



Is Ukraine falling victim to Russian economic "colonisation"?



Author: Sophie Lambroschini

Ukraine's position with regard to Russia has been further weakened as former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko was sentenced to seven years in prison for abuse of power - a decision that was condemned both by Moscow and the European Union. In the Kremlin's eyes, Ukraine is part of Russia's geopolitical sphere and the former is concerned by the rise of its powerful neighbour in their economic relations - a bilateral tension that has been illustrated by a hardening in tone by both parties, the outcome of which is still uncertain. This study offers an overview of Russian economic influence in Ukraine beyond the usual theme of the gas sector, and attempts to assess its impact on Ukraine and its relations with the European Union.

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Front page! :

Freedom under the reign of the Internet



The Robert Schuman Foundation, together with the "Centre for European Studies" CES, is organising a conference on 19th October on the theme of freedom under the reign of the internet... [Read more](#)

Elections :

Presidential Election in Bulgaria



The candidate of the party in power, Rossen Plevneliev, is running favourite in the Bulgarian Presidential election just one week before the election. The Bulgarians are being called to elect their president on 23rd and 30th October next. In Bulgaria, the head of State (and his Vice-President, with whom he forms a ticket) is elected for a five year term in office that is renewable once. 18 people are running for the supreme office, 12 of whom are being put forward by political parties and 6 by voters' committees. According to the most recent poll by the institute Alpha Research, one third of the Bulgarians (32%) are about to vote in support of Rossen Plevneliev (GERB). Ivaylo Kalfine (PSB) is due to win 18%, Meglena Kuneva, 9%, Volen Siderov (Ataka), 4%, and Rumen Christov, 3%. The polls reveals that Rossen Plevneliev is due to win the presidential election in the second round with 46% of the vote if he faces Ivaylo Kalfine (23% of the vote) and by 43% if he faces Meglena Kuneva (27%)... [Read more](#)

General Elections in Switzerland



Five million Swiss are being called to renew the 200 members of the National Council and the 46 members of the Council of States, the two Chambers of Parliament, on 23rd October next. The latest poll by gfs.berne for the Swiss radio and TV company (SSRT) puts the Swiss People's Party (UDC/SVP) ahead with 29.3% of the vote, the Socialist Party 19.9%, the Free Democratic Party (15.2%), the Christian Democratic Party (14.2%) and the Ecologist-Greens Party (9.3%)... [Read more](#)

Our publications :

France, NATO and the EU



The Robert Schuman Foundation has published a study in its series of "Notes" by Pascale Andréani on "France, NATO and the EU" in which she explains the reasons for and the results of France's return to the integrated military organisation of NATO. The paper can be ordered on-line... [Read more](#)

Financial Crisis :

Slovakia struggles to adopt the EFSF



On 13th October the Slovakian parliament was the last of the 17 euro area Member States to approve the enhancement of the European Financial Stability Fund (EFSF). The first vote on 11th October was transformed into a confidence vote for the Slovakian Prime Minister Iveta Radicova. However part of the coalition in power abstained. Hence the EFSF was rejected, likewise the Prime Minister. On 12th October the main opposition party, SMER-SD, under the leadership of Robert Fico, accepted to vote in support of the EFSF in a second round of voting on condition that early elections would take place. On 13th October the enhancement of the EFSF was approved by 114 MPs against 30 and 3 abstentions. The European Support Fund thereby entered into force with a guarantee of over 779 billion euros... [Read more](#)

Malta, adoption of the EFSF



On 10th October the Maltese Parliament approved the reinforcement of the European Financial Stability Fund. MPs voted unanimously in favour of the project. Maltese participation therefore increases from 398 to 704 million euros... [Read more](#)

Recession greater than expected in Greece



On 11th October the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund published the first results of the fifth mission dispatched to Greece as part of the country's economic and financial rescue plan. Experts believe that the recession will be worse than planned and that recovery will not come before

2013. Exports are a major source of Greek growth, which should be used and improved. They lauded the work undertaken to reduce the public deficit and to launch a more extended privatisation programme. However the transport sector and that of independent workers requires further reform. Experts are calling on the Greek authorities to continue their reform plan and to privatise in order to maintain its financial commitment to overcome the present crisis... [Read more](#)

Austerity Budget in Portugal



On 13th October the Portuguese government presented the 2012 budget. Prime Minister Pedro Passos Coelho announced measures that his government aimed to take in order to reduce the public deficit. The government plans, amongst other things, to reduce salaries in the civil service, to reduce the number of days of holiday and to increase working hours in the private sector. Portugal is the third country after Greece and Ireland, that is taking advantage of an aid plan to a total of 78 billion euros, to be funded by the EU and the IMF until 2014... [Read more](#)

Economic forecasts 2012



The eight economic institutes in Germany have reduced their growth forecasts to 0.8% in 2012 well below the 2% forecast in April 2011. "The debt crisis in Europe is threatening to become a banking crisis that will weigh increasingly on the German economy," explain the institutes in their bi-annual report. The institutes raised their growth prospects for 2011 up slightly to 2.9% against 2.8% previously. They forecast inflation at 1.8% in 2012 against 2.3% this year. Advanced indicators are hardly more optimistic and notably business moral, measured by the IFO index, that fell in September to its lowest level since mid-2010. In spite of the worsening economic situation these institutes forecast a reduction in unemployment to 6.7% in 2012 against 7% in 2011. The German government is due to publish its economic forecasts on 20th October, which will be used as a base for its budgetary planning in November... [Read more](#)

Rising unemployment in the UK



According to figures published on 12th October by the Office for National Statistics, the number of British unemployed reached an unprecedented level in 17 years, with 2.57 million people registered at the end of August... [Read more](#)

Rating Downgraded



The American agency Standard & Poor's downgraded the Spanish sovereign debt rating a notch from AA to AA- on 13th October. The main reasons for this were a downturn in the country's growth prospects and the weakness of the banking system. The ratings agency declared that the factors explaining the downgrading were of an economic nature. The agency admits that work to reform by the government has been achieved. However Standard & Poor's fears that the government will not achieve its budgetary goals because the debt of local communities may effect the State's budget negatively... [Read more](#)

G20



The Finance Ministers and the Governors of the Central Banks of the G20 met in Paris on 14th and 15th October in order to bring decisive answers to restore confidence, financial stability and growth. The main progress achieved during this meeting was the definition of an action plan in support of coordinated policies and the commitment to do everything necessary to maintain the stability of the banking systems and financial markets; moreover real measures have notably been taken to enhance the stability and resistance of the IMF. However Finance Ministers said they rejected the idea of a tax on international financial transactions, a so-called Tobin tax... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy



On 12th October the European Commission published a draft reform for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) post 2013. The project aims to enhance competitiveness, sustainability, and the establishment of agriculture across all territories to guarantee European citizens with healthy, good quality food, to protect the environment and to develop rural areas. The Commission suggests for a new partnership to be established between Europe and farmers... [Read more](#)

The State of Countries' Progress



On 12th October the European Commission presented its enlargement strategy 2011-2012, which includes an interim report on several candidate countries. It recommends the opening of negotiations with Montenegro and granting the status of candidate country to Serbia, however although cooperation with the ICTY has improved Serbia still has to work on its relations with Kosovo,, if it hopes one day to enter the EU. Since December 2010 a visa-less entry into the Schengen area entered into force for Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina. However the latter has still not formed a government after the general elections in 2010, which is impeding further reform. Macedonia is still in stalemate because there is no agreement over its name with Greece. Turkey is notably criticised for its lack of respect of commitments taken with regard to Cyprus. Hence negotiations are not moving forwards. Although Iceland meets most of the membership criteria there are still some major challenges to rise to, such as fishing, and notably whaling; the Icesave issue regarding the reimbursement of Dutch and British savings by the Icelandic bank has still not been settled... [Read more](#)

Tax Reform



On 11th October the European Commission published a report entitled "Tax Reforms in EU Member States: Tax Policy Challenges for Economic Growth and Fiscal Sustainability". This report looks into the latest trends in terms of tax revenues and reforms in the Member States. In view of future reforms that the Member States may implement to face the economic and financial crisis, the report also analyses the issue of the quality of taxation and highlights what is at stake for tax policy in the Member States of the euro area... [Read more](#)

Single Market



On 11th October the Commission published a draft regulation in view of a facultative harmonisation of the EU's sales laws. In effect in spite of the establishment of the single market many impediments remain in place and limit intra-European trade. Differences in contract law are one of the main reasons for this and every year it impedes 26 billion euros in intra-community trade. The European contract suggests simplifying administrative measures for those selling and to guarantee better protection and more information for those purchasing. The Council and the Parliament will now have to look into the text over the next few months... [Read more](#)

Reform of Development Aid



On 13th October the European Commissioner for Development Aid, Andris Piebalgs presented "The Agenda for Change" that redefines the aid granted by the EU according to several criteria to countries that need it most. Geographically aid will now mainly be given to the poorest countries, rather than to the emerging countries. In each country resources will be re-distributed according to three themes, in order to avoid an excessive dispersion of funds. Good governance, social protection, healthcare, education, sustainable agriculture and clean energies will be the main focus of this new policy, to guarantee sustainable growth and benefits for all. Finally the Commission intends to use new, more innovative, effective financial instruments. Reforms will be undertaken country by country and spread across the Multi-Annual

Financial Framework (2014-2020). The Commissioner hopes that "each euro will go to those who need it most.". [Read more](#)

The State of Competitiveness in the EU



In a document published on 14th October the European Commission assesses the state of competitiveness in the EU country by country. It is notably based on three criteria: the productivity rate per worker in industry, the share of innovative companies out of the total number of companies and the degree of simplicity of national business law. Luxembourg is systematically one of the countries with the best scores, and Hungary one of those with the worst results. The Commission draws up an overview of the issues and opportunities for each country... [Read more](#)

Recapitalisation of the Banks



The President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso called on 12th October for Europe to recapitalise its banks "urgently" in order to put a halt to the spread of the debt crisis, which has now reached "systemic" levels and is threatening to destabilise the world's economy. Banks have to be recapitalised urgently he declared to the European Parliament in Brussels, without giving a figure to support his claims. To recapitalise, explained Mr Barroso, banks will have to call on private capital, with the national authorities providing support if necessary. In the event of this is not being possible the recapitalisation would have to be funded by a loan from the European Financial Support Fund... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

VAT, Taxation and the Management of the Economic Crisis



On 12th and 13th October MEPs gave wide support to the candidacy of German Jörg Asmussen to the Council of the European Central Bank in replacement of Jurgen Stark, who has resigned. They also called on European leaders to continue their reforms and to harmonise their policies, in order to bring the present economic and financial crisis to an end. As part of the reform of the European VAT system MEPs suggested that the fight to counter fraud should be stepped up, contributions by SME's and NGO's should be limited, and the rates raised on organic products reduced; the Commission should also push for greater harmonisation of national tax policies. Finally they regretted that Romania and Bulgaria had not succeeded in integrating the Schengen area and asked national leaders not to give in to populist discourse... [Read more](#)

Opening of the Parliamentarium



On 14th October the Parliamentarium, the European Parliament's visitors' centre, open its doors to the public. Open 7/7, and operating in the EU's 27 languages, this new centre enables citizens to discover and get to know the European Parliament better thanks to a great amount of interactive multi-media... [Read more](#)

Council :

Foreign Affairs



On 10th October the 27 Foreign Ministers debated the situation in the EU's immediate neighbourhood. They spoke of the repeated infringements of Human Rights in Belarus and Iran. They expressed their concern over the Tymoshenko trial in Ukraine, which ended in the conviction of the former Prime Minister. They also addressed the situation in the Near East, with the recent developments in the Arab Spring in Libya, Syria and Yemen and the Peace Process in the Near East. The ministers called on the Israelis and the Palestinians to take up direct negotiations under the guidance of the Quartet. Finally the Council adopted the conclusions relative to Bosnia-Herzegovina, which has been experiencing a major political crisis for the last year. They repeated the EU's support to the construction of a sustainable State; the Althea mission must now focus on training the national forces... [Read more](#)

General Affairs



On 11th October the 27 European Affairs Ministers notably decided to extend the duration of the loans to Portugal and Ireland as part of the European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism. They also decided on the agenda of the European Council on 23rd October which will mainly focus on the economic and financial crisis, climate change and the November G20 summit in Cannes. Ministers also spoke of the possibility of making changes to the European treaties in order to include the two protocols requested by Ireland and the Czech Republic... [Read more](#)

Environment



On 10th October the 27 Environment Ministers addressed the EU's position in the various international negotiations relative to the protection of the environment. They notably defined the European position for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development for the 10th Conference in Basel and for the 17th UN Conference on Climate Change. They called for an extension of the Kyoto Protocol and for the greater use of legal tools to protect the environment. Ministers also looked into the results of the EU's sixth environmental programme and asked the European Commission to prepare a new one, that will be effective as of 2012... [Read more](#)

Court of Justice :

Air Passenger Rights



In a judgment delivered on 13th October the EU Court of Justice has extended air passenger rights. Indeed it believes that the return of a plane to the airport it has taken off from constitutes a flight cancellation even if passengers are offered alternative solutions. In the case opposing Air France against seven Spanish passengers the latter had to delay their flight until the next day. This opens the way to the right to further compensation for passengers who suffer incidents like this... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Afghanistan



The President of the German Republic, Christian Wulff, arrived on 16th October for an official visit to Afghanistan during which he met his counterpart Hamid Karzai. This is the first official visit by a German Head of State to Afghanistan in 44 years... [Read more](#)

France :

Launch of the first Galileo Satellites



On 20th October the first European navigation satellites Galileo will be launched into orbit. The launch will take place from French Guiana, and will form the core of the Galileo fleet; this "open", civil navigation system, a product of European innovation, was 100% funded by the European Commission and its launch is being ensured by ESA (the European Space Agency). It will also be the first launch of Soyouz rockets from the Guianese Space Centre... [Read more](#)

François Hollande appointed



François Hollande won the second round of the French socialist primaries with 57% against 43% for Martine Aubry. He will be the Socialist Party's candidate in the French Presidential election in April/May 2012... [Read more](#)

Greece :

Budgetary Deficit

On 12th October the Greek Finance Minister revealed that the Greek



budgetary deficit continued to increase in September to total 19.1 billion euros ie 15% more in comparison with the deficit covering the first nine months of 2010. Revenues totalling 34.9 billion over the nine months of 2011 are down by 4.2% in comparison with the same period in 2010. Spending is up by 7% to 52.488 billion euros... [Read more](#)

Italy :

Budget 2012



The Italian Council of Ministers adopted the draft finance law for 2012 on 14th October. The draft approves the austerity measures decided upon in July and September. The measures include a significant reduction in State spending and an increase in taxes totalling 60 billion euros until 2013. The Italian government aims to achieve a balanced public budget in 2013 to enable, the mid-term reduction of the debt. The latter totals more than 120% of the GDP... [Read more](#)

United Kingdom :

Women



On 12th October British Prime Minister David Cameron lauded the companies who had committed to increasing the number of women occupying higher executive posts. Six months after the publication of the report "Women on boards" by Lord Davies, who put forward strategies to increase the presence of women on company boards, major progress has been achieved : 22.5% of appointments to company boards have been women and the number of companies on FTSE100, whose board was male only, has dropped from 21 in 2010 to 14 only in 2011. This progress will stimulate other companies to follow their example... [Read more](#)

Resignation



British Defence Minister Liam Fox resigned on 14th October after having been accused of a conflict of interests. He will be replaced by Philip Hammond, who was Transport Minister until now - himself replaced by Justine Greening who was Economic Secretary to the Treasury. Chloe Smith, deputy at the House of Commons, has taken over her post and is replaced by Greg Hands... [Read more](#)

Slovakia :

Elections



Slovakian President Ivan Gasparovic announced on 14th October that he was going to appoint an interim government after the collapse of the coalition led by Prime Minister Iveta Radicova after the failure of the vote on 11th October on the European Financial Stability Fund in the euro area. "I shall dismiss the outgoing government and appoint a new one as well as a new Prime Minister," he declared after an interview with Ms Radicova. This new government may be in the "majority or the minority or it might even be a government of experts," he said, and it will lead the country until the elections that will take place early on 10th March 2012... [Read more](#)

Ukraine :

Yulia Tymoshenko sentenced to 7 years in prison



Former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko was sentenced to 7 years in prison on 11th October for exceeding her powers in the signature of gas agreements with Russia in 2009. The High Representative Catherine Ashton expressed the EU's disappointment with regard to this trial that she believes to be counter to international standards. She said that "the way the Ukrainian authorities respect universal values and the rule of law generally and especially the way they deal with these affairs may have dire consequences on the bilateral relations between the EU and the Ukraine.".. [Read more](#)

OECD :

Ireland's Economic Situation



The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) published a report on 14th October on the economic situation in Ireland in 2011. According to the report the public debt is still one of the highest in the OECD area. However the tax policy undertaken by the Irish government since 2008, together with the financial support provided by the IMF and the EU have improved Ireland's economic situation. The report explains that a return to more balanced economic situation is possible... [Read more](#)

World Bank :

Gender Equality



On 14th October the World Bank presented its "Report on Development in the World 2012: gender equality and development." This report describes major steps achieved as part of the work done to reduce inequalities between men and women. It also shows that disparities continue in many areas, the most alarming being the gap between the rate of mortality of girls and women and that of men in developing countries... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Inflation



According to figures published on 14th October by Eurostat the annual inflation rate in the euro area lay at 3% in September 2011, against 2.5% in August. One year previously it lay at 1.9%. The monthly inflation rate lay at 0.8% in September 2011. The EU's annual inflation rate lay at 3.3% in September 2011, against 2.9% in August. One year ago it lay at 2.3%. The monthly inflation rate lay at 0.6% in September 2011... [Read more](#)

Foreign Trade



In a document published on 14th October Eurostat revealed that the EU's trade balance was in deficit in August. The EU was in deficit to a total of 17.8 billion euros in August and the euro area to a total of 3.4 billion. These deficits are less than in July but more than in August last year. The energy bill has notably weighed heavily on European accounts which however have benefited from a clear rise in the export of manufactured goods. Germany and the Netherlands have better external trade results, whilst France and the UK notably have the greatest deficits, ahead of Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece... [Read more](#)

Rise in Industrial Production



On 12th October Eurostat published figures on industrial production for August 2011. There has been a recovery in activity with a rise of 1.2% in the euro area and 0.9% in the EU as a whole. In comparison with August 2010 this represents a respective rise of 5.3% and 4.3%. Portugal, Ireland and Italy, who are still experiencing major economic problems, had the best recovery rates... [Read more](#)

Reduction in the number of farms



In a document published on 11th October Eurostat reveals a major decline in agriculture in the EU between 2003 and 2010. Although the surface area of cultivated land only decreased by 2%, the number of farms fell by 20%. The document indicates that there is a concentration of farming activities within just a few countries: 75% of the cultivated land in the EU lies in 7 Member States, likewise 80% of the farms. France and Spain alone have almost one third of the cultivated land in the EU... [Read more](#)

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Studies/Reports :

Georgia



The Atlantic Council's Georgia task force, co-chaired by American senators Jeanne Shaheen and Lindsay Graham, has published a report on Georgia, calling for greater reform. The council also calls on the USA and the EU to reorient their policy towards Georgia... [Read more](#)

Employment



Eurofound, the European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions has published its first report entitled "European Jobs Monitor". The study notes that five million jobs were destroyed between 2008 and 2010. The number of jobs in the tertiary sector increased. However the number of jobs in the secondary sector decreased significantly. Men were more affected by the crisis than women. Finally the study reveals that the employment rate of senior citizens increased whilst that of young people declined... [Read more](#)

Publications :

Is Enlargement endangering the European project?



By wanting to enlarge too far, is the EU endangering its ability to develop in more depth, thereby threatening the completion of political Europe? La Documentation française has published a paper by Luka? Macek in its series "Réflexe Europe" on this issue entitled "Is Enlargement endangering the European project?". To understand this problem the author reviews the EU's history and assesses its successive enlargements. He also looks into what we have to learn for the future and asks how and to what point the Union can reasonably extend its borders... [Read more](#)

European Security



Desclée de Brouwer publishing has released a book by Nicolas Quillet entitled "Une Europe de la sécurité?" The author who worked for the European Affairs Ministry for nearly four years covers the work of eight presidencies and reveals the strengths and weaknesses of an historically unique organisation... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Gauguin in Copenhagen



The Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek in Copenhagen (Denmark) is showing 50 pictures by Paul Gauguin (of Tahiti) with primitive art work (statues, arms, jewellery ...) from Polynesia, which was the source of inspiration to the French painter. The exhibition is open until 31st December 2011... [Read more](#)

Exhibition/Beckmann in Basel, Frankfurt and Leipzig



All of the work by German painter Max Beckmann is on show until 22nd January 2012 in three exhibitions in Basel, Leipzig and Frankfurt. The exhibition organised by the Kunstmuseum Basel focuses on his landscapes. In Leipzig the exhibition is devoted to Beckmann's portraits and in Frankfurt the focus is on "Beckmann and America"... [Read more](#)

Edvard Munch in Paris and Bremen

The Pompidou Centre in Paris and the Kunsthalle in Bremen are both



devoting exhibitions to the Norwegian painter, Edvard Munch (1863-1944). The German exhibition is entitled "Mysteries behind the canvas". At the Pompidou Centre the exhibition is called "The Modern Eye". It shows that Munch held a constant dialogue with the most modern forms of representation: photography, cinema and the theatre of his time... [Read more](#)

FIAC Paris



From 20th to 23rd October the 38th International Contemporary Art Fair is showing at the Grand Palais in Paris. During this international meeting 168 exhibitors, representing 21 countries will be present in the hall of the Grand Palais and also in the Jardin des Plantes where the 2011 FIAC will be inaugurating a outdoor exhibition... [Read more](#)

Discovering Alexander the Great



The Louvre Museum is hosting an exhibition entitled "In the Kingdom of Alexander the Great: Ancient Macedonia" until 16th January 2012. 500 works cover the history of ancient Macedonia from the 15th century BC until the imperial Roman times. The exhibition notably focuses on the progressive ascension of the kingdom of Macedonia with regard to Greece, thanks to the political sense of its kings, the most famous of whom is still Alexander the Great... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



17th October
Brussels
Tripartite Social Summit



19th October
Palais du Luxembourg
Conference on "Freedom under the reign of the Internet"



20th October
Frankfurt am Main
ECB Governors' Council



20th and 21st October
Luxembourg
Agriculture and Fisheries Council



21st October
Krakow
Meeting of European Family and Gender Equality Ministers



23rd October
Brussels
European Council and Euro Area Summit
Presidential Election in Bulgaria (1st round)
General Elections in Switzerland



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