

# Brussels blog round up for 29 September – 5 October: Georgia votes, the third phase of the eurocrisis, and is Mitt Romney anti-EU?

by Blog Admin

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

## The EU centre

*Open Europe* speculates on [the next EU summit](#) (due on 17-18 October) arguing that although the early signs all point towards mutually beneficial agreements for all EU members, the likelihood is that negotiations will be more strained and contentious than this in reality.

On her blog, *Neelie Kroes*, Vice-President of the European Commission, makes the case for rolling out [faster broadband](#) across the EU, saying that it “can energise our economy, generate jobs, and save public money”. *Spanishwalker* writes on the recent [EU Quo Vadis conference](#) in relation to European communication and its repercussions on the online environment.

EU Commissioner *Cecilia Malmström* looks at [homo-and transphobia](#) in Europe in light of Serbia’s banning of gay pride parades, saying that there “is a need for systematic work around Europe to strengthen awareness of LGBT rights at all levels of society”.

Ignacio Perez-Arriaga at the *EU Energy Policy blog* discusses the need for a [sustainable framework for biofuels](#) within the EU.

## EU Foreign policy and the European neighbourhood

Stephen Szabo at the *GMF blog* looks at [opinion polling in Russia](#). He notes that there is a significant urban-rural divide in the country, with Russians in rural areas showing higher levels of support for President Vladimir Putin than those living in cities.

The *European Student Think Tank* wonders if [Lithuania’s foreign policy](#) will change after elections later this month, while the European Council on Foreign Relations says that it is time for [Azerbaijan to open up](#) to the world and develop a post-oil economy. *Viktor Tkachuk* at *Blogactiv.eu* discusses [Ukraine’s relationship with the EU](#), particularly in relation to the ‘Eastern Partnership’ initiative. He argues that prospects for Ukrainian accession have stalled, despite a significant number of Ukrainian citizens supporting EU membership.

The FT’s *Brussels Blog* wonders whether or not US Presidential candidate Mitt Romney is [anti-EU](#), given recent appointments to his foreign policy advisory team, and Craig Willy ponders [how the US screws Europe on everything](#).

## The Euro Crisis

*The New Federalist* looks at the often [strained relationship](#) between the EU and the eurozone, while *Craig Willy* takes a look at [eurozone endgame scenarios](#), saying that he is “now more and more convinced that it



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can only end in a violent partial breakup of the eurozone". *Open Europe* looks at proposals this week for [reform of the European banking sector](#) saying that "for a banking union to ever really work or be effective there must be combined deposit and resolution fund backing it up, something which the eurozone is now shying away from". Meanwhile, the FT's *Brussels blog* has EU President Herman Van Rompuy's [leaked plans for the eurozone](#), which seem to indicate support for a common eurozone budget and for binding reform agreements across all member states.

On Saturday, *Revolting Europe* looks at [protests in Spain and Portugal](#) saying that hundreds of thousands turned out to protest deepening austerity, while *Lost in Europe* is concerned about [pro-cyclical fiscal policies](#) being instituted in Greece, Spain and France, with governments aiming for over €75 billion in savings, which is sure to take demand out of the eurozone. The *European Council on Foreign Relations* says that with the current rioting and unrest across Europe, the eurocrisis is entering a [dangerous third phase](#) where regional aspirations and ill-feeling between countries may be challenging the whole EU-project.

On the economic side of the debate, J. Ignacio Conde-Ruiz at *Nada es Gratis* discusses the problems surrounding [Spain's next budget](#) and the necessity to reduce the deficit to 4.5 per cent of GDP. On France, Noëlle Lenoir writing at *l'express.fr blog* asks whether the country should learn from the German strategy implemented not by Angela Merkel, but by her predecessor [Gerhard Schröder](#). Writing on Blogactiv.eu, *Dimitris Rapidis* looks at the ['medieval' austerity conditions](#) being imposed on Greece by the EU, the European Central Bank and the IMF.

## Across Europe

*Place du Luxembourg* asks the question, "[Will Catalonia become independent soon?](#)", concluding that it is likely that it will not, as an independent Catalonia would leave Spain poorer, something that its current creditor nations would not be keen to see.

On her blog, Romanian MEP *Monica Macovei* discusses the launch of a new political group, the [Right Alliance](#), which calls for a raft of reforms and constitutional changes to address corruption.

Last week the German Social Democratic Party nominated Peer Steinbrück as their candidate for Chancellor. *Kiels Prat in Europe* says that his nomination has [startled](#) German Conservatives, and that the left in Germany should take advantage of the opportunity that this provides.

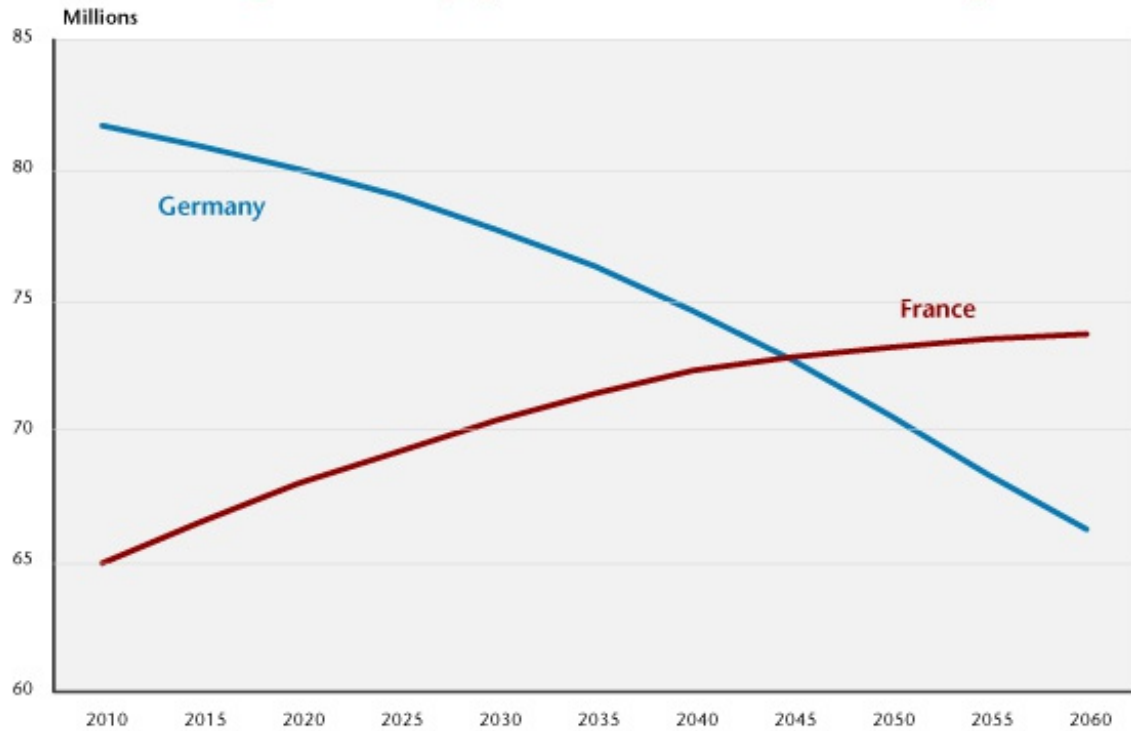
*Nada es Gratis* has an in-depth analysis of [public sector employment in Spain](#) which now faces serious cuts to address the country's deficit. Meanwhile, *Wishing on Europe* at Blogactiv.eu wonders whether or not Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti's technocratic government is [still useful](#).

This week saw parliamentary elections in Georgia. In the lead up to the vote *Au Cafe de l'Europe* says that the election is a [high risk](#) one for incumbent President Mikhail Saakashvili; a victory for his opponent, [Bidzina Ivanishvili](#) might mean a move away from the country's pro-Western stance, to one closer to Russia. After Monday's elections and the defeat of Saakashvili, the *GMF Blog* says that despite the elections being recorded by international observers as free and fair, they [jury is still out](#) on whether or not Georgia will continue on the path towards a stable and democratic political system.

## Graph of the week

The *OFCE blog* has an in-depth look at Germany and France's [demographic differences](#) – if trends continue France will (eventually) have 7 million more people than Germany:

**Figure 3. Total populations in France and in Germany**



Source: European Commission, "The 2012 Ageing Report".

### And finally...

What has EU President Herman van Rompuy been up to? This week, he met with three Prime Ministers, [Andrus Ansip](#) of Estonia, Tunisia's [Hamadi Jebali](#), [Enda Kenny](#) of Ireland and the [President of Yemen](#).

The *EU Journalism Fellowship blog* looks at Brussels' [Place du Luxembourg](#) – the heart of EU networking in the city.

Over at at [Blogactiv.eu](#), *AriRusila's Balkan Perspective* says that the Kosovo passport is one of the [least useful travel documents](#) ever designed, given that it only allows visa-free travel to 37 countries (Denmark is the best with access to 169 countries).

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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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