

Verschwörung gegen die Jungen

93,1

01.12.2013 · Wer lange lebt, muss länger arbeiten. Das hatte Deutschland endlich begriffen. Schwarz-Rot will davon heute nichts mehr wissen. Und die Jungen müssen dafür zahlen.

Von RALPH BOLLMANN



© WRESCH, JONAS  Schaut besser noch einmal in den Generationenvertrag!

Wenige Tage, bevor sie nachgab, zeigte sich die Kanzlerin noch zum Gegenteil entschlossen. In mehreren Vorträgen bereitete sie die Arbeitgeber zwar auf den Mindestlohn und andere Zugeständnisse an den künftigen Koalitionspartner SPD vor. Aber in Sachen Rente klang es, als ziehe sie rote Linien. „Ich werde darauf achten, dass die Rente mit 67 nicht zerlöchert wird“, sagte sie noch vor anderthalb Wochen. „Alles andere wäre gegenüber der jungen Generation nicht zu vertreten.“

Knapp eine Woche später unterschrieb sie die „Rente mit 63“ dann doch. Auf Wunsch der SPD, die sich seit Jahren über die „Rente mit 67“ ihres früheren Vorsitzenden Franz Müntefering zerstreitet. Es war auch eine Gegenleistung dafür, dass die CDU ihrem Frauenverband einen Herzenswunsch erfüllen durfte: Die Ausdehnung der „Mütterrente“, die eigentlich für die jüngere Generation gedacht war, auf die älteren Geburtsjahrgänge. Unter den Rentenbeschlüssen der Koalition sind es die beiden teuersten und nach fast einhelliger Expertenmeinung sinnlosesten Beschlüsse.

„Das ist eine Rolle rückwärts“, sagt etwa Axel Börsch-Supan, Direktor des Münchener Max-Planck-Instituts für Sozialrecht und Sozialpolitik. „Die bislang sehr erfolgreichen Anstrengungen, mehr Ältere in den Betrieben zu lassen, werden zunichte gemacht.“ Nach den Beschlüssen von Union und SPD sollen Erwerbstätige vom 1. Juli nächsten Jahres an schon zwei Jahre früher in Rente gehen können. Das allerdings nur, wenn sie mindestens 45 Jahre Beiträge bezahlt haben. Arbeitslosigkeit und Erziehungszeiten zählen dabei mit.

Rund 17 Prozent der Beschäftigten können die neue Regel in Anspruch nehmen, rechnet der Ökonom Börsch-Supan vor – und sie werden es auch tun. Denn bleiben sie bis zur offiziellen Grenze von 65 oder künftig 67 Jahren im Job, steigt dadurch die Monatsrente um keinen Cent. „Die Rente mit 63 passt nicht in die demographische Realität und schadet der jüngeren Generation“, sagt Börsch-Supan. Er plädiert schon lange dafür, in der alternden Gesellschaft die geschenkten Jahre im Verhältnis 2:1 aufzuteilen: Steigt die Lebenserwartung um zwei Jahre, könnten die Menschen demnach ein Jahr länger arbeiten und würden dann immer noch ein Jahr länger Rente beziehen. Das würde ausreichen, um die Rentenversicherung langfristig finanzierbar zu halten.

Deutschland ist für Europa kein Vorbild mehr

Im vorigen Jahr erregte der Direktor des Rostocker Max-Planck-Instituts für demographische Forschung, James Vaupel, mit der Forderung nach einer Rente mit 72 Aufsehen – allerdings erst für das Jahr 2050. „Die Menschen müssen schlicht einen vernünftigen Teil ihrer Lebenszeit arbeiten“, sagte er. Dabei glaubt Vaupel nicht einmal an die demographischen Untergangsszenarien eines stark schrumpfenden Deutschland, da setzt er

auf Zuwanderung und steigende Geburtenraten. Es ist schlichtweg unsere Langlebigkeit, die ein längeres Arbeitsleben nicht nur finanziell nötig, sondern auch gesellschaftlich sinnvoll macht.

Wer will schon eine Gesellschaft, in der ein immer größerer Teil der Bevölkerung von einem der zentralen Orte der sozialen Integration ausgeschlossen ist, eben der Arbeit? Unzählige Studien belegen inzwischen, dass der Wechsel in die Rente für viele Menschen einen weit härteren Einschnitt darstellt, als sie es sich in jüngeren Jahren vorstellen. Auch die geistige und körperliche Leistungsfähigkeit leidet häufig unter dem Ruhestand. Das mag je nach Berufsgruppe sehr unterschiedlich sein. Aber auch der viel zitierte Dachdecker kann seine Kenntnisse noch nutzen, indem er zum Beispiel im Baumarkt die Kunden berät.

Auf diesem Weg hat Deutschland zuletzt gute Fortschritte gemacht. Als die rot-grüne Regierung 1998 antrat, waren nur 36 Prozent der über 55-Jährigen in Beschäftigung. Heute arbeiten in dieser Altersgruppe mehr als 65 Prozent – und es werden immer mehr.

Die meisten entwickelten Länder sind längst dabei, sich diesem Trend anzupassen, wie erst in dieser Woche [eine neue Studie der Organisation für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung \(OECD\)](#) belegte: Fast überall bewegt sich das Rentenalter nach oben und die Rentenhöhe zumindest für die besser Verdienenden nach unten. „Die Rente mit 63 ist nicht das richtige Signal“, sagt die OECD-Rentenexpertin Monika Queisser. „Damit konterkariert Deutschland die Rente mit 67, mit der es für viele Länder ein Vorbild war.“ Mit der Senkung des Rentenalters mache die deutsche Regierung genau das, [wofür sie Frankreichs Präsidenten François Hollande ständig kritisiere](#).

Die Lebensleistungsrente ist ein erster Schritt

Gerade das französische Beispiel zeigt nach Queissers Erfahrungen, dass die vorgezogene Rente für langjährig Versicherte gar nicht die erhofften Effekte nach sich ziehe. „Davon profitieren nicht die Ärmsten und nicht die Menschen aus den schwersten Berufen“, sagt sie. Die Rente mit 63 kommt vor allem ordentlich verdienenden männlichen Facharbeitern zugute, die schon mit weniger als 20 Jahren ihre ersten Beiträge bezahlt haben. Wer sich ein Leben lang mit schlecht bezahlten Jobs durchgeschlagen hat, wird in der Regel auf die Grundsicherung oder auf die künftige „Lebensleistungsrente“ angewiesen sein.

Auch werden viele der älteren Frauen, trotz Anrechnung von Erziehungszeiten, gar nicht auf 45 Beitragsjahre kommen. [Und denen, die es nötig hätten, hilft auch die Mütterrente nicht viel](#). Für jedes Kind, das vor 1992 geboren wurde, gibt es künftig 28 Euro zusätzlich, unabhängig vom Einkommen. Die meisten der heutigen Rentner, die noch mit relativ guten Altersbezügen versorgt sind, werden diesen Aufschlag kaum spüren. Ob er für künftige Generationen noch finanzierbar sein wird, steht dagegen in den Sternen.

Vor allem sorgt sich die OECD jedoch, ob für die wirklich Bedürftigen noch etwas übrig bleibt, nachdem die Union ihre Mütter und die SPD ihre Facharbeiter zufriedengestellt hat. „Deutschland sollte sich überlegen, ob sein Rentensystem angesichts einer flexiblen Arbeitswelt noch zeitgemäß ist“, sagt Queisser. „Die strikte Koppelung der ausgezahlten Renten an die eingezahlten Beiträge macht es schwer, die Altersarmut effektiv zu bekämpfen.“

Wenn die Koalition jetzt mehr für Erwerbsunfähige tut und mit der „Lebensleistungsrente“ eine Untergrenze bei der Rente einziehen will, kommt sie dieser Forderung der OECD immerhin entgegen. Vor allem von der „Lebensleistungsrente“ werden künftige Rentnergenerationen weit mehr profitieren als die heutige, weil es im Moment noch sehr wenige Ältere mit Bezügen unter 850 Euro im Monat gibt.

„Da reicht Grundschule Sauerland“

Die Zahlen der OECD belegen, dass von grassierender Altersarmut derzeit noch keine Rede sein kann. Die Bezüge der heutigen Rentner liegen demnach bei 85 Prozent des durchschnittlichen Einkommens in der Gesamtbevölkerung, das ist ziemlich genau der internationale Durchschnitt. In der Zukunft könnte das aufgrund

veränderter Erwerbsbiographien und schon beschlossener Rentenkürzungen anders aussehen. „Auf lange Sicht könnte in vielen Ländern der Trend in Richtung Grundrentensystem gehen“, lautet Queissers persönliche Einschätzung.

Die Rente mit 63 ist vor allem der Versuch des SPD-Vorsitzenden Sigmar Gabriel, den Graben wieder zu schließen, den die rot-grüne Agendapolitik und die Rentenreform der vorigen großen Koalition aufgerissen hat. Als die Partei im vorigen Jahr die entsprechenden Beschlüsse fasste, warnte der frühere Arbeitsminister Franz Müntefering auch öffentlich: Ihn erinnere die Debatte an die Rücknahme des demographischen Faktors in der Rentenversicherung im Jahr 1998, die bald wieder korrigiert werden musste. „Da muss man nicht Mathematik studiert haben, da reicht Grundschule Sauerland“, fügte Müntefering noch hinzu.

Dass er sich auf Merkel in dieser Frage nicht verlassen konnte, merkte Müntefering allerdings schon während seiner Amtszeit als Arbeitsminister von 2005 bis 2007. „Geholfen hat mir die Kanzlerin in der großen Koalition nicht“, sagte Müntefering im Rückblick; bei der Rente mit 67 habe sie gekniffen. Kein Wunder: Schließlich ist die CDU vor allem eine Rentnerpartei, in der Altersgruppe der über 60-Jährigen erzielte sie bei der Bundestagswahl mit 49 Prozent ihr bestes Ergebnis.

Das Land der sieben Millionen armen Schlucker

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01.12.2013 · Das Statistische Bundesamt meldet: 16,1 Prozent der Erwerbsfähigen sind von Armut bedroht. Braucht Deutschland nun Care-Pakete? Zur Problematik des relativen Armutsbegriffs.

Von WINAND VON PETERSDORFF

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© DPA Flaschensammler gehören hierzulande längst zum Alltag. Doch so viel Armut, wie es der Datenreport suggeriert, gibt es in Deutschland nicht

Deutschland wird immer ärmer. Diesen Eindruck muss die Öffentlichkeit gewonnen haben, [nachdem die Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung den Datenreport 2013 für die Bundesrepublik vorgelegt hat.](#)

Die wichtigste Aussage in dem umfangreichen Konvolut lautet, dass 16,1 Prozent der Erwerbsfähigen in Deutschland armutsgefährdet seien. Das sind umgerechnet 6,7 Millionen Menschen. Schlimmer noch: Das Armutsrisiko sei in den letzten Jahren gestiegen, heißt es in den Zeitungen vom 27. November. Und das trotz des wirtschaftlichen Aufschwungs, den dieses Land erlebt. Das deutsche Beschäftigungswunder geht an den armen Schluckern vorbei, ist vereinfacht die Quintessenz.

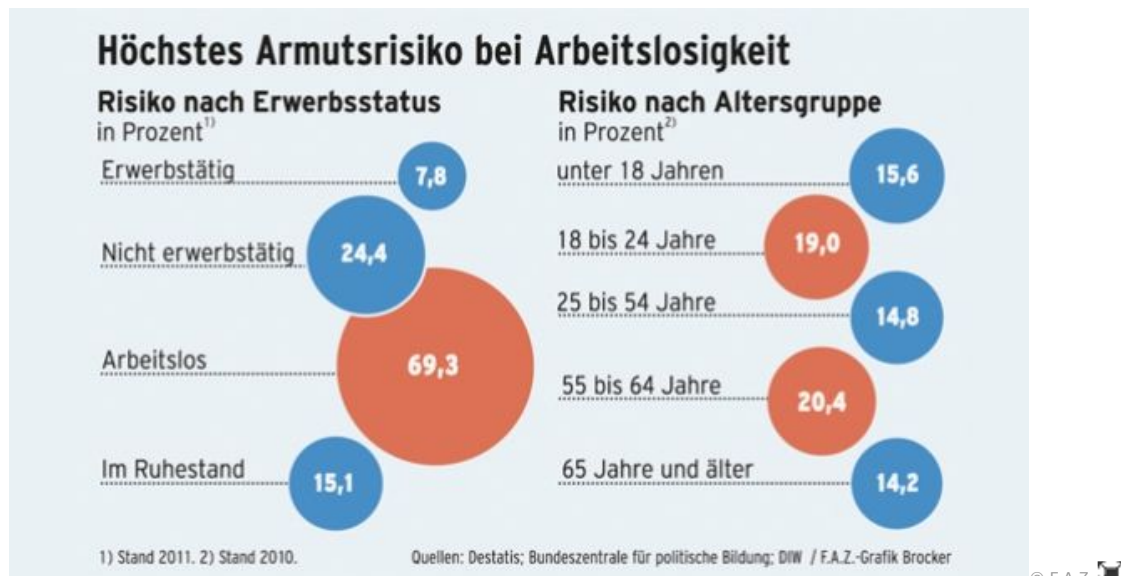
Der Datenreport setzt fort, was sich in der Sonderberichterstattung seit einigen Jahren eingebürgert hat. Man arbeitet mit einem politisch deformierten Armutsbegriff. Von der vom gesunden Menschenverstand produzierten Idee, dass arm ist, wer sich seine lebensnotwendigen Bedürfnisse nicht erfüllen kann, hat sich der Begriff längst entfernt.

Nach der offiziellen Definition gilt als armutsgefährdet, wer weniger als 60 Prozent des mittleren Einkommens (Median) eines Landes verdient. Vereinfacht gesprochen stellen die Statistiker für die Ermittlung des Medians alle Leute in eine Reihe und picken den heraus, der genau in der Mitte steht. Dessen Einkommen ist der Median, wer davon weniger als 60 Prozent bezieht, gilt als armutsgefährdet. Das ausgerechnet von hier an die Armut beginnen soll, ist letztlich eine Konvention, man hätte vielleicht auch 55 Prozent argumentieren können oder noch weniger. Oder noch ganz anders.

Weniger Reiche wären besser für die Statistik

60 Prozent vom mittleren Einkommen entsprachen in Deutschland 2011 für eine allein lebende Person 980 Euro im Monat und für zwei Erwachsene mit zwei Kindern unter 14 Jahren 2058 Euro im Monat. Staatliche Sozialleistungen sind in den Einkommen enthalten, Steuern und Sozialabgaben sind abgezogen.

Der Median eignet sich nur schlecht für die Bestimmung der Armut. Er zeigt nicht die Armut, sondern den Grad der Ungleichheit in einem Land. Das konstruierte Beispiel dazu: Ein Aufschwung, der zum Beispiel jedem einzelnen Bürger in Deutschland 1.000 Euro im Monat zusätzlich bescherte, würde an der Armutsquote nichts ändern.



Okay, werden die Verteidiger des Armutsindikators argumentieren: blanke Theorie. Das stimmt aber nicht, wie der Dortmunder Statistikprofessor Walter Krämer überzeugend dargelegt hat. In den Jahren zwischen 2005 und 2010 ist in Deutschland das monatliche Medianeinkommen eines Haushalts mit zwei Erwachsenen und zwei Kindern von 2.575 Euro auf 2.892 Euro gestiegen. Entsprechend ist das Einkommen, von dem an ein Haushalt als armutsgefährdet bezeichnet wird, in dieser Zeitspanne von 1.545 auf 1.735 Euro gestiegen. Die Armutsgefährdungsquote verringerte sich jedoch im gleichen Zeitraum kaum: von 14,7 Prozent auf 14,5 Prozent. Im Grund hatten alle Haushalte im gleichen Maße vom Aufschwung profitiert, die „Armen“ sogar etwas stärker als der Rest.

So ist das eben bei einem solchen relativen Armutsbegriff: Er erfasst Fortschritte kaum, er soll es auch nicht. Denn solange Armut statistisch dargestellt werden kann, gibt es eine Legitimation für den Ausbau des Sozialstaats.

Noch ein anderes konstruiertes Beispiel zeigt die Schwächen des Indikators: Wenn die oberen Einkommenbezieher Deutschland verlassen, dann würde die Armutsschwelle sinken, viele eben noch arme Schlucker wären es wie durch Zauberhand nicht mehr. Reiche rauswerfen zur Armutsbekämpfung wäre, statistisch betrachtet, vielversprechend.

In München arm, auf dem Land nicht

Die Problematik eines relativen Armutsbegriffs zeigt sich aber auch ganz praktisch bei einer regionalen Aufschlüsselung. Wer statt 980 Euro nun 982 Euro hat und im teuren München lebt, gilt womöglich nicht als arm, obwohl er zum Sterben zu viel und zum Leben zu wenig hat, während er in einigen gottverlassenen Gegenden des Landes mit 980 Euro gut zurechtkäme. Von Bedeutung ist auch die Berücksichtigung von privaten Vermögensverhältnissen. 980 Euro stellen sich anders da, wenn man damit nicht auch noch Miete bezahlen muss. Bei einer Hauseigentümerquote von 40 Prozent insgesamt und 60 Prozent auf dem platten Land ist das relevant. Denn auch Geringverdiener wohnen nicht selten in den eigenen vier Wänden.

Einen genauen Blick verdient ferner die Altersaufgliederung der sogenannten Armutsgefährdeten. Eine stattliche Gruppe darin machen die Leute in der Altersgruppe zwischen 18 und 25 Jahren aus. Das sind Leute, die nicht selten in der Ausbildung, in Praktika, im Zivildienst oder im Studium stecken. Die Definition, arm ist, wer weniger als 980 Euro im Monat hat, macht alle Studenten arm, die vom Bafög-Höchstsatz von 680 Euro im Monat leben. Aber auch die nicht anspruchsberechtigten ausgezogenen Kinder der Mittelschicht dürften häufig in der Armutsfalle stecken, wenn sie von Mutti und Vati eben keinen Tausender im Monat zugesteckt bekommen. Eigentlich wundert man sich, dass nur 20 Prozent der jungen Leuten „armutsgefährdet“ sind. Aber ist Armut hier noch der angemessene Begriff?

Viele Armutsgefährdete können sich ein Auto leisten

Die Zusammensteller des Datenreports sind sich der Schwächen der Armutsmessung und -darstellung bewusst und ergänzen ihn deshalb um Untersuchungen, die „Entbehren“ messen. Worauf mussten Leute verzichten, weil ihnen Geld fehlte? Auf regelmäßige Mahlzeiten mit Fleisch, Geflügel oder Fisch (oder eine entsprechende vegetarische Mahlzeit) müssen 27 Prozent der armutsgefährdeten Menschen nach eigenen Angaben verzichten, heißt es in dem Datenreport. Ist das viel?

Die gleiche Tatsache würde sich zumindest ganz anders lesen, wenn man der staunenden Welt verkündete: In Deutschland müssen knapp drei Viertel der Armen nicht auf regelmäßige Fleischmahlzeiten verzichten. Selbst einwöchige Urlaubsreisen können sich immerhin 40 Prozent der Armutsgefährdeten leisten. Im Datenreport ist das so formuliert: „Mit dem Verzicht oder starken Einschränkungen mussten Armutsgefährdete 2011 auch bei der Finanzierung von Erholungsreisen leben. Etwa drei von fünf (60 %) armutsgefährdeten Personen konnten sich keine einwöchige Urlaubsreise im Jahr leisten.“ Das klingt ungleich betrüblicher. Der Armutsbegriff relativiert sich weiter, wenn 70 Prozent der „Armutsgefährdeten“ berichten, sie können ein Auto finanzieren, 85 Prozent einen Computer. Und nur drei Prozent der Leute sagen, sie kommen mit ihren monatlichen Einkünften nicht aus.

Armut existiert in Deutschland, sie trifft vor allem Menschen ohne Schulabschluss, Migranten, Alleinerziehende. Zudem gibt eine relativ stabile Gruppe, die im Vergleich zu den mittleren Einkommen wenig hat. Dazu gehören nicht nur Arbeitslose, sondern auch Erwerbstätige. Denn neben den klassischen Vollzeitjobs prägen zunehmend atypische Beschäftigungsverhältnisse wie Minijobs, Teilzeit- und Leiharbeit den Arbeitsmarkt: 7,9 Millionen Menschen standen in diesen „atypischen“ Beschäftigungsformen. Das kann in Armut führen.

Allerdings, Schröder ist nicht schuld. Die atypische Beschäftigung dehnte sich lange vor den Schröder-Reformen aus und stagnierte zwischen 2006 und 2011. Die zunehmende Erwerbsneigung der Frauen spielt dabei eine wichtige Rolle. Was die Daten auch zeigen, ist das klassische deutsche Thema: geringe Chancen zum gesellschaftlichen Aufstieg. 40 Prozent der Leute, die vor fünf Jahren zu den Geringverdienern gehörten, tun das auch heute noch. Früher war der Aufstieg leichter.

Das ist tatsächlich ein Armutszeugnis.

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Was hat die Welt nur gegen deutsches Geld? Wenn man die schräge Debatte über die Exportstärke von der Kapitalseite aus betrachtet, wird deutlich, wie irreführend die Vorwürfe aus [Washington](#) und [Brüssel](#) sind, deutsche Erfolge im Außenhandel saugten Südeuropa aus. Die Klagen gehen schon mit Blick auf die Handelsbilanz an der Sache vorbei, weil Deutschlands Industrie als Ausrüster für die Fabriken der Welt vom Aufschwung der Schwellenländer stark profitiert und die Exporte in die Nachbarstaaten durch die Euro-Krise merklich gesunken sind.

Die Vorhaltungen sind aber auch deshalb fragwürdig, weil etwa Spanien viele Autoteile oder chemische Vorprodukte für die deutsche Industrie liefert und damit von deutschen Ausfuhren etwa nach China profitiert. Im Automobilbau entfällt manchmal ein Drittel der Deutschland zugerechneten Exporte auf solche Vorleistungen, nur weil hierzulande die Fahrzeuge zusammengeschweißt und verschifft werden.

Wie abstrus die Vorwürfe der EU-Kommission, des Währungsfonds und des amerikanischen Finanzministers sind, zeigt aber erst ein Blick auf die Kapitalbilanz. Dazu muss man wissen, dass riesige Kapitalexporte der Spiegel (oder die notwendige Gegenbuchung) der deutschen Leistungsbilanzüberschüsse sind. New Yorker Investmentbanken hatten gerne das Geld deutscher Sparer genommen, als sie den Landesbanken Schrottpapiere vom amerikanischen Häusermarkt andrehten. Irische Bauträger hatten vor der Euro-Krise ebenso gerne mit dem Geld hiesiger Anleger überteuerte Häuser in Dublin hochgezogen. Und der griechische Staat verkaufte seine Anleihen gerne an deutsche Versicherungen und Banken, um mit den Erlösen die Gehälter für seine Beamten zu erhöhen oder um Einfuhren unter anderem aus Deutschland zu bezahlen. Diese Waren wurden geliefert und teils mit dem von deutschen Großanlegern geliehenen Geld bezahlt.

Deutschland zahlt die Exporte zum Teil selbst

Der de facto erfolgte Schuldenschnitt Griechenlands sorgt nun dafür, dass die Gläubiger nur noch einen Teil ihres Geldes wiedersehen werden. Als zahlt Deutschland die Exporte, für die es nun am Pranger steht, zum Teil selbst. Und ein Treppenwitz ist es, dass ausgerechnet die größten Bewunderer der geldpolitischen Hilfe bei der Finanzierung von Euro-Krisenstaaten die in der Tat niedrigen Investitionen in Deutschland am lautesten beklagen, obwohl die EZB mit ihrer Rettungspolitik auch das deutsche Sparkapital jetzt wieder in Richtung Süden lenkt.

Für eine schrumpfende und alternde Gesellschaft ist es eigentlich eine gute Idee, die Überschüsse von heute global zu investieren, damit die vielen Rentner von morgen vom Kapitalstock leben können, wenn immer weniger Beitragszahler in die gesetzliche Rentenversicherung einzahlen. Andere Staaten mit chronischen Leistungsbilanzüberschüssen wie Norwegen, Saudi-Arabien oder den Emiraten konsumieren ihre Einnahmen aus dem Öl- und Gasexport nicht vollständig, sondern investieren über Staatsfonds Billionen in ausländische Vermögenswerte. Auch Länder die durch Manipulation der Wechselkurse hohe Devisenreserven aufbauen wie China, Singapur oder die Schweiz legen das Geld über ihre Notenbanken oder über Staatsfonds in internationalen Aktien oder Anleihen an und erwirtschaften damit ordentliche Renditen.

Das Gegenteil passiert in Deutschland. Hier arbeiten die Leute fleißig und sind stolz darauf, Exportweltmeister zu sein. Aber unsere leistungsfähige Volkswirtschaft verkauft hochwertige Produkte zu guten Preisen in die ganze Welt, ohne dabei reich zu werden. Denn die Deutschen schneiden in internationalen Vermögensvergleichen regelmäßig schlecht ab. [Der EZB zufolge](#) lag 2010 das Median-Nettovermögen deutscher

Privathaushalte (51.400 Euro) nicht mal bei der Hälfte der französischen Vermögen (113.500) und noch viel weiter hinter Spanien (178.300) oder Italien (163.900).

Weitere Artikel

[Nicht mal Gold kann man trauen](#)

Warum sind die Deutschen bloß so schlechte Kapitalanleger? Offenbar weil sie zu wenig in Immobilien investieren und sie ihr Erspartes oft den falschen Leuten anvertrauen, wozu auch hiesige Sparkassen, Banken und Versicherungen gehören. Die Lehre daraus ist, dass man sich stärker persönlich um sein Erspartes kümmern, sein Vermögen auch international streuen, einfache Finanzprodukte wählen und bei der Anlage die Aktie nicht meiden sollte.

Das Deutsche Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung hat ausgerechnet, dass die Vermögensverluste Deutschlands sich allein in den Jahren 2006 bis 2012 auf 600 Milliarden Euro summieren. Das ist die Differenz zwischen den Überschüssen in der Leistungsbilanz und den Veränderungen in der Kapitalbilanz. Das gleichwohl auf rund 5 Billionen Euro gestiegene deutsche Geldvermögen erklärt sich vor allem mit der Bildung neuer Ersparnisse und nicht mit der Rendite von schon Erspartem. Ob Filmfonds in Hollywood, Goldminen in Kanada oder Containerschiffe auf den Weltmeeren: Schon lange lacht das Ausland über deutsches Geld. Am Ende heißt es immer: Der andere hat das Geld – und der hiesige Anleger ist um eine Erfahrung reicher. Die englischsprachige Welt hat hierfür einen wenig schmeichelhaften Begriff gefunden: *dumb German money* – dummes deutsches Geld.

Niveau scolaire : la France recule dans le palmarès mondial

93,9

Publiée 02/12/2013 à 06:00



Selon le classement de l'OCDE, les résultats en mathématiques des élèves français sont très décevants.

«Nous sommes sous le choc [Pisa](#), pour l'instant, et ça va être encore pire», prophétisait le ministre de l'Éducation nationale, [Vincent Peillon](#), lors d'une audition à l'Assemblée nationale, le 23 octobre. «La France décroche totalement» dans la prochaine enquête Pisa, déclarait-il déjà le 10 octobre, sur Canal +. Depuis le printemps dernier, le ministre dispense ce pronostic de «déclin scolaire».

Conduite depuis 2000 par l'Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques ([OCDE](#)), l'enquête Pisa (Program for International Student Assessment) est la principale évaluation internationale des systèmes éducatifs. Portant sur 65 pays et mesurant les compétences acquises par les élèves de 15 ans en lecture, [mathématiques](#) et sciences, cette enquête élaborée tous les trois ans plaçait déjà la France en position médiocre en 2009: 21^e rang en lecture, 22^e en mathématiques, 27^e en sciences!

Le dernière enquête, en 2009, plaçait déjà la France en position médiocre : 21^e rang en lecture, 22^e en mathématiques, 27^e en sciences !

Les résultats de la dernière étude ne seront connus que mardi 3 décembre. Mais le ministre a choisi depuis plusieurs mois de s'appuyer sur des résultats annoncés catastrophiques pour défendre le bien-fondé de sa politique, à commencer par celle de la réforme des rythmes scolaires ou celle sur le statut des enseignants. «C'est une tactique politique de sa part, pour que les syndicats changent d'attitude et cessent de s'opposer à toutes les réformes. Car, en France, nous n'avons toujours pas connu de "choc Pisa", contrairement à d'autres pays qui ont su redresser la barre», analyse Bernard Hugonnier, ex-responsable de l'éducation à l'OCDE, aujourd'hui artisan du groupe de réflexion du Collège des Bernardins sur l'éducation. D'autres craignent à l'inverse que le ministre ne désamorce les effets négatifs de l'événement à force d'annoncer le pire...

De fait, le niveau des élèves français baisse depuis la première étude Pisa, il y a dix ans. «Nous n'avons pas de décrochage en matière de résultats bruts. Ces derniers restent sensiblement les mêmes qu'en 2009, en mathématiques, sciences et compréhension de l'écrit. En revanche, des pays nous passent devant, affirme un haut fonctionnaire du ministère de l'Éducation nationale. En dépit des réformes, malgré l'argent massif investi, les résultats des élèves ne s'améliorent pas.» Particulièrement attendus cette année, [les résultats en mathématiques étaient très décevants en 2009](#), accusant une chute de quatorze points. Auparavant classée parmi les pays les plus performants dans cette matière, la France était alors descendue dans le groupe des «moyens»...

«Des pays nous passent devant. En dépit des réformes, malgré l'argent massif investi, les résultats des élèves ne s'améliorent pas»

Les résultats soulignent par ailleurs que les inégalités entre ceux qui réussissent le mieux et les plus faibles ont tendance à croître. Selon Bernard Hugonnier, «la France offre un très bon système scolaire aux excellents élèves, ceux qui sont inscrits dans les meilleurs lycées de centre-ville. Elle se désintéresse des autres. Le décrochage est là. Notre rang global, au-delà de la vingtième place, est indigne et médiocre pour la cinquième puissance économique mondiale». La France occupait ainsi l'avant-dernière place en termes d'équité scolaire en 2009, juste devant la Nouvelle-Zélande... À l'inverse, sur les premières marches du podium figurent régulièrement la Chine, la Corée, la Finlande, le Canada ou le Japon.

Avec de médiocres performances en 2000, l'Allemagne a connu un véritable «choc Pisa». Pour remonter la pente, la conférence des ministres chargés de l'Éducation avait proposé des mesures dans sept domaines. Elles concernaient notamment l'amélioration des compétences linguistiques dès l'âge préscolaire, l'amélioration de l'enseignement à l'école primaire et l'amélioration continue des compétences de lecture. Mais aussi la mise en relation des mathématiques et des sciences pour une meilleure compréhension des liens interdisciplinaires.

L'étude Pisa ayant montré que les élèves issus de milieux défavorisés étaient particulièrement handicapés, un soutien a été mis en place en particulier pour les enfants et les jeunes issus de l'immigration. Avec succès.

Eastern Europe — having been just recently admitted into the EU, and seeing as they had to wait so damn long for admittance — is still trying the whole EU thing out. Just for a little bit. Just until something better comes along.

Turkey, of course, is still eagerly awaiting its membership.

China purchased Greece, and regrets it. Beautiful islands, but that's about it.

Taiwan purchased an indebted Ireland. The annual Greek-Ireland football match always causes an international diplomatic crisis (usually fueled by whichever boozy Irishman burns a Chinese flag).

Britain claims it is still a regional power (per usual), but doesn't really get it. They say a lot of threatening things, but nobody really takes them seriously. They still can't win a World Cup and they still have the worst culinary taste on the continent (and yes, they *are* part of the continent — not separate, as they would have you believe). Scotland seceded a long time ago, and it's the best decision they've ever made.

Switzerland is one big bank, and that makes sense.

The Vatican gave up on Italy, and it was the best thing to ever happen to the Italian fashion scene. It'll be interesting to see what the "gays" from Florence to Rome do with Italy now that there is no religion keeping everyone in check. The Vatican has relocated to Spain. Barcelona seceded from Spain a long time ago, and it's the best decision they've ever made.

The Netherlands still houses all of the useless international organizations that nobody really pays any attention to.

So how did we get here? The complete dissolving of Europe all started with Scandinavia. Around 2014, they realized their superior social welfare programs, standard of living, life expectancy, health care, and business practices were better kept from the rest of the barbarian continent. The Second Kalnar Union was born. And it has flourished. Life expectancy these days is pushing 150 years. There is no crime. No hate. Everyone is beautiful. Clean energy powered by windfarms fuel everything. Ikea has overtaken Walmart in international corporate power. Iceland, though, long ago decided to join the United States, and is now an extension of Alaska. It's the worst decision they've ever made.

The United States is currently surviving (thriving?) under year six of the Rand Paul administration.

Russia is still a dick to everyone.

**Map by Yanko Tsvetkov*

November 30, 2013

Where Factory Apprenticeship Is Latest Model From Germany 93,14

By [NELSON D. SCHWARTZ](#)

GREER, S.C. — For Joerg Klisch, hiring the first 60 workers to build heavy engines at his company’s new factory in South Carolina was easy. Finding the next 60 was not so simple.

“It seemed like we had sucked up everybody who knew about diesel engines,” said Mr. Klisch, vice president for North American operations of Tognum America. “It wasn’t working as we had planned.”

So Mr. Klisch did what he would have done back home in Germany: He set out to train them himself. Working with five local high schools and a career center in Aiken County, S.C. — and a curriculum nearly identical to the one at the company’s headquarters in Friedrichshafen — Tognum now has nine juniors and seniors enrolled in its apprenticeship program.

Inspired by a partnership between schools and industry that is seen as a key to Germany’s advanced industrial capability and relatively low unemployment rate, projects like the one at Tognum are practically unheard-of in the United States.

But experts in government and academia, along with those inside companies like BMW, which has its only American factory in South Carolina, say apprenticeships are a desperately needed option for younger workers who want decent-paying jobs, or increasingly, any job at all. And without more programs like the one at Tognum, they maintain, the nascent recovery in American manufacturing will run out of steam for lack of qualified workers.

“South Carolina offers a fantastic model for what we can do nationally,” said Ben Olinsky, co-author of [a forthcoming report](#) by the Center for American Progress, a liberal Washington research organization, recommending a vast expansion in apprenticeships.

Despite South Carolina’s progress and the public support for apprenticeships from President Obama, who cited the German model in his last State of the Union address, these positions are becoming harder to find in other states. Since 2008, the number of apprentices has fallen by nearly 40 percent, according to the Center for American Progress study.

“As a nation, over the course of the last couple of decades, we have regrettably and mistakenly devalued apprenticeships and training,” said Thomas E. Perez, the secretary of labor. “We need to change that, and you will hear the president talk a lot about it in the weeks and months ahead.”

In November, the White House announced a new \$100 million grant program aimed at advancing technical training in high schools. But veteran apprenticeship advocates say the Obama administration has been slow to act.

“The results have not matched the rhetoric in terms of direct funding for apprenticeships so far,” said Robert Lerman, a professor of economics at American University in Washington. “I’m hoping for a new push.”

In Germany, apprentices divide their time between classroom training in a public vocational school and practical training at a company or small firm. Some 330 types of apprenticeships are accredited by the government in Berlin, including such jobs as hairdresser, roofer and automobile electronics specialist. About 60

percent of German high school students go through some kind of apprenticeship program, which leads to a formal certificate in the chosen skill and often a permanent job at the company where the young person trained.

If there is a downside to the German system, it is that it can be inflexible, because a person trained in a specific skill may find it difficult to switch vocations if demand shifts.

In South Carolina, apprenticeships are mainly funded by employers, but the state introduced a four-year, annual tax credit of \$1,000 per position in 2007 that proved to be a boon for small- to medium-size companies. The Center for American Progress report recommends a similar credit nationwide that would rise to \$2,000 for apprentices under age 25.

The emphasis on job training has also been a major calling card overseas for South Carolina officials, who lured BMW here two decades ago and more recently persuaded France's Michelin and Germany's Continental Tire to expand in the state.

"The European influence is huge," said Brad Neese, director of [Apprenticeship Carolina](#), which links the state's technical college system with private companies to help create specialized programs. "They are our strongest partners."

European companies are major employers in the state, with more than 28,000 workers for German companies alone. The influx has helped stanch much of the bleeding caused by the decades-long erosion of jobs in the textile industry, once the economic bulwark of the Palmetto state.

Of course, there are other reasons foreign companies have moved here. For starters, wages are lower than the national average. Even more important for many manufacturers, unions have made few inroads in South Carolina.

Still, the close cooperation between employers and the state educational system is unusual, and despite initial skepticism on both sides, apprenticeship opportunities are rapidly expanding both for high-school age students and for older workers.

Apprenticeship Carolina started in 2007 with 777 students at 90 companies. It now has 4,500 students at more than 600 companies in the state, with the typical apprentice in his or her late 20s. Mr. Neese's goal is to have 2,000 companies by 2020.

To help develop his program, Mr. Neese has traveled to Germany, Austria and Switzerland, where apprenticeships are thriving, youth unemployment is relatively low and blue-collar jobs are still prized. That contrasts with the United States, where the economic fortunes of younger people with just a high school diploma have plummeted, and the unemployment rate among workers age 16 to 19 stands at more than 20 percent.

"This generation has taken a huge hit from the economic crisis," said Alexander Gelber, an economist at the University of California at Berkeley and a former senior Treasury official. "Apprenticeships offer people the possibility of building skills when they often don't have many other options."

So why have they not caught on in the United States like in Germany, which has 1.8 million apprentices with less than one-third the population?

Besides a longstanding stigma attached to vocational education, opposition from entrenched interests on both the left and the right has hobbled past efforts to promote apprenticeships, including under President Clinton in the 1990s.

Joerg Klisch discovered this firsthand when he started seeking support for the program in 2011.

School officials were wary of allowing a private company to dictate the curriculum. Meanwhile, among employers, “there seems to be a perception that apprenticeship means unions,” Mr. Klisch said. “It doesn’t, but we have to overcome this hurdle.”

Here in Greer, where more than 7,000 employees produce over 300,000 S.U.V.’s and other luxury cars a year in a sprawling, ultramodern BMW factory, Richard Morris, vice president for assembly and logistics, identifies one of the company’s biggest problems: a serious shortage of medium-skilled workers who specialize in mechatronics, or repairing robots and metal presses when they break down and operating the computers that dot the paint shop, body shop and assembly shop. Not only do these jobs pay better than typical assembly-line positions, they also open up avenues for advancement.

Werner Eikenbusch, manager of work force development for BMW in the Americas, is himself the product of an apprenticeship program in Germany who later went back to school and earned a master’s degree in engineering. He helped create the BMW Scholars program in 2011, he said, “to build the skills from the ground up.”

The BMW Scholars are older than Tognum’s apprentices — mostly in their 20s and 30s — and they study full-time at local technical colleges for two years while also working in the BMW factory for 20 hours a week.

“It is a struggle, but if you know how to manage the time, it is not hard,” said Benjamin Peoples, a 27-year-old BMW Scholar who dropped out of Clemson University a few years ago because he could no longer afford it. “I wanted to work with my hands and with machines, but I didn’t have experience with robots.”

Mr. Eikenbusch has been pitching the program to European parts suppliers in the area, as well as to executives at Boeing, which began building sections of the new 787 Dreamliner in Charleston in 2011. He hopes they will follow BMW’s lead.

“We need to find a way to establish two-year training programs on a broader scale,” he said. “Everybody who I hire is someone who is not available for our suppliers to hire.”

Jack Ewing contributed reporting from Frankfurt.

11/29/2013 01:29 PM

Poverty Migration

Berlin Backs UK's 'Benefit Tourism' Offensive

93,17

By [Carsten Volkery](#) and [Severin Weiland](#)

Germany has now stepped into the UK-triggered fray over introducing new restrictions on migration within the EU. The European Commission is enraged, and even conservative EU parliamentarians warn of pandering to populists.

"Free movement within Europe needs to be less free," British Prime Minister [David Cameron](#) wrote on Friday in a guest editorial for the *Financial Times*. Then he outlined a detailed list of ways the [United Kingdom](#) plans to limit access for [European Union](#) citizens to his country's social benefits.

The attack on some of the EU's most popular basic rights has sparked outrage across Europe, though Cameron has defended his comments by saying that other countries -- such as Germany, Austria and the Netherlands -- share his position.

Indeed, in April the four countries sent a letter to the European Commission complaining of the burden [immigrants](#) have placed on their social systems and calling for solutions. And in the new [coalition contract](#) between Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU), its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD), the CSU pushed through several passages critical of migration under the heading "Poverty Migration within the EU." National and European laws must be changed so that "incentives for migrants in social security systems will be reduced," it says. Among other things, it continues, it should be possible to erect temporary re-entry barriers for people who have cheated the system. In addition, it should be "clarified" which benefits could be withheld from jobseekers.

The escalation in rhetoric is related to an impending deadline: Beginning on Jan. 1, 2014, there will be full freedom of movement for workers from Romania and Bulgaria. Both countries have been full European Union members since 2007, but their citizens have thus far faced restricted access to labor markets in nine other EU states. Experts believe that the feared stampede of new migrants will not materialize because the majority of people who wanted to move abroad did so a long time ago. But politicians in Western Europe are still nervous. Cameron, in particular, is worried that the right-wing populist UK Independence Party (UKIP) will make massive gains in the European Parliament elections scheduled for next spring.

'Legitimate Concerns and Problems'

At the next meeting of EU interior ministers, to be held on Dec. 5, Germany and the UK therefore want to bring renewed pressure to the topic. Germany's incumbent interior minister, Hans-Peter Friedrich (CSU), will take part. "The commission is called upon to respond in its final written report for the forthcoming council in December to the legitimate concerns and problems of member states and to identify real solutions," says an Interior Ministry spokesman. From a German point of view, this refers in particular to what measures and sanctions are allowed against the "abuse of the right to free movement on the basis of European law."

"That is especially true for the imposition of temporary re-entry barriers," the spokesman told SPIEGEL ONLINE.

The UK has plans that go much further: Cameron's government also wants to curb benefits for things such as child benefits for foreigners from EU states and is discussing new rules for future candidates for [EU accession](#). The

proposal would only grant these countries' citizens access to the EU labor market once these countries had achieved a certain level of per capita income. On this, Germany's Interior Ministry only says: "We have no comment on individual national measures that would affect other member states in this context."

Austria and the Netherlands, on the other hand, appear to have dropped out of the campaign against benefit tourism. A spokesman for the Austrian Interior Ministry in Vienna said the country currently doesn't see any need for negotiations because the problem of benefit tourism doesn't exist there. Meanwhile, the Dutch labor ministry says that it will have a look at Cameron's plans, but that it doesn't currently have any of its own demands to make of the EU. The main worry in The Hague, it continues, is not abuse of social benefits, but rather the issue of whether one can guarantee equality of pay for Romanian and Bulgarian immigrants.

Is the Problem Being Exaggerated?

This week, the European Commission submitted a "five-point plan" as a response to the interior ministers. It calls for publishing a handbook related to sham marriages, clarifying the rules related to residency tests, offering online training to municipal employees and hosting a meeting of various mayors in February to allow the exchange of best practices. What's more, it calls for EU Social Funds to be used to improve the living conditions of residents of poorer EU countries. Absent from the document, however, is any mention of harsher sanctions against migrants.

Indeed, the Commission believes that the extent of the problem has been exaggerated. The spokesman for Laszlo Andor, the EU commissioner for employment and social affairs, told SPIEGEL ONLINE Thursday that not a single EU member state had provided evidence to support claims about so-called "benefit tourism." Citing a recent report by the European Commission, he added that jobless EU migrants make up less than 5 percent of those claiming social benefits in most EU states, and that the majority of them are students and pensioners. Likewise, a study published by the Centre for European Policy Studies in September concluded that social benefits did not exert a magnetic effect on EU migrants.

Thus, in Brussels' view, there is no need to amend related EU rules. The EU's Free Movement Directive already allows members states to take "all necessary measures" against EU foreigners in cases of social-benefit abuse, including expulsion.

In fact, even conservatives in the European Parliament view the British campaign as overblown. "Cameron should stop running after UKIP," said Manfred Weber, a member of Germany's center-right Christian Social Union (CSU) who serves as vice chair of the conservative European People's Party (EPP) in the European Parliament. "He only strengthens UKIP with his rhetoric." EU law already prohibits immigration into social systems, he added, and all possibilities must first be exhausted at the national level should there be any implementation problems.

EU Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding has gone even further, suggesting that the UK should give some thought to exiting the European single market.

Germany

Die grosse Stagnation

Germany's proposed new government is set to turn the motor of Europe into a slowcoach 93,19

Nov 30th 2013 | [From the print edition](#)



LOOKING in from the outside, Germany seems to be a fearsome machine. Its super-efficient economy has not only weathered the euro crisis, but it has also paid for much of the emergency repair-work that has prevented the collapse of such countries as Greece, Portugal and Ireland. Its exports have flooded markets across the world. Its chancellor, Angela Merkel, wears the crown as the European Union's undisputed leader. Oddly, though, the Germans themselves do not see it like that. Many fret that their country is threatened by inequality and rampant, uncaring capitalism. They are insecure and fearful. They feel poor.

This gulf helps explain why Germany's proposed new coalition government, agreed on in the early hours of November 27th after five weeks of talks and a 17-hour final session, has coalesced around a set of policies that threaten to reverse some of the very reforms that made Germany successful. The deal, which sets up a "grand coalition" between Mrs Merkel's centre-right CDU-CSU and the centre-left SPD, still needs to be approved in a referendum by the SPD's 470,000 party members. The result of the vote, expected on December 14th, is far from guaranteed. But if it passes, Mrs Merkel will be saddled with a leftish agenda that harks back to the era of Kraftwerk. Unless she can use her legendary political skills to water down these ideas, or, better, cast them aside altogether, Germany is heading for trouble.

That is because Germany's economy has been living off past glory—especially "Agenda 2010", a series of reforms launched in 2003 by Gerhard Schröder, Mrs Merkel's predecessor. But it is running out of puff. Labour productivity has grown less than half as fast as Spain's over the past ten years; and its overall rate of public and private investment, at 17% of GDP, has fallen by more than a fifth since the euro was introduced. No European country has carried out fewer reforms than Germany since the euro crisis began.

Back in the GDR

The coalition's 185-page "treaty" was a chance to launch a new reform agenda. Instead, its proposals are a mixture of the irrelevant—charging foreigners to use German motorways—and the harmful. For instance, it sets a new national minimum wage of €8.50 (\$11.50). That is relatively high, especially in eastern Germany. There, companies sometimes pay no more than €6, so the minimum is likely to price people out of work. It is also a departure from the more flexible German tradition of letting unions and employers negotiate in each industry—

a system that helped keep German wages low during the early years of this century when other euro-zone economies went on a binge that left them uncompetitive.

The coalition's pension policy seems even more retrogressive. These days, most advanced economies are expecting longer-living people to be longer-working, too. But the coalition wants the pension age, raised to 67 in the previous grand coalition, to be moved back down again for specific groups, in some cases to 63. France's president, François Hollande, was rightly mocked, not least by Mrs Merkel, for a similar ploy. Now the woman who has lectured the rest of Europe about the unsustainability of its welfare spending will follow down the same spendthrift road.

As well as doing plenty of foolish things, the treaty fails to do some sensible ones. The new government remains committed to the costly goal of closing all nuclear reactors by 2022, which has been especially hard on consumers who have to shoulder the bulk of the cost of the energy transition. And as for much-needed investment in public infrastructure, the accord proposes spending far less on bridges, railways and roads than the €7 billion or so a year that was recommended by a commission of government experts. According to one study, as many as 14% of Germany's highway bridges could be unsafe.

The impact on this coalition on the rest of Europe would not be all bad. One bonus is that, for all its primitive economic policies, the SPD seems keener to support some basic reforms such as the creation of a banking union. But that will count for little if Germany, the motor of Europe's economy, stalls. And, in the light of the coalition agreement, that is a real danger.

France

Strident neocon, lame Socialist

93,21

A gap is widening between the French president's decisiveness abroad and dithering at home

Nov 30th 2013 | PARIS | [From the print edition](#)



ON PAPER, he is one of the most powerful leaders in the Western world. Under the French constitution President François Hollande can dispatch troops abroad, as he is about to do in the Central African Republic (CAR), conduct foreign affairs as he pleases, and dissolve parliament as he sees fit. Moreover, his Socialist Party controls all levels of government, from the senate down to a majority of local councils. In diplomacy, Mr Hollande has indeed turned out to be as decisive in his exercise of power as the constitution allows. Yet, on the domestic front, he behaves with ever-shrinking authority.

In January an unexpectedly hawkish Mr Hollande dispatched 4,500 French soldiers and fighter jets to Mali, to push back an incursion in the north by rebels linked to the local branch of al-Qaeda; 2,800 French troops are still on the ground there. More recently, Mr Hollande had his jets on alert, ready to strike targets in Syria, before America's president halted matters by deciding to consult Congress first. France's foreign minister, Laurent Fabius, then took a tougher line in the latest negotiations with Iran than the Americans did, insisting on pushing for further concessions and delaying the final deal.

Now Mr Hollande is preparing to send some 1,000 French soldiers to the CAR, where lawlessness and violence, in Mr Fabius's words, "borders on genocide". The French have drafted a resolution for the United Nations Security Council, which could go to a vote in early December, to authorise a UN peacekeeping force. This could support African regional peacekeepers already there, and operate with French military backing. Jean-Yves Le Drian, the defence minister, says that he expects the French intervention in the CAR, which will add to the 400 or so French soldiers already guarding the capital's airport, to last six months.

As the French prepare for yet another foreign military adventure, there is much head-scratching about how such a decisive war leader can be so ineffective domestically. Mr Hollande's decidedly shaky grip on governing at home has been underlined by two recent episodes.

The first was his ill-judged decision in October to intervene, via a live televised address to the nation, in a court order to deport Leonarda Dibrani, an illegally resident Roma school pupil, back to Kosovo. Reacting to an outcry about the deportation, and faced with the decision either to uphold the law or flaunt it, Mr Hollande chose a third way with an offer to let the under-aged Ms Dibrani return to school in France—but without her family. This satisfied nobody, and exposed the president as an indecisive meddler.

At the same time, a bigger revolt broke out, this time over taxes. In anticipation of a new “eco-tax”, which was to be a charge on big lorries using main roads in an effort to discourage road freight, furious truckers in Brittany began commando-style attacks on automatic toll sensors. The burning and smashing-up of the sensors spread; the western Peninsula of Brittany fast became the centre of a popular revolt against taxation that drew an improbable mix of farmers, local business bosses and nationalists. In a clever propaganda coup, they adopted red woolly hats, or *bonnets rouges*, in a nod to the headgear worn during a 1675 uprising in Brittany against taxes imposed by Louis XIV.

The fiscal revolt took the government by surprise. The French are famously tolerant of high taxes, regarding them as part of a social pact that secures them good public services in return. Yet that pact has been put to the test by several years of tax increases. Even Pierre Moscovici, the finance minister, recognised that the French had “had it up to here” with higher taxes.

The government promptly backed down on the eco-tax, with Jean-Marc Ayrault, the prime minister, declaring it “suspended”. This was the third retreat on a new tax this autumn. What made this surrender such an emblem of Mr Hollande’s diminished authority was that it was not a mere proposal but written into law, and had passed with cross-party parliamentary support.

Mr Hollande’s options are now limited. His approval rating sank to 20% in November, the lowest since Ifop, a polling group, started measuring presidential popularity in 1958. The economy shrank again in the third quarter. The president’s team argues that it will take time for its efforts, on public finances and competitiveness, to bring results, and that patience will pay off.

But fretful Socialist deputies want a firmer hand now. One has urged a change of prime minister; yet it would be hard to find a pliant successor to the plodding but loyal Mr Ayrault. Others have called for parliament to be dissolved. For now, the strategy seems to be to try to restore the prime minister’s authority, thanks to a grand “fiscal rethink”. This idea was cooked up by Mr Ayrault. Mr Hollande said that this could take years; Mr Ayrault has begun consultations.

Whatever relief this rethink brings may prove short-lived. Mr Ayrault says the idea is to make the French tax system “fairer”, but also that he will keep the overall tax take at the same level. And rejigging the system to help the worse-off is likely to mean higher taxes for the rest, including the squeezed middle. Above all, it means yet more uncertainty about French taxes, at a time when their unpredictability is already a worrying deterrent to investment and confidence.

What would a rational immigration system look like?

93,23

By [Douglas Carswell](#) **Politics** Last updated: December 2nd, 2013

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



Britain is one of the greatest places on the planet to live.

It's not just me who believes that. There are tens – if not hundreds – of thousands of people who settle in Britain each year who seem to think so too.

One or two people in the comment thread below might disagree, but I hope the rest of us would never hold it against any individual for wanting to make a better life for themselves by living in the UK.

We can, however, hold it against the political class for failing to be a little bit more selective as to who gets let in.

With so many people from around the globe wanting to come to our country, you'd have thought we might have a system in place that ensures we attract the brightest and the best. Unfortunately, we don't.

Being in the EU, we are open to anyone from any EU member state wanting to settle here. That means that we allow many unskilled migrants, who are more likely to claim Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit.

At the same time, highly educated and entrepreneurial Singaporeans, for example, have to apply for work visas. It makes no sense.

I know of a farm in Essex (not in my constituency, I might add) that has for years depended on Bulgarian students to help gather in the harvest. Each year they come over, work hard, and return to Bulgaria. Without them, the farm would not cope. However unfashionable it might be to point this out, it needs pointing out.

But here's the thing. While Bulgarian students are willing to travel across a continent to work on that farm, just a few miles away are some folk living at public expense, who could do the work, but won't. This also needs pointing out.

We cannot get serious about reforming the immigration system without also ending the something-for-nothing benefit culture. At times, I wonder if politicians almost depend on the crazy immigration system we have in order to avoid having to make any difficult decisions about benefits.

In order to change things for the better, Britain needs to take back control of its immigration system. It is no coincidence that two of the countries with the best immigration systems I can think of – Switzerland and Australia – are both outside the EU.

It is those elected to Bern or Canberra – not faceless officials in Brussels – who decide on who gets to live in Switzerland and Australia.

And because those elected take responsibility for immigration policy, immigration policy in both Australia and Switzerland has adapted to the needs of each country.

In Switzerland, where one in five workers is non-Swiss, there is an intelligent, rational debate about needs of the Swiss economy. Look how far the debate in Australia about immigration has moved on since the days of Pauline Hanson.

Surely we need to discuss not only the needs to the economy, but what helps make successful first and second generation Britons, too?

If those we elected to Parliament – and vulnerable to the views of the voters - were responsible, we might begin to have an intelligent debate about what kind of immigration we need. As long as we remain in the EU, I doubt this will happen.

Opening speech at the European Banking Congress “The future of Europe” 93,25

Speech by Mario Draghi, President of the ECB,
Frankfurt am Main, 22 November 2013

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting me to speak to you today.

While the situation in the euro area has improved greatly over the last year, we are still faced with considerable challenges.

We need to secure the economic recovery, reduce fragmentation in the euro area and continue the process of institutional and structural reform.

To achieve this, it is essential that we do not retreat into purely national perspectives, with a narrow view of our interest. We must keep our European perspective – and stand up for our common interests.

I would like to use my remarks today to highlight two areas where this European perspective is key.

The first is the monetary policy. Monetary policy with a single currency will always have different effects in different places. But it is essential to understand that the ECB, by its mandate, must act for the euro area as a whole. And in doing so, it makes the best contribution to prosperity for European society at large.

The second area is the creation of banking union, notably the Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM). The SSM will create the first ever genuinely European supervision and we must take advantage of the opportunities this provides.

For banks, it offers a unique opportunity to restore confidence and attract private investors, also through the ECB’s comprehensive assessment. For the wider euro area, it offers a possibility to deepen financial integration and reduce fragmentation. For this process to be effective, a strong Single Resolution Mechanism (SRM) is essential.

The ECB’s monetary policy

Starting with the ECB’s monetary policy, our mandate is inherently European – it is to maintain price stability for the euro area as a whole. And this mandate is symmetric; don’t forget that price stability works in both directions. We need to act as much when there is a risk that inflation in the medium term might become too low as well as too high.

As I had the opportunity to explain yesterday, when we took our recent decision to cut interest rates, we saw a situation where the inflation outlook deviated too strongly away to the downside from our price stability mandate. Our decision was necessary to comply with our mandate.

I also had the opportunity to address some concerns this decision has raised. Let me briefly come back to this.

One concern is that low interest rates erode people’s savings. Another is that low interest rates create risks for financial stability. A third is that they reduce the incentives for governments to reform.

Allow me to address each of these concerns in turn.

First, I understand the concerns about a prolonged period of low returns on savings. But it is important to understand that interest rates are low because the economy is weak. If we raised rates, we would further depress the economy, people would lose their jobs, and then their savings would be lower for longer.

By keeping interest rates at a level that supports the recovery, we should see higher interest rates for savers going forward.

Moreover, the interest rate that matters most to long-term savers is not the main ECB rate, but the rate on safe long-term investments – in Germany, that is long-term Bunds.

It is wrong to think that these rates are solely determined by the ECB. Since the crisis, more powerful factors have been at play. In particular, the low return on long-term Bunds was largely explained by investors seeking safety as other parts of the euro area struggled.

Second, low interest rates can over time threaten financial stability, but we do not see any evidence of this at present.

If we do see low interest rates creating localised risks, then local tools should be used to address them. In particular, national authorities should make full use of macro-prudential tools that they have available.

The third concern is that low interest rates undermine incentives for reform in the euro area. Certainly, monetary policy always has side effects – this is inherent and unavoidable. But one should never forget that the ECB acts for the euro area as a whole in line with our mandate.

I have already reacted to the nationalistic tone that this concern has provoked in some recent commentary. In their deliberations and decisions, Governing Council members are neither German, nor French, nor Spanish, nor Italian but acting as Europeans in pursuit of a European mandate.

To maintain the right incentives for economic policies, countries need to strengthen their frameworks for economic governance. Important steps to strengthen budgetary discipline have already been undertaken. But several countries are further behind in implementing structural reforms. It is therefore high time to bring this area under closer European governance.

The Single Supervisory Mechanism

Let me now turn to the second part of my remarks today – the creation of the Single Supervisory Mechanism.

The SSM offers a tremendous opportunity to move from different national approaches to the treatment of banks to a genuinely European perspective. That is, to take collective responsibility for our banks consistent with the single financial market in which they operate.

The ECB's comprehensive assessment

It is clear that there needs to be much more confidence in banks within and across countries that are joining the SSM.

This is the objective of the ECB's comprehensive assessment. How will the assessment boost confidence?

Primarily, by giving all parties more transparency. Investors should have the facts they need to properly price assets and be assured that banks are sufficiently capitalised.

The exercise aims to achieve this through a supervisory risk assessment, an asset quality review and a stress test. I will not go into the details here as they are being communicated separately, but the key point is that it will be comprehensive and consistent.

Comprehensive because it will cover 128 banks and about 85% of the assets of countries participating in the SSM.

And consistent because it will be centrally led with a rigorous common methodology – there will be no room for perceptions of national bias.

There should be no doubt about the credibility and rigour of the assessment, or the comparability of the results.

Let me add here that, by end-January, we expect to announce the key parameters of the stress test exercise together with the European Banking Authority (EBA).

We have recently been meeting with bank top management along with their national supervisors. We have emphasised in these meetings that to make the exercise a success we need to have high-quality information. In fact our first data request, called the “portfolio selection”, has just been issued.

We are aware that gathering this information requires an extraordinary effort for national supervisors and especially for banks. But it is important to note that this is not a permanent or recurrent feature of the SSM.

Since last year banks have been improving the robustness of their balance sheets by increasing capital and provisions. In this sense, the exercise is already producing results – and I encourage banks to continue. Given the improvement in market conditions, market-based solutions should be more feasible than in the recent past.

If private sector solutions cannot be achieved in a timely and realistic manner, there is also a responsibility for the public sector. To ensure the credibility of the exercise, we need clear public backstops at the national and European levels. If they are drawn upon, the Commission has clarified that the state aid rules will provide for a level playing-field in terms of burden sharing, while financial stability will be fully safeguarded.

The ECB’s comprehensive assessment therefore provides the first step towards building confidence in euro area banks, and between euro area countries and their competent authorities.

I call on all banks covered by the SSM to join our effort in the coming months by supplying the necessary information to the ECB and the national authorities, by undertaking prior actions where needed, and by proactively responding to the conclusions of the exercise.

Fostering financial integration

Once the SSM is established, it offers a real possibility to take a new, European approach towards governance of the financial sector – and hence to reverse the harmful financial fragmentation we have seen during the crisis.

There are three ways in which I see that the SSM can help.

First, the SSM can supervise in the European interest. As European supervisor it has no incentives related to national champions and its mandate is fully aligned with its European financial stability objective.

The fact that the new European supervisor is not only legally independent but also independent of any single government or national financial system facilitates the pursuit of its objective.

Second, the SSM can increase confidence among supervisors. During the crisis, some supervisors, motivated by uncertainty, engaged in defensive actions such as national ring-fencing of liquidity and national asset-liability matching. This may have been rational given their mandates, but it reinforced fragmentation.

Under the SSM, all supervisors will have the same rules, standards and decision-making procedures. As such, a supervisory assessment from the SSM that a bank is healthy will be a “seal of quality” that is valid from one country to the next.

Third, the SSM can foster trust between banks.

European supervision should make banks more confident to lend to one another across borders, in particular in the interbank market. And it could also make banks more willing to engage in cross-border mergers and acquisitions. This would deepen financial integration and make the euro area more resilient to fragmentation.

Our long-term vision for the SSM involves an environment where a creditworthy firm or household can get a loan from any bank in Europe at comparable conditions – and where location considerations would not be predominant.

Yet, further improvements will be needed in other domains. It is not only different supervision that holds back cross-border banking integration and activity. Also different national legal frameworks, different tax regimes and different rules for corporate governance contribute to fragmentation. These issues warrant consideration to facilitate financial reintegration.

The Single Resolution Mechanism as an essential complement

Another essential element in building a more integrated European banking market is greater harmonisation of how non-viable banks are resolved.

This requires a consistent legal framework between countries and a single resolution mechanism to enforce that framework. The first part has already been agreed by governments; the second part, the SRM, needs to be pursued as a matter of urgency.

A robust SRM would encompass all banks established in member states participating in the SSM. It would have at its centre a strong and independent single resolution authority that can act evenly across countries and take decisions in the European interest. And it would have adequate powers, tools and financial resources to resolve institutions swiftly and effectively.

The key to an effective resolution regime is that it creates legal certainty, consistency and predictability, thus helping to avoid *ad hoc* solutions. To this end, there are two points where I think more certainty is needed.

First, while the new EU resolution framework provides the appropriate resolution toolbox, it would be better to have it available right from the start of the SRM. I therefore support implementing the bail-in tool well before 2018.

Second, to price risk properly, investors need to see a clear pecking order in resolution financing – running from capital write-downs and bail-in to use of a bank-financed single resolution fund.

However, it would be difficult to make such a pecking order credible without a public backstop for the single resolution fund for exceptional cases where its resources are exhausted. Otherwise, investors may suspect that governments would at some point be forced to step in again.

Such a backstop would still result in the private sector paying as any borrowing by the fund would have to be repaid, if needed through *ex post* levies on the banking sector. In other words, the future system would not be about bail-outs or mutualisation – it would be fiscally neutral; the taxpayer would not pay.

Conclusions

Let me conclude.

I have discussed today the benefits of a European perspective to our current challenges. This is not the perspective of idealists. Rather, in a closely integrated monetary union, it is the perspective of realists.

A European perspective is firmly enshrined in monetary policy. And it is equally enshrined in our approach for establishing the SSM. We will overcome fragmentation to create a truly integrated financial market. There is still much more to be done to overcome the challenges that we face, but we have the right orientation.

What future? United States of Europe or Disneyland for Chinese tourists? 93,29

What is the vision of the European Union upon which leaders, decision-makers and intellectuals act, asks Alina Bargaoanu.

November 21

Dr. Alina Bargaoanu is the rector of the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration of Bucharest, Romania.

The first striking thing about the difficulties that have been shaking the EU for quite some time is that it is not clear what kind of a crisis we are talking about.

A crisis in search of a name

Here are some of the terms put forth in political, media, and academic discourse: Global crisis, euro crisis, eurozone crisis, sovereign debt crisis, financial crisis, banking crisis, fiscal crisis, trade imbalance crisis, competitiveness crisis, periphery debt crisis, Europe debt crisis, solvency crisis, Greek crisis/ Cypriot crisis/ German crisis ... You name it. These are competing narratives and, as Stratfor founder George Friedman underlined, “the problem is to define what you’re trying to solve”.

The German philosopher Jürgen Habermas was the first to use the most comprehensive term to describe what was going on in the EU - “the crisis of the European Union”. We deal with a political crisis created by the fact that economic globalisation has outpaced political globalisation, a trend which is felt more dramatically in Europe; it is a political crisis created by the clashes over the goals of the European Union, over its future model.

For Habermas, the positive - yet unexpected side effect of the crisis - was that the cunning of economic reason, or its lack thereof, has brought the issue of the future of Europe back on the political agenda”. In his view, the current tensions between the important states of the EU, as well as the disputes opposing Berlin, Paris, London and other European capitals mask the profound conflict over the Union’s goals. It is the model of the European Union which is at stake, and not the daily administration of the crisis and the powerful defence of a shabby status quo.

More Europe, better Europe, stronger Europe...

This brings us to the second striking thing about the “crisis of the European Union”. What is the future model of the EU upon which European leaders, intellectuals and decision-makers act? What is Europe, what will Europe be 20-50 years from now? Of course, we have the catch phrase “more Europe”, but how can you define what “more Europe” means, when you hardly know what is Europe in the first place.

If we search deeper, we discover that “more Europe” means too many things to too many people. Should Europe evolve as a federation or as a supranational democracy? Are we talking about a Europeanised European Union, or about Europe of nation states? About a federal Europe or about a 2-, 3-, x-speed Europe more of an intergovernmental type? If the so-called “federalist perspective” prevails, what kind of federation is it: the United States of Europe, a European superstate, or a federation of nation states? Is it a federation of nation-states or a post-national Europe? A citizens’ Europe, a cosmopolitan Europe bound by the European law? Judging by the crisis resolution mechanisms, is it a citizens’ Europe or a banks’ Europe? An alliance of sovereign states, a “mere economic community, an informal UN” (U. Beck), a “market-conforming democracy” (J. Habermas)? Does the name “European Union” refer to the 28 member states or only to the eurozone? In our opinion, the calls for the political union have the eurozone as an object rather than the entire EU; more precisely, the eurozone with ins (possibly Poland) and outs (Greece, or the whole Southern

periphery?). There are even bleaker prospects, such as ones found in the media, predicting that EU will become a Disneyland for Chinese tourists.

United by euroscepticism

The issue of the future EU model is not a matter of concern to a small group of specialists only, but has a huge symbolic impact. Will the vision of Europe be one that “inspires the commitment of [EU] citizens whose faith in a European future is shaken” (Council for the Future of Europe, “Europe is the solution, not the problem”). Bitter media titles such as that of the Financial Times, “United by Hostility” (October 2013) are backed up by Habermas among others, according to whom “what unites European citizens today is the Eurosceptic mindset that has become more pronounced in all of the member countries during the crisis, albeit in each country for different and rather polarizing reasons”.

There are also compelling statistics in this regard. One can notice a sharp decline in trust in the EU in Spain, Germany and Italy, countries that are historically pro-European. The most dramatic fall in faith in the EU appears to have happened in Spain, where 72% of the respondents tend not to trust the EU, with only 20% tending to do so. Leaving country specificities aside, the September polls indicate that 43% of respondents declare themselves as “Eurosceptic”, 40% as “Euro-optimists”, while 17% are undecided or uninterested. Perhaps negatively uninterested.

Anti-European battles fought on behalf of Europe

Why are these trends important for the EU, more than for other geographical areas? First, as a Polish thinker said, Europe is more about consciousness than geography. And this consciousness must be created, shared and maintained through communication. And, as we know, in any communication setting, trust is the most valuable currency, perhaps the only one. Second, the European project is so endangered because it faces the possibility - or rather the illusion - of renationalisation. Which, in the case of a federal structure such as the United States, is unthinkable. There cannot objectively be any temptation to return to a pre-United States situation, in the unlikely event that the federation could no longer have the capacity to deal with the various challenges.

The EU is a post-national reality in the purely denotative meaning of the term; it must be built and rebuilt, trust and commitment must be fought for permanently. The crisis has revealed - among other things - this temptation to take a step back, to withdraw behind the national borders.

Finally, perhaps euroscepticism is not so bad after all, since such a stance reflects interest, worries, concerns, even commitment. What is more dangerous is the emergence of related phenomena, such as eurocynicism, europopulism or eurodenial. In other terms, the real worrying phenomenon is that anti-European battles or battles having little to do with Europe are fought at the expense of Europe, on its behalf.

Are Europeans Giving Up on Europe?

93,31

Countries like Italy and Spain are turning away from the world, with grave consequences for the European project.

MOISÉS NAIMNOV 29 NOV 2013, 3:48 PM ET

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A protester participates in a demonstration against government austerity measures in Oviedo, Spain, on November 29. (Reuters)

The collective mood of a nation mired in a prolonged economic recession shows many of the symptoms of clinical depression: despair, fatalism, an inability to make decisions, lack of motivation, and irritability. This is one of the impressions I got from a recent trip to Spain and Italy, two nations I know well and visit often. While both countries [have recently made small strides](#) on the path to recovery, I nevertheless came away with the strong sense that their economies are in recession and their societies are in depression. In the course of my travels, I also felt more than ever before that Europeans have fallen out of love with Europe—or, more precisely, with the idea of building a Europe-wide union.

Hopelessness and irascibility are present in spades in statements by politicians, activists, and opinion leaders, and in media reports on the mood of the “people in the street.” Pessimism is the default attitude, and there is a notable paucity of the kinds of exciting ideas and proposals that energize society. All of this is understandable. When a family suffers a major trauma, it is natural for its members to react by becoming more self-absorbed and withdrawing from the world. The same is true for countries.

In both Italy and Spain—two of the hardest-hit economies in Europe—I found a tendency to turn inward and focus on events at home rather than developments abroad. My visit to Spain, for example, coincided with an incident in the Catalan Parliament in which a lawmaker took off his sandal and [threatened](#) Rodrigo Rato, the former head of the International Monetary Fund, who was testifying at a hearing about the large, bailed-out Spanish bank he had led, Bankia.

Pessimism is the default attitude, and there is a notable paucity of exciting ideas and proposals.

Naturally, the incident attracted a lot of media attention; almost everyone with whom I spoke in Spain mentioned it. What received significantly less press was the news that on that same day, in Beijing, Chinese officials had [unveiled major economic reforms](#) at the Communist Party’s Third Plenum. I noticed the same inward-looking attitude in Italy. For the past two decades, any visit to the country has been bound to coincide with some attention-grabbing news about Silvio Berlusconi and his relationship with power and, inevitably, women. This time was no different, with the buzz centering on the lead-up to the Italian Senate’s [expulsion of the former Italian prime minister](#). And yet, if the decisions made at the Third Plenum help China avoid an abrupt economic slowdown that would harm the global economy—and prolong Italy and Spain’s economic troubles—then what happened in Beijing will have a far greater impact on the lives of Italians and Spaniards than the theatrics of Catalonia’s sandal-toting legislator or the travails of Italy’s former prime minister. Despite these realities, I

found that even well-informed elites in these countries are paying little attention to what is going on in China—or in the rest of the world, for that matter.

In fact, the “the rest of the world” increasingly seems to be a mere blip on the radar of many Spaniards and Italians. And, sadly, “the rest” now even includes Europe. Growing indifference to a European project that promised much and has fallen short of high initial expectations has been noticeable for some time now. And the region’s economic crisis, with its uncertain future and legacy of massive unemployment, has deepened disappointment and disinterest in the European Union. Granted, there is support for some of the more tangible features of the EU, like free trade and more open borders that facilitate the movement of people. But there is little backing for a more united Europe, and I could not find anyone during my trip who felt that deeper integration could spur the economic growth that crisis-stricken countries desperately need. On this subject, the opinions of Italians and Spaniards are consistent with those of their fellow Europeans. According to the [Eurobarometer](#), a survey of 27 EU member countries, half of all citizens are pessimistic about the future of the European Union as an institution, and 69 percent express no confidence in it at all. Two-thirds feel as if their voice is meaningless in the decisions taken by the EU.

These responses are as serious as they are easy to understand. Many factors feed the gloom and doom about the EU. The continent’s five-year-old economic crisis has been deeply damaging, and the EU is widely perceived as being complicit in imposing the austerity policies that have created a strong social and political backlash. Moreover, European leaders are perceived as remote, bureaucratic, and opaque, not to mention lacking in charisma. To many, the European project now feels like a dull and irrelevant initiative at best—and a dangerous, intrusive, and expensive one at worst.

This can and must change. Europe needs to once again seduce the millions of Europeans who no longer believe that the project of building a more united continent will directly benefit them and their families. The problems that are undermining the European project are numerous and well-known. But perhaps the greatest threat to the union is that Europe has lost its luster among its own people. Just think how remote the “[welcome parties](#)” that greeted the euro’s introduction in 2002 in cities like Athens and Berlin feel today. The European project needs leaders who are able to persuade voters that a grand and vigorous Europe is possible. The best antidote to the region’s depression may very well be a strong dose of integration.

Einwanderung in Sozialhilfe nimmt zu

93,33

02.12.2013 · Jeder zehnte Bulgare und Rumäne in Deutschland erhält Hartz IV, das sind 2,1 Prozentpunkte mehr als vor einem Jahr. Damit schneiden sie im Vergleich mit anderen Ausländergruppen aber noch relativ gut ab. Von JAN HAUSER, SVEN ASTHEIMER und CHRISTIAN SCHUBERT

Viele Städte sorgen sich um die Einwanderung aus Bulgarien und Rumänien. Für Dortmund, Mannheim oder Duisburg bedeutet dies Millionenkosten für Krankenhilfe und Unterkünfte. Ende Juni waren rund 37.000 Bürger auf das Hartz-IV-System angewiesen. Das entspricht einem Anteil von 10 Prozent aller Bulgaren und Rumänen in Deutschland und geht aus Daten der Bundesagentur für Arbeit hervor, die dieser Zeitung vorliegen. Innerhalb eines Jahres ist der Anteil um 2,1 Prozentpunkte gestiegen. Der Hartz-IV-Bezug von Bulgaren und Rumänen liegt über der Quote in der Gesamtbevölkerung mit 7,5 Prozent.

Aber im Vergleich mit anderen Ausländergruppen schneiden sie noch relativ gut ab: Unter den 2004 zur EU beigetretenen Staaten (Polen, Tschechien, Slowakei, Ungarn, Slowenien und die Balten) beträgt die Quote 10,7 Prozent, unter allen Ausländern sogar 15 Prozent. „Gegenwärtig sind Bulgaren und Rumänen eine der Gruppen, die die geringsten Belastungen für den deutschen Sozialstaat darstellen“, sagt der Migrationsforscher Herbert Brücker. Die Entwicklung sei schwer vorherzusagen. Er rechnet mit einem Anstieg.

Ökonomen verweisen auf Chancen bei gelungener Integration

Wenn 2014 die uneingeschränkte Arbeitnehmerfreizügigkeit für Bulgarien und Rumänien gilt, wird ihnen der Zuzug erleichtert. Die CDU-nahe Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung warnt schon vor rechtspopulistischen Kräften in Europa. In einer neuen Studie empfiehlt die Adenauer-Stiftung den Parteien, die Ängste der Menschen ernster zu nehmen und Einwanderungsvorschriften strikt zu handhaben. Die Debatte befeuert auch ein Urteil des Landessozialgerichts Nordrhein-Westfalen, [das Rumänen Anspruch auf Sozialleistungen zusprach](#). Letztlich wird darüber das Bundessozialgericht urteilen. „Um mögliche Auswirkungen auf die Kommunen abzuschätzen, bleibt die Entscheidung des Bundessozialgerichts abzuwarten“, sagte Stephan Articus, Hauptgeschäftsführer des Deutschen Städtetages.

Auch in Großbritannien und Frankreich wächst die Angst vor zunehmender Einwanderung in die Sozialsysteme. Britische Schätzungen gehen von 50.000 Einwanderern aus Rumänien und Bulgarien im Jahr aus. Premierminister David Cameron forderte, die Arbeitnehmerfreizügigkeit einzuschränken. In Frankreich entzündet sich die Kritik daran, dass illegale Einwanderer das staatliche Gesundheitswesen benutzen, ohne einen Beitrag zu zahlen. Dagegen hält der konservative Politiker Patrick Devedjian: „Mehr als ein Viertel der Franzosen haben einen Großelternanteil, der aus dem Ausland stammt. Frankreichs Genie ist es, dass wir die Zuwanderer im Laufe der Geschichte integriert haben.“

Auch Ökonomen verweisen auf die Chancen bei gelungener Integration. Im internationalen Vergleich ist Frankreich derzeit kein vorrangiges Einwanderungsziel: Laut OECD betrug 2011 die Einwanderung 0,33 Prozent der Bevölkerung – gegenüber 0,6 Prozent für den OECD-Durchschnitt und 0,36 Prozent für Deutschland. Die OECD hat für Frankreich eine Belastung der staatlichen Finanzen durch Einwanderung von 0,52 Prozent des BIP errechnet, für Deutschland 1,13 Prozent. Der Wert errechnet sich aus Steuer- und Beitragszahlungen vermindert um Sozialleistungen und Renten. Ohne Renten ergibt sich für Deutschland und Frankreich dagegen ein positiver Beitrag der Einwanderer zu den Staatsfinanzen.

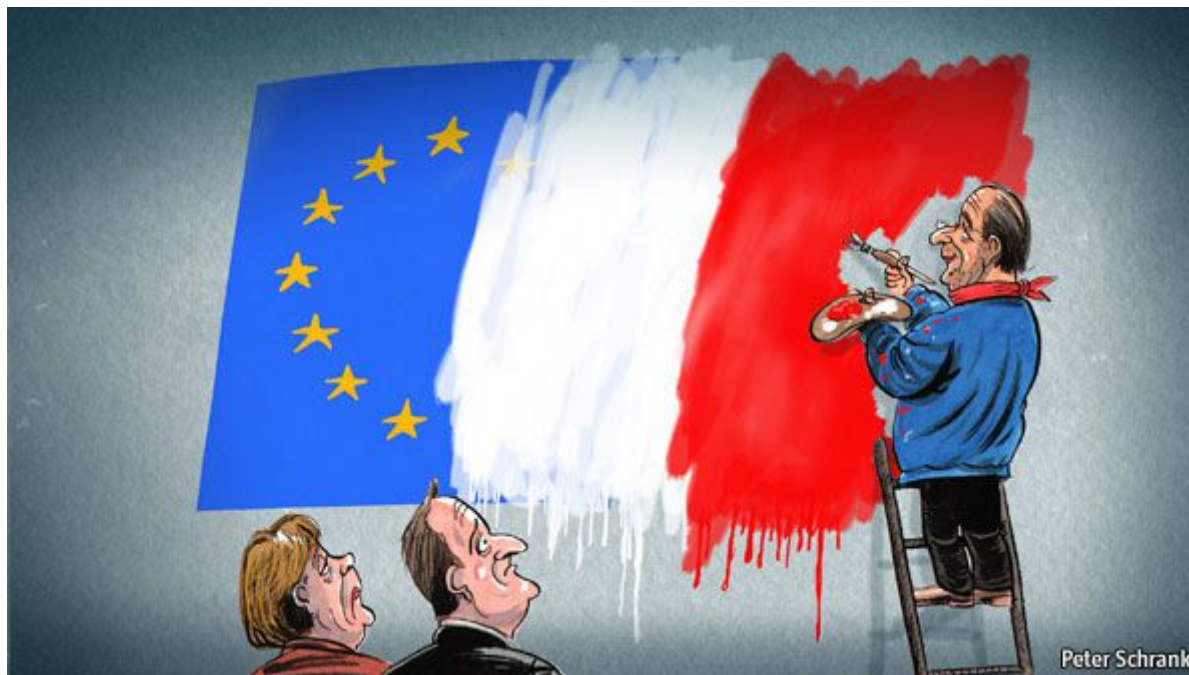
Charlemagne

Europe à l'Hollandaise

93,34

François Hollande's flawed vision for Europe

Feb 9th 2013 | [From the print edition](#)



LEADERS keep talking about the future of Europe, yet none seems able to offer a clear vision. Angela Merkel speaks vaguely of the need for greater **“Europeanisation of national powers”**. David Cameron, by contrast, wants a **renationalisation of European powers**—though without being too specific. This week it was François Hollande's turn to speak about destiny. **His concept, as set out in a speech to the European Parliament on February 5th, is to extend French dirigiste and socialist ideas to Europe, even where they cannot be applied to France itself.**

Take the rising value of the euro. France cannot resort to devaluation to close its already large trade deficit. So Mr Hollande wants euro-zone **governments to act together to bring down the exchange rate**. Or take competitiveness. Mr Hollande has adopted some cautious labour-market reforms, but now he proposes **a euro-zone minimum wage**. Or take taxation. Having put up French taxes, he wants euro-zone countries to **“harmonise” tax policies**. Or take macroeconomic policy. If deficit countries must undergo austerity, then the EU as a whole should continue spending to support growth, and **surplus countries should boost domestic demand to bring up the rest.**

All this, said Mr Hollande, has to be part of a future **“euro-zone government”**—a subtly different term from the “economic government” that his predecessor, Nicolas Sarkozy, used to advocate. **The precise meaning is elusive**, though Mr Hollande would like it to include a separate budget for the euro zone.

Some of what Mr Hollande says makes sense. Austerity has been pushed too hard and too fast. And a currency union needs some collective means of counterbalancing downturns in one or other state. **Yet** for Mr Hollande, as for many of his predecessors, **competition is often “disloyal” and market forces dangerous**—things to be tamed rather than encouraged. From both the left and the right, French politicians accuse European countries that allow lower wages and tax rates than France of **practising “social dumping”**.

Nebulous as Mr Hollande's message may have been, it is striking that he spoke about the future at all. Since his election last year, **the Europhile Mr Hollande has acted as if the less said about big European ideas the better**. The European summit in December killed plans for a long-term "road map" to redesign the euro zone. In part, Europe's leaders are busy managing the immediate crisis, still grappling with the creation of a euro-zone banking supervisor. In part, **Mr Hollande had an unspoken truce with the German chancellor: he toned down his calls for Eurobonds; she stopped talking so much about the need for political union**.

And yet, during his address in Strasbourg, Mr Hollande himself declared that Europe now needed **"a stronger political union, otherwise it would be semi-paralysed"**. **France stood ready "to launch the great project of deepening the economic and monetary union"**. Next year's election for the European Parliament should be the occasion for a **"great debate on the future of Europe"**, particularly its institutional "architecture".

At no point did Mr Hollande mention a revision of the treaties, let alone a referendum to approve the outcome. But he seems to be preparing the ground for such a negotiation. Others reckon his conditions are designed to avoid one. At the very least, Mr Hollande is marking himself apart from Mrs Merkel and Mr Cameron, and **telling them that if they insist on reopening the treaties, France will brandish a list of difficult demands**.

The future of the euro zone, Mr Hollande suggests, will not be the Germanic notion of euro-zone members bearing individual responsibility for their economic policies, within rigid rules imposed by the centre. Instead integration must include common projects on, say, infrastructure and renewable energy, paid for by "new financial instruments". And integration must be accompanied by greater "solidarity", including guaranteed jobs and training for young people and, yes, Eurobonds.

Little of this fits with the British model of a looser, highly liberalised common market, in which members have the flexibility to tailor the terms of their membership. Europe, said Mr Hollande, was not just a market or a currency, but a political project where one could not ceaselessly "question everything at every stage".

There could be no "à la carte" Europe. But there could be a "differentiated" EU in which some countries push towards integration, while preserving a "substantial foundation which must remain common competences". In other words, Britain need never join the single currency, but cannot undo the deals that created today's single market.

The 3% question

For now, Mr Hollande's main worry is not to be cast as a "Club Med" country unable to keep up with Germany in a hard-currency, low-inflation zone. He may soon face a tricky problem. The European Commission's official forecasts later this month will almost certainly indicate that France will miss its EU target to bring the budget deficit to below 3% of GDP this year. Others, such as the Netherlands and Belgium, may have similar trouble,

Should Mr Hollande cut spending to meet EU rules, or breach the target to avoid what he calls "austerity without end"? The commission, for its part, is torn about whether to dare tell a big founding member like France to tighten its belt. Perhaps, think some, France could be deemed to be meeting its target in "structural" terms (ie, after the effect of the economic cycle is accounted for). Or perhaps, Mr Hollande hinted, the targets could be revised "collectively". Whatever the fudge they will come up with, Mr Hollande knows that in negotiations about the future of Europe putting public finances in order is the vital condition for maintaining France's credibility.

Die Geldpolitik kuriert nur Symptome

93,36

03.12.2013 · Die EZB sorgt sich um die schleppende Kreditvergabe in der Währungsunion. Tatsächlich können sich in Südeuropa viele Unternehmen neue Kredite schlicht nicht leisten.

Von PHILIP PLICKERT

Artikel [Bilder](#) (1) [Lesermeinungen](#) (0)



© DPA Mario Draghi hält den Leitzins niedrig

Es klingt ein wenig wie Pfeifen im Walde, wenn EZB-Präsident Mario Draghi versichert, die Europäische Zentralbank habe keineswegs all ihr Pulver verschossen. Den Leitzins hat er so nahe an null Prozent gesenkt wie nie zuvor. Einige ungewöhnliche Instrumente zur weiteren geldpolitischen Stimulierung gäbe es noch. Doch sind es unerprobte Waffen, die gefährlich sein können, weil ihre Wirkung schwer eingeschätzt werden kann. Das gilt vor allem für den negativen Einlagenzins für Banken. Diese Waffe könnte nach hinten losgehen.

In jedem Fall ist der EZB-Rat, der sich an diesem Donnerstag trifft, in einer schwierigen Lage. Europa steht wirtschaftlich weiterhin auf äußerst wackeligen Beinen. Zwar ist die Rezession vor ein paar Monaten nach offiziellen Daten zu Ende gegangen, im Sommer gab es ein Mini-Wachstum. Doch sind die Krisenstaaten Südeuropas zuvor so tief abgestürzt, dass die jetzige minimale Aufwärtsbewegung ihnen kaum Erleichterung verschafft. Frankreich taumelt unter der sozialistischen Regierung nahe an einer Rezession. [Die Arbeitslosigkeit in Südeuropa](#) ist weiterhin sehr hoch, besonders in Spanien. Das Wachstum müsste viel stärker sein, um neue Jobs zu schaffen. Wegen der schwachen Wirtschaft ist der Preisdruck auf ein Minimum gesunken, in einigen Krisenländern sinken die Preise. Einige Beobachter haben sogleich das Deflationsgespenst beschworen. Nach den neuesten Daten, die einen Anstieg der Inflation auf 0,9 Prozent zeigen, hat sich diese Debatte etwas beruhigt.

Peitsche statt Zuckerbrot?

Ein Grund zur Sorge für die EZB ist die sehr schwache Kreditvergabe besonders in Südeuropa. Um gut zwei Prozent ist das Volumen der Kredite an den privaten Sektor im Vergleich zum Vorjahr geschrumpft. In Südeuropa ist das Minus noch viel größer. Die kapitalschwachen Banken dort haben allen Grund, angesichts hoher Kreditausfallraten Bilanzrisiken abzubauen. Der Hauptgrund für die rückläufige Kreditvergabe dürfte aber die schwache Nachfrage sein. Denn die hochverschuldeten Bürger und Unternehmen versuchen, ihre Verbindlichkeiten zu reduzieren; sie wollen und können sich keine neuen Kredite leisten.

In der Geldpolitik gilt der alte Satz: „You can’t push on a string.“ Es ist unmöglich, mit einem Faden zu schieben. Die EZB hat die Banken mit Liquidität regelrecht überschüttet, doch sie kann damit keine Kreditvergabe erzwingen. [Eine besondere Idee hatte sich im vergangenen Jahr die englische Zentralbank mit dem „Funding for](#)

Lending“-Programm ausgedacht: Frisches Geld gab es nur unter der Auflage, dass Hypothekenkredite vergeben werden. Das Programm war mäßig erfolgreich, weil die Banken nur ein geringes Volumen abriefen. Außerdem haftet einer zweckgebundenen Geldvergabe ein planwirtschaftlicher Geschmack an. Will die EZB wirklich so tief in die Kreditpolitik der Banken eingreifen? Es ist nicht ihre Aufgabe, den Kreditzaren für Europa zu spielen.

Statt Zuckerbrot könnte es auch die Peitsche für die Banken geben. Die EZB sei „technisch bereit“ für negative Einlagenzinsen, hat Draghi mehrfach gesagt. Damit würden Banken mit einem Strafzins belegt, die überschüssige Liquidität bei der Zentralbank parken. Derzeit liegen in der Einlagenfazilität gut 56 Milliarden Euro. Der EZB-Rat hat wiederholt über das Für und Wider negativer Einlagenzinsen debattiert. Doch die Bedenken überwiegen. Der Strafzins wäre kontraproduktiv, wenn die Banken die zusätzlichen Kosten an ihre Kunden – die Kreditnehmer – weiterreichen. So ist es in Dänemark geschehen, wo man den negativen Einlagenzins versucht hat. Außerdem würde ein Strafzins in Europa vor allem schwache Banken treffen, die sich am Markt schwer refinanzieren können und als Vorsichtsmaßnahme eine hohe Liquidität halten. Der EZB-Rat sollte von Experimenten wie negativen Einlagenzinsen oder einem zweckgebundenen Langfristender die Finger lassen.

Durch die niedrigen Zinsen hat der Reformeifer nachgelassen

Eher wird es ein neues großes Kreditprogramm (LTRO) für die Banken geben, auch wenn die Sorge besteht, dass diese mit dem billigen Geld wieder vor allem Staatspapiere kaufen. Das hatten spanische und italienische Finanzhäuser getan, als Draghi vor zwei Jahren mit der „Dicken Bertha“ eine erste Geldschwemme auslöste. Und Anfang 2014 könnte die EZB den Leitzins noch näher an die Null rücken, vermuten viele Beobachter.

Letztlich kuriert die Zentralbank mit der ultralockeren Geldpolitik aber nur an Symptomen herum, nicht aber die Ursachen der Krise. **Diese besteht darin, dass unter dem Dach der Währungsunion zu unterschiedliche Volkswirtschaften mit zu unterschiedlicher Wettbewerbsfähigkeit zusammengespant sind.** Die EZB hatte gehofft, den Krisenländern Zeit für Reformen zu erkaufen. Einige haben diese Zeit genutzt, wie Irland und mit Abstrichen auch Spanien. Beide haben mit tiefgreifenden Reformen und der Senkung von Lohnstückkosten Schritte zurück zur Wettbewerbsfähigkeit gemacht. **In Italien jedoch sind die Lohnstückkosten weiter gestiegen, die von der Technokratenregierung verabschiedete Arbeitsmarktreform versandete auf halbem Wege. Seit der Druck hoher Zinsen – durch Draghis Anleihekaufversprechen – stark reduziert wurde, hat der Reformeifer deutlich nachgelassen. Das ist die eigentliche Tragik des Handelns der EZB.**

Pourquoi le *Charles-de-Gaulle* sera inutilisable entre 2016 et 2018 93,38

Publiée 02/12/2013 à 18:00



Pendant 15 à 18 mois, la France va se retrouver sans porte-avions pour assurer une présence en mer. Explications.

Le porte-avions *Charles-de-Gaulle* va subir une révision complète dans trois ans. Le plus gros navire militaire européen sera immobilisé pendant près d'un an et demi, de septembre 2016 à février 2018. Le coût de l'opération est estimé à 1,3 milliard d'euros par le ministère de la Défense. Le précédent arrêt technique majeur remonte à 2008. Le bâtiment doit connaître une période d'immobilisation de 15 à 18 mois tous les sept ans et demi, afin de changer ses cœurs nucléaires. Le *Charles-de-Gaulle* sort tout juste d'un entretien intermédiaire de six mois.

Ce deuxième arrêt technique majeur «sera particulièrement important puisqu'il s'agira de l'entretien à mi-vie du porte-avions», expliquent la présidente de la Commission de la Défense de l'Assemblée nationale, Patricia Adam, et la députée socialiste, Geneviève Gosselin-Fleury, dans le rapport de la commission sur la Loi de programmation militaire. Cette révision permettra d'adapter plus particulièrement le bâtiment à l'avion Rafale, en vue du retrait des avions Super-Étendard. À l'issue de cette période, «le porte-avions sera en capacité de poursuivre son activité jusqu'à son retrait de service actif, programmé en 2041», ajoutent les deux élus. La construction d'un deuxième porte-avions aurait permis d'assurer une présence en mer permanente. Seulement, le projet a été abandonné en 2012.

Depuis sa mise à l'eau, le navire a connu [une série de déboires](#): pont d'envol trop court, fuites dans le circuit de refroidissement des deux réacteurs atomiques... Lors de sa période d'essai en 2000, une pale de l'hélice bâbord s'était cassée alors que le navire croisait dans l'Atlantique. Début novembre, le bâtiment aurait connu un problème sur sa chaufferie nucléaire, [selon l'hebdomadaire Challenges](#). Le bâtiment s'apprête actuellement à se diriger vers l'océan Indien et le Golfe pour une «mission de présence opérationnelle» de trois mois environ. En service depuis le 18 mai 2001, le *Charles-de-Gaulle* compte un équipage de près de 2000 hommes et femmes et a déjà parcouru plus d'un million de kilomètres.

Hollande lance un concours mondial d'innovation

93,39

Publiée 03/12/2013 à 06:00



Son objectif est d'attirer les meilleurs talents pour faire émerger les futurs champions de l'économie française.

Avis aux entrepreneurs innovants! La France veut donner naissance aux Google et Apple de demain. Pour cela, François Hollande a lancé hier, lors d'un grand show au Centquatre, dans le XIXe arrondissement, un concours mondial d'innovation, en présence d'Arnaud Montebourg, de Fleur Pellerin (PME, Innovation) et d'[Anne Lauvergeon](#), présidente de la commission Innovation 2030, qui ont joué les animateurs avec enthousiasme. Notamment lors d'un chat avec différentes personnalités, du Brésil à Israël en passant par les États-Unis et Hawaï, afin de souligner la dimension planétaire du concours.

L'objectif est d'attirer les meilleurs talents mondiaux et de susciter la création d'entreprises innovantes dans sept grands domaines, identifiés comme stratégiques par la commission Innovation: le stockage de l'énergie, le recyclage, la valorisation des richesses marines (métaux et dessalement de l'eau de mer), les protéines végétales et la chimie du végétal, la médecine individualisée, la «silver économie» (longévité) et la valorisation des données informatiques massives (Big Data).

Pour montrer toute l'importance qu'il accorde à l'innovation, le chef de l'État avait visité dans la matinée à Paris l'entreprise Mauna Kea, qui a mis au point le plus petit microscope flexible du monde, le Cellvizio, utilisé dans le domaine de l'imagerie médicale. Cet appareil permet de détecter des tumeurs cancéreuses avec une plus grande précision que par biopsie, et sur des organes où les prélèvements de tissus sont impossibles à réaliser. La société d'une centaine de salariés, qui conçoit et fabrique ce produit en France, connaît un fort développement, notamment aux États-Unis et en Asie, mais peine à se développer dans l'Hexagone, faute d'agrément dans les hôpitaux publics notamment.

300 millions d'investissements

Le concours est ouvert à tous, PME, grands groupes, chercheurs, qu'ils soient français ou étrangers. Peu importe la nationalité des porteurs de projet, la seule contrainte est de créer l'entreprise dans l'Hexagone et qu'elle soit de droit français.

Pour participer, il suffit de remplir un dossier sur le site www.innovation2030.org et de monter une présentation en cinq ou dix pages. «Il faut que le projet soit vraiment novateur, faisable, qu'il puisse escompter des retombées économiques et qu'il soit porté par des gens qui y croient», a indiqué Anne Lauvergeon. Une centaine de projets vont être sélectionnés d'ici au mois de mars prochain, et seront dotés d'une enveloppe de 200 000 euros chacun. À la rentrée 2014, lors d'une deuxième vague, une trentaine de projets seront retenus et pourront bénéficier chacun de 2 millions d'euros. Enfin, en 2016, une troisième étape permettra de soutenir l'industrialisation d'un

ou deux projets, parmi les plus innovants, dans chacun des sept secteurs. Ils recevront jusqu'à 20 millions d'euros chacun.

Au total, l'État affectera 300 millions d'euros au financement de ces projets innovants dans le cadre du programme «investissements d'avenir» et en s'appuyant sur la Banque publique d'investissement.



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Le 03/12/2013 à 07:26

December 2, 2013

‘Anti-Racism’ of the Left Reaps Scorn in France

93,41

By CELESTINE BOHLEN

PARIS — Politically correct has long been scorned in French political debates as an Americanism that shrouds the truth with a veil of well-meaning but misleading euphemisms deployed by the “caviar left,” the French equivalent of limousine liberals.

Now comes “anti-racism,” a word that apparently has come to mean much the same thing, at least as defined by Alain Finkielkraut, a prominent French intellectual who, in his latest book, called it “an unrelenting battle against reality.”

So what exactly does that mean? Some years ago, Mr. Finkielkraut elaborated by saying that “anti-racism was the communism of the 21st century,” suggesting that only brave free-thinking dissidents could raise their voices against the reigning ideology.

This could be an empty semantic debate were it not for recent slurs aimed at Justice Minister [Christiane Taubira](#), a black woman who has been compared to a monkey in a photo on a politician’s Facebook page and on the cover of a right-wing magazine, and taunted with bananas at public demonstrations.

These ugly insults have been condemned across the political spectrum: The politician had to withdraw from the list of candidates for the far-right National Front party; the magazine, *Minute*, has been taken to court; and a petition against racism has collected more than 100,000 signatures.

But the question of racism — and anti-racism — in France lingers, casting a shadow on an ongoing debate about immigration, as poll after poll shows a deepening resentment of new waves of foreigners arriving in France from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe.

“One can observe a very clear hardening of French public opinion on the question of immigration,” said Jérôme Fourquet, a director at the polling company Ifop, commenting on poll results published in the magazine *Valeurs Actuelles* that showed the percentage of French people who think immigration to be a good thing for the country dropping to 37 percent in 2013, from 49 percent in 2007.

The publication of the poll was a key element of a riposte by *Valeurs Actuelles*, a right-wing magazine with a growing circulation of almost 100,000, to the anti-racist campaign set off by the attacks against Ms. Taubira. The headline: “The Dictatorship of the Politically Correct: No, France Is Not Racist.”

Inside, the magazine circled back to anti-racism, in an article titled “Omerta.” “Anyone who dares to question the credo (that immigration is a bonus for France), repeated in chorus by most of the French media, is thought to be a racist,” the article concluded.

Those are strong words, for which Yves de Kerdrel, editor of *Valeurs Actuelles*, makes no apology. “There is an evolution of an ideology of anti-racism,” he said. “It is the genes of the French left to use any pretext of racism to get itself out of difficulty.”

He called the *Minute* cover “a stupidity” that the current Socialist government turned into a “national event.” At a time of high unemployment and record low popularity ratings, “the Socialists have nothing else to rally around,” he added.

That's why he chose the word "dictatorship" for the magazine's Nov. 14 cover. "We had to react," he said.

But react to what? A swift condemnation of obvious, and odious, racism? What does that have to do with a debate about the real problems of integrating immigrants, which, in fact, is aired almost daily in the French media?

Mr. de Kerdrel, whose magazine has recently run a string of strongly worded headlines ("Roma, The Overdose," and "The New Barbarians: The Foreigners Who Are Pillaging France"), says he is appealing to the "invisible France," readers who are worried about the changes taking place in their country.

It's no surprise that in difficult economic times, those anxieties should take a nasty, xenophobic turn, and many commentators, including Ms. Taubira, have warned against breaking barriers that inhibit racist rhetoric.

"A dike has been breached," she said in the newspaper *Le Parisien*. "People today don't have any complexes about making scandalous statements."

Maybe political correctness isn't such a bad idea after all.

Transparency-Ranking

93,43

Korruption in Krisenland Spanien nimmt drastisch zu



REUTERS

Proteste in Valencia (im Februar): Wenig Aufmerksamkeit seitens der Regierung

Spitzenpolitiker nehmen Geld von Baumagnaten, gegen den Schwiegersohn des Königs wird ermittelt: Laut Transparency International ist die Korruption in Spanien auf dem Vormarsch. Im 177 Staaten umfassenden Index bleibt Griechenland Europas Schlusslicht, Deutschland rückt leicht nach vorne.

Berlin - Eine Serie von Skandalen in Regierungspartei und Königsfamilie hat Spanien in der weltweiten Rangliste der [Korruption](#) einen jähen Absturz beschert. Das Euro-Krisenland fiel dem Jahresbericht von [Transparency International](#) (TI) zufolge um zehn Plätze auf Rang 40 zurück. Nur das vom Bürgerkrieg gezeichnete Syrien verzeichnete noch größere Verluste. Insgesamt haben die Experten der Organisation 177 Staaten eingehend untersucht.

Die Korruptionswächter bewerteten Spanien mit nur noch 59 Punkten auf einer Skala von null (hohe Korruptionsrate) bis 100 (sehr wenig Korruption) Punkten. Die Organisation begründete den Absturz Spaniens auch damit, dass die Regierung in Madrid mehreren jüngst aufgedeckten Korruptionsskandalen wenig Aufmerksamkeit gewidmet habe.

Spanien steckt seit fünf Jahren in einer Wirtschaftskrise, die das Land zu drastischen Sparmaßnahmen zwang. Dabei stellte sich heraus, wie sehr die engen Beziehungen zwischen Politikern und Bauunternehmern in der Vergangenheit die Immobilienblase gefördert hatten. Der frühere Schatzmeister der regierenden Volkspartei gab zu, [Bargeldgeschenke von Baumagnaten an Spitzenpolitiker weitergeleitet zu haben](#). Auf seinen Schweizer Konten fanden die Ermittler 48 Millionen Euro. Auch der Schwiegersohn des spanischen Königs wurde dieses Jahr [wegen der Veruntreuung von sechs Millionen Euro öffentlicher Gelder angeklagt](#).

Griechenland bleibt das korrupteste Land Europas

Absolut gesehen ist die Lage in Spanien damit freilich noch wesentlich besser als in anderen Ländern Europas oder in Afghanistan, Nordkorea und Somalia, den korruptesten Staaten der Welt. Die drei Länder belegen gemeinsam den letzten Platz der Rangliste.

Der Corruption Perception Index (CPI) oder kurz Korruptionsindex listet die Nationen nach dem vermuteten Grad der [Korruption](#) im öffentlichen Sektor im Land, spiegelt also Bestechlichkeit, Vetternwirtschaft und Käuflichkeit bei Mitgliedern von Regierung, Behörden und anderen öffentlichen Einrichtungen wieder. Er stützt sich auf verschiedene Umfragen und Untersuchungen von neun unabhängigen Institutionen,

darunter [Weltbank](#) und [Weltwirtschaftsforum](#). Laut TI werden Geschäftsleute sowie Länderanalysten befragt und Umfragen mit Staatsbürgern im In- und Ausland miteinbezogen.

Das korrupteste Land in der EU bleibt Griechenland. Allerdings konnte sich das hoch verschuldete Land deutlich verbessern, es legte vier Punkte zu und kletterte von Rang 94 auf Rang 80. Im Kampf gegen die [Schuldenkrise](#) habe das Land Fortschritte gemacht und zum Beispiel einen obersten Korruptionsbekämpfer ernannt, sagte Transparency-Experte Finn Heinrich. Auch für Italien ist Korruption ein deutliches Problem. Es kam mit 43 Punkten auf Platz 69, den es sich mit [Kuwait](#) und [Rumänien](#) teilt.

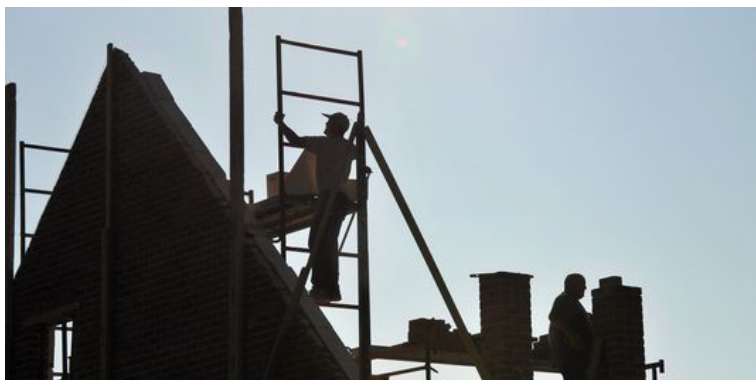
Staatszerfall ist Nährboden für Korruption

Insgesamt steht die Euro-Zone im globalen Vergleich aber recht gut da. Deutschland konnte sich in der Rangliste um einen Platz auf Rang zwölf verbessern - verlor allerdings mit nun noch 78 Punkten einen Zähler. Dennoch ist die Bundesrepublik damit Spitzenreiter unter den großen Ländern Europas. Mit 83 Punkten belegen die Niederlande Platz acht, Luxemburg kommt mit 80 Punkten auf Rang elf. Frankreich als zweitgrößte Volkswirtschaft der Euro-Zone erhielt 71 Punkte und findet sich damit auf Platz 22 wieder.

Den ersten Platz auf der Rangliste teilen sich mit jeweils 91 Punkten Dänemark und Neuseeland, dicht gefolgt von Finnland und Schweden mit je 89 Punkten. Ebenfalls in der Spitzengruppe mit mindestens 80 Punkten finden sich zudem Norwegen, Singapur und die Schweiz sowie Australien und Kanada. Zu den Ländern, die im Jahresvergleich besonders stark abgerutscht sind, zählen die Krisenstaaten Syrien (168), Libyen (172) und Mali (127). Korruption und Staatszerfall seien eng miteinander verknüpft, sagte Heinrich

Den gesamten Bericht finden Sie [hier](#).

Land/Gebiet	Rang 2013	Rang 2012
Dänemark	1	1
Neuseeland	1	1
Finnland	3	1
Schweden	3	4
Norwegen	5	7
Singapur	5	5
Deutschland	12	13
USA	19	19
Frankreich	22	22
Spanien	40	30
Italien	69	69
China	80	80
Griechenland	80	94
Sudan	174	172
Afghanistan	175	174
Nordkorea	175	174
Somalia	175	174



L'Assemblée nationale a commencé à débattre, lundi 2 décembre, du [rapport d'information](#) sur la proposition de directive relative à l'exécution de la directive sur le détachement des travailleurs, qui concernerait 1,5 million de personnes dans l'[Union européenne](#). Retour sur une polémique qui ne cesse d'[enfler](#).

■ Qu'est-ce qu'un travailleur détaché ?

Le [statut de travailleur détaché](#) est défini par [la directive européenne du 16 décembre 1996](#), elle-même établie par le Conseil et le Parlement européens.

« Un travailleur est considéré comme “détaché” s'il travaille dans un Etat membre de l'UE parce que son employeur l'envoie provisoirement poursuivre ses fonctions dans cet Etat membre. Par exemple, un prestataire de services peut remporter un contrat dans un autre pays et décider d'envoyer ses employés exécuter ce contrat sur place. (...) Cette catégorie ne comprend pas les travailleurs migrants qui se rendent dans un autre Etat membre pour y chercher un emploi et qui y travaillent. »

Les charges sociales appliquées sont celles du pays d'origine. Ce qui, concrètement, permet à un employeur d'[employer](#) des travailleurs à moindre coût dans des pays aux charges sociales bien plus élevées.

En revanche, le salaire et les conditions de travail de l'employé détaché relèvent des règles du pays dans lequel il travaille. Un travailleur détaché en France doit donc [toucher](#) au moins le smic.

Mais, dans les faits, *« le contournement de ces règles s'accroît en France »*, déplorait fin novembre le ministre du travail, Michel Sapin, via, notamment, *« des montages frauduleux de plus en plus sophistiqués »*, ce qui conduit à une forme de *« dumping social »*.

Un constat déjà dressé par les députés Gilles Savary (PS), Chantal Guittet (PS) et Michel Piron ([UDI](#)) dans [un rapport parlementaire](#) publié en mai. Ce dernier dénonçait une directive *« insuffisante et largement inefficace »*, qui *« consacre des pratiques de concurrence déloyales et le dumping social »*.

Lire : [Travailleurs détachés : le gouvernement monte au créneau](#)

Combien sont-ils en France et, inversement, combien de Français sont détachés au sein de l'UE ?

Selon [un rapport d'information du Sénat publié en avril](#), la France a accueilli, en 2011, 144 411 travailleurs détachés officiellement déclarés. C'est 30 % de plus qu'en 2010 (111 320) – une hausse due à un «

incontestable effet "élargissement de l'UE" ». Un chiffre qui pourrait en réalité atteindre le triple : le ministère du travail estime que 220 000 à 300 000 travailleurs détachés ne sont pas déclarés.

« La France est le deuxième pays d'accueil, derrière l'Allemagne(311 000 travailleurs détachés en 2011) et devant la Belgique (125 000). La durée moyenne du détachement par salarié s'établit à cinquante jours », indique le rapport du Sénat.

Nombre de salariés détachés en France depuis 2000

2000	2002	2004	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
7 495	16 545	26 466	37 924	67 872	95 261	105 744	111 320	144 411

Dans l'autre sens, la tendance est inverse : 169 029 détachements de salariés français au sein de l'Union européenne ont été enregistrés en 2011, toujours selon le Sénat, qui précise que ce nombre a diminué de près de 38 % depuis 2007.

« La France reste cependant le troisième pays exportateur derrière la Pologne(plus de 300 000 travailleurs détachés en 2011) et l'Allemagne (plus de 250 000 travailleurs) », précise le rapport.

De quels pays viennent-ils ?

« De façon générale, 61 % des déclarations de détachement de travailleurs proviennent de pays ayant adhéré à l'Union européenne avant 2004. Il n'en demeure pas moins que la dynamique est clairement du côté des "nouveaux Etats membres" qui ont adhéré après cette date : les demandes en provenance de ces pays ont ainsi augmenté de 44 % en cinq ans. »

Selon le rapport d'information du Sénat publié en avril 2013, le **Luxembourg** est le premier pays d'origine des déclarations de détachement des entreprises en France (le quart d'un total de 11 200 déclarations). Il est suivi par la **Pologne** (7 700) et l'**Allemagne** (5 500).

Les salariés détachés en France d'origine européenne sont en majorité **polonais**(27 700, soit 19 %), **portugais** (16 500, soit 11 %) et **roumains** (13 200, soit 9 %). Par ailleurs, quelque 18 500 Français sont détachés en France (13 %) par une entreprise européenne.

Dans quels secteurs sont-ils le plus employés ?

Les trois principaux secteurs concernés sont **la construction** (33 % des travailleurs détachés), **l'industrie** (25 %) et **le travail temporaire** (20 %), note le rapport du Sénat.

« Il convient de relever l'explosion du nombre de recours aux travailleurs détachés au sein du bâtiment et des travaux publics : 63 659 en 2011 contre 5 865 en 2008. Le secteur de l'agriculture attire également de plus en plus de travailleurs détachés : une augmentation du nombre des déclarations de 58 % a été enregistrée entre 2010 et 2011. »

Nombre de salariés détachés par secteur d'activité en 2011

Secteur d'activité	Nombre	Évolution depuis 2004
Agriculture	7 636	+ 1 003 %
Bâtiments et travaux publics	63 659	+ 985 %
Hôtel, café, restaurant	2 065	+ 679 %
Industrie	24 969	+ 357 %
Spectacle	2 450	+ 75 %
Intra-groupe	3 956	+ 670 %
Entreprises de travail temporaire	32 725	+ 3 348 %
Autre	6 951	+ 441 %
Total	144 411	+ 779 %

Qu'est-ce qui fait débat en France ? Et à l'échelle européenne ?

En mars 2012, la Commission européenne a présenté un projet de directive pour clarifier le texte de 1996 sur les conditions d'emploi des salariés détachés. Celui-ci prévoit notamment que les travailleurs détachés dans un autre pays européen soient traités sur un pied d'égalité.

La majorité des pays, dont la France et l'Allemagne, veulent renforcer les contrôles et lutter contre les dérives générées par le recours à la main-d'œuvre détachée, notamment en matières de cotisations sociales. Mais d'autres pays font valoir qu'un renforcement des moyens de contrôle va à l'encontre de la libre circulation des travailleurs dans l'Union.

Si, à ce jour, aucun accord n'a été trouvé entre les ministres européens du travail, ces derniers espèrent parvenir à un accord lors d'un sommet le 9 décembre et avant le Conseil européen des 19 et 20 décembre.

En France, Michel Sapin a tenté, le 20 novembre, d'accélérer le débat en présentant en Conseil des ministres un « *plan de lutte* » – demandé par le président, François Hollande — contre les abus liés au détachement de travailleurs dans l'Union.

M. Sapin souhaite renforcer les contrôles, notamment via l'inspection du travail, mais aussi « *l'arsenal législatif national* » pour mieux « *responsabiliser les maîtres d'ouvrage et les donneurs d'ordre quand ils recourent à des sous-traitants multiples* ».

De leur côté, les députés Gilles Savary (PS), Chantal Guittet (PS) et Michel Piron (UDI) ont annoncé qu'ils déposeront une proposition de loi après la réunion des ministres européens des 9 et 10 décembre, qui prévoit la création « *d'une liste noire des entreprises frauduleuses, qui seraient écartées des appels d'offres* » ou encore l'introduction « *d'une double notification de détachement de travailleurs étrangers, non seulement par l'entreprise qui détache mais également par le maître d'ouvrage* ».

Lire aussi [Après le « plombier polonais », voilà la polémique du « travailleur détaché »](#)

■ [Anna Villechenon](#)

Journaliste au Monde

This article reviews the theory behind *Optimum Currency Areas* and the lack of willingness in the European Union and particularly of Germany to lead the process of political and fiscal unions. With Britain maintaining its euro-skeptical status and France and Italy immersed in political crisis, there remains little hope that the Eurozone will ever become what Professor Robert A. Mundell once defined as an Optimum Currency Area.

You do not need to be a rocket scientist to know that Columbia University Emeritus Professor Robert A. Mundell won the 1999 Nobel Prize in Economics for his seminal work on *Optimum Currency Areas* explained in his 1961 paper “A Theory of Optimum Currency Areas” (American Economic Review, Vol. 51, No. 4 (Sep., 1961), pp. 657-665). Prof. Mundell won the Nobel Prize before the European Union launched the Euro on January 1st, 2002. Prof. Mundell created the Eurozone and he did so in 1961, only four years after the Treaty of Rome was signed by the six founding members of the European Union (then European Economic Community) in 1957.

You do not have to be a Nobel Prize Laureate to know that Prof. Mundell’s theoretical conditions need to apply in order for an *Optimum Currency Area* (the Eurozone) to work properly. The fact of the matter is that because of the current political leadership in Germany and the European Commission at large, only a handful of these theoretical conditions have been accomplished. The ones which remain to be implemented are the fiscal and the political unions, which I reviewed as a student of the *MPA Program in Economic Policy Management* at Columbia University in 2007-2008.

There is no fiscal union in the Eurozone. This condition is implicitly known as fiscal federalism. It is here where the Eurobonds controversy steps in. A northern axis of countries including Austria, Finland, Germany and the Netherlands seem to oppose the idea of debt mutualization of up to 60% of a country’s public debt. The spread on the Eurobonds is likely to be higher than that on the Deutsche Bund but significantly lower than spreads on Greek, Italian, Portuguese or Spanish Debt. This move forward would allow southern Europe to breathe normally and focus more of the attention on fixing the house which is indeed a disaster (remember Tom Hanks’ 1986 Movie “The Money Pit”). In the absence of Eurobonds the financial markets have put a severe burden on the highly-indebted countries whose debt is skyrocketing under no control whatsoever. Public debt has already reached unsustainable levels in Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain. Spain’s debt coupled with its terrible job market does not leave a lot of room for maneuver.

In a recent conversation, a former Deputy Finance Minister of Spain pointed out that spending three percent of GDP servicing the debt interest and three percent of GDP on unemployment benefits (“el paro”) for the jobless, leaves very little room to pull Spain out of the ditch, from where the country continues to fight a war against itself and against the financial markets.

There is no political union in the Eurozone, although the Members of the European Parliament based in Strasbourg may think otherwise. Prof. Mundell explains (page 661) that “In Western Europe the creation of the Common Market is regarded by many as an important step toward eventual political union, and the subject of a common currency for the six countries has been much discussed”. Prof. Mundell adds:

In the real world, of course, currencies are mainly an expression of national sovereignty, so that actual currency reorganization would be feasible only if it were accompanied by profound political changes.

When have the profound political changes been accomplished in the Eurozone? The Eurozone and more in particular the European Union remains a club of “rich” nations (perhaps this term should not apply to some of the latest incorporations in Eastern Europe) with a governance at the nation level which is much stronger than

the weak governance of Brussels and the European Commission and Parliament. This is why the European Central Bank is particularly commanded by Germany, reason why the French are particularly “méfiant” and always try to interfere with the apparently independent monetary policy of the European Central Bank, too focused on inflation control applying the old manual of the Bundesbank.

European countries are unlikely to give up their dreams of grandeur for the sake of the continent’s emergence as the World’s leading force. Almost every country in Europe has been an Empire: Austria, Britain, France, Portugal, Spain. In the absence of a common agenda Europe –the aggregation of past World Empires- is condemned to irrelevance. Who cares about Europe any longer? We will fall in the trap that Japan has already fallen into. Priorities at the nation-state continue to dominate continental priorities. Member states of the European Union continue to insist that certain areas no limited to monetary policy and including defence and foreign policy remain sovereign.

Usury with the Greek has reached a point in which we must say “enough is enough”. Germany must stop the episode of arrogance or we might reach a point in which history shall be repeated. Some say, anyhow, that an (economic) war has already begun. No further cooperation seems possible, we have reached a plateau from which who knows what trigger might help us move forward.

Greece’s GDP is about 5% of Germany’s, which means that bailing out Greece’s 100% of GDP would have represented issuing Eurobonds equivalent to 5% of Germany’s GDP. In the meantime Greece’s public debt-to-GDP ratio continues to increase reaching a point of no return with spread levels in the two digit space for the Greek debt.

The Germans are perfectly able to disseminate their euphoria and enthusiasm on top of their rigor and discipline. A New Europe shall then be born. Perhaps southern Europe can contribute with its creativity and improvisation which the Germans most often lack.

Perhaps only the World’s best surrealist painters would have been to depict the ongoing lack of vision among our political elites in Berlin and Brussels. We all know and know very well the recipe to get out of this mess. Why don’t we move forward faster then? Europe’s twentieth-century history (the two World Wars) represents an obstacle on our way forward to the best World we could have ever imagined.

Filed under: [Euro](#), [Euro area](#), [Europe](#), [European Periphery](#), [Eurozone](#), [Germany](#), [Spain](#)

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+2



[diatool140p](#) · 3 days ago

You describe the situation in the EU correctly as: "Priorities at the nation-state continue to dominate continental priorities. Member states of the European Union continue to insist that certain areas no limited to monetary policy and including defence and foreign policy remain sovereign. - See more

at: <http://www.economonitor.com/blog/2013/11/germany-...>

You miss the facts when saying: "This is why the European Central Bank is particularly commanded by Germany, reason why the French are particularly “méfiant” and always try to interfere with the apparently independent monetary policy of the European Central Bank, too focused on inflation control applying the old

manual of the Bundesbank. - See more at: <http://www.economonitor.com/blog/2013/11/germany-...>.

Fact is that the ECB is providing fiscal financing against its statutes for the ailing Euro countries.

You are wrong in saying: "The spread on the Eurobonds is likely to be higher than that on the Deutsche Bund but significantly lower than spreads on Greek, Italian, Portuguese or Spanish Debt. This move forward would allow southern Europe to breathe normally - See more at: <http://www.economonitor.com/blog/2013/11/germany-...>.

"Breathing normally" cannot be defined without looking at the 3 to 5 times higher borrowing rates these countries had before the introduction of the Euro.

Correctly you say that the Euro zone is in very bad shape. But why should Germany be so stupid to guarantee or even pay the debts of the ailing countries, only to see that after collecting such benefits their egoism will continue without leading to "Mundell's Optimum Currency Area".

The solidarity you ask from Germany makes only sense if the ailing countries fulfill the prerequisite to restructure to improve their competitiveness, so that "Mundell's Optimum Currency Area" assured to happen. That is exactly the present policy of Germany.

Reply

+2



[FeliceMusso0p](#) 3 days ago

I belong to the category of European citizens of the "southern belt" (Italy), but I have to say that I do not agree at all with the spirit of this article, even if I fully agree with the suggested solutions, that is common fiscal policy and political union. We should stop complaining and blaming the "bad" Germans, the "bad" Finnish, etc. We have to say that they are right, and we are wrong. We have wasted, for decades, our richness, our treasures, our capabilities, with crazy spending policies. How can we pretend to proceed on that path, and pretend that Northern people pay for our debts, while we do not show even a minimum of grievance? We show everyday that we intend to proceed on the wrong path, and that the short periods in which we have shown at least a little of good will, are disrupted by populism, demagoguery, etc? Yes, the situation is dramatic, and maybe it is true that Germans are looking with skepticism at fiscal and political union. **But we must not forget that, when we talked of Eurobond, Frau Merkel said: "OK, first we do fiscal and political union, and then we do Eurobond". Was it a bluff? Maybe. But, if you want to know it, you must go to see the bluff. Well, please tell me which southern-belt politicians seriously answered "YES, let's start talking of political union"? In Italy, for sure, no one. So, let us show to be serious. Then, but only then, we can ask something.**

- See more at: <http://www.economonitor.com/blog/2013/11/germany-and-the-euro-surrealpolitik/#sthash.JCb3tMoZ.dpuf>

Regierung - Koalition:

Rajoy und Hollande begrüßen deutschen Koalitionsvertrag

93,52

Madrid (dpa) - Der Koalitionsvertrag von Union und SPD ist in Frankreich und Spanien auf Zustimmung gestoßen. Spaniens Ministerpräsident Mariano Rajoy sagte, das Abkommen verleihe der EU mehr Stabilität. Der Koalitionsvertrag sei gut für Deutschland und Europa, so Rajoy. Er werde zur Bekämpfung der Schuldenkrise und zur Förderung des Wachstums beitragen. Frankreichs Präsident François Hollande lobte die in die Vereinbarung aufgenommenen Forderungen der SPD. Wichtig sei vor allem ein gesetzlicher Mindestlohn.

erschieden am 27.11.2013 um 22:02 Uhr

The Eurozone Crisis and Europe's Persistent 'No-Demos Problem'

93,53

Posted on [January 31, 2012](#)

By [Prof. Peter L. Lindseth](#). Peter is the Olimpiad S. Ioffe Professor of International and Comparative Law at the University of Connecticut School of Law (USA).

As usual, things are moving so quickly in the Eurozone crisis that pressing controversies one day seemingly become old news the next. In the lead up to this week's EU summit, for example, Germany caused a stir by calling for the appointment of an external commissioner with the power to veto the Greek budget because of Greece's inability to meet its budgetary commitments. We'll see where that leads, but outrage in Athens was the predictable result. The Greek finance minister [reportedly said](#): 'Whoever puts before a people the dilemma of choosing between financial assistance and national dignity disregards basic historical lessons'. In the overheated world of contemporary Eurozone commentary, one observer called the proposal '[Anschluss economics](#)'.

But as readers of this blog well know, Germany has its own worries about the Eurozone crisis and what it portends for that country's own historically hard-won democracy. These worries arguably animate, for example, the recent jurisprudence of the German Federal Constitutional Court, as [some of my earlier posts](#) have outlined. From the German perspective, recourse to Eurobonds as a means of addressing the crisis (in which other member states might add to Germany's debt obligations without a vote of the national parliament) would almost certainly be seen by the Court as a violation of the Bundestag's historical control over the national purse, and therefore also an affront to the democratic identity of the German constitution.

These two contrasting (Greek and German) expressions of concern over the fate of national democracy in the face of the current crisis, however, are suggestive of a deeper challenge for European integration. I am referring not merely to the Eurozone's seeming lack of financial solidarity among its member states—that, in fact, is merely a symptom. Rather, I am speaking of the notorious lack of a coherent 'demos' for the EU as a whole—what we academics have long called the 'no-demos problem'.

This label refers to Europe's failure (as yet) to develop a fully autonomous and strongly-legitimated supranational identity akin to a national identity, one capable of sustaining the sort of supranational solidarity and mutual financial discipline that the current debt crisis may well demand. The polity to which integration currently corresponds—'Europe'—does not (as yet) understand itself as sufficiently cohesive to legitimize the EU in a recognizably 'democratic' and 'constitutional' sense. As Joschka Fischer put it in [his famous Berlin speech](#) in May 2000 on Europe's constitutional future, European governance has long been understood, not without cause, as a largely 'bureaucratic affair run by a faceless, soulless Eurocracy in Brussels'. This lack of autonomous democratic legitimacy is now making itself felt in the Eurozone crisis.

A European demos need not define itself in linguistic, religious, ethnic, racial or any other purportedly 'organic' or 'pre-political' terms—that would be dangerous and unacceptable. But, for better or worse, a European demos must still define itself historically. This species of historical legitimacy builds on more than merely legal and technocratic foundations—indeed, on more than what Max Weber [called](#) 'the directly economic disposition of goods and services'. Rather, it must be grounded in what Weber described as a 'particular pathos' and 'enduring emotional foundations' derived from a history of 'common political struggle'.

The devastating legacy of extreme nationalism, war, and genocide in Europe in the first half of the twentieth century did much to propel the integration process forward in the second half. But that devastating experience, along with the seeming benefits of the integration process itself (its so-called '[output legitimacy](#)'), have proven insufficient to create a sense of an autonomous European demos capable of self-rule through supranational

institutions ‘constituted’ for this purpose. Hence the limitations on supranational solidarity that one now senses in the Eurozone crisis.

Even as many aspects of governance have, over the last half-century, been otherwise denationalized, indeed ‘Europeanized’, the same has not occurred in the realm of political culture, at least not to the same extent. Europe continues to suffer from [a disconnect](#) between the scope of its (actual or needed) supranational power, and the scope of its autonomous supranational legitimacy. In the realm of political culture, the institutions of representative government within the nation-state have thus retained their central role in terms of democratic and constitutional identity, as both the Greek and German perceptions of the current crisis seem to suggest.

All this points to the fact that, like any form of essentially delegated governance (akin, say, to delegation to an administrative agency on the national level), supranational governance in the EU or the Eurozone is legitimate for certain purposes but not others—unless Europeans are prepared to change fundamentally their understanding of what democratic self-government means, or where it is located. The recent examples from both Greece and Germany suggest an ongoing and potentially deep resistance to full-blown integration, even as both countries are acutely aware that the current crisis almost certainly demands ‘[more Europe](#)’.

Whenever we talk about the legitimacy of integration in whatever form, we must always ask the question ‘legitimate for what?’ It is one thing for a member state to delegate authority to a supranational process to harmonize regulatory standards in various domains (important a task though that may be). It is quite another to denationalize the power over the national purse in an indeterminate way, as a means of saving a common currency whose initial design and implementation may well have been [so flawed](#).

As the Italian political scientist Stefano Bartolini [presciently warned](#) in 2005 (that is, well before the onset of the current crisis), ‘the risk of miscalculating the extent to which true legitimacy surrounds the European institutions and their decisions . . . may lead to the overestimating of the capacity of the EU to overcome major economic and security crises’. Unfortunately, the Eurozone crisis is, sadly, proving to be a case in point. Monetary union depended implicitly on the capacity of supranational bodies (most importantly the ECB, but also national governments collectively) to undertake certain policy steps that they simply lacked the autonomous legitimacy to take. Resistance, foot-dragging, and push-back are the inevitable result. The ‘no-demos problem’ is thus not merely an object of academic debate. Rather it has real bite, and it may still impede the resolution of the crisis.

To resolve the current crisis, it is becoming increasingly likely that significant sacrifices in terms of traditional understandings of constitutional democracy on the national level may well be required. The resolution of the crisis will, in other words, require more than merely economic or financial concessions. Rather, it may also ultimately require deep and possibly painful political-cultural adjustments in prevailing understandings of democratic self-rule.

These adjustments may demand, in the end (at least for many Europeans), several steps further in the integration process than they are currently willing to go, precisely because of the lack of a common European demos. Then the Euro will fail. Or—and this too is possible—the need to retain the common currency, one which perhaps should never have been established in the first place but whose dismantling now is too costly and unpredictable to contemplate, may ultimately control the outcome. But one can only guess how enduring the regime that emerges from such functional demands will be. We must simply wait and see.



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EU/budget/European elections – Mali – Speech by M.François Hollande, President of the Republic, to the European Parliament

Strasbourg, 5 February 2013

Mr President of the European Parliament, cher Martin Schulz,

Mr President of the European Commission,

Deputies,

Thank you for the honour you do me by allowing me to address the European Parliament here in Strasbourg. France respects the role and the place of your assembly in all the European institutions.

I address you as the representative of a nation which has linked its destiny to that of Europe and which still bears a special responsibility today. I address you as a political leader whose belief in Europe has guided his commitment. I address you as a head of state who has made the reorientation of Europe central to his action and who has dedicated himself to this task for nine months. I address you as the president of a republic that has, for 200 years, pledged to ensure that each new generation has a better life than the previous one.

EU/achievements and failures

Europe is a wonderful idea, a great adventure, an extraordinary political enterprise; it has succeeded in making history without breaking up nations, it has created a model that is admired on all continents, it has established peace, human rights and democracy, and this has been recognized – and rightly so – by the Nobel prize.

But for too long Europe has doubted itself, hesitated over its decisions; it has sometimes rushed ahead blindly and sometimes stood still; it takes too long to make major decisions, decisions that are expected, hoped for; and it spends too little time reflecting on its direction and its overall architecture. Europe prides itself on being a major market, but it fails to defend it in the face of unfair competition. It allows its currency, the euro, to be vulnerable to irrational trends in one direction or another. Lastly, Europe is a continent where growth is too weak, where mass unemployment reflects the depth of the crisis, which is not, as has been said, a short-term transition but a major transformation.

It may be true that the Euro Area crisis is largely behind us, but we're a long way from having learnt all the lessons, and the threat we're now facing is no longer market distrust but the people's mistrust, and we all know – following a series of statements – that national interests are taking precedence over Europe's interests.

So the issue that the heads of state and government, like the European Commission, like the European Parliament, must resolve is as follows: it's not a short-term issue, it's about our own future. What can we do to regain support, to revive enthusiasm for Europe, and first of all, how can we respond to the challenge of financial stability and economic growth?

I would like to pay tribute to the efforts and the progress made in this area for several months now.

Europe has been able to implement the measures necessary to ensure budgetary discipline, and I want to pay tribute to the European Parliament, which made a significant contribution through the "six pack" and the "two pack". The states themselves have ratified the Fiscal Compact and France – under my leadership – has taken responsibility for it. At the same time, the European Council also adopted in June a Growth Compact that is in line with the views of the European Parliament; this Europe, which was considered too slow, was also able to establish instruments for stability and solidarity, notably the European Stability Mechanism. Lastly, the European Central Bank redefined its activities by clearly announcing its plans to address speculative trading, and so calm was restored to the markets, and the interest rates on certain sovereign debts could be brought down. We also allowed Greece to remain in the Euro Area, when some had already announced – too soon – her departure. Lastly, the principles of a banking union were defined in order to prevent the excesses of a financial system, and this will be a considerable challenge, involving banking supervision, a resolution mechanism, and deposit guarantees so that savers are better protected.

Europe has been able to make progress, but at the same time this cannot be the end of it, since in my view there can be no respite while 25 million Europeans remain unemployed. There can be no respite while in certain EU countries one out of every two young people is looking for work. There can be no respite while millions of people still face job insecurity. There can be no respite until an energy transition has been defined that will allow us to move from one world to another.

We must respond to the challenge of growth and employment. This will certainly, inevitably, involve reducing the debt and improving competitiveness, but I want to say here that however necessary this policy may be, it must be adapted to national circumstances, and applied judiciously over the long term, otherwise we will condemn Europe to endless austerity, and I refuse to do that.

France has herself made commitments and will honour them, but at the same time we must collectively and continuously adjust our goals according to the realities of the situation.

Economic coordination/EMU

The next stage we have to begin is the coordination of national economic policies; we need to reduce the imbalances. There are countries with surpluses, with high levels of competitiveness, others with deficits, which have efforts to make. The countries in the former situation must boost domestic demand to allow the others, at some point, to see economic activity return.

Similarly, we must think about the place in the world of our currency, the euro; it can't fluctuate depending on the market's moods. A monetary area must have a foreign exchange policy, otherwise it will see an exchange rate imposed on it which doesn't reflect the real state of its economy. It isn't a matter, in this speech, of assigning from outside an objective for the European Central Bank, which is independent, but of setting in train the essential reform of the international monetary system. Otherwise we're asking countries to make efforts on competitiveness which are annihilated by the euro's rise in value.

The time has come to launch the major project of deepening Economic and Monetary Union; France is ready for this. It has two principles: integration and solidarity. Integration means defining shared objectives, harmonizing fiscal policies, bringing in structural reforms to make our economies stronger, as well as common policies on infrastructure and research. Integration means us having new financial instruments in order to launch innovative projects in the areas of new technologies, renewable energies, and energy and ecological transition. And since we're for integration, we are for solidarity, since you can't have one without the other.

Solidarity/budget

Solidarity isn't just a matter of transfers between European nations: solidarity means having a social ambition, guaranteeing all young Europeans a job or training at the end of their studies, by strengthening exchanges between member states. Solidarity means fighting unemployment, particularly in the hardest-hit areas; that's the objective in particular of the Globalization Adjustment Fund. Solidarity involves job transitions, supporting employees throughout their working lives, enabling them to keep their entitlements to retirement, unemployment insurance, and social security when they change job or profession and at times even country. Solidarity is moving towards the minimum wage. Solidarity also means financial instruments, through new resources, through the financial transaction tax, through everything that can enable us to imagine the future together.

From this viewpoint, the European Parliament has paved the way. You've gone beyond political sensitivities and floated the idea of common borrowing; I daren't say Eurobonds, but you've imagined what the very terms "integration" and "solidarity" could be. And the discussion on the European Financial Framework must be put in this context, and I want to open up and be direct with you. We're experiencing all the difficulties of this negotiation: some want cuts, others – sometimes the same people – want guarantees about their rebates or reductions. Most of the countries have an interest in this or that part of the European budget but not in another, so my position can be put simply – yes to making savings, no to weakening the economy – and therefore our position, France's position, boils down to four principles:

Common policies

The first principle is a level of spending that maintains the common policies: firstly the Cohesion Policy, which finances the essential investments, not only for the beneficiary countries but for the whole of Europe, which benefits from it in terms of growth. The [other] common policy is the [Common] Agricultural Policy, which enables us to strengthen a food industry invaluable for the European Union but which must also respect the environment, and this is why direct aid and rural development are complementary. But I don't pit the two policies against each other, as it's easy to do – Cohesion Policy against Agricultural Policy. We must keep the foundation of European policies; otherwise, how can we build?

Growth Compact

My second principle is that the budget, the Financial Framework that must be proposed, must build on the Growth Compact adopted last June, and this means increasing the resources envisaged for innovation, infrastructure and new energies, because where would the coherence be in defining a Growth Compact in June and then creating a deflation compact through the European Financial Framework?

Supporting vulnerable Europeans

My third principle is that the budget must support the most vulnerable Europeans and those most exposed to the crisis. Hence the challenge of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, which must be not only maintained but properly resourced; of the Globalization Adjustment Fund, necessary if we want to face up to the restructuring that many countries are undergoing; of the European Social Fund's place in regional programmes; and finally, the challenge of youth employment, which must become a real European programme with genuine priority for the choices we have to make.

Rebates/own resources

Finally, the last principle I'll uphold in the forthcoming negotiation is a system of resources that is fairer and more transparent. In the immediate term the sum of rebates and reductions must stop rising, but in future genuine own resources will be essential, otherwise the European enterprise itself will be called into question.

This is France's position; I'm not sure it's far removed from the European Parliament's aspirations. A compromise is possible, but it must be reasonable, and those who want to cut back the European budget beyond what is acceptable must be made to see reason. Because I say here that there'd be no point in negotiating an agreement between heads of state and government if it were not followed by a matching vote by your assembly. Everyone must properly understand how the Community institutions work, and so you MEPs and we heads of state and government must, along with the Commission, show clear-sightedness and responsibility.

That's France's position in these negotiations, which must provide Europe with a framework for action over seven years and show that we heads of state and government and MEPs are capable of taking decisions together. Our credibility – not just our financial but our political credibility – is at stake.

Conception of Europe

Beyond these budget choices it's a conception of Europe which is being debated, and I'm going to tell you mine. Europe can't make do with being a market, a budget, a currency – invaluable though these instruments are. Nor can it be just a collection of treaties, a set of rules – necessary – for living together. Nor can Europe be simply a sum of nations, with each one coming to get from the EU what's useful for it, and it alone. Europe – because this is its history, this is its destiny – is above all a political will, in other words a commitment whereby everyone accepts the balance of rights and obligations, rules are respected and confidence creates solidarity – in other words, a project for which we can't endlessly be discussing rights we're entitled to and calling everything into question at every stage.

"Differentiated" Europe

On the other hand, I believe it legitimate to work on a new EU architecture. I'm pressing the case for a differentiated Europe – to use Jacques Delors' expression; it wouldn't be a two-speed Europe, which incidentally would quickly become an unequal Europe or a divided Europe; it isn't an à la carte Europe either. No, a differentiated Europe is a Europe in which states – not always the same ones – decide to forge ahead, embark on new projects, release funding and harmonize their policies, beyond the substantial core – which must remain – of common powers.

But there's nothing new in what I'm saying to you. It's this approach which allowed us to make borders a thing of the past with Schengen, create a single currency with the euro and introduce the financial transaction tax. This approach is a path to enhanced forms of cooperation, one open to everyone, everyone who wants to take part in them, and one day able to bring us together around these principles. In this Europe, the European Parliament will have a major role to play, because through its control it will ensure overall coherence.

Transparency/integration

I also want to make Europe more transparent, I've argued in favour of budget, fiscal and social integration – this has happened. It calls for a political union that's stronger – otherwise it is hemiplegic –, which means a Euro Area government and new financial instruments for taking action, and a budget – under certain conditions – for the Euro Area coordinated with the European Union budget. All this being controlled by the European Parliament and the national parliaments.

I would like next year's European elections to provide an opportunity for a major debate on Europe's future, which will allow us to determine the policies we'll – no doubt – have to conduct and above all, the architecture we'll have to propose. Without forgetting the candidates for the essential posts of our EU, so that there's a great collective deliberation in Europe and that we emerge with stronger legitimacy. Because Europe must have the institutions which will allow it to influence the world's destiny.

Europe is a continent of peace and democracy which seeks nothing for itself but brings to the rest of the world its heritage, its values and its principles. And so Europe must play its part in fighting for democracy and human dignity.

Mali

That's why I decided on behalf of France to intervene in Mali. I took this decision in the framework of international law. There was no time to lose, or more specifically, if we had taken our time, the whole of Mali would have been conquered by terrorists. I made this choice on behalf of France because it was our responsibility. We were in the region. We could immediately provide the aid the Malian President needed from us. I also took this decision on behalf of Europe, and on behalf of the international community.

I want to thank the European Parliament for its support and understanding at this unique moment, in which a European country stood up for an African country. Not to reopen the wounds of the past, but rather to bring dignity to a nation that had helped my own country free itself from servitude during World War II.

I assure you, here, that Mali will regain her territorial integrity; the time is near. Then it will be time for a political effort, for dialogue, reconciliation and stability in that country and in that part of West Africa; a time for development. That will be the moment for African organizations to come forward. They stand ready; they are already on the ground. It must also be a moment for Europe, because we must work not only for peace but for the security of that part of Africa.

The Malian army and Afisma [African-led International Support Mission to Mali] forces must be trained and equipped so that they can provide security on the ground, prevent atrocities and the settling of accounts, foster a political transition, and restore democracy and the electoral process.

There are expectations of Europe, for these reasons, and Europe is also expected to participate in the Sahel's development, learning from the policies that previously tried and failed to prevent the collapse of these countries' economies and, in particular, the development of trafficking. I want to highlight the fact that the fight against drug trafficking is key if we want to fight terrorism, because terrorism is fuelled by drug trafficking throughout the world, and particularly in West Africa.

EU foreign policy/climate change

In this worldwide redistribution of power, we must leave no doubt of Europe's determination to support these values. But, here too, we must accept the consequences, with the clear-sightedness that is essential for developing a strategy to conduct a genuine common foreign policy, to have a European defence. France stands ready. Here too, it is time to end piecemeal initiatives and pool our forces and resources, to bring our industries closer together and also harmonize our positions in international bodies in which Europe must speak with one voice and act to resolve the conflicts that offend human consciences.

I am thinking of Syria. Of Iran, and preventing nuclear proliferation. Of the need to influence negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, because the time has come there too, and Europe must not wait for the United States, but should already be hastening the resumption of talks.

Europe must also do its part on climate change. France welcomes the opportunity to host the 2015 Climate Conference, but we will not succeed alone. Here too, Europe must set an example on renewable energies and energy efficiency.

European project

I believe in Europe, because I think it is useful, not just for the Europeans but for the whole world, and the best way for Europe to protect its interests is to champion its model and its values at global level. We must get back to the very meaning of the European project, a project founded on values and on the free movement of people,

knowledge, ideas, creations, culture and creativity. It is by continually recalling this ambition that we will be worthy of our history and, most important, of the hopes of new generations.

People expect a Europe of knowledge, a Europe of universities, research, culture. We Europeans have a culture that transcends our continent. We shouldn't consider it a legacy to protect, but rather a movement to promote. That's the point of the cultural exception – the idea that intellectual creations are not merchandise like other works, the conviction that our nations' cultural identity is essential, and that pluralism and freedom must be defended at global level.

Once again, here before this assembly, I – like others before me – call for a cultural dimension to the European enterprise. That means guaranteeing intellectual property and copyright; defining as a group the economic and fiscal rules ensuring that artists are paid more than those who circulate their work, i.e. access providers; ensuring that we have a digital Europe in which technologies serve civilization.

Ladies and gentlemen, François Mitterrand stood before the European Parliament 18 years ago – 18 years! – and asked those who were listening to do everything in their power to make sure Europeans loved Europe. Eighteen years later, let's admit that we are far from having accomplished that task, and the risk is no longer indifference but detachment, if not a breakup.

It is our responsibility, and as heads of state and government, the European Commission and the European Parliament, we must confront it head-on.

Let me say quite clearly: either the wake-up call will be collective or it won't happen, but time is short.

We can end this difficult period by embarking on a new path. Europe has been able to overcome much graver trials than those of a crisis, but we must outline a new ambition. And this new ambition must not lessen our previous one. It's an illusion to think we should abandon the project we've been working on for years in order to build new hope. On the contrary, the things that remain to be done must be based on everything we've already achieved. And I know that any European advance must correspond to a new stage of democracy.


Ladies and gentlemen, it is you who are going to decide to take this new step, to accomplish the European project and advance democracy.

Höheres Leistungsniveau und ein wenig mehr Gerechtigkeit 93,61

03.12.2013 · Die erste Pisa-Studie vor zehn Jahren war ein Schock für Deutschland - doch jetzt haben die deutschen Schüler viele Rückstände aufgeholt. Bei der jüngsten Untersuchung lagen ihre Leistungen über dem Durchschnitt.

[Artikel](#) [Bilder](#) (1) [Lesermeinungen](#) (0)



© DPA  Die deutschen Schüler haben aufgeholt

Die erste Pisa-Schulstudie vor mehr als zehn Jahren war ein Schock für Deutschland: Die 15-jährigen Schüler schnitten im internationalen Vergleich schlecht ab, und zudem war in kaum einem anderen Industrieland der Zusammenhang zwischen sozialer Herkunft und Bildungserfolg enger. Doch Deutschlands Schüler haben wieder aufgeholt. Ein Überblick.

Was wird bei Pisa getestet?

Pisa steht für „Programme for International Student Assessment“. Verantwortlich für die Untersuchung ist die Organisation für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (OECD). Bildungsforscher testen dabei alle drei Jahre weltweit in repräsentativen Stichproben die Leistungen von 15 Jahre alten Schülern. Der erste Test fand im Jahr 2000 statt. Die aktuelle Untersuchung fand im vergangenen Jahr statt, weshalb von Pisa 2012 die Rede ist. Es nahmen 510.000 Schüler aus 65 teilnehmenden Ländern und Volkswirtschaften teil. In Deutschland waren es 5000 Schüler

Getestet wird bei Pisa jeweils das Leistungsniveau in den Bereichen Lesekompetenz, Mathematik und Naturwissenschaften. Dabei gibt es bei jeder Testrunde einen Schwerpunkt. Bei Pisa 2012 war dies Mathematik.

Wie haben sich die Leistungen der deutschen Schüler entwickelt?

Die Leistungen haben sich in den vergangenen Jahren stetig verbessert. Bei der jüngsten Studie lag das Leistungsniveau der 15-Jährigen - gemessen an einer Punkteskala - erstmals in Mathematik, Lesekompetenz und Naturwissenschaften über dem OECD-Durchschnitt. Ausschlaggebend war vor allem, dass die leistungsschwachen und sozial benachteiligten Schüler besser abschnitten.

In Mathematik zählen laut der jüngsten Untersuchung 18 Prozent der Jugendlichen zur Gruppe der besonders leistungsschwachen Schüler. Dieser Anteil lag im Jahr 2003, als das letzte Mal Mathematik im Zentrum stand, noch bei fast 22 Prozent. Zudem erzielten die leistungsschwächsten zehn Prozent der Schüler bei Pisa 2012 über 20 Punkte mehr als die entsprechende Gruppe vor zehn Jahren.

Ist das deutsche Schulsystem gerechter geworden?

Ja, auch wenn weiter ein Zusammenhang zwischen sozialer Herkunft und Schulerfolg besteht. Dieser ist allerdings im Vergleich zu den ersten Untersuchungen schwächer geworden und liegt mittlerweile in etwa auf dem OECD-Durchschnittsniveau. Von den 39 Ländern und Volkswirtschaften, die an Pisa 2003 und Pisa 2012 teilgenommen haben, konnten lediglich Deutschland, Mexiko und die Türkei in diesem Zeitraum sowohl ihre Leistungen im Bereich Mathematik als auch die Chancengerechtigkeit steigern.

Dennoch hat die soziale Herkunft weiter Einfluss auf den Schulerfolg. In Deutschland erklären sich die verschiedenen Leistungen in Mathematik zu 17 Prozent aus Unterschieden im sogenannten sozioökonomischen Hintergrund der Schüler. Im OECD-Durchschnitt sind es 15 Prozent. Im Jahr 2003 lag der Anteil in Deutschland noch bei 24 Prozent.

Was misst Pisa noch?

Die Studie versucht beispielsweise auch, das schulische Engagement zu erfassen. So gaben etwa im OECD-Durchschnitt 35 Prozent der Schüler an, in den zwei Wochen vor der Pisa-Erhebung zu spät zur Schule gekommen zu sein. In Deutschland lag der Anteil bei 23 Prozent.

Auch die Zahl der Sitzenbleiber wird im internationalen Vergleich erhoben. In Deutschland gab ein Fünftel der Schüler an, mindestens eine Klasse wiederholt zu haben. In Europa war der Anteil nur in Belgien, Frankreich, Luxemburg, den Niederlanden, Portugal und Spanien höher. Allerdings verringerte sich der Anteil an Sitzenbleibern zwischen 2003 und 2012 leicht von 23,1 Prozent auf 20,3 Prozent.

Erfolgsmodell Mindestlohn

93,63

03.12.2013 · In Großbritannien ist die Lohnuntergrenze längst allgemein akzeptiert. Die befürchteten Schäden auf dem Arbeitsmarkt sind ausgeblieben. Doch man hat ihn behutsam eingeführt.

Von MARCUS THEURER, LONDON

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© PICTURE-ALLIANCE / PHOTOSHOT 1999 führte Tony Blair in Großbritannien den Mindestlohn ein

Vor drei Jahren verschickte die Londoner Denkfabrik Institute for Government einen Fragebogen an 800 Politikwissenschaftler im Land: Welche politische Weichenstellung in Großbritannien war nach Meinung der Fachleute in den vergangenen drei Jahrzehnten die erfolgreichste? Der mit Abstand meistgenannte Reformerfolg war die Einführung eines nationalen Mindestlohns – vor anderen wichtigen Richtungsentscheidungen wie dem Friedensprozess in Nordirland und der Privatisierung von Staatsunternehmen. Während die Deutschen über das Für und Wider eines nun auch hierzulande geplanten allgemeinen Mindestlohns streiten, ist das Thema auf der Insel schon lange kein Aufreger mehr.

„Wir waren am Anfang sehr skeptisch, aber der Mindestlohn hat sich als eine echte Erfolgsgeschichte erwiesen“, sagt Lena Tochtermann, die Leiterin der Abteilung für Arbeitsmarktpolitik der Confederation of British Industry (CBI), dem führenden Unternehmensverband in Großbritannien. 6,31 Pfund (7,60 Euro) in der Stunde sind derzeit die Lohnuntergrenze auf der Insel. Im internationalen Vergleich liegt der Mindestlohn der Briten damit im Mittelfeld. Seit der Einführung im Frühjahr 1999 ist er erheblich aufgestockt worden, um rund 75 Prozent und damit deutlich stärker als das allgemeine Gehaltsniveau gestiegen ist. Rund eine Million Arbeitnehmer arbeiten zum Mindestlohn.

Ganz oder gar nicht

Wie heute in Deutschland gab es auch in Großbritannien [viele Gegner](#), als die damalige sozialdemokratische Labour-Regierung von Tony Blair vor vierzehn Jahren den Mindestlohn verordnete. In Großbritannien, das über einen der am wenigsten reglementierten Arbeitsmärkte der industrialisierten Welt verfügt, galt der staatliche Eingriff in den Arbeitsmarkt vielen Kritikern als Teufelszeug. „Wir hatten damals geradezu

apokalyptische Vorhersagen, über die Verwüstungen, die der Mindestlohn auf dem Arbeitsmarkt anrichten werde“, erinnert sich der Ökonom Robert Elliott. Der Professor an der Universität Aberdeen ist Mitglied der staatlichen Low Pay Commission, die jährlich Empfehlungen über die Höhe des Mindestlohns abgibt.

In der schlichtesten Spielart der ökonomischen Arbeitsmarkttheorie ist der Mindestlohn entweder wirkungslos oder er vernichtet Arbeitsplätze: Ist er zu niedrig, hilft er den Betroffenen nicht, weil die Löhne am Markt ohnehin höher sind, ist er zu hoch raubt er ihnen die Stelle. Die Erfahrungen in Großbritannien sind aber andere: [Empirische Studien zeigen immer wieder, dass der Mindestlohn nicht zu dem Stellenkahlschlag im Niedriglohnsektor geführt hat, den Gegner vorhergesagt haben.](#) Auch in der Rezession der vergangenen Jahre hat die Lohnuntergrenze demnach weder Beschäftigte den Arbeitsplatz gekostet, noch die Chancen für Arbeitslose geschmälert, eine Stelle zu finden. Allerdings scheint der Mindestlohn tendenziell zu etwas kürzeren Arbeitszeiten im Niedriglohnsektor zu führen.

Differenzierter und behutsamer

Machen sich die Mindestlohn-Gegner in Deutschland also unnötig Sorgen? Er wolle da keine Ratschläge geben, sagt der Wirtschaftsforscher Elliott. „Dafür kenne ich den deutschen Arbeitsmarkt zu wenig.“ Aber als einen wichtigen Erfolgsfaktor für Großbritannien nennt er, dass die Lohnbarriere zunächst sehr niedrig angesetzt worden sei. „Wir haben auf einem bescheidenen Niveau begonnen. Als wir in den folgenden Jahren feststellten, dass die von den Skeptikern befürchteten Schäden am Arbeitsmarkt nicht eintraten, wurde dafür deutlich aufgestockt.“ Die erste Lohnuntergrenze lag bei umgerechnet nur 4,35 Euro.

Weitere Artikel

[Was sagt die Armutsstatistik? Das Land der sieben Millionen armen Schlucker](#)

[Kommentar zum Mindestlohn: Die Handschrift der Kanzlerin](#)

Die Behutsamkeit der Briten fehlt in Deutschland: Hier steigt der Staat mit 8,50 Euro [und damit relativ hoch](#) ein. Die Briten differenzieren den Mindestlohn auch nach Altersgruppen. Die Untergrenze für junge Beschäftigte zwischen 18 und 21 Jahren liegt mit derzeit 5,03 Pfund um rund 20 Prozent unter dem für ältere Arbeitnehmer – eine Vorsichtsmaßnahme, um den Jüngeren bessere Chancen zu geben den Einstieg in den Arbeitsmarkt zu finden. In den deutschen Plänen ist eine solche Abstufung nicht vorgesehen.

„Der Mindestlohn findet in den britischen Unternehmen inzwischen breite Akzeptanz“, sagt die Arbeitsmarktexpertin Tochtermann vom Wirtschaftsverband CBI. Das liege nicht zuletzt an der Unabhängigkeit der Lohnfestsetzung. Die Low Pay Commission wird vom Wirtschaftsminister berufen. Sie ist jedoch – ähnlich wie nun auch in Deutschland vereinbart – paritätisch besetzt: Dem Gremium gehören jeweils drei Vertreter der Arbeitgeber und der Gewerkschaften sowie drei unabhängige Fachleute wie Elliott an. Die Empfehlungen der Kommission sind zwar nicht verbindlich, doch ist die Regierung dem Rat der Fachleute in der Praxis bisher meistens gefolgt. „Der Mindestlohn war ein Experiment“, sagt Tochtermann. „Aber eines, das sich ausgezahlt hat.“

La France délaisse ses élèves les plus faibles

93,65

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La France est un des pays de l'OCDE où les inégalités scolaires sont les plus marquées. Les 10 % d'élèves les moins performants ont vu leurs résultats chuter de 23 points en France entre 2003 et 2012.

Les faiseurs du [classement PISA](#) ne cessent de le répéter depuis dix ans. Si elle maintient le niveau de son élite, la France ne s'occupe pas suffisamment de ses élèves en difficulté. C'est un des pays de l'[OCDE](#) où les inégalités scolaires sont les plus marquées. Et le classement PISA 2012 confirme cet état de fait qui tend même à s'aggraver de façon inquiétante. Par rapport aux résultats de 2003, il y a à peu près autant d'élèves très performants en France, mais surtout beaucoup plus d'élèves en difficulté, ce qui sous-entend que le système s'est dégradé principalement par le bas entre 2003 et 2012. «Le système d'éducation français est plus inégalitaire en 2012 qu'il ne l'était neuf ans auparavant. En France, lorsque l'on appartient à un milieu défavorisé, on a clairement aujourd'hui moins de chances de réussir qu'en 2003.», indique l'OCDE.

Alors qu'en 2003, la proportion d'élèves de 15 ans très performants à l'évaluation PISA était légèrement au-dessus de la moyenne de l'OCDE et que, à l'autre extrémité de l'échelle, la proportion d'élèves en difficulté se situait bien en dessous de la moyenne de l'OCDE, ces deux proportions se retrouvent aujourd'hui au niveau de la moyenne de l'OCDE. Ceci explique la baisse générale des résultats des élèves de 15 ans, qui a fait passer la France du groupe des pays se situant au-dessus de la moyenne de l'OCDE à celui des pays dont la performance est «dans la moyenne de l'OCDE». Les 10% d'élèves les moins performants ont vu leurs résultats chuter de 23 points en France entre 2003 et 2012, alors que les résultats des 10% d'élèves les plus performants n'ont baissé que de 6 points; l'écart entre ces deux groupes d'élèves s'est donc creusé de 17 points rendant le système d'éducation français encore plus «dichotomique» qu'auparavant, expliquent les créateurs de PISA.

Les élèves issus de l'immigration sont deux fois plus susceptibles d'être en difficulté

Si on s'intéresse à la «compréhension de l'écrit», la proportion d'élèves très performants a augmenté de 4 points de pourcentage. La proportion d'élèves peu performants a en revanche elle aussi augmenté de 4 points de pourcentage sur cette période. Les élèves issus de l'immigration sont au moins deux fois plus susceptibles de compter parmi les élèves en difficulté. La proportion d'élèves issus de l'immigration se situant sous le «niveau 2» en mathématiques lors du cycle PISA 2012 ne dépasse pas 16% en Australie et au Canada, mais atteint 43% en France et globalement plus de 40% uniquement en Autriche, en Finlande, en Italie, au Mexique, au Portugal, en Espagne et en Suède.

Même après contrôle du milieu socio-économique, en France, les élèves issus de l'immigration accusent des scores inférieurs de 37 points à ceux des élèves autochtones, soit presque l'équivalent d'une année d'études. En France, les élèves issus d'un milieu socio-économique défavorisé n'obtiennent pas seulement des résultats nettement inférieurs, «ils sont aussi moins impliqués, attachés à leur école, persévérants, et beaucoup plus anxieux par rapport à la moyenne des pays de l'OCDE.», est-il encore indiqué. Pas de quoi pavoiser...

A Shanghai, premier du classement PISA, la majorité des élèves sont très performants

En France, les proportions d'élèves très performants et d'élèves en difficulté sont au niveau de la moyenne des pays de l'OCDE, s'établissant respectivement à 13% et à 22%. À titre indicatif, à Shanghai (Chine), premier du classement PISA, la majorité des élèves de 15 ans (55%) compte parmi les élèves très performants à l'évaluation PISA. Entre 20% et 40% des élèves entrent dans cette catégorie à Singapour (40%), au Taipei chinois (37%), à Hong-Kong (Chine) (34%), en Corée (31%), au Liechtenstein (25%), à Macao (Chine) (24%), au Japon (24%) et en Suisse (21%).

L'OCDE note qu'il est également intéressant de comparer la répartition des élèves en France à celle du Danemark ou de l'Irlande, qui obtiennent un score moyen légèrement au-dessus de celui de la France. Ces deux pays présentent un pourcentage d'élèves très performants inférieur de 2 à 3 points de pourcentage, mais un pourcentage d'élèves en difficulté inférieur de 5 points de pourcentage...

Parmi les exemples positifs, entre 2000 et 2012, l'Italie, la Pologne et le Portugal ont réduit leur proportion d'élèves en difficulté tout en augmentant celle de leurs élèves très performants. La Pologne, dont la performance a augmenté de 27 points entre 2003 et 2012, recueille les fruits de sa réforme globale qui lui a permis de diminuer sa proportion d'élèves peu performants (passant de 22% à 14%) et d'augmenter en même temps sa proportion d'élèves très performants (passant de 10% à 17%).

Le « choc Pisa » 2001 a provoqué des réformes efficaces en Allemagne

[L'Allemagne a connu un véritable « choc éducatif »](#) en 2001 avec la publication des résultats de la première étude PISA. Les résultats des lycéens allemands en mathématiques et en sciences étaient en dessous de la moyenne des pays de l'OCDE... De nets progrès ont depuis été réalisés. La conférence des ministres chargés de l'Éducation avait proposé des mesures dans sept domaines. Elles concernaient notamment l'amélioration des compétences linguistiques dès l'âge pré-scolaire, une meilleure corrélation entre les structures pré-scolaires et primaires, l'amélioration de l'enseignement à l'école primaire et l'amélioration continue des compétences de lecture. Mais aussi la mise en relation des mathématiques et des sciences pour une meilleure compréhension des liens interdisciplinaires. L'étude PISA ayant montré que les élèves issus de milieu défavorisés étaient particulièrement handicapés, un soutien avait été mis en place en particulier pour les enfants et les jeunes issus de l'immigration.

12/03/2013 06:01 PM

Feeding the Bubble

Is the Next Crash Brewing?

93,67

By Martin Hesse and [Anne Seith](#)

Central banks around the world are pumping trillions into the economy. The goal is to stimulate growth, but their actions are also driving up prices in the real estate and equities markets. The question is no longer whether there will be a crash, but when.

When 42-year-old hedge fund manager Mark Spitznagel wants to forget about his high-stakes business for a while, he heads to the goat farm he and his wife Amy purchased in the bucolic hills of Michigan. There, he produces cheese according to environmentally sustainable methods, because he views modern agriculture, with its large-scale pesticide use and automated factory farms, as degenerate. In fact, he says, factory farming is "an ideal metaphor" for the economy.

In Spitznagel's view, the world's financial and equities markets are also dysfunctional, and what happens there is unhealthy and anything but sustainable. As a money manager, he has also opted for an alternative business model of sorts: He's betting on a crash.

For his customers, Spitznagel's multi-billion-dollar fund acts as an insurance policy against the next meltdown in the financial system. When the market is doing well, they lose modest amounts of money. But they cash in as soon as prices take a nosedive, even when all other investments are going up in smoke.

The hedge fund manager has made a lot of money in the past with his prognoses, and he is convinced that substantial turbulence is on the cards for the near future. "The setup is there for it," says Spitznagel.

'It Might Go Badly'

Since the last crisis, central banks around the world have pumped trillions into the economic cycle, both by lowering interest rates and buying up securities in the markets. For central bankers like United States Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, the aim of the policy was to stimulate the economy and rescue banks that could no longer raise capital elsewhere. But this "grand monetary experiment," as Spitznagel calls it, has side effects. Because it makes borrowing cheaper than even before and saving all but pointless, it encourages investors to pursue reckless deals. Share prices are exploding on stock exchanges around the world, while real estate prices are rising at an alarmingly fast pace. And many US companies are now in as much debt as they were before the financial crisis.

To take Spitznagel's metaphor a step further, the flood of money coming from central bankers acts like a highly aggressive, artificial fertilizer. It generates enormous yields in the short term, but eventually leads to potential devastation.

For this reason, the ongoing party in the stock and real estate markets is beginning to feel uncanny to a growing number of observers. "It might go badly," Nobel laureate Robert Shiller told SPIEGEL. Some economists are even convinced that the question is no longer whether the next crash is coming, but when.

For brokers on the venerable trading floor at the New York Stock Exchange, such predictions are hugely exaggerated. "This is not a bubble," says Peter Tuchman, who has worked on Wall Street for almost 30 years and, with his white, Einstein-like hairstyle, half a dozen bracelets and well-worn running shoes, is a legend on

the floor. He taps his smartphone a few times and pulls up a graph depicting the S&P 500 index of stock prices for 500 large companies, which has gone up by 166 percent since it hit rock-bottom in 2009. "This is a stable development," says Tuchman, pointing to the graph, which is directed uniformly upward. In his view, these are simply good times following on the heels of years of crisis. "There are new company listings every day," he says. "That is a good sign to me."

It's the first Thursday in November, the day of the Twitter IPO, and the jocular trader is completely in his element when a nine-year-old girl in a tulle dress and actor Patrick Stewart, who played Captain Jean-Luc Picard on the "Star Trek: The Next Generation" series, ring the traditional opening bell.

At 9:45 a.m., during the initial pricing phase, the Twitter share price jumps from \$26 (€19) to more than \$40. At 9:54 a.m., Twitter is trading at about \$42 a share, and at 10:49 it's at \$45.10. "If you bought the stock yesterday evening and sell it today, you'll have earned a return on investment of more than 70 percent," says one of Tuchman's fellow traders, with a note of awe in his voice.

Twitter hasn't made any money yet, nor does it have a convincing idea of how it will do so.

Other tech stocks are also doing extremely well, just as they were in the heyday of the New Economy. Amazon's share price has almost doubled in two years, while electric car manufacturer Tesla has gained 300 percent in market value in the same period.

"It is a complete joke," says hedge fund manager Spitznagel. He explains that the market is driven by investors' confidence that prices will continue to rise in the future. He says it is "a self-reinforcing process entirely disconnected from economic reality."

A Hunger for German Stocks

For many people, what Spitznagel is describing is typically American. In the heartland of capitalism, the crash has been to economic life what the Colt gun was to the Wild West. In Germany, on the other hand, centuries-old family businesses operating in brick-and-mortar factories make sophisticated tools, machines and systems, with which real, palpable, everyday products are made in the rest of the world. One would think that prices would be more down-to-earth in such a grounded environment.

Dürr AG, which makes machine tools in Germany's southwestern Swabia region, is one of those traditional companies. In business since 1895, Dürr is a supplier to automakers, as well as the chemical and aviation industry, and it manufactures production and environment technology systems -- a thoroughly solid product line.

But Dürr's share price has doubled within a year and increased fourfold in the last two years. A share of Dürr stock costs €66 today, whereas it could be had for less than €4 in 2009.

That's because international investors are hungry for securities like Dürr shares, which embody the successful model of Germany's export economy. It's also because companies like Dürr benefit from growth in emerging economies, and because their operations are in Germany and not in one of the crisis-ridden countries of the euro zone.

This demand has driven the MDAX, a German stock index for mid-sized companies, from 11,400 to 16,300 points within a year. The index is currently almost four times as high as it was during the stock market boom in 2000, far outperforming the DAX itself, an index of Germany's 30 largest companies -- although the DAX is also breaking one record after the next.

Germany is a hot commodity among investors, in both the equities and real estate markets. Prices for single-family homes and condominiums in major cities like Munich, Hamburg, Frankfurt and Cologne are rising faster than rents, a sign that speculators are pushing their way into the market. Buyers are from Germany, Italy,

Eastern Europe and Asia, and they are buying German real estate because they believe that by investing in "concrete gold," they can protect themselves against the dangers of inflation.

This buying frenzy creates potential trouble spots around the world. Real estate prices in major Chinese cities have increased by more than 20 percent in only a year, wealthy foreigners are snapping up luxury property in Istanbul, and in the United Kingdom the government is giving an additional boost to the economy by offering a special loan program for homebuyers.

In the last 12 months, real estate prices in the United States have gone up more than they have since 2006. Some cities, like San Francisco and Las Vegas, have even seen price increases of 24 to 27 percent. Ironically, the last crisis began in the overheated US housing market.

'Ignoring the Risks'

Some economists seek to allay fears by noting that the real estate market still has a long way to go before it reaches the levels that triggered the last crash, and that prices are still averaging 50 percent lower than they were then. But who says that you have to reach the most inflated point in the last crisis before a dramatic downturn sets in? And at what point does a solid growth trend turn into unhealthy hype?

"There are two types of bubble," says economic historian Werner Abelshauser, "the classic and the modern type." The mother of all classic bubbles was the market euphoria that took hold in the United States in the 1920s and came to an abrupt end on Oct. 24, 1929, known as Black Thursday. "From maids to taxi drivers, people were intoxicated with the idea that an age of never-ending prosperity had begun. They bought refrigerators and cars, as well as stocks, frequently on credit," says Abelshauser.

Black Thursday was followed by a Black Monday and a Black Tuesday. Within a few days, the benchmark Dow Jones index had lost a third of its value.

In the late 1990s, with the advent of the Internet age, investors believed once again that new economic laws applied and that growth rates would continue to rise. The term "New Economy" was coined. Once again, people who barely knew what a share was began trading in the market, even scrambling to buy shares in companies with nothing more than a vague prospect of ever turning a profit.

The New Economy bubble burst when the first of these companies were unable to fulfill overinflated expectations, and when several cases of fraud came to light.

A Blind Eye to Excessive Hype

Even Abelshauser, a prudent man with gray hair and a somewhat skeptical look in his eyes, lost money in the stock market at the time. What fascinates Abelshauser even more than the phenomenon of a bull market propelled by milkmaids and dentists is the second type of speculative bubble: one based on the new methods of financial mathematics, and the mad belief that risks can be largely overcome with sophisticated financial products.

The first such crash occurred in 1987, as a result of misguided speculation in financial derivatives, followed by a second crash in 2008. This time the culprits were banks, which had sugarcoated the numbers on subprime mortgage loans and sold them in large numbers.

Instead of eliminating investment risk, the modern mathematical models only increased investors' willingness to take risks, causing them to turn a blind eye to excessive hype.

Another phenomenon has also been around since the 1970s: debt management policy. After the oil shocks and the economic crisis they triggered, governments tried to jump-start their economies by borrowing and spending

more. "The more money that is injected into the economic cycle, the more room there is for speculative bubbles," says Abelshauser.

Today central banks, especially, have encouraged the flow of capital with their extremely low benchmark interest rates and financial bailouts for banks and governments.

But the situation becomes dangerous when even the massive sums central banks are pumping in the economy don't lead to a rise in consumption and corporate investment. Economists like Carl Christian von Weizsäcker of the Max Planck Institute for Research on Collective Goods in Bonn, Germany see evidence of a global investment bottleneck, noting that too few factories are being built and not enough new products developed. This is offset by the growing mountain of savings aging Western societies are accumulating as a safeguard for the future.

Exacerbating a Problem

It's a misguided approach, though. The consequence of a high savings rate and a low investment is a decline in interest rates. Insurance companies and pension funds come under great pressure to invest their customers' assets in ways that are at least somewhat profitable. The flood of money coming from central banks only exacerbates the problem.

Central bankers claim they will be able to use the tools of monetary policy to extract the money from the global economy once again -- at just the right time and in the right amounts. At times, it almost sounds as if they were the ones who were trying to use numbers to obscure the risks.

But the danger is real, and the only question is how far prices on financial markets have already strayed from fundamental values.

The problem is that every expert comes up with a different answer. "It is a bit tricky," Nathan Sheets, global head of international economics for US-based Citigroup, says of the situation in bond markets. Low interest rates make borrowing cheaper than ever. US companies alone, by issuing bonds to willing investors, have borrowed money at a faster pace this year than ever before. If central banks decided to stem the flow of money, painful corrections could ensue.

Sheets is less concerned about prices on US stock markets. "There are a large number of firms that are extremely profitable and internationally competitive, with strong balance sheets," he says.

Concerns over the Bull Market

Hedge fund manager Spitznagel, for his part, cites a simple indicator to substantiate his concerns over the bull market: Tobin's Q, named after its inventor, Nobel laureate James Tobin. Roughly speaking, Tobin's Q indicates how high a company's market value is in comparison to all of its assets.

Instances when this ratio has been high in the past have always been followed by a crash at some point, says Spitznagel. Tobin's Q is now extremely high in the United States.

In many places, it has become difficult to cite corporate profits as justification for rapidly rising share prices. This doesn't just apply in the glamorous world of US technology stocks, but also in the rock-solid *Mittelstand*, the term used to describe Germany's small and medium-sized companies. On the MDAX, for example, the average ratio of share prices to corporate profits is at an all-time high. It would take almost 27 years for the companies to earn what investors are paying for their stock. And even though analysts are predicting declining profits, share prices continue to rise.

Still, market psychologist Joachim Goldberg does not see a bubble forming in the German stock market. He too believes that a rise in the market only becomes dangerous when large numbers of people get caught up in the hype.

But there can be no question of that today. "This is perhaps the most-hated bull market I've ever experienced," says Goldberg, who used to work for Deutsche Bank and now runs his own firm in Frankfurt, where he studies what influences investors in making their decisions.

People noted that prices were rising, but at the same time they heard economists warning against the risks, says Goldberg, including the euro crisis, the interest rate turnaround or whatever the admonishers felt was the greatest threat at a given moment. For that reason, he explains, many private investors tend to be skeptical.

Plenty of Potential Problem Spots

But even Goldberg is concerned. "People prefer to invest in things with which they haven't had any negative experiences, such as the real estate market in Germany," he says.

Germans are also avidly investing in Bitcoin, the virtual currency that rose above \$1,000 for the first time last week. In early October, one Bitcoin was still worth less than €200. The volume of the currency is limited by a complex algorithm, which also drives up the price.

"The same prophets who were advocating investing in gold until recently are now pushing the Bitcoin," says Goldberg. The behavioral scientist almost succumbed to the temptation himself recently. "I wanted to invest, but I hesitated for a day, and the price almost doubled the next day," Goldberg says with a chuckle.

The irritation he felt afterwards is what typically leads to speculative bubbles, says Goldberg. "When people see how their neighbors are getting rich with apparently no effort at all, and the psychological strain resulting from lost profits becomes too great, they begin ignoring the risks and jump on the bandwagon."

Will the next conflagration erupt online, with the collapse of an artificial currency that most people still see as a gimmick dreamed up by a few Internet nerds? Or perhaps in the art market, which has attracted speculators who fancy themselves art aficionados?

These niche markets are probably still too small to set off a global quake. Still, there are plenty of potential trouble spots.

Hedge fund manager Spitznagel, at any rate, is convinced that the next crash isn't far off. "We don't know where it is going to start," he says, "It won't be pretty."

Translated from the German by Christopher Sultan

How the E.U. Pushed Ukraine East

93,72

By *NICOLAI N. PETRO*

ODESSA, Ukraine — Both Russia and Ukraine consider themselves European nations, part of Western civilization, and in both countries pluralities favor membership in the European Union. So how did the European Union manage to turn such a favorable situation against itself?

By pitting both nations against each other, and then attempting to force Ukraine to choose Europe over Russia. Instead of adopting a strategy that would have allowed Ukraine to capitalize on its close cultural, religious and economic ties with Russia, and which could have also served to build deeper ties between Western Europe and Russia, from the outset European negotiators went out of their way to turn Union association into a loyalty test.

First, they rejected Ukraine's suggestion — to which Russia initially had no objection — that accession to the European Union could be compatible with membership in the Customs Union, the precursor to a Eurasian Union linking former Soviet states. Now they have apparently also rejected President Viktor Yanukovich's proposal to resolve the remaining issues (the main one being the very real possibility of European goods being dumped into Russia through Ukraine) through a three-way format that would include efforts to curb cross-border smuggling — something one would think would also concern Brussels.

Second, instead of highlighting those values that would have honored Ukraine's Slavic European identity, the European Union actively promoted the notion that accession was a "civilizational choice" between Russia and Europe. Since the majority of Ukrainians traditionally regard Russia as their closest and friendliest neighbor, is it any wonder that they balked at such a choice?

Finally, European negotiators made the strategic error of ignoring substantial differences in traditional and religious values. The fear among a significant part of Ukraine's Christian population is that the European Union would impose a very liberal moral agenda on the Ukrainian legal and educational system, including nontraditional family values that many here categorically reject. Spokesmen for the European Union made no effort to assuage these concerns, and their condescension on this matter has placed a ticking bomb under European integration efforts throughout the entire region. In sum, instead of approaching these negotiations as a partnership, the European Union behaved more like the owner of a country club which, while it might consider allowing Ukraine to caddy, would never consider granting it club membership. No wonder Mr. Yanukovich called the entire process "humiliating" for his country.

The most important lesson to be drawn from the European Union's failure is the urgent need to alter the confrontational mind-set that drives the Eastern Partnership initiative. The response of Union officials to Ukraine's decision to defer this agreement reveals what many already suspected, that at its core the initiative is nothing more than an attempt to push Russia out of Europe by drawing its boundaries further to the East. But since Ukraine and Russia already see themselves as part of Europe, we can expect both countries to reject what they see as the pointlessly confrontational choice the European Union is placing before them: that being European means turning one's back on Russia.

Indeed, this false choice only builds momentum for the Eurasian Union. For one thing, this group respects the common cultural heritage left from Soviet times, which still holds significant appeal throughout the region. Second, in an effort to bolster ties, Russia already provides economic assistance to the region that is an order of magnitude greater than anything the European Union is even considering. Meanwhile, the final objective of both the European and Eurasian Unions is the same — the formation of a free trade zone that extends from Dublin to Vladivostok. The only real difference is that, because of its size, the Eurasian Union will be able to

negotiate an agreement with the European Union on terms that are much more advantageous than those that individual states can extract.

Critics of the Eurasian Union, however, make two additional points. One is that, because Russia will dominate such a union, it must sooner or later turn into a new incarnation of the old U.S.S.R. The other is that mutual trade benefits negotiated among former Soviet states must inevitably lead to economic stagnation.

As the region's largest economy, Russia will always be the driving force of the Eurasian Union, though less so as more nations join. But the notion that Russia will be able to restore the former Soviet Union through closer economic and trade ties is simply ludicrous. For one thing, state sovereignty is the cornerstone of the Eurasian Union. And, in any case, European Union mandates are already far more intrusive than anything being contemplated by the Eurasian Union. Therefore, if any group should be suspect of harboring aspirations that undermine national sovereignty, it is the European Union.

The economic stagnation argument is similarly miscast, for it typically contrasts the entire European Union to Russia alone, rather than the entire Eurasian Union. Moreover, Russia is already part of the BRICS coalition (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), which analysts say will be among the world's dominant economies by 2050. Are critics really suggesting that it is in Ukraine's interest to shun the opportunity to gain access to these rising economic powerhouses simply because it also happens to expand Ukraine's relationship with Russia? Talk about cutting off your nose to spite your face!

Advocates for the Eurasian Union also make other key points. First, the Eurasian Union is already adopting many standards based on those of the European Union, but it seeks to introduce them gradually, so as not to impoverish the local population, a point that is especially relevant given Ukraine's fragile social and political balance. Second, they point out that European Union rules are very narrowly tailored to the needs of member states, which may not be optimal when competing for access to other markets.

The contrast could not be sharper. The European Union proposes abandoning a common heritage and adopting unpopular liberal alternatives. It proposes weakening national economic and legal autonomy in exchange for the ephemeral prospect of membership, which will be decades in coming, if it comes at all. Meanwhile, many Ukrainian industries will be ruined by the removal of tariffs on European Union goods.

The Eurasian Union proposes rallying around an existing common heritage. It proposes building economic partnerships to expand markets and establish new, globally competitive industries. Finally, it seeks to integrate these into the larger global economy on the basis of collective market strength. In the meantime, the Eurasian Union, unlike the European Union, is willing and able to offer significant financial subsidies to countries that wish to build such a transcontinental common market.

In retrospect, the sensible question to ask is not why Ukraine failed to sign the association agreement, but what possessed its leaders to think that doing so would be a good idea in the first place?

Nicolai N. Petro, professor of politics at the University of Rhode Island, is currently a Fulbright research scholar in Ukraine.

December 3, 2013

Americanized Labor Policy Is Spreading in Europe 93,74

By [EDUARDO PORTER](#)

In 2008, 1.9 million Portuguese workers in the private sector were [covered by collective bargaining agreements](#). Last year, the number was down to 300,000.

Spain [has eased restrictions](#) on collective layoffs and unfair dismissal, and softened limits on extending temporary work, allowing workers to be kept on fixed-term contracts for up to four years. Ireland and Portugal have frozen the [minimum wage](#), while Greece has cut it by nearly a fourth. This is what is known in Europe as “internal devaluation.”

Tethered to the euro and thus unable to devalue their currency to help make their goods less expensive in export markets, many European countries — especially those along the Continent’s southern rim that have been hammered by the financial crisis — have been furiously dismantling workplace protections in a bid to reduce the cost of labor.

The rationale — forcefully articulated by the German government of Angela Merkel, the European Commission and somewhat less enthusiastically by the International Monetary Fund — is that this is the only strategy available to restore competitiveness, increase employment and recover solvency.

These policy moves are radically changing the nature of Europe’s society.

“The speed of change has certainly been very fast,” said Raymond Torres, the chief economist of the International Labor Organization in Geneva. “As far as I can tell, these are the most significant changes since World War II.”

While most of the debate over Europe’s response to the financial crisis has focused on the budget austerity enveloping the Continent, the comparatively unheralded erosion of worker protection is likely to have at least as big and lasting an impact on Europe’s social contract.

“It has a disastrous effect on social cohesion and a tremendous effect on inequality,” argued Jean-Paul Fitoussi, an economics professor at the Institut d’Études Politiques de Paris. “Well-being has fallen all across Europe. One symptom is the rise of extremist political parties.”

Europe’s strategy offers a test of the role played by labor market institutions — from unions to the minimum wage — in moderating the soaring income inequality that has become one of the hallmarks of our era.

Inequality across much of Europe has widened, but it is still quite modest when compared with the vast income gap in the United States.

The question is whether relative equity can hold as workplace institutions that for decades protected European employees’ standard of living give way to a more lightly regulated, American-style approach, where the government hardly interferes in the job market and organized labor has little say.

The [evidence so far](#) suggests the answer is no. The drop in unionization in Portugal “is going to blow the wage distribution apart,” David Card, a labor economist at the University of California, Berkeley, said.

Perhaps the most compelling evidence that Europe’s tentative new path will lead to deepening inequality comes from the country that adopted the strategy earliest and came out at the other end a paragon of success: Germany.

The overhaul of the labor market started after German unification in the early 1990s, when factories in the less-productive Eastern part of the country found they could not compete at the pay scales provided in the West, and defected en masse from the sector agreements negotiated between industry associations and large unions. West German firms soon took up the strategy. The share of workers covered by collective labor agreements fell.

In the early 2000s — when a hobbled Germany won the moniker “sick man of Europe” — efforts to improve competitiveness and employment further eroded worker protections, fueling a boom in low-paid, short-term “mini-jobs” that today account for more than a fifth of German employment.

Today, Germany is seen as a shining example of the virtues of such reform efforts. It is an exporting powerhouse with an unemployment rate, according to the European statistical agency Eurostat, of 5.2 percent: the envy of the Western world. But on closer inspection it becomes apparent that not all Germans have benefited from Germany’s success.

In 1991, the richest 10 percent of Germans took in 26 percent of the nation’s income before taxes and transfers, according to [a report](#) by Kai Daniel Schmid and Ulrike Stein of the Macroeconomic Policy Institute in Düsseldorf, which is closely linked to the German Confederation of Trade Unions. By 2010 they took in 31 percent.

Over the same period, the slice of the nation’s income taken by the bottom half of the population fell to 17 percent, from 22 percent.

As Professor Card has noted, the [widening of the wage gap among German men](#) from 1996 through 2009 roughly matches that in the United States during the 1980s — one of the periods of fastest-growing income inequality since the Gilded Age.

And though inequality in Germany has abated somewhat over the last two years as the number of part-time, low-wage jobs has stabilized, it remains much higher than a decade ago.

Whether Germany’s strategy will be of any use to distressed European countries today is [hotly debated](#). German exports did take off, but domestic demand sagged, a direct consequence, critics say, of lower pay. So it took a long time for the efforts to produce jobs.

What’s more, the German rebound relied on a fast-growing global economy that was hungry for its exports. The world is very different today. “Demand from Asia was much more important than mini-jobs,” Mr. Torres of the I.L.O. argues.

But there is another issue at play. Even if the strategy were to eventually increase employment, what else will it do to Europe?

Andrew Watt, an economist who heads the Macroeconomic Policy Institute in Germany, worries that the push for labor market deregulation will cascade from one weak country to the next, as all engage in a futile race to create jobs by gaining market share from one another in a world of insufficient demand. “Whichever country is weakest at the time is forced into major cutbacks. First Germany, now Spain, next France,” he said.

“I am concerned about the longer-run costs,” Mr. Watt added. “It is hard to rebuild collective bargaining and welfare-state structures once they have been destroyed.”

Lowell Turner, who heads the Worker Institute at Cornell University, argues that there has always been a tension between the European Union’s economic project — centered on creating a vast single market — and the Continent’s deep-rooted commitment to social equity. The crisis put a thumb on the scales. “For a year or two governments protected their workers,” he said. But “the balance has tipped away from social Europe.”

There are signs of change, though. German elections earlier this year forced the Christian Democratic Union of Chancellor Merkel into a governing coalition with the Social Democratic Party. Part of the deal to form a government included [introducing Germany's first minimum wage](#), at 8.5 euros an hour, or about \$11.50.

Lifting German wages at the bottom end should help other European countries to some extent, expanding German demand for their products. It is perhaps overly optimistic, though, to assume Berlin would welcome similar policies among its poorer, weaker neighbors.

Rather, labor markets in Southern Europe seem destined to increasingly follow the American way. "This is a way to, indeed, make Europe very much more like the U.S.," Mr. Watt said. "With respect, that is not what most Europeans want."

« Il y a toujours eu de bons et de mauvais élèves mais l'écart est devenu un gouffre » 93,77

Le Monde.fr | 03.12.2013 à 18h38 • Mis à jour le 04.12.2013 à 07h36



Une cinquantaine d'enseignants ont répondu à l'appel à témoignages lancé sur LeMonde.fr à la suite de la publication de l'enquête PISA sur le niveau des élèves de 15 ans. Nous en publions une sélection.

« **Les résultats de l'étude PISA sont le reflet de ce que je constate sur le terrain** », par Emeline, professeure en zone d'éducation prioritaire (ZEP) depuis le début de sa carrière il y a onze ans.

« Je ne suis pas du tout surprise par les résultats de l'étude PISA qui sont le reflet de ce que je constate sur le terrain. Il y a toujours eu de « bons » et de « mauvais » élèves dans les classes mais l'écart entre les uns et les autres est devenu un gouffre ces dernières années. La constatation est particulièrement alarmante pour les 6^e que nous avons accueillis cette année dans mon établissement. On ne peut qu'être interpellé par les différences de niveau incroyables qui se sont déjà installées entre des élèves de seulement 11 ans. Alors que certains maîtrisent ce qui semble être le bagage normal pour un enfant sorti du primaire, d'autres nous arrivent en collège sans avoir la moindre base dans quelque domaine que ce soit. Et pourtant, ils sortent des mêmes écoles, ont eu les mêmes instituteurs. Il y a quelque chose de profondément perturbant à constater que certains peuvent passer cinq ou six ans en primaire sans en retirer rien du tout. On se sent alors désarmé quand on nous demande de faire nos programmes de collège, qui supposent un certain nombre d'acquis chez nos élèves, avec des gamins qui sont incapables d'écrire une phrase simple dans un français correct ou de mettre en route la moindre réflexion. »

« **Mes élèves de 6^e ignorent en général ce que signifie multiplier ou soustraire** », par Mary, 60 ans, enseignante en SVT depuis 1978, Charentes-Maritime

« Lors de la première enquête PISA, il y a environ dix ans, on s'était dit, avec les collègues, que c'était exagéré, que cela ne correspondait pas à ce qu'on faisait. C'était une enquête anglo-saxonne, nous étions l'exception. Et puis j'ai regardé ce qui était demandé et j'ai vu que les questions étaient pertinentes. C'est une enquête qui nous interpelle. Ce qu'elle dit se vérifie au quotidien. J'ai bien sûr constaté une diminution des compétences de mes élèves. Par exemple, je suis très frappée de constater que mes 6^e ne savent pas le sens des mots « horizontal » ou « vertical ». Ce n'est qu'un exemple mais ils manquent de vocabulaire et en général ignorent ce que signifie multiplier, soustraire. Et je ne parle pas de diviser... Ils sont très anxieux de savoir ce que « je veux » pour réponse. J'ai beaucoup de mal à les habituer à écrire leur idée afin qu'on en discute ensuite. Ils veulent tout apprendre par cœur et s'ils n'y arrivent pas (qui y arriverait ?) ils capitulent et basculent dans le « à quoi ça va me servir plus tard ? ». En effet, l'école ne s'occupe plus d'introduire du rêve et de la passion dans la tête des élèves. »

« **Les tests PISA ne correspondent pas à ce que l'on apprend en France** », par Stéphane, 45 ans, enseignant au Havre (Haute-Normandie)

« Même si la baisse du niveau des élèves est incontestable, j'accorde assez peu de crédit à cette enquête PISA, parce que les critères sont biaisés, et surtout parce que j'ai participé à une session PISA avec des élèves me montrant que, comme toute étude statistique, on pouvait lui faire dire ce que l'on voulait. D'abord l'étude compare des villes (Shanghai) et des Etats ! Pourquoi ne pas comparer Paris et Shanghai alors ? Ou Pékin et Grenoble ? Et puis je suis perplexe sur la façon de comparer les pays où il y a une culture de la réussite, avec une pression sociale terrible, avec le système français, plus démocratique.

Ensuite, les tests ne correspondent pas à ce que l'on apprend en France : dans beaucoup de pays on utilise le questionnaire à choix multiples, mais très peu en France. Si l'on formait nos élèves à ce type d'exercice, les résultats seraient totalement différents. (...) Que l'école française soit perfectible, tout le monde en convient, mais elle fonctionne plutôt bien, et elle fonctionnerait encore mieux si chaque ministre ne défaisait pas ce que son prédécesseur a fait ! Ce qui est vrai, par ailleurs, c'est qu'on accueille des élèves qui il y a environ dix ans n'auraient pas intégré le lycée. »

« Une méconnaissance de plus en plus grande des tables de multiplication », par Simone, professeur de mathématiques en collège.

« Je ne suis pas étonnée. L'enquête PISA met surtout en évidence l'échec des réformes précédentes, notamment celle de l'école primaire et la disparition des écoles normales qui ne peuvent plus apporter les bases et la pédagogie nécessaires pour enseigner le calcul à des instituteurs principalement littéraires. Professeur de mathématiques en collège je constate une méconnaissance de plus en plus grande des tables de multiplication et du calcul mental, par l'utilisation des calculatrices, ainsi que de la compréhension fine des opérations de base. Je constate aussi de plus en plus l'arrivée en collège d'élèves qui ont été « laissés au fond de la classe » avec beaucoup des lacunes mais aussi avec un grand désir d'apprendre, ce qui prouve qu'on ne leur a pas accordé tout l'attention nécessaire en primaire. En ce qui concerne le collège les professeurs doivent travailler l'empathie vis à vis des élèves et abandonner la sélection par l'échec. »

« Ce que je constate n'est pas une vraie baisse de niveau mais une appréhension de ce qui touche aux chiffres », par Guillaume, 35 ans, Reims, enseignant.

« Je suis professeur en économie gestion pour les sections de STMG (anciennement STG). Ce que je constate n'est pas une vraie baisse de niveau mais une appréhension de ce qui touche aux chiffres. Des élèves de terminale ont du mal à comprendre un pourcentage, un chiffre. Tous les calculs passent par la calculatrice, même les plus simples. Les lycéens ont de vrais problèmes à comprendre les chiffres et butent sur la résolution de problèmes. Mais en général, ce n'est que le cumul d'autres problèmes. J'ai été amené à aider des 1^{ers} en math. Je me suis aperçu que le vrai problème était une question de compréhension et de lecture de l'énoncé, donc un problème de maîtrise de langue. Aujourd'hui, en section de comptabilité, les élèves fuient ces formations car les chiffres les effraient et sont rapidement en difficulté face à une compréhension chiffrée. »

« Le niveau global des élèves semble se détériorer de manière continue », par Thomas, professeur d'histoire-géo à Dunkerque.

« J'enseigne dans un collège du Nord depuis dix ans. Cet établissement n'est pas en ZEP mais est loin d'être favorisé socialement. Ma constatation est la suivante: le niveau global des élèves me semble se détériorer de manière continue. Premièrement, le vocabulaire des élèves s'appauvrit, de même que la maîtrise de la langue. Résultat des courses: même les élèves sérieux et motivés se retrouvent limités dans leur raisonnement par le manque des mots, des concepts... Quelles explications ? Peut-être les modes de vie (écrans omniprésents, rythme de vie...), peut-être également des programmes scolaires qui laissent peu de place à l'acquisition d'un vocabulaire riche et nuancé. Deuxièmement, il me semble que les élèves de manière assez généralisée ne mémorisent pas. Les conjugaisons sont rabattues depuis le CE1 et pourtant les verbes usuels au présent de l'indicatif sont trop souvent victimes de barbarismes. »

« **Cela fait longtemps que les profs dénoncent la baisse du niveau** », par Marjolaine, enseignante depuis quinze ans.

« Cela fait bien longtemps que les profs dénoncent la baisse du niveau, en privé, dans des ouvrages publiés, dans les médias... et depuis tout ce temps on les traite comme des psychopathes réactionnaires ou des mythomanes!! Il faut des études extérieures pour créer une réaction ! Les corrections des épreuves du bac sont devenues une épreuve pour les enseignants tellement le niveau des sujet est bas et les consignes de correction d'un laxisme aberrant. Le pire c'est que la baisse du niveau a depuis longtemps gagné l'université. Si les profs d'aujourd'hui sont recrutés à Bac +5 et plus à Bac +3, c'est tout simplement parce qu'avec un bac +5 aujourd'hui, on a le même niveau disciplinaire qu'avec un bac +3 d'il y a dix ans ! Mais contrairement à ce qui se passait encore il y a dix ans, ce ne sont plus des étudiants comptant parmi les meilleurs des promos de Maîtrise/master qui se préparent à l'enseignement, loin de là. Ceux qui sont intelligents donc lucides quant à la dégradation des conditions de travail et de rémunération préfèrent allervoir ailleurs. La boucle est bouclée. Bon courage pour sortir du cercle vicieux ! »

« **Un allègement et un recentrage sur les fondamentaux sont nécessaires** », par Francis, 54 ans , Nantes , enseignant SVT.

« Enseignant en collège depuis trente ans , je confirme ce constat [de PISA]. Certaines copies de mes élèves de sixième sont illisibles et vides de sens, d'autres sont remarquables ! Cela est nouveau et alarmant . Au fil du temps, les différents ministres de l'éducation ont alourdi les programmes en primaire. Le travail des élèves et des professeurs des écoles est devenu très lourd et difficile : les écarts se creusent , c'est logique. Un allègement et un recentrage sur les fondamentaux sont nécessaires. La réforme actuelle de M . Peillon ne changera rien sur l'apprentissage des fondamentaux et ne fera qu'accentuer les écarts entre le petit écolier chanceux de Paris qui aura accès aux activités encadrées par des professionnels et l'autre écolier largué sur un terrain à jouer au foot. »

KENAN KOLAT ZUM KOALITIONSVERTRAG

Doppelte Staatsbürgerschaft? "Die SPD hat ihr Wort gebrochen"

93,80



Foto: BLZ/Paulus Ponizak

Kenan Kolat kam 1980 nach Berlin. Seit acht Jahren ist er Bundesvorsitzender der Türkischen Gemeinde Deutschlands.

Der Bundesvorsitzende der Türkischen Gemeinde in Deutschland, Kenan Kolat, ist tief enttäuscht, dass die Mehrstaatlichkeit nur bei den hier geborenen Kindern von Zuwanderern akzeptiert werden soll.

Herr Kolat, die türkische Zeitung Vatan titelte am Donnerstag „Sieg der Türken“ und meinte damit den Wegfall des Optionszwangs. Sie sehen keinen Anlass zur Freude?

Nein, überhaupt nicht. Ich verstehe nicht, was daran ein Sieg für die Türken sein soll. Wir sehen die Koalitionsvereinbarung sehr kritisch, nicht nur wir als Türkische Gemeinde, sondern auch die anderen türkischen Organisationen.

Warum sind Sie so unzufrieden mit dem Vertrag?

Erstens hat die SPD nicht ihr Versprechen eingehalten. Sie hat ihr Wort gebrochen, wonach es keinen Koalitionsvertrag ohne doppelte Staatsangehörigkeit geben wird. Zweitens lässt man ausgerechnet die Menschen aus der ersten und zweiten Generation, die so viel zum Wohlstand Deutschlands beigetragen haben, außen vor.

Wenn man aber bedenkt, von wo die Union gekommen ist – ist das nicht ein ziemlich großer Sprung, dass nun wenigstens die hier Geborenen zwei Pässe haben dürfen?

Dazu muss man sagen, dass schon die Einführung der Optionspflicht ein fauler Kompromiss war. Aber ich erkenne an, dass das für die CDU ein großer Schritt ist. Ihre Argumente gegen die doppelte Staatsangehörigkeit verfangen nun aber nicht mehr. Diese ganzen vorgeschobenen Gründe, dass durch zwei Pässe Loyalitätskonflikte entstehen, sind hinfällig, wenn man bei den hier Geborenen zwei Pässe akzeptiert.

Eine Folge des Kompromisses wird sein, dass es immer mehr Menschen mit zwei Pässen gibt. Ist nicht die Zeit auf Ihrer Seite?

Wir diskutieren nun schon seit 40 Jahren über das Thema. Natürlich kann man sagen, dass das nur noch die letzten Gefechte der Vergangenheit sind. Trotzdem: Diese Koalition hätte einen ganz neuen Anfang wagen können. Das hat sie nicht getan und damit ist diese einmalige Chance vergeben worden.

Sie sind SPD-Mitglied. Auf Ihr Ja zum Koalitionsvertrag scheint Gabriel nicht zählen zu können?

Die Vorstandsmitglieder in der Türkischen Gemeinde und die der Landesverbände, die in der SPD sind, haben beschlossen, mit Nein zu stimmen, um ein Zeichen zu setzen. Das ist Ausdruck unserer Enttäuschung gegenüber der SPD.



Im Türkischen Pass ist eingetragen, ob der Passinhaber die türkische Staatsbürgerschaft besitzt

Die **Türkische Staatsbürgerschaft** ist das rechtliche Band einer natürlichen Person zum türkischen Staat, deren Erwerb und Verlust im türkischen Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz (türkisch *Türk Vatandaşlığı Kanunu*; türk. StAG) vom 2. November 1964 geregelt wird.

Erwerb

Das türkische Staatsangehörigkeitsrecht folgt grundsätzlich dem ius sanguinis (Abstammungsprinzip), demzufolge die Staatsbürgerschaft vom Vater und (eingeschränkt auch) von der Mutter geerbt wird (Art. 1, 2 türk. StAG). Die Geburt auf türkischem Staatsgebiet verleiht die türkische Staatsangehörigkeit („ius soli“, Geburtsortsprinzip) nur, sofern das geborene Kind keine Staatsangehörigkeit durch Abstammung erwerben kann (Art. 4 türk. StAG).

Für die Einbürgerung in der Türkei wird verlangt, dass die ausländische Person nach den eigenen nationalen Gesetzen volljährig ist, seit mindestens 5 Jahren ununterbrochen den rechtmäßigen Wohnsitz in der Türkei hat, sich nachweislich in der Türkei dauerhaft niederlassen will, sittlich einwandfrei lebt, keine ansteckenden Krankheiten hat, ausreichende türkische Sprachkenntnisse besitzt und den Lebensunterhalt gesichert hat (Art. 6, 9 türk. StAG).

Der Erwerb ist erleichtert für Ehegatten von Türken (Art. 5 in Verbindung mit Art. 14, 42 türk. StAG), für staatenlose Adoptivkinder (Art. 3 türk. StAG) und für ehemalige türkische Staatsbürger (Art. 7, 8 türk. StAG). Das türkische Staatsbürgerschaftsrecht erlaubt prinzipiell, jedoch nicht vorbehaltlos (Art. 25 a) türk. StAG), die doppelte Staatsbürgerschaft.

Das sagte Ministerpräsident Erdogan in Köln

93,82

Seit Tagen wird über diesen Auftritt hitzig debattiert: Recep Tayyip Erdogans Rede vor 16.000 Türken in der Köln-Arena löste deutschlandweit Proteste aus.

WELT ONLINE dokumentiert die komplette Rede des türkischen Ministerpräsidenten.

Ich verstehe die Sensibilität, die Sie gegenüber Assimilation zeigen, sehr gut. Niemand kann von Ihnen erwarten, Assimilation zu tolerieren. Niemand kann von Ihnen erwarten, dass Sie sich einer Assimilation unterwerfen. Denn Assimilation ist ein Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit, Sie sollten sich dessen bewusst sein. Wir müssen jedoch auch Folgendes zur Kenntnis nehmen: Sie können sich im heutigen Deutschland, in Europa von heute, in der heutigen Welt, nicht mehr als "der Andere", als derjenige, der nur vorübergehend hier ist, betrachten, Sie dürfen sich nicht so betrachten. Die türkische Gemeinschaft hat sich volle 47 Jahre für dieses Land verausgabt. Nicht nur in Deutschland, in zahlreichen Ländern Europas nähert sich die Zahl unserer Staatsbürger fast fünf Millionen. Es ist bemerkenswert, dass trotz diesem immensen Einsatz, trotz dieser zahlenmäßigen Stärke gewisse grundlegende Probleme in diesen Ländern sich immer noch nicht auf der Tagesordnung befinden. Selbstverständlich werden unsere Kinder Türkisch lernen. Das ist Ihre Muttersprache und es ist Ihr natürlichstes Recht, Ihre Muttersprache Ihren Kindern weitergeben.

Jedoch würden Sie, wenn Sie die Sprache des Landes erlernen, in dem Sie leben, oder sogar noch einige Sprachen dazu, in jeder Hinsicht davon profitieren. Schauen Sie, viele unserer Kinder hier lernen in frühem Alter keine Fremdsprachen. Diese Kinder werden mit Deutsch erst dann konfrontiert, wenn sie mit dem Schulbesuch beginnen. Und das führt dazu, dass diese Kinder im Vergleich zu den anderen Schülern die Schullaufbahn mit einem Nachteil von eins zu null beginnen müssen. Doch würde es für Sie und für Ihre Kinder in jeder Hinsicht vorteilhaft sein, wenn Sie die Möglichkeiten maximal ausschöpfen, die das hiesige gute Schulsystem Ihnen bietet.

Sie werden einen Beruf ausüben, Sie werden öffentliche Dienste in Anspruch nehmen. Wenn Sie die Sprache des jeweiligen Landes nicht beherrschen, nicht lernen, so fallen Sie unweigerlich in eine Situation der Benachteiligung.

Deutschland erwägt nationale Lösung

93,83

05.12.2013 · Die EU-Mitgliedsstaaten streiten seit Monaten über die Armutswanderung in der Union. Ergebnislos. Nun hat Bundesinnenminister Friedrich seine Amtskollegen vor ihrem Treffen in Brüssel unter Druck gesetzt.
Von NIKOLAS BUSSE, BRÜSSEL



© DPA Grimmig in Brüssel: Bundesinnenminister Friedrich mit seinem französischen Amtskollegen Manuel Valls

In der Diskussion über die sogenannte Armutseinwanderung ist die Bundesregierung so unzufrieden mit der Haltung der Europäischen Kommission, dass sie nun eine Lösung außerhalb der EU erwägt.

Bundesinnenminister Hans-Peter Friedrich kündigte am Donnerstag an, „notfalls“ Gespräche mit anderen betroffenen Ländern zu führen, um gegen das Erschleichen von Sozialhilfe durch EU-Bürger aus ärmeren Mitgliedstaaten vorzugehen. Friedrich schlug nationale Gesetze gegen die ungerechtfertigte Inanspruchnahme von Sozialhilfe vor, die die betroffenen Länder dann miteinander abstimmen sollten. Dazu zählen Großbritannien, Österreich, Dänemark und die Niederlande.

Friedrich äußerte sich vor Beginn einer Sitzung der EU-Innenminister, auf der deutliche Differenzen zwischen der Kommission und einigen Mitgliedstaaten über das Thema erwartet wurde, über das schon seit Monaten in der EU gestritten wird. Justizkommissarin Viviane Reding bekräftigte noch einmal, dass die Freizügigkeit ein Grundrecht der EU-Bürger sei, das nicht in Frage gestellt werden könne. Sie stellte allerdings nicht mehr kategorisch in Abrede, dass dieses Recht womöglich auch missbraucht wird, um sozialstaatliche Leistungen zu erhalten. Betrug müsse von den Mitgliedstaaten bekämpft werden, sagte sie, dafür seien diese zuständig. „Viele nationale Gesetze sind zu vage und zu positiv, sie laden geradezu zum Betrug ein.“ Sie fordere die Mitgliedstaaten auf, „ihre Hausaufgaben zu machen“.



© DPA Obdachlos in Dresden statt arm in Ploiesti: Die Armut in ihrer Heimat treibt viele Menschen aus Rumänien nach Deutschland

In einigen EU-Ländern klagen die öffentlichen Verwaltungen seit längerem über einen Zuzug von Bulgaren und Rumänen, oft Roma, die es offenbar nur auf Sozialhilfe abgesehen hätten. In Deutschland betrifft das etliche Städte und Gemeinden, darunter vor allem Duisburg.

Auch die britische Regierung beklagt sich über „Sozialstaatstourismus“ und fordert besonders nachdrücklich Gegenmaßnahmen. Innenministerin Theresa May schlug in Brüssel vor, den nationalen Regierungen solle

erlaubt werden, Obergrenzen für den Zuzug von EU-Bürgern einzuführen. Außerdem solle beim Beitritt neuer EU-Länder volle Freizügigkeit erst gewährt werden, wenn diese ein „gewisses Einkommensniveau“ erreicht hätten. Solchen weitgehenden Forderungen, die eine Änderung des EU-Rechts erforderlich machen würden, hat sich die Bundesregierung bisher nicht angeschlossen.

Friedrich: „Mit diesem Bericht bin ich nicht zufrieden“

Die EU-Kommission legte zu dem Treffen einen Bericht über das Problem vor, den sie auf Bitten Deutschlands, Großbritanniens, der Niederlande und Österreichs verfasst hat. Darin zitiert sie Statistiken, wonach mobile EU-Bürger im Durchschnitt häufiger einer Beschäftigung nachgehen als Staatsbürger ihres Aufenthaltslandes. In den meisten Mitgliedstaaten zahlten sie mehr an Steuern und Sozialbeiträgen, als sie an staatlichen Leistungen erhielten. Die Kommission weist darauf hin, dass EU-Bürger in einem anderen Mitgliedstaat zwar Anspruch auf die gleichen Sozialleistungen haben wie die Einheimischen, es dazu in der Praxis aber selten komme, da sie nur länger als drei Monate bleiben dürften, wenn sie eine Arbeit oder ausreichende Finanzen nachweisen können. Die Kommission kündigte an, die Verwaltungen der Mitgliedstaaten mit Handbüchern und Schulungen bei der Anwendung des EU-Rechts zur Freizügigkeit zu unterstützen.

Friedrich sagte, das sei ihm nicht genug. „Mit diesem Bericht bin ich nicht zufrieden.“ Er verlangte eine genauere Klärung der Rechtslage und ein „klares Vorgehen“ gegen jene EU-Mitgliedstaaten, die die EU-Mittel zur Förderung ihrer Minderheiten nicht abrufen. Diese Bemerkung dürfte sich vor allem auf Bulgarien und Rumänien bezogen haben, die in der Vergangenheit offenbar wenig Gebrauch von der Möglichkeit gemacht haben, EU-Gelder für Sinti und Roma zu nutzen und diese Volksgruppen damit in ihrer Heimat zu halten. Zufrieden zeigte sich Friedrich damit, dass die Kommission in ihrem Bericht das Verhängen von Wiedereinreisesperren für zulässig erklärt, wenn jemand Sozialhilfebetrug begangen hat.

12/05/2013 01:12 PM

Weapons of Last Resort

ECB Considers Extreme Crisis Measures

93,85

The European Central Bank wants to spur lending by banks in Southern Europe, but conventional methods have shown little success so far. On Thursday, ECB officials will consider monetary weapons that were previously considered taboo.

From Mario Draghi's perspective, the euro zone has already been split for some time. When the head of the powerful European Central Bank looks at the credit markets within the currency union, he sees two worlds. In one of those worlds, the one in which Germany primarily resides, companies and consumers are able to get credit more cheaply and easily than ever before. In the other, mainly Southern European world, it is extremely difficult for small and medium-sized businesses to get affordable loans. Fears are too high among banks that the debtors will default.

For Draghi and many of his colleagues on the ECB Governing Council, this dichotomy is a nightmare. They want to do everything in their power to make sure that companies in the debt-plagued countries also have access to affordable loans -- and thus can bring new growth to the ailing economies.

The ECB has already gone to great lengths to achieve this objective. It has provided the banks with virtually unlimited high credit and drastically lowered the collateral required from the institutions. The central bank has also brought down interest rates to [historical lows](#). Since early November, financial institutions have been able to borrow from the ECB at a rate of 0.25 percent interest. By comparison, the rate was more than 4 percent in 2008.

Lending Still in Decline

The only problem is that all those low interest rates have so far barely been put to use. Lending to companies in the euro zone is still in decline. In October, banks granted 2.1 percent less credit to companies and households than in the same period last year.

In addition to a further cut in interest rates to zero percent, the central bankers are considering new, drastic measures to combat the negative trend. Some of them are likely to be hotly debated when the Governing Council meets this Thursday in Frankfurt.

So what measures are still on the table and how would they effect the European economy?

One scenario that drives fear into the hearts of all savers is the so-called negative interest rate. It would mean that the banks would have to pay a fee for the money they park, currently without interest, at the ECB -- a kind of penalty interest rate. The idea is to create an incentive for the institutions to loan out extra money to other banks, in Southern Europe for instance. This, it is hoped, would then lead to more lending to businesses and consumers.

The penalty interest rate was already a topic at the last Governing Council meeting in early November. ECB board member Benoit Coeure recently confirmed that the negative interest rate had been discussed and considered from both a technical and legal perspective. "The ECB is ready," he said.

It's questionable, however, whether the negative interest rate will actually be employed. Some economists doubt its effectiveness. "The question is whether the banks won't simply place less money at the ECB," said Hans-

Peter Burghof, a professor of banking and economics at the University of Hohenheim in Germany. Thus, the problem of the lack of lending would not be solved.

Experiences with negative interest rates have so far been rather poor. Denmark tried it in 2012 with an interest rate of -0.1 percent on deposits at the country's central bank. The result: Many banks simply passed on the higher cost to the consumer.

Fresh Financial Aid for Banks

The ECB already lent a helping hand to banks with long-term, cheap loans at the end of 2011 and during early 2012, lending financial institutions a total of €1 trillion for the exceptionally long period of three years -- a step it has so far only taken one time. Central bank head Draghi spoke at the time of using "Big Bertha," a reference to a World War I-era howitzer, to battle the crisis.

As a monetary weapon, it had mixed results. Many banks used the cheap money to purchase loans that had been issued at significantly higher interest rates in their home countries. For banks and the countries, it was a lucrative business, but it wasn't an intended side effect.

Meanwhile, the situation has become less tense and many banks have even paid the money back early. But the ECB is still thinking about a new form of long-term credit. Only this time, the loans would only have a term of one year and they are also supposed to have a specific purpose affixed to them. Banks would only be able to obtain the cheap money if they obliged themselves to pass that money on to companies.

Still, the experience gathered so far with these kinds of instruments hasn't exactly been encouraging. In Britain, the Bank of England recently undertook a similar program, which it called "funding for lending," but the results were limited. Many banks rejected the offer.

Economists have also criticized the planned-economy characteristics of the idea. "Banks should actually only give loans when they are certain that it is a good idea," said banking professor Burghof. "When people intervene in this process from the outside and try to steer the issuing of loans, it usually ends in disaster," he said.

Bond Buying

The ultimate means the ECB has for keeping market interest rates low is to purchase large quantities of bonds from investors. Other central banks including the Fed in the United States, the Bank of England and the Japanese central bank are already using this instrument more or less successfully. The idea behind "quantitative easing" is that a central bank purchases government or company bonds on the market and, by doing so, drives down prices -- e.g. interest rates.

In contrast to the ECB's previous bond buying, the new program would not be aimed at easing financing for individual countries. Nevertheless, it would be extremely difficult for the ECB to implement such a program, given the widespread resistance to it, particularly in Germany. Many German economists believe the purchase of government bonds is little more than a veiled effort to fund national budgets and is tantamount to printing money. Germany's highest court has also voiced criticism and is currently reviewing the issue.

Besides, experts believe the purchase of corporate bonds or packaged corporate loans would only have a limited effect on interest rates. The market may be large enough in the United States for such an undertaking, but it is simply too small in the euro zone.

Not a United States of Europe, please!

93,87

5 December 2013

[NRC HANDELSBLAD](#) AMSTERDAM



Walenta

If the EU is to continue to exist, then its representatives will have to be clear about their ultimate objective. This should not be a federation of states, but a Union which sets its sights on further horizons, defends its diversity, puts an end to its expansion and establishes a legal basis for further integration, says academic Paul Scheffer writes. Excerpts.

[Paul Scheffer](#)

The [European elections](#) 22 May 2014 bid the opportunity for a payoff: it is certainly not inconceivable that the populist aversion to ‘more Europe’ courted by the left and [right](#) may prove a force to be reckoned with in the European parliament.

If politicians representing the moderates fail to present their own view of the future of Europe, then populism may prove the only political alternative. The following are four building blocks of an entirely different story of Europe.

Although European unity has long been very much a matter of internal borders – in the sense of the immortal phrase “[war no more](#)” – it will increasingly become a matter of exterior boundaries during the next few decades. The actual motive for integration lies beyond the continent itself, as the position that it occupies in a new world is changing radically. When Europe has to turn to countries like India, Brazil and China to help it overcome the monetary crisis, then it is evident that a vital change has occurred.

The setting for a new story about “Europe” is therefore more likely to be Beijing instead of Berlin, or Sao Paulo rather than Paris.

Concealed vitality

This external perspective reveals to us another factor, however, which may prove vital to any story focused on the future of Europe. Consider the [Human Development Index](#) for example. The top five in the 2012 index consists of Norway, Australia, the United States, the Netherlands and Germany in that order. Belgium ranked seventeenth, France 20th and the United Kingdom 26th. In stark contrast, the BRIC countries scored rather poorly: Russia 55th, Brazil 85th and China 101st, while India could only manage a lowly 136th. The corruption index paints a similar picture: the western nations fare far more favourably than the BRIC countries.

This leads us to gradually discover the concealed vitality van the majority of European societies: by comparison, they boast a high measure of equality and quality of life, low levels of corruption and a constitutional state which functions reasonably well, but also urbanisation which compares rather favourably to that of the megacities sprouting in countries like India and China for example. Amid all the discussion on the matter of Europe, however, there is a deplorable lack of this sort of comparative perspective: only then does the quality of our society actually become apparent, after all.

Strengthening of the nation state

The big question is whether this hidden vitality of Europe is not also rooted in the diversity that characterises the continent

The big question is whether this hidden vitality of Europe is not also rooted in the diversity that characterises the continent. Indeed, that question should form the core of the debate in the forthcoming elections for the European Parliament. Must Europe strive towards a federal structure or will the nation states continue to play an important role?

Klaus Mann wrote about this diversity in his autobiography [Turning Point](#): "That is the double condition that Europe must meet in order not to fail: maintain and deepen the awareness of European unity; while at the same time celebrating the multiformity of European traditions and styles."

That multiformity is at least as important as the sense of unity. Let it be stated clearly once and for all: a European Union with the current 28 Member States can never become a United States of Europe and should not have the ambition of doing so.

Purpose of the Union is not to bring an end to the national state, but rather to strengthen those states as viable democracies, governed by the rule of law and a high level of social welfare. We must extricate ourselves from the simple choice that some wish to impose on us when it comes to thinking about Europe: either a federal state or a free trade zone.

Stated differently: we need a constitution for Europe, which in a limitative manner lays down the authorities of the Union. Not with the purpose of ruling out further integration, but rather as a deliberate constitutional choice.

Only once stability has been achieved along the interior borders, can the communal external border receive the attention that it deserves.

Moratorium on expansion

From the end of the 1960s, various new peripheral areas have been added to the old continental core. The question is how far the process can continue until the core itself starts to weaken

We cannot conclude a reflection on the borders of Europe without saying a few words about the boundaries of expansion of the Union. From the end of the 1960s, various new peripheral areas have been added to the old continental core. The question is how far the process can continue until the core itself starts to weaken.

Taking stock, it is now clear that the boundaries of expansion have been reached: neither [Turkey](#), nor the former republics of the Soviet Union, such as [Georgia](#) and [the Ukraine](#), nor Russia itself may be led to believe that membership of the Union is on the cards during the next 20 years or so. While this is common knowledge, it is not spoken openly. Exceptions form those parts of the former Yugoslavia – such as [Serbia](#) – that have not yet joined the Union. Given their geographical location and size, they are a natural part of the Union, which with its 30 Member States has reached its maximum for the coming decades.

This is a heavily edited version of the essay *The hidden vitality of Europe*, issued by Felix Meritis Foundation following a debate last Friday between Scheffer at the Austrian writer Robert Menasse.

DEBATE:

Forging an EU identity

93,89

4 December 2013 THE IRISH TIMES DUBLIN



Despite the diverse history of the EU's member states and the waning support for the European project, the bloc has all the elements needed to form a community with its own distinctive shared cultural identity, argues an Irish political scientist.

[John Coakley](#)

Irish may point way to a deeper sense of EU identity

93,89

John Coakley

Last Updated: Thursday, November 28, 2013, 18:39

For those familiar with research on the nature of nationalism, the evolution of the [European Union](#) represents something of a puzzle. As the institutions of the EU have extended their reach, and as the number of members has grown, it is not surprising that the EU has attempted to promote a deeper sense of European identity.

But in a [Europe](#) of nation states this represents a singular challenge. Once mass populations have been socialised into a powerful sense of national identity – as Germans, as Finns, or as Irish, for example – this is extraordinarily difficult to dislodge. To the extent that people's loyalties are thus deflected from commitment to Europe, the construction of a powerful European superstructure is impeded. Yet, the process of institutional deepening has continued. How has this been possible?

There can be little doubt that the European Union of which [Ireland](#) is a member in 2013 is profoundly different from the EEC that Ireland joined in 1973. Although the end goal of the European “project” is more usually taken for granted than defined, to the extent that this is a federation of European member states, significant progress has been made.

The EU is run by a set of political and bureaucratic structures that are unusual, but recognisably similar to those of a federal state.

It still lacks two of the defining features of a federation: it does not yet control military and security services capable of ensuring that its writ runs and that its external interests are protected, and its foreign policy functions are shared with member states rather than independently managed by the EU.

The EU also lacks many of the distinctive features that have helped to shape identity at the level of the nation. Rather than having a shared language, it is a linguistic kaleidoscope.

It is true that it possesses the elements of common culture in its shared religious past, notwithstanding the profound sectarian antipathies that have marked the Christian tradition in western Europe, but the importance of religion in Europe has been receding.

Powerful myth

The EU does, however, possess the ingredients for the creation of a powerful myth of the past, stretching back to the Roman Empire (see, for example, Wednesday's *Irish Times* supplement, "The New Europe"). It also shares other features that are commonly built into nationalist ideology: symbols, including an anthem and a flag; a self-defined collective "mission", the pursuit of peace; and, perhaps the most central of all ingredients in the formation of a collective identity, an "other", a role once filled by the [Soviet Union](#), but with several alternative candidates now available.

Accommodating the diverse states of Europe to this vision cannot be easy. For many of them, the "other" defined in the nation-building process is now a fellow member of an important political structure. For the Irish, in particular, whose memory of a struggle for national independence left its imprint on the collective consciousness, compromising this independence once again might seem a particularly demanding sacrifice.

Yet, it is possible that nationalist values actually helped Ireland to accommodate to Europe: the EEC was, after all, an important counterbalance to the traditional enemy, Britain, and EU membership has meant a significant enhancement of Irish autonomy at least in respect of its larger neighbour. Without this, for instance, Ireland would no doubt be effectively using sterling as its currency, but its leaders would have little voice in its management.

The rejection of the Lisbon and Nice treaties by Irish voters may well have encouraged a perception of the Irish as unenthusiastic Europeans, a perception only partly modified by the result of the reruns. But it is worth recalling that the proposed European constitution was brought down by French and Dutch voters, and that others would no doubt have followed suit, and would also have voted against other aspects of the process of deepening European integration had they been given a chance.

Survey figures show consistently that positive Irish attitudes towards the EU continue to surpass those of most other member states. Irish enthusiasm for membership of the EU may have been declining over the past decade, but it has been declining elsewhere too, and the Irish lead over the European average continues to be rock solid.

Public opinion

It may well be the case that the pillars on which Irish nationalism has relied in the past – such as its ancestral language, a perceived link to the Catholic tradition, and a militantly separatist version of history – have all been undermined over recent decades, leaving space for the growth of broader patterns of loyalty.

But the pace at which public opinion seems to have changed must remain something of a puzzle. Why have Irish citizens, like their counterparts elsewhere, been prepared to give up the distinctive green passport, to adopt the euro in place of the pound, and perhaps even to defer to European foreign and defence priorities? And why have Irish elites, like elites in other member states, been willing to surrender decision-making capacity and to forgo domestic promotion prospects (even if much brighter prospects beckon for the few at EU level)?

These questions are challenging, and raise a more general issue about the puzzle referred to above. Rather than exploring "Eurocepticism", whose roots are not at all surprising in a union of nation states, should we not be exploring "Euronationalism", the force that has played so remarkable a role in driving the European integration process?

John Coakley, professor of politics at UCD and author of *Reforming Political Institutions: Ireland in Comparative Perspective*, is a speaker today at University College Cork's conference on "Reflections on 40 Years of Irish Membership of the EU".

Sozialdemokratie als europäisches Schicksal?

93,91

06.12.2013, 10:00 Uhr · Warum leidet die SPD unter Profilschwund und dominiert zugleich in den Koalitionsverhandlungen? In einer einem ebenso breiten wie moralistisch aufgeladenen Konvergenz verliert Europa die Alternativen zur Sozialdemokratie aus den Augen.

Von HANS ULRICH GUMBRECHT

In einer eigentümlichen Situation der Schwäche und Stärke zugleich befindet sich die Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, das ist nicht nur für “politisch Eingeweihte” unübersehbar. Es geht um eine Situation, die man “paradoxal” im eigentlichen Sinn nennen kann, weil sich zeigen lässt, dass Schwäche und Stärke dieselbe Ursache haben. Diese eine Ursache aber, deren Identifikation weder komplizierter Theorien bedarf, noch das Wagnis kühner Thesen fordert, könnte eine Signifikanz haben, welche weit über die deutsche Tagespolitik hinausgeht – weil sie einen neuen Blick auf den Status von “Politik” zu Beginn des einundzwanzigsten Jahrhunderts im europäischen und internationalen Kontext eröffnet.

Während des vergangenen Jahrzehnts ist nicht allein die Mitgliederzahl der SPD drastisch zurückgegangen; vor allem sind auf Bundes- und (ziemlich konsistent) auch auf Landesebene ihre Wählerstimmen auf den Stand der unmittelbaren Nachkriegsjahre gesunken, auf den Stand vor dem “Godesberger Programm” aus dem Jahr 1959, mit dem sich die SPD von einer Klassenpartei zur “Volkspartei” umdefiniert hatte, von einer Partei des Proletariats zu einer Partei für alle Wählerschichten (tatsächlich nicht nur für den immer breiteren “Mittelstand”). Doch der als Folge jener historischen Transformation erreichte Status ist mittlerweile wieder verlorengegangen: die SPD wird nicht mehr als gleichstarke politische Kraft neben der Christlich Demokratischen Union und mithin als echte Alternative der Macht wahrgenommen — und steht nun vor dem Dilemma, eine große Koalition eingehen zu müssen, um nicht Schuld am Scheitern einer Regierungsbildung zu tragen, obwohl das Mitregieren wahrscheinlich zur weiteren Erosion ihrer Attraktivität führen wird. Das sind die vielfachen Schwächen dieser Partei, die nur gesteigert werden durch ihren Beschluss, den für über achtzig Millionen Deutsche relevanten Koalitionsbeitritt abhängig zu machen von einer Abstimmung unter weniger als einer halben Million Parteimitgliedern. Dennoch – und darin wiederum liegt die erstaunliche Stärke der “deutschen Sozialdemokratie” (wie sich die SPD noch immer gerne nennt) — ist sie als eindeutiger Punkt-Sieger aus den Koalitionsverhandlungen hervorgegangen. Gegen die vom eigenen Erfolg bedrohte Kanzlerin hat der Parteivorsitzende Sigmar Gabriel Runde um Runde gewonnen — ohne allerdings den politischen Antagonisten und künftigen Koalitionspartnern viel Angst einzujagen.

Die für die Schwäche der SPD ebenso wie für ihre Stärke ausschlaggebende Ursache nun lässt sich am besten historisch fassen. 1959, am Beginn der bis heute herausragenden Zeit in ihrer langen Geschichte, wurde sie nicht nur von einer Klassen- zur Volkspartei, sondern distanzierte sich auch von der Ausrichtung am Sozialismus als Ideologie. An die Stelle eines kohärenten und oft überkonturierten Bildes von der idealen Gesellschaft der Zukunft, deren Überlegenheit und historisch notwendige Verwirklichung in der Tradition des Sozialismus “wissenschaftlich” erwiesen werden sollte, trat das viel vagere Versprechen vom “allgemeinen Wohlstand.” Zugleich wurde die Bejahung des Wettbewerbs als Energiezentrum wirtschaftlichen Wachstums mit der Formel “soviel Wettbewerb wie möglich, soviel Planung wie nötig” ganz offen aus dem Kapitalismus übernommen.

Während eine solche Konfiguration bis in die siebziger Jahre des vergangenen Jahrhunderts vor allem mit den skandinavischen Gesellschaften assoziiert wurde, gibt es aber heute kaum eine europäische Regierung, welche sich ihr gegenüber eine explizite Distanz leisten könnte. Aus der Außen-Perspektive zumindest und typologisch gesehen sind mittlerweile alle potentiellen Regierungsparteien der Europäischen Union sozialdemokratisch geworden, weil eben eine regierungsfähige Mehrheit allein für solche Politiker erreichbar scheint, welche sich

auf die schwach konturierte Kombination von “allgemeinem Wohlstand” und “wirtschaftlichem Wettbewerb” einlassen.

Hier genau liegt der Grund für die Schwäche der SPD, welche – als der eine Teil eines Paradoxons aus Schwäche und Stärke – selbst intrinsisch paradoxal ist. Über einen Begriff von “Sozialdemokratie” im Sinn der Godesberger Reformen und des “Modells Skandinavien” können sich Parteien und ihre Politiker in Europa heute kaum noch profilieren, weil eben die Basis-Formel dieser politischen Position zur Voraussetzung für jeglichen politischen Erfolg geworden ist. Man riskiert nicht viel mit der These, dass ein Konsens diesen Inhalts heute von mehr als drei Vierteln der EU-Wähler getragen wird. Neben der Bejahung von allgemeinem Wohlstand als Grundwert und kontrolliertem Wettbewerb als seiner Triebfeder gehören dazu (erstens) die implizite Forderung nach einer extreme Armut ebenso wie extremen Reichtum ausschließenden wirtschaftlichen Umverteilung; zu deren Durchführung durch progressive Steuersätze (zweitens) ein starker Staat ermächtigt wird; der des weiteren (drittens) auf ökologische Werte festgelegt und (viertens) in seinem außenpolitischen Handlungsspielraum durch einen de-facto-Pazifismus begrenzt ist.

Keine Partei in der EU, behaupte ich noch einmal, wird gewählt, ohne sich auf diese Agenda einzulassen – ob sie sich nun explizit “sozialistisch” beziehungsweise “sozialdemokratisch” nennt oder ihren Namen aus anderen Traditionen ableitet. Sozialdemokratie ist also das, was heute in Europa politisch der Fall ist, und weil dies eben weit über die “sozialdemokratischen” Parteien hinaus gilt, könnte man das Gesamtphänomen (leicht differenzierend) “Sozialdemokratismus” nennen. Er ist zugleich Grund für die Schwächen und für die Stärke der SPD — wie sie sich etwa in den jüngsten deutschen Koalitionsverhandlungen gezeigt hat. Denn eine CDU-Kanzlerin kann bei der Aufnahme sozialdemokratischer Minister in ihr Kabinett großzügig verfahren, weil solche Minister unglaublich erschienen, wenn sie je ihre politischen Differenzen gegenüber der Regierungschefin herausstellten.

Doch warum profitiert – ja nicht allein in Deutschland – jene Partei, welche den Begriff “Sozialdemokratie” tatsächlich im Namen führt, weniger von dieser historisch singulären (aber doch fast immer übersehenen) Erfolgs-Entwicklung als ihre politischen Gegner? Ein Grund mag darin liegen, dass die Identität jeder sozialdemokratischen Partei in Europa heute von dem bedroht und am Ende absorbiert wird, was als breiter Konsensus schon immer der Fall ist – während die CDU etwa, die Grünen (mindestens bis vor kurzem) und die Liberalen (vielleicht eines Tages wieder) auch bei verschiedenen Gruppen am Rand der Wählerschaft Sympathien gewinnen können. Hinzu mag auf der anderen Seite kommen, dass ein harter Kern von in der SPD verbliebenen Mitgliedern – teilweise wohl zurecht – in dem Ruf steht, eine für den heute dominierenden politischen Geschmack allzu kohärente und inflexible Weltsicht als Ideologie zu kultivieren. Wie die Grünen – und zugleich im Gegensatz zu den Grünen – gelten SPD-Mitglieder als besserwisserisch, genauer: als besserwisserisch im Hinblick auf Werte und Weltsichten, die viele Zeitgenossen für überlebt halten.

Als eine von allen ideologischen Obertönen gereinigte Synthese aus Sozialismus und Kapitalismus mag man den Sozialdemokratismus sehr wohl als bestes Angebot auf dem Markt der heute verfügbaren politischen Positionen ansehen. Aber wie können wir erklären, dass er spezifisch unter Europäern mit einer Konsens-Wucht erfolgreich ist, die ihn wie ein kollektives Schicksal aussehen lässt – und nicht wie das Ergebnis millionenfach punktueller politischer Entscheidungen? Eine (noch einmal) historische Antwort auf diese Frage müsste Bezug nehmen auf die Erfahrung einer allzu bewegten und deshalb traumatisch diskontinuierlichen Geschichte von ideologischen Rivalitäten im Europa des vorigen Jahrhunderts (bis mindestens 1989). Für die meisten Europäer ist wohl deshalb Stabilität ein größerer Wert als die – realistisch gesehen immer bloß minimale – Chance einer steilen individuellen Erfolgskarriere (an der den Amerikanern so liegt). Selbst besonders erfolgreiche Europäer scheinen mittlerweile für den Stabilitäts- und Ausgleichswunsch soviel Verständnis zu haben, dass sie ihn über Steuerabgaben ohne Protest zu finanzieren bereit sind. Die dazu nötige permanente Umverteilung vertraut man dem Staat als Garanten der Stabilität an. Mehr als dies, mehr die Garantie von individueller und kollektiver Stabilität erwarten Europäer heute nicht von ihren politischen Systemen, und deshalb misstrauen sie Politikern und Parteien, die sich einerseits mit Moralvorstellungen in ihr

Privatleben einmischen oder andererseits aufgrund außenpolitischer Ambitionen als potentielles Stabilitätsrisiko wahrgenommen werden wollen.

Mit diesem – profund sozialdemokratischen — Verhältnis zum Staat hat sich längst eine gemeinsame politische Identität der Länder im Vereinten Europa herausgebildet. Sie unterscheidet sich am deutlichsten von der Politik in den Vereinigten Staaten, deren Bürger – wie der prekäre Status der Obama-Care deutlich macht – einerseits in ihrer Mehrheit jede Intervention des Staates in ihre Privatsphäre ablehnen (so sehr die Intervention ihnen nutzen mag) und andererseits vom Bundesstaat eine (milde gesagt) kraftvolle Außenpolitik erwarten. In dieser Erwartung von konturierter Außenpolitik konvergieren die Bürger in Russland und der Volksrepublik China (möglicherweise unter dem anhaltenden Einfluss des ehemaligen Staatssozialismus) mit denen der Vereinigten Staaten, während ihre Offenheit gegenüber dem versorgenden Staat größer und ihr Anspruch auf politische Einflussnahme geringer ist als in Amerika.

Verloren geht im Europa des solide sozialdemokratischen Schicksals das Bewusstsein von Alternativen. Der alle Parteien mit wirklichem Einfluss und eine potentiell repressive Mehrheit umfassende Konsensus setzt sich heute selbst zunehmend normativ. Immer weniger können selbst Wahlkämpfe die ihnen einst von Niklas Luhmann zugeordnete Funktion einer innersystemischen Produktion von alternativen Werten, Motivationen und Strategien erfüllen. In dieser Konstellation des lähmenden Konsensus ist aus dem Sozialdemokratismus ein Moralismus des grenzenlos guten Gewissens hervorgegangen. Mit Erfolg – ohne Widerstand und vor allem ohne Selbstironie – treibt der politisch korrekte Wutbürger im eigenen Interesse den Staat zu immer neuen Rekorden der Umverteilung und Versorgung und legt ihn zugleich auf außenpolitische Abstinenz fest. Von außen wirken die Überlebenschancen dieser “Brave New European World” wohl viel prekärer als in ihrer alternativenlosen Innenperspektive.

The inconvenient voters of Europe

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By John Lloyd

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Sixty years ago, pondering the question of an unruly populace, the German playwright Bertolt Brecht mused, *“Would it not be easier / In that case, for the government / To dissolve the people / And elect another?”*

[It was](#) a rare piece of ironic criticism of East Germany’s communist regime for Brecht, since he usually supported it. But after the regime’s suppression of a workers’ revolt in 1953, he spoke out. It’s one of his most famed observations, trotted out whenever a populace is ungrateful enough to vote “against their own good.”

European Union politicians can sympathize. They’ve labored for six decades to fashion a union that was supposed to end wars and greatly expand economic markets, not to mention bring former communist states into freedom.

Yet the European people, instead of gratitude, now strain against an institution over which they have little direct say. In one of several recent books that express pessimism over the future of the euro currency, *The Fall of the Euro*, Jens Nordvig, the head of currency strategy at Nomura Securities, [puts it bluntly](#): “The economic need for further integration is clashing with public sentiment, increasingly opposed to handing over additional functions to European officials.” Nordvig’s pessimism derives from the view that the politicians cannot ensure the EU’s political support, not that the authorities can’t manage the mechanics of the euro.

The British economist and commentator David Marsh is marginally less categorical in his new book, *Europe’s Deadlock*. He thinks the euro currency may survive, but shrink in footprint. He saw firsthand how skeptical the Germans had become when he took part in a debate in Hamburg in 2009. The audience believed that the euro was irreversible. But when faced with the question of who’d pay for it, the previous majority who had thought that the euro would last forever melted into a small minority.

The French are even less supportive, becoming [“an increasingly unpredictable partner.”](#) per the *Economist*. The Euro Zone’s most important intellectual defector hails from there: Francois Heisbourg’s [“La fin du rêve européen”](#) (“the end of the European dream”) claims the calm in Europe’s markets is a “cancer in remission,” and that continuing on the strategy of austerity will bring “serial crises ending in a nervous breakdown and an uncontrolled disintegration of the euro with all its consequences.”

Heisbourg, long an adviser on strategic issues to governments and corporations, is reluctant to let the common currency go. He sketches the possibility of a better-managed attempt at monetary union a decade down the road. But a group of less-prominent economists at the Observatoire de l’Europe think tank [wrote last year](#) that the currency was doomed, “sooner or later, to an uncontrollable explosion.”

The end-of-the-euro chorus is not the only song in town. The famed British sociologist Anthony Giddens, in his recent [“Turbulent and Mighty Continent.”](#) believes that “a federal solution, backed by greater legitimacy and capacity on an EU level, is the only feasible way forward.” The Dutch philosopher Luuk van Middelaar, a speech writer to Herman van Rompuy, the President of the European Council, writes in his [“Passage to Europe”](#) that the crisis will “force the circle of member states to politicize itself, to increase its capacity to act and take responsibility.” The veteran activist and German Green politician Daniel Cohn-Bendit [calls for](#) “Europeans (to) start voting not as French, German or Greek citizens — but as European ones.”

Cohn-Bendit comes closest to the ironic Brechtian warning to the political class. He wants to change the people’s allegiances, not the people themselves — to make those trapped in their national identities into

Europeans, continentalists rather than nationalists. Yet the crisis has shown one stark fact before all others: “Europeans” think of themselves as Germans, French, Dutch, Spaniards and Italians first, [and often despise other EU members](#).

They benefit from Europe and will assert European-ness when outside of the continent. But when they vote, the vote that counts is national. Even in the little-supported European elections, the choice reflects the support for and dissatisfactions with the national politicians.

The dream of a Europe whose manifest goodness and destiny was acclaimed by nearly all has gone by. What remains is the fact of the nation state, and, for those who would renew the European quest, the hard work of gaining the people’s support for the endeavor. When, next year, we [mark the centenary](#) of that “war to end all wars,” we should remember that it wasn’t. The EU was a noble attempt, after World War Two, to give that statement a real basis. But there is no easy exit from the nation state, which has for good and ill won and still keeps the allegiance of most of humankind.