

Brussels blog round up for 13 – 19 October – EU summit, the Banking Union and who should collect the EU’s Nobel Prize?

by Blog Admin

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

The EU centre

The European Council meet for their latest summit this week. Peter Spiegel at the FT’s *Brussels Blog* has a rundown of the [latest developments](#) through Friday. *Open Europe* casts a sceptical eye toward the claim that EU leaders have made substantial progress on the issue of creating a European [banking union](#). Meanwhile *Open Democracy* asks whether [Poland](#) has now taken over France’s position as Germany’s most trusted partner in the EU and whether Polish support could strengthen Germany’s position in negotiations with other EU Member States.

The beginning of the week saw continued comment on the EU’s award of the Nobel Peace Prize. *Au Cafe de l’Europe* [says](#) that the prize pays homage to Europe as an idea, but also encourages new commitments from the EU as an institution, despite the crisis. On the other hand, *European Geostrategy* states that the EU is [not responsible](#) for creating peace in Europe, given the roles that the UK and USA have played over the past 60 years. Meanwhile, *KielspratinEurope* wonders who should [collect](#) the prize on behalf of the EU. *Croatia, the war, and the future* puts the prize in the [context](#) of Croatia’s President Ivo Josipovic recent award of the European Medal of Tolerance, saying that: “EU is desperate in demonstrating that its original mandate of creating peace and reconciliation on the continent is a success, even if that peace and reconciliation may in fact be very flimsy and questionable when it comes down to where it counts – on the street”.

Au cafe de l’Europe looks at possible [threats](#) from budget cuts to the EU’s Erasmus program, which facilitates student mobility in Europe. Elsewhere *EU logos* at Blogactiv.eu looks at the [progress](#) of the European Citizen’s Initiative and two new initiatives on preventing “Ecocide” and on media plurality in Europe. The *European Citizen* looks at proposals from the European Parliament to introduce a [minimum unemployment allowance](#) for the eurozone.

On a different topic, *Martinned* writes that while many criticise the European Parliament for having two seats (one in Brussels, the other in Strasbourg), the [European Council](#) should give up its second seat in Luxembourg and only meet in Brussels to save on costs.

Finally, writing at *Europe’s World*, [Hanna Trojanowska](#) argues that Europe does not have an energy future without [nuclear power](#).

EU Foreign policy and the European neighbourhood

Igor Ivanov at *Europe’s World* says that Russia and the EU have much to gain by working [more closely](#) with



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one another and should especially concentrate on increasing the efficiency of their human capital. *Victor Tkachuk* writes on the EU's relationship with Russia's neighbour [Ukraine](#), speculating on the reasons behind the recent postponement of the EU-Ukraine summit.

The *French and EU blog* at [Blogactiv.eu](#) [reports](#) that French President Francois Hollande is on his first trip to Africa. His approach of encouraging greater partnerships between France and the continent is noticeably different to that of his predecessor, Nicolas Sarkozy, they report.

CaféBabel assesses the state of the EU's bilateral [relations with China](#), in light of the current EU summit and *Lost in Europe* argues that the EU's heavy regime of [sanctions](#) against Iran does not fit the EU's 'peace-loving' image.

The Euro Crisis

Spotlight on Geopolitics at [Blogactiv.eu](#) looks at the role that the European Central Bank might play in [solving](#) the eurocrisis, saying that governments should be able to sell their debts directly to the ECB. *Eberhard Rhein*, also at [Blogactiv.eu](#) argues that the EU needs to resist the temptation to create ever increasing numbers of new [financial instruments](#).

Open Europe argues that the key to [understanding the eurozone crisis](#) is 'sequencing'. By this they mean that the debate between France and Germany is primarily over whether money is put forward to aid troubling eurozone economies before there are rules on ensuring fiscal discipline (as France would like) or after these rules are in place (as Germany would prefer). *Open Europe* also has concerns about a possible 'virtual' [bailout](#) in Spain, or a 'bailout without any money'. On slightly firmer ground, the *EU Energy Policy Blog* looks at [oil prices](#) and the impact the eurozone crisis and statements from EU officials can have on global prices.

Dimitris Rapidis at [Blogactiv.eu](#) says that Greece is [paying](#) somewhere in the order of €1.2 million every month to maintain the 400 or so representatives of the EU/IMF/ECB "Troika" who are assisting Greece in its structural reforms.

[Siriwan Chutikamolthan](#) at *Europe's World* suggests some [lessons](#) for the eurocrisis from Asia's economic crisis of the late 1990s, saying that European countries need structural reforms that address the root causes of the crisis similar to those undertaken in Asia.

Across Europe

This week saw the Scottish Government reach agreement with the UK's government in Westminster on the terms of a referendum on Scottish independence in 2014. The *Verfassungsblog* [notes](#) that the Spanish government may veto the accession to the EU of an independent Scotland, given its own concerns over Catalonia and its independence efforts. The *EU Journalism Fellowship* blog at [Blogactiv.eu](#) reports that the European Commission has [confirmed](#) that Scotland's potential membership of the EU cannot be firmed up until the UK asks them about Scotland's status, if it became independent.

On a similar theme, Sunday's local elections in Belgium resulted in gains for the Flemish Nationalist Party, leading *Debating Europe* to [ask](#): should Flanders be independent? *Open Europe* also looks at [separatist movements](#) across Europe, saying that they "simultaneously showcase both the weakness and strengths of the European project".

Beyond the Transition provides some different election coverage, noting that the ruling right-wing party in the Czech Republic has suffered large [losses](#) in regional and upper house elections this week. *Europe & Me* looks ahead to parliamentary elections in Romania in December, saying that given the country's political turmoil, these will be the [most important elections](#) since the end of communist rule in 1990.

Meanwhile, *Nucleus* at [Blogactiv.eu](#) looks at how much the UK [gives, and gets back from](#), Brussels, and *Open Europe* looks at what is next after the UK [opts-out](#) of 130 crime and policing laws in the coming months.

Graph of the week

The Economist illustrates the (slow) decline in budget deficits in Spain and Portugal

And finally...

Writing for y(EU) tries to make people on Facebook smile, with varying success.

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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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