



Italy's Return to Europe



Author: Alain Fabre

The Robert Schuman Foundation has published a European Issue signed by Alain Fabre on Italy's return to Europe. In his opinion the appointment of Mario Monti as head of the Italian government in November 2011 and that of Mario Draghi as the President of the European Central Bank herald a kind of return by Italy in the lead position within Europe. After listing the various reforms undertaken to consolidate public accounts and to revive growth Alain Fabre then explains that the recovery of the Italian economy will help it strengthen its influence long term in the management of affairs in the euro zone. Will Europe then have an example in Italy of how to recover growth?

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Front page! :

Only one day left to enrol in the first EU/Korea Forum!



You have just one day left to enrol for the first EU/Korea Forum organised by the Robert Schuman Foundation, the Yonsei University and the Korea Foundation on 19th September at the European Parliament in Brussels. On this occasion speakers, both European and Korean from various areas, will be presenting the state of relations one year after the signature of the free trade agreement between the EU and South Korea. It is obligatory to enrol... [Read more](#)

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The euro zone crisis and its possible contractual consequences

The Club Droit Public at Sciences Po together with the Robert Schuman



Foundation is organising a meeting on 18th September 2012 on the theme of "The euro zone crisis and its possible contractual consequences". The Foundation's Chairman, Jean-Dominique Giuliani, as well as representatives from the legal and academic spheres, will be debating this issue... [Read more](#)

Back to work! Learn everything you need to know about Europe, order the Foundation's atlas



"The Permanent Atlas of the European Union" published by the Robert Schuman Foundation and co-managed by Jean-Dominique Giuliani and Pascale Joannin, respectively the Foundation's Chairman and Director General, is the first atlas of Europe that presents not only the 27 Member States but also the European Union and the euro zone. To learn everything you need to know about Europe, this is the reference work to order from the Foundation's site this September... [Read more](#)

European Defence - NO to empty promises



Just as the 10th Summer Defence University in Brest will be held on 10th and 11th September the Foundation's Chairman, Jean-Dominique Giuliani has signed an article in the Echos on "the mirages of European Defence". He warns against making empty promises about European Defence and calls for real projects... [Read more](#)

Angel Gurría: OECD Secretary General



As part of the Robert Schuman Foundation, Audiovisuel extérieur de la France (AEF) partnership, the Foundation is broadcasting the latest programme "Talking Europe" on its site - the guest this week was the OECD Secretary General Angel Gurría. The latter reviews the announcements recently made by the ECB and notably the purchase of euro bonds. In his opinion it is good news for the countries in debt such as Spain and Italy. He also said he was extremely worried about unemployment in Europe that is rising constantly, especially amongst the young... [Read more](#)

Elections :

General Elections in the Netherlands: Liberals and Labour run neck and neck



Europe is the heart of the Dutch electoral campaign. The most moderate parties, which are traditionally pro-European have been overwhelmed by the populists, the PVV on the right and the SP on the left. However the latest polls show a certain amount of resistance on the part of the Liberals (VVD) led by the outgoing Prime Minister and a return by Labour (PvdA). The PvdA is now running neck and neck in the polls with the VVD. The last poll published on 8th September by the public TV channel NOS places the PvdA and the VVD in joint first place with 35 seats each, in these elections in which 150 MPs are to be appointed. The day before a poll published by the Maurice de Hond institute forecast 32 seats for the PvdA, just one seat behind the VVD... [Read more](#)

Financial Crisis :

Unemployment rises again in Spain: 4.3 million unemployed



The Minister for Employment and Social Security in Spain, Engracia Hidalgo announced in a press release on 4th September 2012 that unemployment had risen by 0.83% ie 38,179 people more than in July. The number of unemployed has now reached 4.63 million, thereby ending four consecutive months of a reduction in the unemployment rate. However the rise dated 31st August is the smallest since 2006... [Read more](#)

France: the rise in unemployment continues in the second quarter

According to figures published on 6th September by the French



national statistics institute (INSEE) unemployment continued to rise in the second quarter 2012. On average over the second quarter of 2012, the unemployment rate lay at 10.2% of the working population across all of France (overseas territories included). For mainland France with 2.8 million people out of work, the rate totals 9.7%. Up by 0.1 points in comparison with the first quarter of 2012 and after a rise of 0.2 points in comparison with the fourth quarter of 2011 (revised figures), it now lies at its 1999 level... [Read more](#)

GDP Contraction in Greece



The Greek GDP contracted by 6.3% in the second quarter of 2012 after a decline of 6.5% in the first quarter according to revised data announced on 7th September 2012 by the Greek Statistics Authority (Ase). These data are slightly more negative than the first forecasts (6.2%) and the GDP lay at 43,661 billion euros in the second quarter. Total consumer spending lay at 7.2% in the second quarter over one year ie -8% in terms of household consumption and -3.7% in terms of public spending, whilst gross capital investments fell by 19.4%... [Read more](#)

Hungary is in recession



According to final figures released by the Central Statistics Bureau (KSH), Hungary's GDP contracted by 0.2% in the second quarter of 2012 in comparison with the previous quarter for the second consecutive period thereby officially plunging the economy into recession. In the first quarter the economy contracted by 1% according to data that had been adjusted to seasonal variations, said KSH figures in a press release published on 7th September 2012... [Read more](#)

GDP contraction in Italy



According to figures published on 10th September 2012 by the Italian Statistics Institute (ISTAT) the GDP contracted by 0.8% in the second quarter in comparison with the first, which represents a decrease of 2.6% over one year. Since the second half of 2011 final consumer spending has decreased by 2.9%, the gross fixed capital formation by 9.5% and imports by 8.2%, whilst exports have risen by 1.4%... [Read more](#)

Unemployment up in Poland



Unemployment increased slightly in Poland in August to 12.4% of the working population, in comparison with 12.3% in July announced the Labour Ministry on 6th September. The number of unemployed totalled 1.97 million at the end of August it said. In August 2011 unemployment in Poland, a country with 38.2 million inhabitants, affected 11.6% of the working population. Moreover the Polish government reviewed its growth forecasts of the GDP in 2013 downwards, to 2.2% in comparison with a previous 2.9% and 2.5% expected in 2012, said an official press release... [Read more](#)

Further austerity measures in Portugal



Portuguese Prime Minister Pedro Passos Coelho announced on 7th September 2012 that austerity would be stepped up in 2013 whilst Portugal, which is under financial assistance, is not succeeding in respecting its commitments to reducing its public deficit. He announced an increase in social security contributions on the part of wage earners in both the private and public sectors. In exchange he is anticipating a reduction on business contributions in order to foster employment whilst unemployment has risen beyond 15% of the working population. Employees' contributions will therefore rise from 11% to 18% whilst business contributions will decrease from 23.75% to 18%. "The government has decided to increase social security contributions in the private sector to 18% which will enable us to reduce employers contributions also set at 18%," said the Prime Minister... [Read more](#)

ECB :

The ECB will buy back public debt and facilitate bank loans



On 6th September 2012 the Council of Governors of the European Central Bank decided to leave the key rate unchanged at 0.75%. ECB President Mario Draghi announced that estimates placed inflation over 2% in 2012 and forecast low growth. The ECB will launch a new programme "Outright Monetary Transactions" (OMT), designed to buy back euro zone Member States' public debt (purchase of short and mid term maturity bonds, notably over 1 to 3 years) to help the countries which are hardest hit in finding funds on the markets. This programme will be launched on the strict condition that the States which want to benefit from it have previously called on the European aid fund (EFSF) and the ESM, its successor... [Read more](#)

Towards Banking Union?



Vitor Constancio, Vice-President of the European Central Bank defended the idea of Banking Union on 7th September 2012. He firstly insisted on the need for monetary union together with banking union because of the increasing interconnexion between markets and banks, of the need for financial integration in the euro zone and of damaging differences between Member States. The ECB should in this context ensure the supervision of this banking union due to its independence, because of its expertise and the interest in combining monetary supervision with banking and financial supervision. The European Commission is soon to put proposals forward on this... [Read more](#)

Economic Forecasts for the euro zone



The European Central Bank has published its most recent economic forecasts for the euro zone. It stresses that these forecasts are uncertain and largely linked to the Member States' future policy decisions, both in the euro zone and the EU, as well as the reactions of private players, notably the banks and the financial markets. The ECB is anticipating GDP growth between -0.6% and -0.2% and inflation ranging from 2.4% to 2.6% in 2012. In 2013 growth will lie within a range of -0.4% to 1.4% and inflation will lie between 1.3% and 2.5%... [Read more](#)

European Council :

To be able to enter the EU Serbia has to normalise its relations with Kosovo



On 4th September 2012, Serb Prime Minister Ivica Dacic, made his first official visit to Brussels since his appointment in July. He notably met the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy. On this occasion Mr Rompuy re-iterated that he wanted to see Serbia become a member of the EU but insisted on the work it had to do to continue in this direction. "A visible, sustainable improvement" in its relations with Kosovo is a key condition for the launch of negotiations regarding the country's accession. He also spoke of several other measures that had to be applied by Serbia if it wanted to progress towards integration... [Read more](#)

For the quality and the quantity of jobs in Europe



On 6th September 2012 the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy delivered speech on employment in the EU. Although some countries are achieving good results unemployment is now over 20% in Spain and Greece and is affecting 25 million Europeans, more than 10% of the working population, notably young people. He called on the EU to implement structural reform to improve employment, notably by improving training and stimulating supply. Member States must promote the fight to counter unemployment, whilst it is up to the EU to offer an overall economic context that favours employment. European Commission President José Manuel Barroso stressed the dangers of worsening work conditions and called for an effort on the part of the EU to help SME's to take people on... [Read more](#)

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Commission :

Anti-Dumping Inquiry into Chinese solar power



On 6th September 2012 the European Commission announced the launch of an anti-dumping inquiry into Chinese solar panel imports. A European solar industry federation is accusing China of selling this equipment at prices below market value and therefore that it is infringing competition rules. Several European companies in the sector have experienced serious problems over the last few months. The inquiry will last 15 months and the EU might impose anti-dumping taxes after 9 months if there is sufficient proof of this... [Read more](#)

Validating school and non-school experience



On 5th September 2012 the European Commission presented a draft recommendation to the Council that aims to acknowledge non-formal and informal apprenticeships. Indeed a growing number of Europeans have experience like this. The acknowledgement of this training would stimulate employment and bring a share of the European population out of its social exclusion. This document suggests that Member States introduce by 2015 the mechanisms to acknowledge these acquis by concentrating on their identification, their documentation, their assessment and their certification. The Member States will also have to ensure the distribution of information about the possibility to validate acquis and offer citizens the opportunity to make an assessment when necessary... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

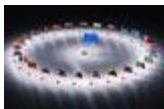
EU/Georgia relations just weeks before the general elections



On 3rd September 2012 Catherine Ashton, the EU's High Representative and Stefan Füle, European Commissioner for the Neighbourhood Policy stressed the main challenges facing Georgia, such as the consolidation of democracy, social cohesion and the fight to counter exclusion. The next general elections will be under close scrutiny by the EU in this context. The Robert Schuman Foundation has published a study that analyses the issues at stake in the election just one month before it takes place... [Read more](#)

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Further sanctions against Syria and Iran?



A "consensus" was reached on 8th September 2012 for stronger European sanctions against the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said the Cypriot Foreign Minister, Erato Kozakou-Marcoullis after a meeting with his EU counterparts. During this meeting many people spoke in support of stronger European and also international sanctions against Iran... [Read more](#)

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Annual Conference of EU Heads of Delegation



On 5th September 2012 the Annual Conference of EU Heads of Delegation took place. High Representative Catherine Ashton welcomed the progress made by the European External Action Service in spite of institutional and financial uncertainties. She also insisted on the need to develop an "overall approach" in order to achieve a better management of international and European issues; she also emphasised the need to improve conflict prevention. The President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy recalled the importance of explaining clearly and precisely all of the institutional and financial reforms that have been implemented to overcome the crisis to the EU's major economic partners... [Read more](#)

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Space :

Galileo moves to Prague



On 6th September 2012 the Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Industry and Business, Antonio Tajani, inaugurated the new European GNSS Agency (GSA) that was previously located in Brussels. This agency is

mainly responsible for security and market development issues related to Galileo. By the end of the decade it is due to have put about thirty satellites into orbit... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Franco-German Meeting in Bonn



French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius travelled to Bonn on 5th September 2012 to take part in the ceremonies organised on the anniversary of the meeting between General de Gaulle and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer that took place fifty years ago, together with his German counterpart, Guido Westerwelle. This visit is part of the 50th anniversary celebration of the Elysee Treaty (22nd January 1963), which has been given a particular tone with the organisation of the Franco-German Year: 50th anniversary of the Elysee Treaty (September 2012-July 2013); whose leitmotif will be youth. This Jubileum Year will be inaugurated by François Hollande and Angela Merkel on 22nd September 2012 in Ludwigsburg... [Read more](#)

German Exports and Imports up in July 2012



German exports increased in July 2012 according to figures published by the Federal Statistics Office (Destatis) on 7th September 2012 but at a slower pace than imports, which is revealed in a slight decrease in the trade surplus. Hence the surplus lay at 16.1 billion euros in July 2012. Exports, according to an adjusted base, increased by 0.5% in July and imports by 0.9% in comparison with last month. Compared with July 2011 exports increased by 9.2% and imports by 1.9%... [Read more](#)

Spain :

Angela Merkel and Mariano Rajoy want to solve the euro crisis



On 6th September 2012 German Chancellor Angela Merkel was the guest of the head of the Spanish government, Mariano Rajoy, the aim being to discuss possible measures to improve Spain's economic situation. During a joint press conference Ms Merkel welcomed the vast programme of structural reform introduced by Spain and said she was impressed by the austerity measures taken, convinced that this is the right path to follow. Both leaders want to settle the crisis once and for all. Mr Rajoy explains that Spain and Germany will work together with the European institutions to draft a "roadmap" to move towards fiscal and banking union... [Read more](#)

France :

France and European Defence



The French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian spoke with the main EU and NATO leaders on 3rd September in Brussels regarding European Defence. He believes that the conditions "are right to move forwards in terms of European Defence". Four conditions were put forward ie continued threats, the strategic re-orientation of the USA towards Asia-Pacific, "budgetary constraints" in European countries and the fact that "Europe is looking for a future". In this context France "has a role to play" and it would like take "a pragmatic, humble approach" added Mr Le Drian... [Read more](#)

GDP contraction in France



The Bank of France confirmed its forecast on 10th September of a 0.1% contraction in the GDP in the third quarter of 2012... [Read more](#)

Greece :

A dangerous week for Greece



The President of the European Council Herman van Rompuy has asked Greece to produce results on his visit to Athens which coincided with the troika's visit, which had been asked by the creditors to check that the Greek recovery plan is being implemented. He insisted on the fact that "the future of Greece lay in the euro zone" after a meeting with Prime Minister Antonis Samaras. But he called for "continued efforts" notably regarding structural reform. Mr Samaras insisted on the urgent need for the country to have financial aid again from the IMF and the EU which depends on Athens' partners' assessment of the report that the troika is to present to them at the beginning of October. He said that he told Mr van Rompuy of the "need to release the next payment on time," frozen since June - this totals 31.5 billion euros without which the country might default... [Read more](#)

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Italy :

Meeting between François Hollande and Mario Monti



The French President François Hollande and the head of the Italian government, Mario Monti met on 4th September 2012 in Rome. They spoke in support of a simplification and greater regularity in the European Summits so that the decision making process can be accelerated in the euro zone. Both leaders also spoke of "excessive levels of budgetary obligations" in Italy and Spain... [Read more](#)

Lithuania :

A Lithuanian internet site on the KGB archives swamped by inquiries



The centre for research on Genocide and Resistance Vilnius has published a further 628 documents on political police activities in Lithuania when the country was occupied by the USSR from the end of the Second World War until 1991, which feature lists of around 1500 KGB executives... [Read more](#)

Czech Republic :

Retirement Reform



The lower chamber of the Czech parliament approved a draft law to reform retirement pensions on 7th September with the introduction as of 2013 of "a second pillar" that brings competition into the present distribution system managed by the State. MPs gave the greenlight to this text on second reading after the Senate recently rejected it. In order for it to come finally into force the draft presented by the government led by Petr Necas still has to be approved by President Vaclav Klaus. In virtue of this law every Czech aged 18 or over will be able to transfer 3% of his social insurance into private funds on condition that he adds an equivalent sum of 2%... [Read more](#)

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UK :

Government reshuffle



On 4th September British Prime Minister David Cameron made his biggest government reshuffle since 2010. Ministers, recruited on the party's right were chosen to continue the planned austerity programme (a 20% reduction in public spending over four years). The appointment of eurosceptic representatives to head Rural Affairs (Owen Paterson) and Justice Minister (Chris Grayling) reveals on the one hand, a toughening of the British position regarding to Common Agricultural Policy and a desire to challenge the decisions made by the European Court of Human Rights, deemed as an interferer (expulsion of foreign terrorists) on the other... [Read more](#)

Meeting between the French President and the British Prime Minister



On a visit to the UK on 6th September 2012 French President François Hollande held a joint press conference with British Prime Minister David Cameron. He said he totally agreed with Mr Cameron over Syria; both want to "step up the democratic transition in Syria" and to strengthen

sanctions against Bachar el-Assad. Over Sahel they want to step up the fight against terrorism. Regarding the euro zone the French President stressed that "although France and the UK were in a different situation" they did share the same interests however. He called on the countries of Europe; notably the UK to "act together to support the continent's economic activity as much as possible"... [Read more](#)

OECD :

The Euro Zone crisis is slowing the world's economy



In an assessment presented in Paris on 6th September 2012 the Deputy Secretary General and the OECD's chief economist, Pier Carlo Padoan, said that the European recession is responsible for slowing the world's economy. According to this report the growth rate of the G7 countries is not due to rise beyond 0.3% in the third quarter of 2012 and 1.1% in the fourth. Regarding the three biggest economies in the euro zone - Germany, France and Italy - they are due to experience an average contraction of 1% in the third quarter of 2012 and of 0.7% in the fourth. In Mr Padoan's opinion the key to recovery lies in the settlement "of the problems associated with banking, budgetary and competitiveness in the euro zone.".. [Read more](#)

IMF :

The IMF releases a further instalment of aid for Ireland



The IMF's Executive Board approved the release of a loan of 920 million euros for Ireland on 5th September 2012, the 8th instalment in aid as part of the 23.5 billion euro plan granted in December 2010... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

GDP Decline in the 2nd Quarter



On 6th September 2012, Eurostat published new European GDP forecasts for the second quarter of 2012. According to these figures the GDP contracted by 0.2% in the euro zone and by 0.1% in the EU in comparison with the previous quarter during which time it stagnated at 0%. Over one year this decrease reached 0.5 and 0.3% respectively...

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Current account surplus



According to a Eurostat publication on 7th September 2012 the EU recorded a current account surplus of 4.6 billion euros in the second quarter of 2012. At the same period in 2011 the deficit lay at 37.1 billion euros... [Read more](#)

Eurobarometer :

Improvement in EU citizens' confidence



According to a survey undertaken on the request of the European Parliament European confidence in the EU is rising. For the first time ever the absolute majority of those interviewed believe that belonging to the EU is a good thing and an increasing share believe that their opinion is best taken account of on a European level. The values of democracy and freedom as well as the single currency are seen as the main elements of European identity. It also emerges in this survey that Europeans do not know much about how the EU's institutions work. Many believe that they would be more motivated in taking part in the European elections if the appointment of the President of the European Commission were more politicised... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

The 2012 world competitiveness ranking at the World Economic Forum

According to the 2012 ranking at the World Economic Forum, which



published its 2012 report on world competitiveness on 5th September 2012, Switzerland is still the most competitive country in the world. Singapore retains second place, whilst Finland lies third, pushing Sweden into fourth place followed by the Netherlands and Germany. France is no longer in the first 20 countries in this ranking, falling to 21st. The USA, which still held first place five years ago continued to decline, falling from 5th in 2011 to 7th this year. The study was undertaken amongst 15,000 company heads in 144 countries... [Read more](#)

Culture :

"Olympia - Myth, Cult and Games"



The "Martin Gropius Bau" Museum in Berlin is hosting an exhibition until 7th January entitled "Olympia-Myth, Cult and Games" devoted to the Olympic Games in Ancient Greece. For the first time outside of Greece the museum is showing nearly 500 archeological artefacts which have been completed with loans from the Louvre, the Vatican and important museums in Munich, Dresden and Rome. In all, more than 850 objects are on show... [Read more](#)

Haydn Festival in Austria



It was between Vienna and the castles of Eisenstadt and Fertöd (in Austria and Hungary), the sumptuous properties of Prince Esterhazy, that Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) spent most of his life. Every year an international festival takes place in the magnificent festival hall in the Eisenstadt castle which pays tribute to the composer. This year the festival will take place from 6th to 16th September 2012... [Read more](#)

European Heritage Days



The 29th edition of the European Heritage Days is taking place in several countries on 15th and 16th September 2012. Discover new heritage treasures that are often hidden by a door, or in an obscure courtyard, above your heads, under your feet - they are only open to the public at this time. Wherever you live there are various offers available to satisfy everyone's curiosity... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



10th & 11th September
Nicosia
Informal Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers' Meeting



10th-13th September
Strasbourg
European Parliament Plenary Session



12th September
General Elections in the Netherlands



14th-15th September
Nicosia
Informal Economy and Finance Ministers' Meeting



17th September

17
Sep

Nicosia
Informal Energy Ministers' Meeting

19
Sep

19th September
Justice-Internal Affairs Council

Brussels
The first EU/Korea Forum organised by the Robert Schuman Foundation, the Yonsei University and the Korean Foundation

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