

Brussels blog round up for 12 – 18 May 2012: No sparks between Hollande and Merkel, MEPs on MySpace, and a ‘Euro-annulment’ for Greece?

May 18 2012

Chris Gilson and [Julian Kirchherr](#) take a look at the week in Brussels blogging.

The EU Centre

Are there any climate change sceptics out there? If so, European Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva recommends that those who are sceptic read [the Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation](#). “That’s quite a mouthful, which is why the authors have shortened the title to SREX”, Georgieva writes. She goes on: “If that reminds you of the popular name for Tyrannosaurus Rex – T-Rex – then perhaps it might also realise that if we don’t wake up to what’s going on around us we may end up like the dinosaurs – extinct!”

The United Nations Environment Programme is the voice of the environment within the United Nations system at the global and regional level. *Polscieu* critiques the European Union’s mid-term priorities at the United Nations and its programmes as “[a shopping list of diplomatic bla-bla](#)”. He predicts that the level of bla-bla in the document will be matched by a respective level of failure. Meanwhile, *EuroSearch* explores [the speed of decision-making](#) in the European Union. Is it too slow to combat climate change?

At BlogActiv.eu, *EU-Logos* looks at MEP’s recent efforts to clarify the EU’s laws [on cross border defamation](#), while the *Fride Blog* is concerned that delays in the formation of the [European Endowment for Democracy](#) show that the ambition for further democracy in Europe may be limited.

EU Foreign policy and the European neighbourhood

With former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko in jail and on hunger strike, European leaders have [threatened to politically boycott this summer’s Euro 2012 competition in Ukraine](#). [Matiyeshyn](#) on BlogActiv.eu wonders whether this boycott is [accidental or tendentious](#).

The 6th Sense [praises Serbia](#) for its hospitality and helpfulness, while *Croatia, the War and the Future* are [cynical](#) about the UK’s involvement in Croatia’s judicial reforms. *Corina Cretu* looks at [Romania’s representation](#) at European summits. Meanwhile, as *EU-Logos* at BlogActiv.eu calls for greater EU resources to counter maritime [piracy](#), the *Fride Blog* wonders what the EU should say on the topic of [pooling defence resources](#) at the upcoming NATO summit.

The Euro Crisis and Greece

Who can solve the Euro crisis, and can Greece be saved from an exit from the Euro? There is [still no good news from Greece](#), reports *Open Europe Blog*. *A Fistful of Euros* reflects on the sheer [logistics](#) of a Greek Euro-exit, *Nada es Gratis* wonders if Greece could get a ‘Euro-annulment’, and *Martinned* proposes [southern and northern versions](#) of



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the Euro. *Marek Siwiec MEP* at [BlogActiv.eu](#) is very worried that a Greek exit from the Euro could signal the beginning of the [EU's disintegration](#), while Nucleus says that [the UK is waking up](#) to the problems that a Greek exit could cause for the UK. *Protesilaos Stavrou* has a forensic analysis of the [current state of Greek politics](#), as well as possible scenarios for June's fresh elections.

On Thursday, *Open Europe* raises the possibility that the European Central Bank might be [pulling back](#) its support for Greek banks in an attempt to encourage Greece to exit the Euro, and at week's end they provide a survey of [national newspapers' Euro coverage](#), which does not look good for the single currency. The FT's *Brussels Blog* says that even if a ['run' on Greek's banks](#) is imminent, a slow one has been underway already, with 30% of deposits being withdrawn in the past three years.

Meanwhile, *Protesilaos Stavrou* [tears apart](#) an article published by Jens Weidmann, the President of the German Bundesbank on why [monetary policy is no panacea for Europe's ills](#). He calls upon Weidmann "to abandon this hypocritical and polarizing palaver."

Many commentators believe that *François Hollande's victory in France will refocus EU policies on growth and employment*. Ahead of his first meeting with Angela Merkel on Tuesday, the *Centre for European Reform* provides [an array of tips](#) on how he should handle the German chancellor. One issue Hollande and Merkel will have to discuss is who should replace Jean-Claude Juncker as head of the Euro group. [The frontrunner is Wolfgang Schäuble](#), the German finance minister, finds *Charlemagne's Notebook*. After the meeting, *Open Europe* says that their discussions were unexciting (despite the earlier lighting strike on Hollande's plane!), but also that their tone was one of [compromise](#).

Debating Europe discusses with László Andor, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, whether a ["growth compact"](#) would have a large enough impact to create jobs. *GMF Blog* argues that the employment crisis in Europe is [even worse than it appears](#). Hence, they call for a slower pace of fiscal consolidation in troubled countries such as Spain. Writing at [BlogActiv.eu](#) *European Innovation* calls for a [real growth agenda](#) in Europe that focuses on the economic benefits of the internet.

Across Europe

Estonia is an e-leader. The Baltic nation boasts one of the world's highest broadband penetration rates and has carved out a pioneering role in promoting e-government and online freedom. About 94 per cent of tax returns last year were made online. Estonians [vote on their laptops](#) and sign legal documents on a smartphone. For all these reasons, Google's *European Public Policy Blog* now takes ["particular pleasure to announce the launch of our popular Google Maps Street View feature in Estonia."](#)

And *The New Federalist* critiques that many students only participate in youth politics and related activities [to improve their CVs](#).

And finally...

What has Herman been up to? This week he [takes us backstage](#) explaining – in a seventeen-minute-video – what it needs to organize a European Council meeting. And he [visited the information stands](#) during the Open Days at the European Council. He also met [people born on the 9th of May in 1950](#).

[Finnegan's Take](#) at [BlogActiv.eu](#) finds it odd that 3% of the Members of the European Parliament say that [they frequently – that's 'daily or weekly' – log on to MySpace](#).

Writing for (y)EU admits he is [an expert in bad EU jokes](#).

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

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