

# Brussels blog round up for 1 – 7 December: Romania heads to the polls, Spain's Catalonia conundrum, and who will replace Juncker?

by Blog Admin

**Chris Gilson and Stuart A Brown** take a look at the week in Brussels blogging.

## The EU centre

Using the recent arguments and disagreements over the EU budget and the United Nations vote to grant Palestine non-member observer status, *Kielsprat in Europe* [argues](#) that the EU and the European Council is at risk of drifting away from its citizens. *Eurosearch* is [similarly worried](#) that Europe's citizens do not trust the EU enough for any of the reforms that are currently being proposed by the European Commission to be pushed through.

On Sunday, *Coulisses de Bruxelles* [previews](#) the upcoming European Council summit and potential moves towards a greater economic and monetary union for the EU by 2018, while the *FT's Brussels blog* [discusses](#) the European Commission's proposals for reform 'contracts' for eurozone members. Still on European Council meetings, *PolsciEU* [tracks](#) the use of the #EUCO twitter hashtag, and *Cafe Babel* [looks](#) at the unexpected support for the UK's negotiating position from Germany at the last summit. Meanwhile, *Martinned* [looks](#) at the ideological and pragmatic reasons behind further European integration.

The *FT's Brussels blog* looks at [negotiations](#) this week aimed at establishing EU-wide banking supervision - Germany has been objecting heavily .

*Lost in EUrope* [ponders](#) whether or not the EU would like to 'ban' youth unemployment. *The European Citizen* [says](#) that one of the main issues with youth unemployment in Europe is the 'invisible wall' between discussions at local and national levels, and actions on a European level. Meanwhile, *Karpfenteich* at Blogactiv.eu [looks](#) at the costs of youth unemployment in Europe where more than 5.5. million young people are looking for a job.

ACELG at Blogactiv.eu [looks at](#) consumer protection law in the EU, while Debating Europe asks whether privatising healthcare in Europe would make it more [innovative](#).



President of the Eurogroup, Jean-Claude Juncker (right) Credit: © European Union 2012 – European Parliament (Creative Commons BY NC ND)

## EU Foreign policy and the European neighbourhood

*Lost in EUrope* [looks](#) at German and Chinese economic policy, comparing China's export promotion through exchange rates with Germany's via lower wage costs compared to the rest of Europe.

As Vladimir Putin visits Ankara, the *European Council on Foreign Relations* [discussed](#) Turkey's relationship with Russia.

*Eberhard Rhein* at [Blogactiv.eu](#) writes on the [Doha climate conference](#). He notes that while present targets call for around a 50 per cent reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, current trends suggest that emissions are likely to rise by 27 per cent in this period. *MedTech Europe*, also at [Blogactiv.eu](#), has an overview of efforts to counteract the [spread of HIV/AIDS](#) in Africa.

## The Euro Crisis

*Lost in Europe* [comments](#) on what looks to be a softening of Germany's position on a potential Greek debt 'haircut' according to recent comments from the Chancellor, Angela Merkel. Greece, however, may have to wait until after the upcoming elections in Germany in the autumn of 2013.

Monday night sees a meeting of the eurozone's finance ministers (the Eurogroup). The *FT's Brussels blog* [says](#) that the only major thing on the agenda for the meeting will be the proposed €10 billion bailout of the country's banks. Later in the week, *Lost in Europe* looks at the impending [resignation](#) of Jean-Claude Juncker as President of the Eurogroup, and speculates who his replacement might be.

The *European Student Think Tank* has some fairly [pointed criticism](#), labelling the euro a "common liability".

## Across Europe

On Sunday, Romanians will go to the polls to vote in the country's legislative elections. Perhaps unsurprisingly, *MEP Monica Macovei* is strongly [critical of the Social-Liberal-Union](#) (USL), which is predicted to win power, arguing that its real slogan for the elections should be "Together for Corruption".

Following on from the recent Catalan elections, Sarah Marshall from the *GMF Blog* writes on [separatism](#) in Spain, Scotland and Flanders. Nicholas Siegel, also at the *GMF Blog*, has a look at the specific situation in Catalonia, which he labels a '[growing conundrum](#)' for Spain.

This week, London's Mayor, Boris Johnson called for the UK to renegotiate its EU membership. *Open Europe* has [coverage](#) of his speech, which called for "a pared down relationship with the EU". Meanwhile, *Jon Worth* ponders whether or not euroscepticism in the UK is [rooted](#) in more general anti-political and anti-authority sentiments.

*Con acento Hispano*, writing at [Blogactiv.eu](#) [looks](#) at the uncertain future of Catalan politics following that region's recent elections. *Nada es Gratis* profiles the changing face of wage [inequality](#) in Spain during the crisis, finding that wage inequality is higher than in France, but lower than in the UK or Germany.

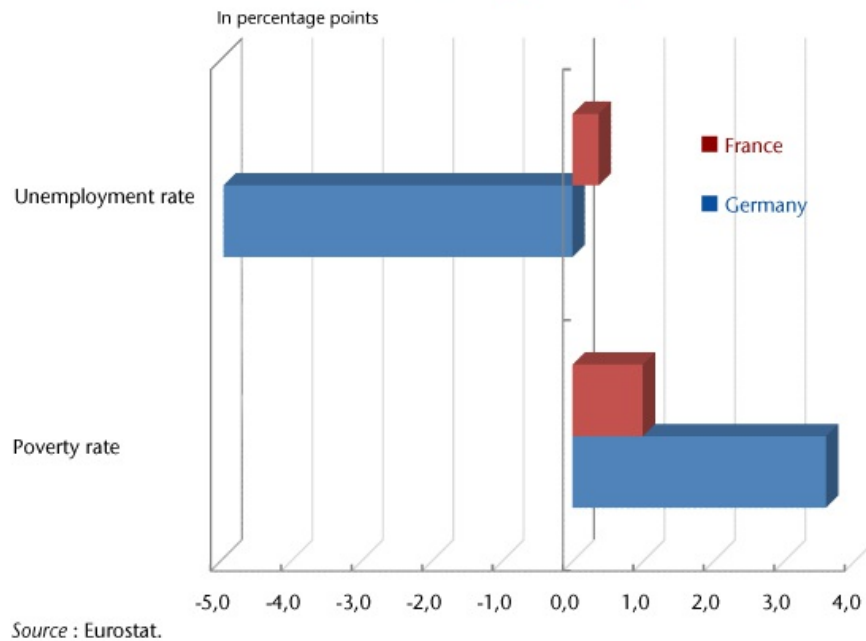
*Charlemagne* [discusses](#) the election in Italy of the centre left Democratic Party's new leader, and mayor of Florence, Pier Bersani. Meanwhile, *Open Europe* casts its eyes [ahead](#) to next April's elections in Italy, saying that given the current nature of the Italian political landscape, there is a likely to be a great deal of post-election uncertainty.

British *MEP Mary Honeyball* looks at the [issue of prostitution](#), arguing in favour of recommendations which aim to produce a "Europe free from prostitution".

## Graph of the week

This week, the *OFCE blog* [compares](#) unemployment in France and Germany, saying that while Germany's reforms have led to lower unemployment, they are also linked to greater poverty.

Figure 3 : Changes in the unemployment rate and poverty rate (60 % of median income) in France and in Germany (2005-2011)



### And finally...

*PolsciEU* wonders if there is a German speaking blogosphere in Europe.

What has President of the European Council, Herman van Rompuy been up to? This week he spoke at the annual [Convention against Poverty and Social Exclusion](#).

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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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