

Brussels blog round up for 9 – 15 June 2012: Preparing for Rio+20, liquid democracy and is Italy next in line for a bailout?

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

The EU Centre

How can we make the European Union (EU) more democratic? Last week, *Debating Europe's* partner think-tank, [Friends of Europe](#), held a seminar with [EuropaNova](#) in Brussels for the '40 under 40' European Young Leaders. The group hopes that new and innovative tools such as "[liquid democracy](#)" could help democratize political processes in the EU. [What do you think?](#)

While the '40 under 40' European Young Leaders discuss the EU's democratic deficit, the current generation of EU policy-makers prepares for the upcoming [Rio+20 conference](#) on sustainable development from June 20th to June 22nd this year. Its core question: How can we secure clean energy and sustainable development globally? To *Polscieu*, [Rio+20](#) will just be "yet [another global conference](#) pretending that a better world is possible if you just put together thousands of bureaucrats, diplomats, and politicians whose main goal is not having to change anything." *Rhein on Energy and Climate on BlogActiv.eu* is more optimistic pointing out that [global investment in renewable energy keeps rising](#). Denmark hopes *Polscieu* is wrong. The country has made the environment a priority for its Presidency, but the Eurozone crisis has made this a difficult juggling act to pull off. Nevertheless, *Debating Europe* discusses with Thomas Egebo, Permanent secretary of State at the Danish Ministry of Climate and Energy, [which environmental reforms need to be undertaken](#).

Meanwhile, Oxfam's EU Advocacy Office in Brussels on *BlogActiv.eu* argues that the EU is still ignoring the impact of biofuels on food security: "Energy ministers must set out [a renewables path for Europe](#) that does not come at the expense of millions of families in developing countries, who are struggling to feed their children." Why does Denmark not launch any related initiatives? Meanwhile, *Finnegan's Take at BlogActiv.eu* says that the new boss of the [European Medicines Agency](#), Guido Rasi, faces an uphill battle to turn the organisation around after two years of criticisms from doctors and politicians.

Nederland Krijgt Nieuwe Energie on BlogActiv.eu suggests that the countries most affected by the Euro crisis could reduce their debts substantially with concessions for renewable energy: "Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Ireland have [excellent conditions for harvesting energy](#) from the sun, wind and geothermal sources." That is just what [Bob Hancké](#) already argued on LSE EUROPP [a few weeks ago](#). Finally: Don't miss out on [the Energy Savings Man!](#)

EU Foreign policy and the European neighbourhood

The Fride Blog argues that the EU's normative dimension, knowledge economy and attractive market can be offered to the population of partner countries, regardless of their geographical location, as [a way to reposition a citizen-centred EU brand](#) in the global scenario. Meanwhile, the *Centre for European Reform* hopes that [the](#)



[EU will continue fighting corruption](#) at home and abroad.

The Euro Crisis and Spain

What does Europe really need these days? *NPThinking* argues that saving the Euro is a now “[an impossible mission](#)”; European leaders waited too long to initiate the necessary reforms. *The New Federalist* disagrees: If a ‘Grexit’ – a Greek exit from the Euro – is prevented, [financial markets will supposedly regain trust in the European project](#) due to the efforts undertaken in many Member States, the blog argues.

Over the weekend, Eurozone finance ministers [agreed](#) on a bailout for Spain’s banks. *Open Europe Blog* discusses [the importance and role of Spain](#) in the EU and calls for [a new model of EU membership](#). Meanwhile, *Debating Europe* wonders whether [the Spanish bailout](#) will really be the last one. *Presseurop* summarizes media reactions all over Europe on [the Spanish request to the EU](#) for assistance in recapitalising Spain’s financial sector.

Open Europe Blog wonders whether [Italy is next in line](#) and has collected [the best quotes](#) on Euro crisis.

A banking union, a single regulator to oversee banks across all 27 European Union, is considered by many observers as one possible solution to the European financial crisis. However, Open Europe Blog does not think there will be [a banking union](#) within a year; supposedly the idea is not feasible. Meanwhile, *Protesilaos Stavrou* argues that without a banking union [the Euro will be history](#).

Across Europe

Late last week Croatia’s minister for the environment and natural protection, Mirela Holy, resigned her ministerial post after being exposed of sending an email to the CEO of Croatian Railways Rene Valcic asking him to save the job of one of his secretaries, the wife of Holy’s Social Democrat Party colleague. *Croatia, the War and the Future* [reports on the scandal](#).

The European Citizen has been keeping an eye on the German parliament, the Bundestag. He says that the [next likely clash](#) between Angela Merkel’s government and the opposition Greens and Social Democrats will be over the introduction of a Financial Transactions Tax (FTT). The *OFCE* blog wonders if Germany can avoid being [caught up in the recession](#) that its European partners are experiencing.

And finally...

What has Herman been up to? This week, [he met Ollanta Humala](#), President of Peru, in Brussels. And he [shook hands with Mercedes Bresso](#), President of the Committee of the Regions. And he discussed [the situation in the Balkan countries](#) with *Tomislav Nikolić*, President of Serbia. Keep up the good work, Herman!

[Fans of the Common Fisheries Policy](#) ought to subscribe to *Polscieu’s* blog. Ever wondered why Australian electricity prices are so high? EU Energy Policy Blog provides you with [a comprehensive answer](#).

German Joys argues that the people in Germany are [a little bit smarter](#) than in most other places. Meanwhile, *Writing for (y)EU* explains [how to survive a spam attack](#).

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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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