



## EU Membership of the European Convention on Human Rights: a legal analysis of the draft membership agreement of 14th October 2011



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This study offers a legal analysis of the draft agreement that focuses on the EU's membership of the European Convention of Human Rights published on 14th October 2011 by the Steering Committee for Human Rights at the Council of Europe. It recalls the most controversial issues that were debated before and during the writing of the draft membership agreement; it then looks into the answers that were provided by the experts of the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

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### Front page! :

#### In Default of Loyalty



Following the Greek decision to submit the European Agreement of 27th October last to referendum, the Chairan of the Robert Schuman Foundation, Jean-Dominique Giuliani published an editorial on his site in which he qualified this decision as a "default of loyalty"... [Read more](#)

#### Greece comes to the G20



"We knew that the interdependency of the economies had become a feature of the new world. But could we foresee that Greece's political situation and its 11 million inhabitants would become the focus of debate for the leaders of the 20 biggest economies on earth, which gathered together in Cannes on 3rd and 4th November?" Listen to the

new European Update broadcast by Canal Académie with the Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation... [Read more](#)

### The Future of the Council of Europe



On 8th November the Robert Schuman Foundation, together with the French delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, is organising a seminar on "the future of the Council of Europe in the light of 60 years experience," at the Palais du Luxembourg. Many experts from the political and academic world will be taking part in the discussions that will review the history of the Council of Europe, the driving role played by the parliamentary assembly and the contribution made by the Council of Europe as far as fundamental rights are concerned... [Read more](#)

### 10th Congress on European Security and Defence



On 8th November the chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation, Jean-Dominique Giuliani, is taking part in the 10th congress on European Security and Defence in Berlin. He is speaking on "The New Challenges facing European Defence and Security: which answers can NATO and the EU provide?..." [Read more](#)

## Elections :

### Early General Elections in Slovenia



On 4th December, for the first time in the country's history, Slovenians are being called on early to renew the 90 members of the Drzavni Zbor (Parliament). This election follows parliament's rejection on 20th September last of the confidence motion presented by Borut Pahor's government (Social Democratic Party, SD), 51 votes against 39. Seven parties are represented in the outgoing parliament: the Social Democratic Party (SD) chaired by the outgoing Prime Minister Borut Pahor; the Democratic Party led by Janez Jansa; Zares (Real, Z); the Democratic Pensioners' Party (DeSUS); the People's Party (SLS); the National Party (SNS); the Liberal Democratic Party (LDS). Some new parties are making their debut (Fokus 2031, Positive Slovenia, the Virant List). According to the latest polls the opposition forces led by the Democratic Party are due to win the election... [Read more](#)

### General Elections in Croatia



The Croats are being called on 4th December to renew the members of the Hrvatski Sabor (Parliament) which comprises 150 MPs. According to the Constitution the number of MPs can vary; there cannot be less than 100 nor more than 160 sitting in parliament. MPs are elected every four years by proportional representation. Ten political parties are represented at present in the Hrvatski Sabor: the Democratic Union (HDZ), led by outgoing Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor; the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the main opposition party led by Zoran Milanovic; the Farmers' Party (HSS), member of the government coalition; the People's Party-Liberal Democrats (HNS); Democratic Alliance of Slavonia and Baranja (HDSSB); the Istrian Democratic Assembly (IDS); the Pensioners' Party (HSU); the Right Party (HSP); the Workers'-Labour Party (HL-SR) and the Social Democrats (HSD). The party in office is suffering criticism because of corruption scandals (trial of former Prime Minister Ivo Sanader) and the polls forecast that the opposition will win... [Read more](#)

### General Elections in Russia



The Russians are being invited to renew the 450 members of the Duma (the lower chamber of Parliament) on 4th December. On the same day the Russians will also appoint the 1210 representatives of the assemblies of the country's 27 regions. More than 2,500 local elections will also take place on 4th December. MPs are elected by proportional representation for five years on the basis of federal lists that can include up to 600 names each in a single electoral constituency. A minimum of 7% of the votes cast is necessary for a party to be represented in the Duma. Four political parties are represented there at present: United Russia (ER) led by Vladimir Putin, 315 MPs; the

Communist Party (KPRF) led by Guennady Zyuganov, 57 seats, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) led by Vladimir Jirinovski, 40 seats; A Just Russia (SR) 38 seats. Although 7 parties are running this year in the elections there will be no surprises. United Russia is due to win the election quite easily!.. [Read more](#)

### Financial Crisis :

#### Reduction of the main lending European Exchange Mecharate at the Bank of Denmark



On 3rd November the Danish Central Bank (Denmarks Nationalbank) reduced its main lending rate by 0.35% down to 1.2%. The bank was responding to the ECB's announcement, made on the same day that it was reducing its key rate by 0.25% down to 1.25%. This decision finds explanation in Denmark's participation in the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM II) since 1st January 1999. This is an agreement that links the central banks of the countries that adopted the single currency together with those of some EU member countries that do not belong to the euro zone. The agreement limits the fluctuations in the exchange rate between the euro and the national currencies, like the Danish Crown... [Read more](#)

#### The ECB reduces its main interest rate



Mario Draghi, former governor of the Bank of Italy, took office on 1st November as president of the European Central Bank for an 8 year mandate. He succeeds Frenchman Jean-Claude Trichet. The ECB Governors' Council, chaired for the first time by Mr Draghi, announced on 3rd November that there was to be a reduction of the main interest rate down to 1.25% against a previous 1.5%. This is the first reduction since 2009, which corrects the rise in interest rates this summer (1% to 1.5%), in response to the deterioration in the economic outlook in the euro zone and in the wake of recent developments in Greece. Given the fears of rising inflation Mario Draghi believes that inflation will slow and "drop below the 2% mark in 2012". He called on euro zone governments to show unbending determination in their efforts to reform and not to count on the monetary institution to resolve the debt crisis... [Read more](#)

#### Conclusion G20



The heads of State and Government of the group of the 20 industrialised and emerging countries (G20) which met on 3rd and 4th November in Cannes, committed to coordinating their work and policies towards boosting economic growth. They agreed on an Action Plan for Growth and Employment. They voted in support of the decisions taken during the last Euro Zone Council that took place on 26th October and the surveillance of Italy by the IMF. The 20 Heads of State and government pointed to the role played by the IMF in strengthening the world's financial safety nets. In order to have better regulation of world trade imbalances, countries with surplus accounts promised to stimulate domestic demand. Finally as part of the financial regulation programme they committed to addressing food price volatility, to foster agriculture, to improve the energy markets and to continue to fight climate change... [Read more](#)

#### The Unemployment rate in Germany declines



On 2nd November the German Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) announced that the gross unemployment rate totalled 6.5% in October (a level as low as this had not been reached in 20 years) and the number of unemployed totalled 2.373 million (the number of unemployed increased for the first time since the beginning of 2010)...

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#### Unemployment Rising in Spain

According to an announcement made on 3rd November by the Spanish Labour and Immigration Ministry, the number of unemployed increased by 134,182 people in October (+3.17%) in Spain. The number of



unemployed now totals 4.630 million people... [Read more](#)

### New Austerity Plan in France



French Prime Minister François Fillon, presented the new plan "to balance public finances" on 7th November, in a bid to save 100 billion euros and "to achieve balance by 2016". The new austerity measures comprise: a reduction in tax rebates to a total of 2.6 billion euros in savings, the earlier implementation of the retirement reform by 2017 (bringing the age of retirement up to 62), a 5% increase in company tax on big companies, a freezing of the President of the Republic and the ministers' salaries, the raising of the reduced VAT rate from 5.5% to 7%, the freezing of income tax and also wealth tax in 2012 and 2013 and a limit on the increase on some social benefits to 1% in 2012... [Read more](#)

### Ireland: Further Measures to Reduce Budgetary Deficit



Ireland would like to make an additional 12.4 billion euros in savings over the next four years to achieve its deficit reduction goals, whilst growth is due to be weaker than forecast next year, said the Finance Minister on 4th November. "The necessary level of adjustment is slightly higher than planned but it is imperative to ensure that we achieve our deficit goals. It is vital for them to be reached," stressed the ministry in a press release... [Read more](#)

### Italy: Financial Surveillance



On 2nd November, on the eve of the G20, the Italian Council of Ministers came together for an emergency meeting, and the next day the President of the Council, Silvio Berlusconi presented the anti-crisis measures that had been adopted on the previous day by the Ministers. The main measures comprise the sale of State-owned buildings, the raising of the retirement age to 67 years of age by 2026, the liberalisation of some regulated professions and local public services. Moreover, it was announced that the measures adopted will be submitted to the Senate on 8th or 9th November. On 4th and 5th November Mr Berlusconi confirmed that Italy had requested the help of the IMF and that it would follow the "opinions" that the IMF and the European Commission would give - however he refused to submit to "the strict surveillance" of the two institutions with regard to the implementation of the measures to reduce the country's public deficit... [Read more](#)

### Boosting Financial Stamina in Portugal



During the Council of Ministers on 3rd November the Portuguese government approved a draft law establishing measures to boost the financial stability of loan companies. The draft law aims to boost the levels of the banks' own funds; privileged alternatives are the use of capital injections by private shareholders, both national or foreign, and as a last measure the State will be able to intervene to recapitalise the banks but for a maximum period of five years... [Read more](#)

### Prudence in Romania



After a meeting on 3rd November with an IMF and EU delegation, Romanian President Traian Basescu announced that Romania was forecasting a deficit of 1.9% and growth of between 1.7% and 2.7% in 2012. This deficit might rise to 2.5% depending on the development of the economy and developments in Europe and might total 3% if the late payments made by State companies are included, as demanded by the EU, said the Romanian president... [Read more](#)

### British Economic Priorities



On 31st October British Prime Minister David Cameron revealed his plan to revive the British economy and pinpointed three priorities: "facing the UK's debts, stepping up competitiveness of the British economy and opening up world trade." David Cameron also announced a series of new measures to stimulate the economy, notably by giving the green-light to two power stations in the north of the country but also by setting up a new credit easing programme... [Read more](#)

#### Commission :

##### IT Security



On 3rd November the first day of a joint EU-USA exercise to face IT problems took place. This project aims to gauge the degree of coordination between the authorities on either side of the Atlantic. Two scenarios were followed: an attack against the IT systems of energy producers and attack against two national security agencies. Over the last few months many international organisations, national administrations and companies have fallen victim to cyberattacks. To face this problem the European Commission - via the European Agency for IT network security, initiated CyberAtlantic 2011 with the participation of specialised agencies of the Member States and those of the USA... [Read more](#)

##### The Advantages of an Agreement in the Doha Round



On 31st October the European Commission published a study on the economic advantages of an agreement as part of the Doha Round. The countries are trying to agree on the reduction of obstacles to trade and on the possibility of improving developing countries' trade situation. The study concludes that economic advantages ensuing negotiations are important to the EU since they comprise an increase in world exports totalling 359 billion dollars... [Read more](#)

#### Council :

##### Negotiations for an EU/Australia Agreement



On 31st October the EU and Australia started negotiations for a new framework agreement. Kevin Rudd, the Australian Foreign Minister and Catherine Ashton, the EU's High Representative, expressed their mutual decision to agree on a strengthened partnership. The new agreement will involve foreign and security policy, climate change, research, science and education, as well as development aid. The two sides are cooperating closely together already in terms of food aid... [Read more](#)

#### Germany :

##### Germany and Turkey are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the treaty on "guest workers"



On 2nd November German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, celebrated the 50th anniversary of the treaty that led to the emigration of some 900,000 Turkish "guest workers" to Germany. The agreement between the two countries was signed on 30th October 1961 and gave Germany a multi-cultural image. At present 3 million Turks or people of Turkish descent live in Germany (700,000 have German citizenship). The German Chancellor spoke of a certain number of problems, notably about the level of education of the population of foreign origin... [Read more](#)

##### Inauguration of the Gas Pipeline Nord Stream



The gas pipeline Nord Stream, the new gas transit route between Russia and Europe via the Baltic Sea, is to be inaugurated on 8th November. Nord Stream comprises two pipes that lie on the bottom of the Baltic Sea, one inaugurated on 8th November and the second is to be built by the end of 2012, each measuring 1.224 km in length. Each pipe comprises around 100,000 sections weighing 24 tonnes; the

internal diameter is 1.15m. They lie at a depth of between 80 and 110 metres. Once the pipes have been laid, the gas pipeline's capacity will reach up to 55 billion m3 per year, which, according to the owners, will cover the requirements of 26 million households... [Read more](#)

## France :

### Franco-German Work Group on the Euro Zone



Bernard Accoyer, leader of the National Assembly and Norbert Lammert, leader of the Bundestag, met on 31st October in Berlin to establish a bilateral parliamentary working group on economic and financial policy issues in Europe. This working group comprising French and German MPs is mainly devoted to issues of euro zone governance, as well as how the two national parliaments can work together and the enhancement of this governance. Two experts will take part in the group's work with the MPs: Jacques Larosière, former IMF Director General, former Governor of the Bank of France, former Chair of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (BERD) and Pierre de Boissieu, former Secretary General of the Council of the European Union. This group will meet once a month in Berlin or Paris alternately, in view of finalising work in February 2012... [Read more](#)

## Greece :

### A new national unity government and early elections



After a week of agitation, with the announcement of a referendum, which was finally abandoned followed by a vote of confidence that was just won on 5th November, Greek Prime Minister, Georges Papandreou, planned to resign to leave the way open for a new national unity government. The principle was approved during a meeting between the two main political leaders, Georges Papandreou (PASOK) and Antonis Samaras (New Democracy) on 6th November, together with Greek President Karolos Papoulias. The interim government, announced on 7th November, aims to establish and ratify the European rescue plan for Greece, before starting the procedure for early general elections on 19th February 2012 - (instead of in 2013). Greece will therefore benefit from financial support totalling 130 billion euros - in exchange for the implementation of an ambitious reform programme... [Read more](#)

## Italy :

### Bank of Italy : "Viability of the Italian Public Debt"



The Bank of Italy published its second report on financial stability in which it states that even with returns of 7.5% to 8% the viability of the Italian debt is not in danger and also that the Italian banking system is strong. Ignazio Visco, the new governor of the Bank of Italy, demanded that the government respect the commitment taken at European level to reduce public debt and to initiate a vast structural reform programme... [Read more](#)

## UK :

### Cybercrime



An international conference on the internet on 1st and 2nd November addressed the themes of boosting capabilities, network connections, on-line confidentiality, data protection and investment on the internet. Prime Minister David Cameron said, "It is our task to find a balance. We cannot leave the web wide open to criminals and terrorists who threaten our security and our prosperity." No overall agreement was reached: the conference was an exchange of points of view to set the base of a dialogue and follow-up conference will take place in Hungary in 2012 and in South Korea in 2013... [Read more](#)

## Belarus :

### The Regime steps up its repression



Aleksander Lukashenko's authoritarian regime has stepped up the repression of its opponents. Ales Beliatzki, chair of the Human Rights movement, "Centre Viasna" may be sentenced to 7 years in prison in the wake of his trial, that opened on 2nd November in Minsk. The prosecutor has accused him of fiscal fraud. The Belarus authorities are refusing to register the association, which prevents it from falling in line with fiscal legislation. According to the organisation "Human Rights Watch" (HRW) Belarus continues to impede the freedom of association. In October 2011 the Belarus parliament adopted even more restrictive legislation, declares HRW in a press release on November 1st... [Read more](#)

#### Ukraine :

##### Yulia Tymoshenko supports the association agreement



Former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, sentenced to seven years in prison by the Ukrainian courts last month, has spoken in support of the signature of the association agreement between the EU and Ukraine. In a letter addressed to the "nations, parliaments and governments of Europe" dated 2nd November the heroine of the Orange Revolution accuses Viktor Yanukovich's government of sabotaging European integration and of turning towards Russia. She says that the signature of the agreement is vital to enable the Ukrainian people to strengthen its partnership with the EU... [Read more](#)

##### Time is running out



The deputy director of the Ukrainian think tank "Centre Razumkov" Valery Chaly said on 28th October that Viktor Yanukovich's government only has a few more weeks to settle concern about the country's political development... [Read more](#)

#### Council of Europe :

##### The UK takes the presidency of the Committee of Ministers



On 7th November the UK took over the rotating presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for a six month period. It succeeds Ukraine after its controversial presidency and will be followed in alphabetical order by Albania, Andorra, Armenia and Austria. The British European Affairs Minister, David Lidington announced that the priorities of the presidency will be the respect of Human Rights and the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law. On the agenda will feature a reform of the European Court of Human Rights, the freedom of expression and governance via the internet, as well as the fight to counter discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation... [Read more](#)

##### Artificial Procreation



In a judgement given on 3rd November the European Court of Human Rights gave a decision on artificial procreation. Two Austrian couples who had no access to sperm or ova donation for in vitro fertilisation, which is banned by Austrian law, denounced an infringement of their right to family. The Court believed that there had not been any infringement of this right, indeed the Austrian legislator wanted to avoid complicated situations in which there would be disagreement over the biological maternity of a child between its genetic mother and the one carrying the child. With this the Court brought a long legal procedure to an end - ongoing since 1998; the judgement is designed to be an example in this area for European jurisprudence... [Read more](#)

##### New President of the Court



The new President of the European Court of Human Rights, Nicolas Bratza, took office on 4th November. He succeeds Jean-Paul Costa, who had chaired the Court since 19th January 2007. Sir Nicolas is the third British president in the Court's history... [Read more](#)

## UN :

### Further Discussions at the UN on a Possible Reunification



Cypriot leader, Dimitris Christofias, and Turk, Dervis Eroglu met in New York on 30th and 31st October together with UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon. After discussions Ban Ki Moon congratulated the two parties for the progress they have achieved in terms of their relations with the EU and domestic security. However discussions over governance, power sharing, property rights and citizenship have brought no results. The Secretary General thinks that a future agreement is possible and is suggesting a further meeting in January... [Read more](#)

## World Development



The UN Programme for Development (UNPD) published its 2011 report on human development on 2nd November - "Sustainability and Equity: a better future for all" takes on board health, income and education, as well as environment and gender disparity. According to the annual ranking Norway is the country where it is best to live and four other European countries (Germany, Ireland, Netherlands and Sweden) are in the top 10. The inequality index (IIG) shows that Sweden is in the lead in terms of gender equality, followed by the Netherlands, Denmark, Switzerland, Finland and Norway... [Read more](#)

## WTO :

### Trade Agreement between Russia and Georgia



Russia and Georgia came to an agreement on trade relations on 3rd November. Russia needed the agreement of each WTO member country in order to join the latter. But since the war in 2008 between Georgia and Russia the former had refused to give its agreement; it finally accepted after a settlement of trade relations between the two countries. In December Russia will be the last G20 member to enter the WTO... [Read more](#)

## World Bank :

### Study on International Corruption



The World Bank and the UN Office against Drugs and Crime (UNODC) have published a study on money laundering and international corruption. In this report entitled "Puppet Masters", 150 major cases of corruption to a total of more than 56 billion dollars are analysed and followed according to the origin of those involved. The USA, the British Virgin Islands, Panama, Liechtenstein, the Bahamas, and also the UK and Cyprus - both EU members - are specifically targeted in this study. The World Bank is suggesting real solutions and is calling on these States to implement them to counter corruption and embezzlement more effectively... [Read more](#)

## Eurostat :

### Industrial Production



According to Eurostat figures published on 4th November, in September 2011 in comparison with August 2011, the industrial price index increased by 0.3% in the euro zone and by 0.4% in the EU. In August prices decreased by 0.2% in the two zones. In September 2011 compared to September 2010, industrial production prices rose by 5.8% in the euro zone and by 6.9% in the EU... [Read more](#)

## Studies/Reports :

### Towards a two-speed Europe

Thierry Chopin, Studies Director at the Robert Schuman Foundation has published an article that appears on the Le Monde.fr entitled "Two-





speed Europe: a means to integration?" The economic and financial crisis is leading to a Europe that is moving along at two speeds - that of the euro zone driven along by the Franco-German couple and the rest of the Union. In Thierry Chopin's opinion the debate over a two-speed Europe should be discussed and thought out again given the present crisis... [Read more](#)

### Corruption in the world



Russian and Chinese businesses are seen as being the most corrupt according to a study by NGO Transparency International that was undertaken amongst 3,000 company executives in the world and published on 2nd November. According to the NGO, these two countries, whose companies have invested 120 billion dollars (around 85 million euros) abroad, come last in the ranking that comprises 28 countries. According to the Bribe Payers' index established by the NGO whose HQ is in Berlin, Russia, in the lead in terms of the most corrupt businesses, has a 6.1 rating and has progressed in comparison with a previous assessment, in 2008 (2.5 out of 10) whilst China is stagnating at 6.5... [Read more](#)

### Culture :

#### Leonardo da Vinci



The National Gallery in London is devoting a major exhibition to one of the most famous artists in the world: Leonardo da Vinci. The exhibition, "Leonardo da Vinci: painter at the Court of Milan", presents some of the artist's unique work, when he was the painter at the Court of Duc Ludovico Sforza in Milan. The exhibition is on until 5th February 2012... [Read more](#)

#### Spain between two centuries from Zuloaga to Picasso (1890-1920)



Until 9th January the Orangerie Museum, Paris, is devoting an exhibition to the main artists and trends in Spanish art from the end of the 19th ,to the beginning of the 20th century. The exhibition presents around 60 works by major artists of this period. The latter illustrate the wealth and diversity of Spanish art at the turn of the 20th century, as well as its natural development towards the avant-garde, notably symbolism and post-impressionism... [Read more](#)

#### Women, avant-garde artists



The Kunstsammlung NRW in Düsseldorf is devoting an exhibition to women, avant-garde artists called "The other side of the moon". These artists influenced dadaism, constructivism and surrealism. The exhibition presents the works of Claude Cahun, Dora Maar, Sonia Delaunay, Florence Henri, Hannah Höch, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Katarzyna Kobro and Germanie Dulac. The exhibition is on until 15th January 2012... [Read more](#)

#### Comic Strip Exhibition



The European Comic Strip Exhibition is on until 20th November in Bucharest for the second year running - the emphasis this time round focuses on the creative effervescence in Eastern Europe and "a trip into the ninth dimension" with the Belgian, French-speaking comic strip. The exhibition is being organised by the National Romanian Contemporary Art Museum and a group of foreign cultural institutes (Eunic) and offers the public work by Portuguese, Greek, French and Hungarian artists... [Read more](#)

#### Bruno Racine to lead Europeana

The Chair of the National Library of France, Bruno Racine, was elected



on 2nd November as chairman of the Board of the Europeana Foundation. This foundation aims to provide the public with access to European art and science, notably thanks to the digitisation of major works and the possibility of consulting them on-line... [Read more](#)

### Rubens, Van Dyck and Jordaens



The Hermitage of Amsterdam is presenting a magnificent retrospective of Flemish painters until 16th March 2012, based on the impressive collection of Flemish art from the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg. The exhibition "Rubens, Van Dyck & Jordaens" with 75 pictures and around 20 drawings includes several works of art by the three masters of the School of Anvers, as well as works by some famous contemporaries... [Read more](#)

### Agenda :



7th November  
Eurogroup Meeting



8th November  
Brussels  
EU Economy and Finance Council

Palais du Luxembourg, Paris  
Conference : "The Future of the Council of Europe"



8th and 9th November  
Berlin  
Conference on Security and Defence



14th November  
Brussels  
Foreign Affairs Council



14th and 15th November  
Brussels  
"Agriculture and Fisheries" Council



14th to 17th November  
Strasbourg  
European Parliament Plenary Session

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