

Brussels blog round up for 20- 26 October – EU development aid at the crossroads, hunger strikes in Italy and Poland, and will the eurocrisis break-up member states?

by Blog Admin

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

The EU centre

On Tuesday, the European Commission outlined its [work programme](#) for 2013. *Public Affairs 2.0* discusses the [importance of the programme](#) for European Commission President José Manuel Barroso as it represents the last opportunity for his Commission to shape its legacy prior to the end of their term in 2014. *Wishing on Europe* at Blogactiv.eu puts forward the idea of a [separate budget](#) for the 17 members of the euro, as well as a “Eurozone parliament” based in Strasbourg, alongside the current European Parliament in Brussels. Meanwhile, *Nucleus* at Blogactiv.eu looks at the continued [challenges](#) of building a ‘genuine’ European Monetary Union.

Also this week, UK Foreign Minister, William Hague made [his first major speech](#) on Europe, according to *Open Europe*, calling for different degrees of integration in different areas, and “started to articulate a vision of the EU that the UK might be at home in”.

Following local elections, *Au Cafe de L'Europe* assesses [disunity](#) in Belgium and whether or not the EU can learn any lessons from that country’s potential break-up. *Cafe Babel* goes into more [detail](#) about the splits in Belgium itself.

Late last week the Maltese European Union commissioner for health and consumer policy John Dalli apparently resigned after an investigation by the EU’s anti-fraud office, OLAF, over alleged links with an oral tobacco firm. *Lost in Europe* [says](#) that by Wednesday, there was still no actual written letter of resignation from Dalli.

Verfassungsblog has an analysis of the overlapping jurisdictions in Europe with respect to [human rights](#). The EU’s accession to the European Convention on Human Rights poses some interesting questions on the relationship between the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. *Coulisses de Bruxelles* looks at the [representation of women](#) across Europe’s companies’ boards, and some of the EU’s institutions, in light of proposals for 40 per cent women quotas.

EU Foreign policy and the European neighbourhood

With the eurocrisis putting pressure on the EU’s and member states’ budgets, *Cafe Babel* says that [European development aid](#) is at a crossroads. Meanwhile, the *GMF blog* says that austerity is [no excuse](#) for the EU to reduce its sustainable development programmes. The *GMF blog* also analyses the prospects of ‘Arab Spring’ countries successfully making the [transition to democracy](#). The article argues that while some similarities could be drawn with the transition to democracy in former Communist countries in Eastern Europe, the reality is that countries in the Arab world are likely to face much larger problems.



Credit: Éole Wind (Creative Commons BY NC SA)

The Ukrainian elections are now only a few days away, and *Marek Siwiec MEP* looks at some of the [latest polling](#). Surprisingly, heavyweight boxer Vitaly Klitschko's party currently sits joint-second in predicted overall vote share. Meanwhile, *EU-Ukraine relations* at Blogactiv.eu says that if the incumbent President Yanukovich wins, the EU will face a [difficult choice](#) on whether or not to resume a dialogue with him after the elections, especially as their legitimacy has been put into question. In a similar vein, *Dimitris Rapidis* at Blogactiv.eu argues that eight years after the 'Orange Revolution' there has been very little progress in improving democracy or reducing the country's corruption problems.

The Euro Crisis

Covering the latest EU summit last week, *Couliesses de Bruxelles* looks at [progress](#) made towards an agreement on a European banking union. The European Citizen says that the European Council has [agreed to agree](#) on a union. Alex Barker at the FT's *Brussels blog* notes that this agreement is likely to prove [particularly difficult for Germany to achieve](#) as it is unclear how the country's powerful network of small public banks – Sparkassen – will fit into a potential EU wide banking supervision system. Meanwhile, *A Fistful of Euros* looks at how ['bad banks'](#) interact with the European Central Bank.

Eva en Europa looks at summit [disagreements](#) between the UK and Germany, especially as Prime Minister David Cameron has threatened to veto the EU's proposed 2014-2020 budget at upcoming negotiations in November. One EU programme which may be under threat in the new EU budget is Erasmus, which provides funding for student exchange programmes between EU countries. *Debating Europe* poses this as a discussion topic, asking whether Erasmus should be ['saved or scrapped'](#).

Meanwhile, the *Centre for European Reform* [wonders](#) whether or not the eurocrisis will lead to the break-up of EU member states, given separatist movements in Spain, the UK and Belgium.

Across Europe

On Sunday, Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy's Partido Popular won regional elections in Galicia. *Open Europe* [cautions](#) that these results should not be exaggerated given Rajoy's connections to the area and the fact that the region has had a tendency to be right wing historically.

Croatia, the war and the future looks at efforts from the Croatian government to reduce the amount of small business [red tape](#). *Verfassungsblog* [looks](#) at the recent referendum on Iceland's constitution, saying that a clear majority have approved the 'crowdsourced' constitution.

According to *Beyond the Transition*, seventy people are continuing to [hunger strike](#) in Polish detention centres. They claim that they lack competent legal support and interpretation services, and that they are being treated as second class citizens. Meanwhile in Italy, fifty severely disabled people have gone on hunger strike over the axing of their 24-hour care provision, [reports Revolting Europe](#).

On her blog, *Neelie Kroes*, Vice-President of the European Commission [calls](#) for more people in the Netherlands to sign up as organ donors, as only one third of the population are currently on the organ donor registry.

Graph of the week

Not exactly a graph, but *PolisciEU* has put together a diagram of [linkages](#) between the European Parliament's committees.

And finally...

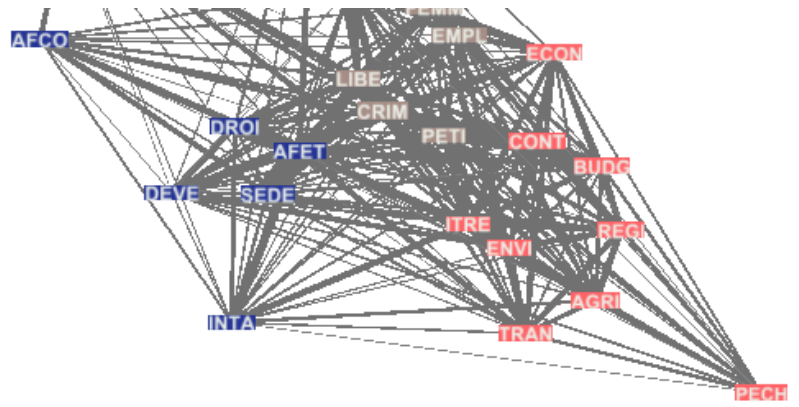
What has President of the European Council, Herman van Rompuy been up to? This week he met with the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of



the Congo, [Matata Ponyo](#).

Europe and Me looks at a new Serbian [film](#) promoting gay rights that has had more than half a million viewers in the Balkan states.

Schengen Justice at [Blogactiv.eu](#) [takes](#) an in-depth look at the Schengen visa process, saying that applicants have a right to be heard before their visa is refused.



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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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