

Brussels blog round up for 17– 23 November: Budget troubles, France is downgraded, and are European young farmers facing extinction?

by Blog Admin

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

The EU centre

This week saw the summit to decide on the EU's budget for 2014-2020. On Monday, *Open Europe* had a good [roundup](#) of what the different countries want out of the budget, and who is likely to veto it. On Wednesday, *Lost in Europe* was [pessimistic](#) about the summit's outcome. There is much discussion about Britain's role in the budget negotiations; *Open Europe* [says](#) that the UK is "not about to get completely stuffed in Europe". Meanwhile *Coulisses de Bruxelles* is worried that the European Commission has all but [absented](#) itself from the budget debate. Finally today, *Open Europe* discusses what it identifies as a '[leaked version](#)' of President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy's, latest proposed budget.

Bruegel has a [detailed report](#) on the wider implications of the budget, arguing that the focus on the overall size of the budget is misguided and much less important than how the budget is spent. *Jon Worth*, in a similar vein, takes a quick look at spending on the [Common Agricultural Policy](#), and the *Common Agricultural Policy* blog wonders if European young farmers may become [extinct](#).

The *European Citizen* looks at the [politics](#) of appointing Tonio Borg as a new European Commissioner. Many in the European Parliament disagree with his views on divorce and abortion. *ACELG* at *Blogactiv.eu* looks at the [circumstances](#) behind the resignation of his predecessor, John Dalli, saying that it "could constitute the plot of an institutional thriller". On a more general level, *Dimiter Toshkov* argues that while the Commission may be good at bureaucracy, it is [ineffective as a political actor](#) and suffers from an inability to influence public opinion.



Angela Merkel, Mariano Rajoy, Francois Hollande and Mario Monti Credit: Mariano Rajoy Brey (Creative Commons BY NC ND)

Public Affairs 2.0 has an interesting [solution](#) to Europe's fishing woes, while *Brian Gardner* at *Blogactiv.eu* [looks](#) at the European Commission's proposals to cut back on the biofuels section of its renewable energy policy.

EU Foreign policy and the European neighbourhood

Over the weekend, *LostinEU* accuses the Nobel Prize winning EU of being [silent](#) over the escalating conflict between Gaza and Israel.

Reuniting Europe at Blogactiv.eu says that in the aftermath of its elections, Ukraine would like to send the message to the EU that it has [‘passed the test’](#), and would like to pursue closer relations by holding an EU-Ukraine summit.

Karpfenteich previews German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s visit to [Russia](#) this week, saying that she will not encounter the same protests as when she visits EU countries. Meanwhile, *Matiyeshyn on Europe* at Blogactiv.eu looks at the recent gas pipe [agreement](#) between Russia and Bulgaria.

The Euro Crisis

Lost in Europe looks at the dispute between the EU and the IMF on the [restructuring](#) of Greece’s debt, saying that the emergency loans will not likely eventuate until the end of November. *Open Europe* says that the planned two year extension to Greece’s bailout (when it does eventuate) could end up [costing](#) an extra €32.6 billion. Meanwhile, *Dimitris Rapidis* at Blogactiv.eu reports that over 2.3million Greeks now live [below the poverty threshold](#), at a time where social welfare has become almost completely non-existent.

Rhein on Energy and Climate at Blogactiv.eu says that the EU should look to Switzerland for [lessons](#) in economic policy – small government and decentralised political responsibility.

Revolting Europe says that there is [little benefit](#) to the recent round of privatizations in Southern Europe – except for ‘corporations and fat cats’.

Across Europe

Open Europe marks the end of the [‘Monti paradox’](#), saying that now, most Italians no longer want the a second term for Italy’s Prime Minister. Meanwhile, *Nucleus* at Blogactiv.eu looks at how austerity is [working](#) a year into Monti’s premiership.

Craig Willy has a comprehensive [rebuttal](#) of the Economist’s recent critique of the French economy, though France still [lost its AAA rating](#) from Moody’s (to AA1) as reported by *Lost in Europe* this week. Perhaps it is something to do with France’s growth projections being revised downwards as the *OFCE* blog [discusses](#). In terms of French politics, the biggest development this week was the disputed leadership contest in the opposition UMP party. The *Economist* has an assessment of what it states was an [‘unbelievably messy process’](#), which ultimately saw Jean-François Copé emerge as the winner over his rival François Fillon by only 98 votes.

Nada es Gratis looks at Spanish [labour reforms](#) aimed at reducing the number of workers on temporary contracts. Meanwhile, *Revolting Europe* says that Spain’s [‘precarariat’](#) has swollen to nearly 21 million as a result of the crisis, and *European Ideas* says that investing in higher education may be key to [recovering prosperity](#) in Spain. *Lost in Europe* says that Spain is increasingly looking towards Latin America for [investment](#) to help it during the economic crisis.

On her blog, *Corina Cretu* [says](#) that the opposition PDL party in Romania has serious problems understanding democracy given their view that having a parliamentary session on Romania’s position on the European Council meeting would be a ‘waste of time’.

The British Labour MEP, *Mary Honeyball* [reports](#) on Ed Miliband’s speech to the Confederation of British Industry which made it clear that the UK’s future lies with Europe. The *European Council on Foreign Relations* says that the UK’s main value in Europe is [geopolitical](#).

Beyond the Transition [reports](#) that an Anders Breivik-style terror attack on the Polish parliament has been foiled by Polish Internal Security. Finally *Europe & Me* voice their opinion on [abortion laws](#).

Image of the week

Open Europe takes a lighter look at the EU budget by drawing up a [‘team of the week’](#) of figures who have threatened to use their veto during negotiations:



And finally...

What has President of the European Council, Herman van Rompuy been up to? This week he met with the [President of Haiti](#), Michel Martelly.

Jon Worth blogs that Schengen is a [myth](#), while *Euromove* at [Blogactiv.eu](#) address another 'myth' by looking at the claim that the EU is banning the reuse of [jam jars](#).

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

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