

Brussels blog round up for 2 – 8 June 2012: Banking union, a revival for the European left, and do we need to protect small businesses?

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

The EU Centre

Does the European Union (EU) need a directly elected President of the European Commission? Wolfgang Schäuble, Germany's Federal Minister of Finance believes that such a directly elected President would contribute to "[the much needed development of a European Political Union](#)". *Nosemonekey's EUtopia* is sympathetic to Schäuble's idea, but he thinks that a strong European Parliament would be [a more effective solution](#) for conferring longer-term democratic legitimacy on the EU. Meanwhile, *The European Citizen* argues that neither a stronger European Parliament nor a directly elected President of the European Union would [diminish the EU's democratic deficit](#): The continent is too diverse to adopt such reforms.

More than [99% of all European businesses](#) are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and these have been especially hard hit by the tightening of credit and the weakening economic outlook, argues *Debating Europe*. Do we need to protect them from globalization? John Perry, Irish Minister for Small Business, thinks that when it comes to competing with foreign companies, [European SMEs can compete very well](#).

LostinEUrope is very concerned at the approval this week by the European Commission of a draft agreement to [revise the Schengen Agreement](#) by allowing countries to implement emergency border controls. *Polscieu* is sceptical of the European Commission's claims that full implementation of EU waste legislation would [save €72 billion](#).

EU Foreign policy and the European neighbourhood

Cecilia Malmström, Member of the European Commission, met with Grigol Vashadze, Georgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, on the occasion of the launch of the European Commission's dialogue [with Georgia on visa liberalisation](#). She argues that this dialogue could be facilitated if a common European asylum system was finally complete.

Europe mon beau souci is worried about the [increasingly authoritarian regime in Hungary](#), and says that the EU should remind Prime Minister Orbán of his democratic responsibilities. Meanwhile, commenting on Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan's recent comments against abortion and for large families, *Rhein on energy and climate at BlogActiv.eu*, says that, if anything, [Turkey needs to stabilise its population](#).

The *GMF blog* urges European leaders to see [Asia as more than just a trading partner for Europe](#) – and as more than just China. *Reuniting Europe* says that Turkey is likely to [undermine Cyprus' upcoming presidency](#) of the Council of the EU by opening its borders to those countries which the EU has a strict visa regime.



The Euro Crisis and Greece

Open Europe Blog is convinced that a Greek exit from the Euro would benefit the country eventually. However, [it would not be an easy ride](#). Meanwhile, *PressEurop* is surprised to learn that Germany's [Süddeutsche Zeitung editorial](#) argues that Eurobonds are the only option to "save Europe" and will necessarily require the creation of a European federation. After all, Eurobonds would lead to higher interest rates for Germany.

In the wake of last week's Yes vote in Ireland to the Fiscal Compact Treaty, *Financialguy*, blogging at *BlogActiv.eu*, says the vote Yes was a 'damage limitation exercise', and looking forward to the upcoming elections in Greece, says that if anti-austerity parties gain popular support, ['all hell may break loose'](#). *Nada es Gratis* looks at a [more cooperative solution](#), where member states and EU authorities work together to solve the Eurozone crisis. *A Fistfull of Euros* says that the release of a document by the IMF shows that they are concerned about their [risk exposure](#) in the Eurozone.

As Spain's banking crisis worsens, calls for a Europe-wide banking area build. *Couliesses de Bruxelles* is very much [in favour](#) of the plan, but the FT's *Brussels Blog* has [ten difficulties to remember](#) for those who advocate such a union. *Open Europe* reckon that a banking union [would not be helpful in solving the short term crisis](#) in the Eurozone.

The Honeyball Buzz says that the UK's outsider role in new developments like this ["will be damaging for the UK in the longer term"](#). Similarly, *Nosemonkey's EUtopia* says that the UK missed out by not joining the Euro, saying that it is now on the [sidelines](#).

Across Europe

Francois Hollande's victory in France, state elections in Germany and the political radicalization of Greece all signal a possibility for [a revival of the left in Europe](#). Such a left-wing wave was anticipated with the beginning of the global financial crisis of 2008. However, these emerging left leaders lack new visions or sustainable ideas for political and economic change in Europe, argues *GMF Blog*.

Beyond the Transition explores [why Poland maintains one of the highest growth rates](#) in the European Union (EU). The disillusioning truth: The Polish are working more and more hours for less and less money.

The New Federalist invites people to visit Europe's capitals of culture for 2012, [Guimarães, in Portugal, and Maribor, in Slovenia](#).

The *EU Energy Policy blog* says that shale gas in Eastern Europe may have the [potential to free the region from Russian gas imports](#), while Kaj Embren at *BlogActiv.eu* says that Sweden may be [fossil fuel free by 2030](#). Meanwhile, Rhein on energy and climate says that Europe is in need of a [continental power grid](#) to ensure continuity of supply.

And finally...

What has Herman been up to? This week [he met Vladimir Putin](#), President of Russia, in Saint Petersburg. He also explained [the roots of the world's economic crisis](#). And he shook hands with Pierre Moscovic, French Minister for Economy, Finances and Foreign Trade, as well as with Mustapha Ben Jafar, President of the Tunisian National Constituent Assembly.

Polscieu reveals the story of the Cyprus EU Presidency logo – [a story of nepotism and copyright](#).

Kaj Embren on *BlogActiv.eu* searches for sustainable, [antibiotic-free chicken](#) in Europe.

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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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