénigrés.

Reste qu'il est un peu tard pour brandir le vieil adage – « *À Rome, fais comme les Romains* ». Tout simplement parce que les amis salafistes de Claude Askolovitch peuvent se prétendre aussi romains que les Romains.

Les uns se disent mal-aimés, les autres ne se sentent plus chez eux, et tous ont le sentiment tenace d'être des « citoyens de seconde zone ». Et si on parle abondamment du « vivre-ensemble », c'est précisément parce que, dans les faits, on vit de plus en plus séparés. Ils sont fous, ces Romains.

**Cet article en accès libre ouvre le dossier “La France à la carte” de Causeur n°6 (nouvelle formule). Pour lire tous les articles de ce numéro, rendez-vous chez votre [marchand de journaux le plus proche](#) ou sur notre [boutique en ligne](#) pour l'acheter ou vous abonner : 5,90 € le numéro / abonnement à partir de 14,90 €.**

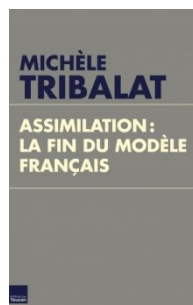
## Assimilation : pourquoi le modèle français ne fonctionne plus

Chiffres à l'appui, **Michèle Tribalat** démontre que le processus social d'assimilation a aujourd'hui cessé de fonctionner en France. Extrait de "Assimilation : la fin du modèle français" (1/2).

### Bonnes feuilles

Publié le 5 octobre 2013

85,142



### [Michèle Tribalat](#)

Michèle Tribalat est démographe, spécialisée dans le domaine de l'immigration. Son dernier livre, [Assimilation : la fin du modèle français](#), a été publié aux éditions du Toucan (2013)

Nous n'offrons plus, aux yeux des autres, un modèle suffisamment enviable pour qu'ils fassent l'effort d'adapter leurs modes de vie lorsque c'est nécessaire. Pour que l'assimilation fonctionne, il faut en effet que ce qui est proposé aux nouveaux venus soit attrayant. Pourquoi voudrait-on que l'on endosse l'habit du Français avec enthousiasme si celui-ci a l'air tout dépenaillé ? L'Europe, écrit Pascal Bruckner, « *n'a pas de pire ennemi qu'elle même, sa culpabilité taraudante, le scrupule poussé jusqu'à la paralysie. Comment voulons-nous être respectés si nous ne nous respectons pas, si nous ne cessons, par médias et littérature interposés, de nous dépeindre sous les traits les plus négatifs ?* »

Par ailleurs, la rhétorique sur les principes républicains sonne creux. Nous n'arrêtons pas de répéter que si les immigrés et leurs descendants éprouvent des difficultés dans les banlieues de nos grandes villes, c'est parce que **la République n'a pas tenu ses promesses**. Pour que la promesse laïque retrouve une capacité d'attraction, nous dit Gilles Kepel, « *il faudrait [...] que l'insertion dans la société par l'emploi rende au peuple dans sa diversité une pleine croyance dans les valeurs de la nation et que l'éducation lui en ait fourni les capacités.* » On remarquera l'emploi du verbe « *fournir* ». L'école de la République doit « *fournir* », à tous, les capacités nécessaires à l'insertion sur le marché du travail. **Le citoyen en herbe n'est qu'un sujet passif auquel la République doit tout apporter**. La République est un fournisseur et si le sujet n'a pas le niveau requis, c'est de sa faute à elle.

**Cette rhétorique sur les promesses républicaines a bien des inconvénients**. Elle a tendance à surévaluer ce que les institutions sont capables d'accomplir. Elle déresponsabilise, démobilise l'ardeur individuelle, fournit un argumentaire tout prêt pour rationaliser ses propres insuffisances et transforme les institutions en guichet. Elle fait oublier que la devise républicaine n'est pas un programme d'action publique dont il suffirait que les institutions l'appliquent scrupuleusement pour satisfaire tout le monde mais que tous doivent contribuer, par l'effort sur soi, pour qu'elle s'incarne. La devise républicaine n'est pas une vapeur qui flotte dans l'air. Elle résulte de l'application de tous à la faire vivre, avec le soutien des institutions. Cette rhétorique des promesses est démobilisatrice pour ceux qui ont le plus d'efforts à fournir et consolante pour ceux qui occupent les places enviables conquises grâce au système méritocratique. Christopher Lasch fait remarquer que les gens de gauche comme de droite, qui n'ont pas de mot assez dur pour les privilèges héréditaires, « *se contentent d'arguments douteux pour dire que l'éducation ne tient pas ses promesses d'encourager la mobilité sociale. Ils semblent sous-entendre que, si c'était le cas, personne n'aurait, supposent-ils, la moindre raison de se plaindre* » .



Gilles Kepel, dans son enquête à Clichy-Montfermeil, illustre bien ces attentes démesurées d'individus qui ne se donnent pas toujours les moyens de les réaliser. Redouane, né au Maroc, a passé une maîtrise en administration économique et sociale en France et travaille dans une association spécialisée dans l'insertion locale. Il a été un temps contractuel de l'éducation nationale après avoir échoué au concours de l'IUFM, sans qu'on sache dans quelle discipline. Il a échoué à l'oral, « *épreuve ou l'aisance langagière et le capital socio-culturel sont déterminants* » nous dit Gilles Kepel. On apprend, deux pages plus loin, « *qu'il ne lit pas et ne semble guère à même ou désireux d'accroître son capital culturel.* » Comment espérer enseigner aux enfants sans lire et sans désir d'apprendre soi-même ? Pourquoi alors dépeindre Redouane comme quelqu'un qui « *se retrouve piégé dans le quartier d'où il sort peu et qui bride ses capacités d'ascension sociale* ». L'intéressé se dit satisfait de son travail qui lui permet de rester dans « *sa ville* » et à proximité de son domicile, même s'il souhaite quitter la France. Que fait-il de son temps libre ? Il « *fréquente les mosquées* » apprend l'arabe, fait du footing et du vélo .

Par ailleurs, les musulmans n'ont pas forcément hâte d'adopter nos modes de vie, pas seulement parce que nous ne les valorisons pas nous-mêmes et les dénigrons, mais aussi parce qu'ils ne les trouvent pas très attrayants. Ils ont des raisons bien à eux, pour refuser une société sécularisée où la religion et la famille n'ont pas la place qu'ils leur attribuent. Comme l'écrit Christopher Caldwell à propos des Turcs « *allemands* », « *si de fortes chances de se retrouver sans enfant à l'âge mûr et seul dans sa vieillesse est le prix de l'assimilation, pour beaucoup de Turcs, c'est un prix exorbitant.* » L'attraction des pays européens est nichée dans leur niveau de vie et leur protection sociale et non dans leur prestige culturel ou historique. Ce n'est pas parce qu'on s'installe en France qu'on l'admire et se sent honoré d'en être. Une bonne partie des élites veille d'ailleurs soigneusement à ce que son portrait soit suffisamment répulsif pour dissuader l'admiration. Le slogan anti-FN « *ne nous laissez pas seuls avec les Français* » en dit long sur la haine de soi. Comment dès lors espérer susciter l'empathie et la sympathie ? Si nous ne sommes pas aimables à nos propres yeux, il n'y a aucune raison pour que nous le soyons aux yeux des autres. Redouane n'a pas une haute opinion de la France qu'il déteste et de ses médias qui ruinent la réputation des gens comme lui dans tout l'Occident. Il veut quitter la France, mais qui voudra de lui ? « *Il faut que je parte, parce que j'ai une haine, j'ai une frustration contre les gens, contre les donneurs de leçons. Comment ces gens-là sont en train de venir nous donner des leçons, ils sont corrompus jusqu'à l'os, comment ils donnent des leçons à des... il y a combien d'étrangers, ce sont des gens nickel. Ils ont le plus de mérite. Ils ont vécu dans la pauvreté et tout ça et ils essaient quand même de s'en sortir. Eux, ils sont blindés de fric, et ils continuent... ils continuent à magouiller à droite, à gauche, ces gens-là.* »

Loin d'admirer la France, Redouane considère que « *malheureusement, on est dans un modèle de société qui nous mène à notre perte !* ». Sa femme devra se consacrer à l'éducation de leurs futurs enfants, avant de songer à travailler. Comme l'écrit Christopher Caldwell « *on peut migrer vers un endroit en y étant hostile, ou du moins sans le considérer avec un égard particulier. Oui, les immigrants "souhaitent simplement une vie meilleure", comme le veut le cliché. Mais ils ne veulent pas nécessairement d'une vie européenne. Ils peuvent avoir envie d'un mode de vie du Tiers Monde avec un niveau de vie européen.* »

Extrait de "[Assimilation : la fin du modèle français](#)", Michèle Tribalat, ([Editions du Toucan](#)), 2013.

## Marine le Pen : la guerre des mots est déclarée



**Front national.** [Marine le Pen](#) déclare une guerre sémantique. La stratégie de dédramatisation de parti passera par une guerre des mots. Elle entend poursuivre en justice tous ceux qui continueront de qualifier le Front national d' « *extrême droite* ». Une démarche que son père avait déjà entreprise : Jean-Marie le Pen avait également tenté à moultes reprises de se débarrasser de cette étiquette. Photo © MaxPPP

[Invitée de Ruth Elkrief](#) jeudi soir, la présidente du Front national considère que l'expression « *extrême droite* » est un « *terme péjoratif* ». Elle confirme sa détermination à se tourner « *vers les tribunaux pour faire admettre que ce terme n'est pas du tout comme on nous l'explique, uniquement un positionnement sur l'échiquier politique* ». Il est employé en vue de « *dénigrer le Front national* » et relève de « *l'amalgame avec des comportements ou d'autres mouvements qui sont éminemment criticables* ». *l'amalgame avec des comportements ou d'autres mouvements qui sont éminemment criticables* ».

### Marine le Pen a le vent en poupe

La position grandissante de Marine le Pen dans le paysage politique s'affirme. Le parti confirme son importante dynamique. Alors que l'impopularité de François Hollande perdure, la présidente du FN apparaît sur le podium des personnalités que les Français souhaiteraient voir jouer un rôle politique à l'avenir.

Marine le Pen occupe une place grandissante sur l'échiquier politique. Elle s'élève à la troisième marche du podium aux côtés de François Fillon, Alain Juppé et Christine Lagarde. Elle reste devancée par le ministre de l'Intérieur Manuel Valls et Nicolas Sarkozy. [Le sondage mené par la TNS Sofres pour le Figaro Magazine](#) révèle une progression de la présidente du FN à gauche (16%, +2) comme à droite (54%, +1) : elle acquiert 7 points supplémentaires auprès des sympathisants UMP.

Elle fait ses choux gras de la faiblesse du parti majoritaire atone et d'une droite marquée par des divisions internes. Alors que la côte de popularité de Marine le Pen s'envole, le président de la République s'enfonce davantage. Un vote sanction des Français pour son manque d'autorité et les bisbilles à répétition entre les membres du gouvernement.

Ce sondage pourrait se traduire par une progression du nombre de ses élus lors des municipales en mars prochain où le FN sera en position de créer nombre de triangulaires.

October 4, 2013

85,145

## Desperation Fuels Trips of Migrants to Spain

By [RAPHAEL MINDER](#) and [JIM YARDLEY](#)

TARIFA, Spain — The southern tip of Spain is barely nine miles from the coast of Morocco, a distance so tantalizingly close that African migrants trying to reach Europe can see the Continent from the Moroccan shoreline.

To actually reach Europe is not so simple, yet they come anyway.

For months now, a rising number of migrants have been daring the waters of the Mediterranean. And the Spanish police and boat captains say many asylum seekers have become so desperate that they are trying to reach Europe on flimsy rubber dinghies. So many migrants are now traveling by dinghies that the price for a modest one can reach \$680 in Morocco, compared with only \$109 in Spain.

“Some people will clearly risk death to reach Europe,” said Israel Díaz Aragón, who captains one of the boats of Spain’s maritime rescue services. “It has been a very busy summer, because we’re now also rescuing Africans who not only cross in a toy boat but haven’t even spent money on buying proper oars.”

The danger of migration in the Mediterranean became evident again on Thursday when a [boat of African migrants capsized](#) near the Italian island of Lampedusa. At least 111 people died and more than 200 people are still believed missing.

The shipwreck revived calls for the European Union to create a common, humane response to the flow of migrants, and to improve cooperation with the countries where the migrants originate in Africa and the Middle East. But the difficulty of completely curtailing this exodus is evident in Spain, which in recent years has worked with Morocco to stop illegal immigration.

The dinghies illustrate the risks migrants are willing to take. For many years, the main landing point in Spain was the Canary Islands, in the Atlantic Ocean, off the southwestern coast of Morocco. Criminal networks used powerful boats to smuggle people across.

But then Spain sharply increased patrols in the waters off western Africa, cutting off the route to the islands, while also installing a network of thermal infrared cameras along its entire shoreline, making it almost impossible for larger vessels to go undetected.

The impact was immediate: In 2006, a record 39,180 people reached Spain illegally by boat. Last year, the total was 3,804. Now, though, traffic is increasing across the Strait of Gibraltar, even as the voyage has become more dangerous as many migrants use dinghies to elude cameras. Spanish officials estimate that four-fifths of illegal immigrants who have crossed the strait this year have used dinghies — as opposed to large trawlers.

Italy has seen an especially large increase of migrants this year, more than 24,000 so far, including thousands traveling from war-torn Syria. On Friday, Italy recognized the Lampedusa tragedy with a national day of mourning. And Italian officials repeated their demands that Europe take greater responsibility for the waves of migrants reaching Italian shores.

“Today, we have a new Checkpoint Charlie,” said Italy’s interior minister, Angelino Alfano, speaking in Parliament on Friday, and referring to the crossing between East and West Berlin during the cold war. “Its name is Lampedusa.”

The numbers in Spain are far lower but increasing after several years of decline. The Spanish military police say more than 900 people have been intercepted in the strait this year.

In Morocco, where the ruling monarchy has been relatively unscathed by the Arab Spring, officials have increased cooperation with Spain and are intercepting many boats before they can even reach Spanish waters.

Doing this, though, has also involved a clampdown by the Moroccan police against sub-Saharan migrants who have flocked to the country's northern cities closest to Spain, according to some human rights advocates.

"Since late July, the Moroccan authorities have basically been cleaning out illegal migrants from the north," said Helena Maleno, who works for Caminando Fronteras an association that helps migrants. "This repression has made migrants feel desperate to get out and even willing to jump in the water without a proper boat."

Recently, the Spanish police in Ceuta and Melilla — two Spanish enclaves in northern Morocco — have also struggled to contain migrants trying to break through border fences. Last month, about 100 people entered Melilla after tearing down fencing and charging past the police, leaving six officers injured.

In Thursday's accident near Lampedusa, most of the migrants came from Eritrea and Somalia, according to Italian and United Nations officials. Those who travel by boat to Spain, however, normally are from western Africa.

"Almost everybody now claims to come from Mali, because there's been a war there and that makes them confident nobody can send them back," said Manuel Ovidio, a captain in Spain's military police.

Interviewed in a Spanish police cell after being rescued at sea, Amadou Makalou showed the blisters on his hands from paddling. He said he had left Bamako, Mali, then crossed Mauritania before a month in Tangier, in Morocco. There, he pooled money with six other Malians to buy a dinghy.

They hid for hours in a forest before setting into the sea from a nearby beach at about 1 a.m. Mr. Makalou, 34, said his family had remained in Bamako. Asked whether he knew about Spain's unemployment rate, Mr. Makalou laughed.

"It can't be worse than Mali," he said. "Europeans want to scare us away, but they don't have a clue what kind of problems we leave behind."

Raphael Minder reported from Tarifa, and Jim Yardley from Rome. Gaia Pianigiani contributed reporting from Rome.

October 4, 2013

# Syrians Seeking Asylum End Standoff in France

By [DAN BILEFSKY](#)

85,147

PARIS — A three-day standoff between security forces in the French port of Calais and several dozen Syrians ended Friday evening when the Syrians backed down, a migrant association in northern France said.

The standoff began on Wednesday when about 60 Syrians who had fled the conflict in their country but felt they were being harassed in France began occupying a gangway at the Calais ferry terminal. When the French police intervened Friday, two of the Syrians climbed onto the roof of the terminal building and threatened to jump or stay there until their demand for asylum in Britain was met, according to Maël Galisson, the coordinator of Migrant Services Platform, an outreach group.

“These are Syrians who have come from cities in Syria like Damascus and Dara’a to escape from the Syrian conflict,” Mr. Galisson said from Calais. “They have not had a warm welcome in France and so would prefer to go to Britain.”

But Mr. Galisson said the Syrians finally agreed to end their protest late Friday afternoon, when British border officials arrived and convinced them that their goal of attaining immediate asylum in Britain — skipping proper controls — was in vain.

According to French news media reports, the British officials told the migrants that their requests for asylum would be considered on case by case, taking into consideration factors like whether they already had family in Britain. Mr. Galisson said some of them did.

“They are very disappointed because they were hoping to go to Britain and find a better life,” he said. “But they realized that they would not be able to leave and that staying on the roof was futile.”

Mr. Galisson said some of the Syrians would remain in France and seek asylum. They had been evicted from makeshift living quarters in an abandoned storage area on Sept. 5, he said, and most will probably try to live there again until they can find more permanent lodging.

The remainder, he said, will go either to Germany or to Sweden, which [announced](#) in early September that it would grant asylum to all Syrian refugees who applied from within Sweden.

Earlier, Migrant Services Platform posted a statement on its [Web site](#) in which the Syrians appealed for refuge in Britain.

“We are here for one or two months and the French government and police have treated us very badly, and shown no interest in resolving our situation,” the statement said. “They have systematically expelled us from our homes and put us on the street. We are here for one thing, and that is to ask for asylum in England.”

During the protests, the Syrians [held cardboard signs](#) bemoaning their plight in France. One said, “We sleep on the streets, take us to the UK pls.”

For more than a decade, migrants have come to Calais in hope of sneaking across the channel to Britain, which is viewed as a more hospitable destination for asylum seekers, Mr. Galisson said. He said that while it could take up to 18 months to get asylum in France, in Britain it could take half that.

Syria’s neighboring countries have absorbed more than two million refugees since the Syrian uprising began more than two years ago.

The refugee flood has also been building in Europe in recent months. In mid-September, the United Nations refugee agency said boatloads of Syrians were crossing the Mediterranean and arriving in Italy. It said the new arrivals were gathering pace, with several thousand arriving in August and September, including unaccompanied children.

# Dealing a Blow to Berlusconi, an Italian Senate Panel Recommends His Expulsion

By [JIM YARDLEY](#) and [GAIA PIANIGIANI](#)

ROME — A special panel of the Italian Senate on Friday voted to strip Silvio Berlusconi of his current seat, a humiliating blow for a man who has dominated Italy for the past two decades but whose political career is now very much in jeopardy.

The expulsion vote against Mr. Berlusconi, based on his [recent tax fraud conviction](#), was his second setback of the week, after [his failed attempt](#) to bring down the country's fragile coalition government. The full Senate will probably decide by the end of the month whether to expel Mr. Berlusconi, though a vote against him is now considered very likely.

Mr. Berlusconi, 77, a former prime minister and billionaire media mogul, who once wielded power with a swagger, had fought for weeks to prevent the expulsion vote. Many analysts say his effort to topple the government was partly intended to interrupt or delay the proceedings against him in the Senate. But a mutiny of his center-right supporters forced him to make a public reversal and support the government in a parliamentary confidence vote.

"It's a loss on all fronts for a man who is at the end of his career," said Stefano Folli, a political commentator for the daily newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore*. "Now his twilight will be swifter. This clearly has a highly political and symbolic value."

Mr. Berlusconi, who has spent most of the past two months out of the public eye, must now prepare to begin serving a one-year sentence on Oct. 15, most likely under house arrest, for the tax fraud conviction. He is also awaiting a ruling from a court in Milan, which will decide how many years he will be barred from seeking public office, based on the same conviction.

His legal troubles have shaken the center-right political movement he has led for the past two decades. Analysts say Mr. Berlusconi, if often controversial, has nonetheless been the undisputed central figure who has shaped his party. But with his career in trouble, several longtime protégés and followers abandoned him before the confidence vote and even spoke of splitting his People of Freedom party.

His loyalists have fought fiercely to derail the expulsion proceedings, arguing that the move is unconstitutional. Lucio Malan, a senator with Mr. Berlusconi's party and a member of the special panel, described Friday's vote as "very grave" and promised that the center-right would make its arguments before the full Senate.

But members of the center-left Democratic Party, the longtime opponents of Mr. Berlusconi, framed Friday's vote as an example of rule of law.

"This is an instrument that protects Parliament and prevents people convicted for serious crimes from sitting in Parliament," Felice Casson, a Democratic Party senator, said during an interview on Italian television. "In my opinion, we decided in a serene way, and we applied the law."

For his part, Mr. Berlusconi has seemed erratic in recent weeks. Party insiders say he fears that Italy's magistrates, long his adversaries, will now have the leeway to bring a fusillade of new investigations against him and could even put him in jail. As a senator, Mr. Berlusconi enjoys certain immunities from prosecution or detention.



As yet, public attitudes are difficult to gauge. Pro-Berlusconi posters began appearing in Rome on Friday as the Senate panel deliberated. Yet a recent survey showed that his People of Freedom party, recently leading in national polls, has since slipped to second place, behind the Democratic Party.

“This week has marked the almost complete decline for Mr. Berlusconi,” Mr. Folli said.

# Europe's Failure

## Bad Policies Caused the Lampedusa Tragedy

A Commentary By Hans-Jürgen Schlamp

85,151

**More than 100 refugees died off the Mediterranean island of Lampedusa on Thursday after their boat sank. The tragedy shows in yet another horrendous way just how badly Europe's refugee policies have failed.**

The scenes verged on the apocalyptic: 500 people, many of whom couldn't even swim, were forced from a burning ship into the sea. The events that took place early Thursday morning off the Italian island of Lampedusa have shaken all of Europe.

More than 100 refugees were killed, including children. Hundreds are still missing. It's the second such disaster to happen within just a few days. On Monday, 13 refugees drowned off the coast of Sicily as they attempted to swim to shore.

Now the bodies have been laid out in Lampedusa, Europe's southern-most outpost in the Mediterranean Sea. The island's desperate mayor even called on Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letta to visit the site. "Come here and help us count the bodies," she said.

Residents of the small island, which is situated more closely to Tunisia than to the Italian mainland, feel abandoned -- and not for the first time. Since 1999, more than 200,000 people from Africa and Asia have landed on the island fleeing civil wars, hunger and misery. It is estimated that 10,000 to 20,000 people have perished making their way to Lampedusa.

This year, more refugees have arrived on the island than in any previous year. They come from Somalia, where criminal gangs spread terror and death each day, from Eritrea, where people have no future, and from Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, where the Arab Spring started as a dream but has since become a nightmare for many. Since January, 22,000 refugees have arrived on the coast of Lampedusa. The island has become a powerful symbol of the failure of the European Union's refugee policies.

### **The Myth of an 'Freedom, Security and Justice'**

The attempt by European politicians to find the middle ground between populist slogans like "The boat is full" and a half-way ethically sound migration policy has long since proven to be a dead-end. But no one wants to admit this because they have no other answer at hand. So each time another tragedy occurs on Lampedusa, leaders from other European capitals travel to the site, offer condolences and promise there will be a political response.

On Thursday, European Commissioner for Home Affairs Cecilia Malmström said that authorities must improve procedures for identifying refugee boats in trouble. She also said dialogue must be intensified with the countries the refugees come from as well as the transit nations they travel through as they attempt to reach Europe. At the same time, she appealed to EU member states to do more to help people who are seeking asylum.

That's all well and good. But Malmstöm, just like all the other politicians involved in the issue, knows that the problems aren't easily solved. History has shown that. The EU first agreed to a common asylum and refugee policy in 1999 with the Amsterdam Treaty, but it has never worked.

Europe has not become the "area of freedom, security and justice" pledged in the treaty, one in which every refugee, regardless of where in the EU he or she is, is guaranteed the same fair asylum procedure. Nor has the EU come through on the pledge that the disproportionate burdens faced by countries on Europe's borders would be fairly shared by other member states. And how can it? In practice, the policy had one thing in mind: taking in the smallest number of refugees flowing in from the south and the east as possible. The modus operandi has always been that European countries take care of themselves. Their only common position has been in fighting against those who want to come to Europe.

### **'Fortress Europe ' Is Real**

The countries of Southern Europe -- Italy, Spain and Greece -- have been hit particularly hard by the transcontinental migration and have been quick to take their own initiative. In almost theatrical gestures, politicians, led by Italy's Silvio Berlusconi when he was still prime minister in Rome, traveled throughout North Africa to pay homage to presidents and dictators, to coddle Libya's ruling colonel and enter into treaties by the dozens. The message was always the same: We'll pay you money, give you speed boats and other weapons, and you keep the refugees from our shores. We don't really care how you do it.

Those who nevertheless decided to dare the risky trip over the ocean in dilapidated boats were often intercepted at sea and sent back. It was a nifty way of circumventing the legal right to submit an asylum application in Europe. As a result of the policy, the number of asylum requests filed in Europe dropped from 460,000 in 1992 to 220,000 in 2007.

Despite all statements to the contrary, the EU partners built a "Fortress Europe." When that image at times appeared too tough, politicians issued words of regret or tried to hush up events.

### **'A Disgrace'**

And it didn't matter if it was the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Amnesty International or the Catholic charity Caritas that was doing the criticizing; the EU countries simply didn't care. Germany itself was able to keep away from the refugee trail through the EU's Dublin Convention, which stipulates that an asylum seeker can only apply for asylum in the first member state that he or she entered. So anyone who comes to Germany through Italy or Greece -- even if they have a legitimate reason for seeking asylum -- is sent back to that country by German authorities.

To be sure, Fortress Europe's walls are becoming less and less porous -- with radar and satellite controls in the Mediterranean Sea, for example -- but they still haven't stopped millions of people from fleeing the world's impoverished and war-ravaged nations. They sacrifice their family savings and risk their lives to get here. And for as long as these people have no future at home and can't even be certain they will survive the next day, they will continue to flee -- either to a place that is better or one that at least offers the prospect of a future.

The majority flee to refugee camps in neighboring countries. Others go further -- often in the direction of Europe. With the anti-refugee treaties between Southern European and Northern African countries, the price for passage across the Mediterranean is also rising with the need to bribe officials in those countries. Risks are also increasing for the refugees, with human traffickers often dumping them near rather than on shore -- which can be deadly for the large number of non-swimmers making the journey.

This makes disasters like the one that occurred in Italy on Thursday a foregone conclusion. Pope Francis described the tragedy as "a disgrace." He's right.

**URL:**

## France and the euro

### The time-bomb at the heart of Europe

# Why France could become the biggest danger to Europe's single currency

With VIDEO: Nov 17th 2012 | [From the print edition](#)

85,153



THE threat of the euro's collapse has abated for the moment, but putting the single currency right will involve years of pain. The pressure for reform and budget cuts is fiercest in Greece, Portugal, Spain and Italy, which all saw mass strikes and clashes with police this week (see [article](#)). But ahead looms a bigger problem that could dwarf any of these: France.

The country has always been at the heart of the euro, as of the European Union. President François Mitterrand argued for the single currency because he hoped to bolster French influence in an EU that would otherwise fall under the sway of a unified Germany. France has gained from the euro: it is borrowing at record low rates and has avoided the troubles of the Mediterranean. Yet even before May, when François Hollande became the country's first Socialist president since Mitterrand, France had ceded leadership in the euro crisis to Germany. And now its economy looks increasingly vulnerable as well.

As our [special report](#) in this issue explains, France still has many strengths, but its weaknesses have been laid bare by the euro crisis. For years it has been losing competitiveness to Germany and the trend has accelerated as the Germans have cut costs and pushed through big reforms. Without the option of currency devaluation, France has resorted to public spending and debt. Even as other EU countries have curbed the reach of the state, it has grown in France to consume almost 57% of GDP, the highest share in the euro zone. Because of the failure to balance a single budget since 1981, public debt has risen from 22% of GDP then to over 90% now.

The business climate in France has also worsened. French firms are burdened by overly rigid labour- and product-market regulation, exceptionally high taxes and the euro zone's heaviest social charges on payrolls. Not surprisingly, new companies are rare. France has fewer small and medium-sized enterprises, today's engines of job growth, than Germany, Italy or Britain. The economy is stagnant, may tip into recession this quarter and will barely grow next year. Over 10% of the workforce, and over 25% of the young, are jobless. The external current-account deficit has swung from a small surplus in 1999 into one of the euro zone's biggest deficits. In short, too many of France's firms are uncompetitive and the country's bloated government is living beyond its means.

## Hollande at bay

With enough boldness and grit, Mr Hollande could now reform France. His party holds power in the legislature and in almost all the regions. The left should be better able than the right to persuade the unions to accept change. Mr Hollande has acknowledged that France lacks competitiveness. And, encouragingly, he has recently promised to implement many of the changes recommended in a new report by Louis Gallois, a businessman, including reducing the burden of social charges on companies. The president wants to make the labour market

more flexible. This week he even talked of the excessive size of the state, promising to “do better, while spending less”.

Yet set against the gravity of France’s economic problems, Mr Hollande still seems half-hearted. Why should business believe him when he has already pushed through a string of leftish measures, including a 75% top income-tax rate, increased taxes on companies, wealth, capital gains and dividends, a higher minimum wage and a partial rollback of a previously accepted rise in the pension age? No wonder so many would-be entrepreneurs are talking of leaving the country.

European governments that have undertaken big reforms have done so because there was a deep sense of crisis, because voters believed there was no alternative and because political leaders had the conviction that change was unavoidable. None of this describes Mr Hollande or France. During the election campaign, Mr Hollande barely mentioned the need for business-friendly reform, focusing instead on ending austerity. His Socialist Party remains unmodernised and hostile to capitalism: since he began to warn about France’s competitiveness, his approval rating has plunged. Worse, France is aiming at a moving target. All euro-zone countries are making structural reforms, and mostly faster and more extensively than France is doing (see [article](#)). The IMF recently warned that France risks being left behind by Italy and Spain.

At stake is not just the future of France, but that of the euro. Mr Hollande has correctly badgered Angela Merkel for pushing austerity too hard. But he has hidden behind his napkin when it comes to the political integration needed to solve the euro crisis. There has to be greater European-level control over national economic policies. France has reluctantly ratified the recent fiscal compact, which gives Brussels extra budgetary powers. But neither the elite nor the voters are yet prepared to transfer more sovereignty, just as they are unprepared for deep structural reforms. While most countries discuss how much sovereignty they will have to give up, France is resolutely avoiding any debate on the future of Europe. Mr Hollande was badly burned in 2005 when voters rejected the EU constitutional treaty after his party split down the middle. A repeat of that would pitch the single currency into chaos.

### **Too big not to succeed?**

Our most recent [special report](#) on a big European country (in June 2011) focused on Italy’s failure to reform under Silvio Berlusconi; by the end of the year he was out—and change had begun. So far investors have been indulgent of France; indeed, long-term interest rates have fallen a bit. But sooner or later the centime will drop. You cannot defy economics for long.

Unless Mr Hollande shows that he is genuinely committed to changing the path his country has been on for the past 30 years, France will lose the faith of investors—and of Germany. As several euro-zone countries have found, sentiment in the markets can shift quickly. The crisis could hit as early as next year. Previous European currency upheavals have often started elsewhere only to finish by engulfing France—and this time, too, France rather than Italy or Spain could be where the euro’s fate is decided. Mr Hollande does not have long to defuse the time-bomb at the heart of Europe.

## Anger as UK's Economist calls France threat to euro

Latest update: 16/11/2012

### French fury at Economist's 'time-bomb' warning

France's industry minister (pictured, right) has slammed British weekly The Economist after it published a cover story describing the French economy as the biggest danger to Europe's single currency.

VIDEO: By [Katharyn GILLAM](#) (video) [FRANCE 24](#) (text)

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France's minister of industry slammed famed British weekly The Economist after it ran a 14-page special report calling the country's economy a ticking time bomb and the biggest threat to the euro currency's stability.

The Economist has published "caricatures that are worthy of Charlie Hebdo," minister Arnaud Montebourg told Europe 1 radio on Friday, referring to a French satirical magazine notorious for publishing [a cartoon of a nude Prophet Mohammed in September](#).

#### EXPLOSIVE COVER



Photo credit: The Economist

After saying the French were in "denial" last March, British weekly **The Economist** has published another provocative [cover story](#) this month.

In its edition set to hit news stands on Friday, the highly-respected British weekly warned that France's high taxes on businesses were eroding the country's competitiveness and that France was a bigger danger to Europe's single currency than the debt-stricken countries of Italy, Spain and Portugal.

The Economist said both French leaders and voters were dangerously behind on much needed economic reforms and that a major blowback was on the horizon. "You cannot defy economics for long," the weekly wrote, adding that "the crisis could hit as early as next year."

The right-leaning magazine highlighted Europe's strategic position in the Eurozone and its massive public sector that accounts for 57% of gross domestic product, the highest in the single-currency zone.

Business sentiment has also deteriorated, following "a string of leftish measures, including a 75% top income tax rate, increased taxes on companies, wealth, capital gains, and dividends, a higher minimum wage and a partial rollback of a previously accepted rise in the pension age."

### **The Economist loves "French bashing"**

However, Montebourg said the British weekly was given to exaggerations. "Honestly, the Economist has never distinguished itself by its moderation."

In similar fashion, the head of France's MEDEF employers' association, Laurence Parisot, also rejected the magazine's claims as "completely exaggerated".

"In reality, The Economist is behind the times because its dossier was conceived before the [Gallois report](#) and the government's decisions to promote competitiveness," she told French BFMTV news channel in reference to a government-commissioned report that calls for slashing 30 billion euros (\$38.54 billion) off payroll taxes and loosening existing labour laws.

The Economist raised French eyebrows earlier this year when it accused its citizens of being in "denial" during the presidential election campaign in late March, and called President François Hollande "dangerous" for Europe.

France's leading and left-leaning daily [Le Monde](#) said Friday that The Economist's new cover story was in line with the magazine's predisposition to "French bashing".

Financial data out on Thursday showed that the Eurozone had fallen into a second recession since 2009, but that France's economy had rallied between July and September of this year, showing modest 0.2% growth.

*(FRANCE 24 with news wires)*