



Budgetary Balance and Competitiveness: the Swedish Example



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Sweden is deemed by its observers to be one of the leaders in the EU in terms of managing public finances. With a public debt under 40% of the national wealth and balanced public accounts its means of budgetary governance seem to comprise a path for many countries in the Economic and Monetary Union. It learned its lesson in the 1990's when it saw that its economic and social model was inadapted - the famous Swedish model - to the new world regime and reformed it, thereby anticipating the principles that were recently adopted within the EU.

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Front page! :

France, a problem for Europe?



The Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation, Jean-Dominique Giuliani has published an editorial on his site entitled "France, a problem for Europe?".. [Read more](#)

Towards a Federation of Nation States?

On 15th November 2012 the chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation, Jean-Dominique Giuliani will be speaking at the meeting of the European People's Party. He will be speaking during the first round table entitled "Completing the Monetary and Economic Union : towards



a European Federation of Nation States?".. [Read more](#)

Europe via the economy? From the initial projects to the present debates



The General Council of Moselle is organising the third round of study days on 15th and 16th November at Scy-Chazelles on the theme of "Europe via the economy? From the initial projects to the present debates". The various debates will lead to thought about historic legacy and highlight the present debates on the economic dimension of European integration... [Read more](#)

Review of Franco-German Relations



As part of the 50th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty, the Goethe Institute in Paris is organising a conference and an evening-debate on 13th November 2012 to discuss the effects of the change of government on the political relations between France and Germany and the changes in attitude in Franco-German cooperation. The General Manager of the Robert Schuman Foundation, Pascale Joannin, will be speaking at the conference on "A new layout in Franco-German cooperation as part of Europe"... [Read more](#)

Elections :

Parliamentary Elections on 9th December 2012 in Romania



The Romanians are being called to ballot on 9th December next to renew their two chambers of Parliament. The electoral battle is between the Social Liberal Union (Social Democratic Party, the National Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, the Union for the Progress of Romania), the Romanian Alliance of the Right (Democratic Liberal Party, the National Party of Christian Democratic Farmers, the New Republic Party, the Christian Democratic Foundation, the Civic Force Party), the Democratic Union of Hungarians of Romania and the People's Party. The Romanian Parliament is bicameral; the Chamber of Deputies (Camera deputatilor) comprises 335 MPs, and the Senate (Senatul) 143 members elected for four years... [Read more](#)

Social Democrat Borut Pahor creates a surprise



Former Prime Minister (2008-2011) Borut Pahor (SD) caused a surprise in the first round of the Presidential election on 11th November in Slovenia. He won the election with 40% of the vote and now lies ahead of outgoing Head of State Danilo Türk, who won 35.83%. Milan Zver came third with 24.16%. Turnout totalled 47.68% ie 10 points less in comparison with the first round of voting in the presidential election on 21st October 2007. Danilo Türk and Borut Pahor will face each other in the second round on 2nd December next. For the first time ever in a presidential election voters will be choosing between two leftwing candidates... [Read more](#)

Financial Crisis :

Slow but strong recovery, unchanged interest rates, new banknotes



During the Governing Council meeting on 8th November 2012 Mario Draghi, President of the European Central Bank announced that interest rates would remain unchanged. In his opinion recovery in the euro zone "will be slow, progressive but strong" thanks to the sound base of its economy. This base is "more balanced" than in the US, the UK and Japan. He said he was confident in the programme to re-purchase debt on the secondary markets which had already helped calm the markets but he recalled that "structural reforms (of the States) are vital to stimulate growth potential in the euro zone countries and to support employment." Finally he announced the launch of new banknotes in 2013. The series, which will be called "Europe", after the figure from Greek mythology, which gave the continent its name, will be launched in May... [Read](#)

The States ease off in their budgetary effort



On 4th and 5th November 2012 the Finance Ministers and central bankers of the G20 met in Mexico. They re-iterated the importance of support to the growth of the world economy. In this context they called on Europeans to introduce their "complex" anti-crisis strategy and on the US to "carefully calibrate the pace of budgetary tightening" to ensure that public finances were viable long term whilst avoiding a violent budgetary contraction in 2013", because "world growth was still modest and risks were still high". The countries postponed the "Toronto Objectives"; in June 2010 heads of State and government committed to halving their budgetary deficits by 2013 and to stabilising and even reducing their public debts by 2016... [Read more](#)

Action plan to support the economy of Central and Eastern Europe



On 8th November 2012 the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, as well as the World Bank announced the launch of a new action plan designed to support economic recovery and growth in Central and Eastern Europe. This action plan worth over 30 billion euros over the period 2013-2014 is "a direct response to the continued impact of problems in the euro zone on Europe's emerging economies." It aims to "revive growth in the region by supporting private and public sector initiatives notably in infrastructures, business investment and in the financial sector... [Read more](#)

The Bank of France forecasts a slight recession for the end of 2012



On 9th November 2012 the Bank of France published its forecasts as it published its survey on the economic state of industry and services in October 2012. It notably forecasts a reduction of 0.1% in the GDP in the fourth quarter. This forecast has been confirmed by INSEE studies which believe that the GDP will continue to stagnate in the third and fourth quarters which will bring the number of consecutive quarters of zero growth up to five. This means a recession that will herald a difficult, lifeless beginning to 2013... [Read more](#)

Spain: the GDP is due to contract by 1.4% in 2012 and 2013



The recession is due to continue in Spain until mid-2013 with a GDP forecast down by 1.4% this year and the next, said the research institute BBVA Research on 6th November 2012, concerned that the country will not succeed in reducing its public deficit sufficiently. "The Spanish economy is continuing to adjust its activity and employment which will almost probably go beyond the first half of 2013 with a contraction of the GDP of 1.4% both this year and the next" writes the institute in its economic monitor... [Read more](#)

Greece: unemployment at 25.4% in August 2012



On 8th November 2012 the Greek National Statistics Office, Elstat published its revised data on the working population in Greece for August 2012. According to these figures the unemployment rate lay at 25.4% instead of 18.4% in August 2011 and 24.8% in July 2012. The number of people out of work increased by 38.4% in comparison with August 2011 and 1.9% in comparison with July 2012... [Read more](#)

A fiscal measure plan put forward by the Czech government approved by parliament



On 7th November 2012, the Czech MPs adopted by 101 votes in support and 93 against, the government bill which plans to increase taxes. The Czech Prime Minister Petr Necas announced that this vote "confirms confidence in the government". After being rejected a first time by parliament in September, the fiscal measures bill aims to increase the two VAT rates to 15% and 21% and to increase the rate

on high incomes. According to the Prime Minister, the approval of this bill will enable the adoption of a 2013 budget with a public deficit under the 3% mark of the GDP, as required by the Maastricht Treaty and confirmed by the new budgetary package... [Read more](#)

Commission :

Europe is still weak but hopes for a return of growth in 2013



On 7th November 2012 the European Commission indicated that economic conditions were still "weak" this autumn in the EU. The GDP is due to contract by 0.3 points across the entire Union in 2012, and by 0.4 points in the euro zone. The Commission does hope however that there will be a return to growth in 2013, with 0.4% and 0.1% for the EU and the euro zone respectively. This trend is due to consolidate in 2014. The Commission said that budgetary consolidation was starting to produce results since this had led to an overall reduction in deficits amongst the Member States and a reduction in their stock of sovereign debts... [Read more](#)

An ambitious European plan to revive the car industry



Antonio Tajani, the European Commissioner for Industry and Entrepreneurship revealed an action plan on 8th November 2012 entitled "CARS 2020" that is designed to reorganise and modernise the European car industry in view of boosting the sector's competitiveness. This plan counts on innovation and research in view of producing more economic, safer cars with greater added value. The European Investment Bank will be helping with the development of infrastructures to encourage the transfer over to the use of electricity and hydrogen. The Commission wants to foster access by European manufacturers to the world market by rationalising international technical standards. The car industry represents 12 million jobs in the EU, 4% of the GDP and a trade surplus of 90 billion euros... [Read more](#)

Petition for the Erasmus Programme



About one hundred European personalities from the education, economic, arts and sports worlds have addressed an open letter to the heads of State and government in support of the Erasmus programme, the funding of which is under threat. Criticising the fact that due to "budgetary restrictions" "thousands of young people are in danger of missing out on a potentially decisive experience for the rest of their life" the signatories stress that students' international experience is a major advantage at the beginning of their professional career... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Angela Merkel defends her vision of the Union to MEPs



On 7th November 2012, German Chancellor Angela Merkel presented her view of a revived Europe to MEPs. In her opinion the EU must find the courage to reform and integrate further. She called upon European leaders to agree during the next European summit in December on real, ambitious measures for greater budgetary and economic integration of the euro zone. She suggested a harmonised regulation of the financial markets and political mechanisms to guarantee the democratic legitimacy of the decisions taken. She also asked for European institutions to be given the right to intervene in the States' budget when the rules set in this regard by Brussels were infringed... [Read more](#)

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Council :

Negotiations over the European Budget 2013 in Stalemate



Negotiations between the States and the European Parliament over the European 2013 Budget failed on 9th November 2012 and a new meeting is being planned for 13th November in a bid to break the stalemate before the European Council on 22nd and 23rd November, which is to examine the multi-annual budgetary perspectives 2014-

2020. The Council of Ministers was "not in a position to negotiate, and so talks were suspended," announced the Head of the European Parliament's delegation (EPP, FR). "It was not possible to reach a final agreement, so we thought it wiser to suspend the meeting," said the Cypriot Minister for European Affairs, Andreas Mavroyiannis... [Read more](#)

Europe attempts to reassure Asia leaders



On 5th and 6th November during the 9th EU/Asia Summit European leaders tried to reassure their Asian counterparts about the situation in the euro zone and the debt crisis in Europe. With average growth at around 7% Asian growth offers new, unavoidable markets to the EU, which might support its growth in the future. The European delegation insisted on recalling the rules of international trade that have been set in place to avoid all kinds of protectionism and closure of the Asia markets to Europeans. Free-exchange agreements are under negotiation at present with Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, India and soon Japan... [Read more](#)

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New President of the EU's Military Committee



On 6th November 2012, General de Rousiers, of the French airforce, former military representative for France at the EU and NATO, took over the presidency of the EU's military committee. He succeeded General Hakan Syren, of the Swedish army, for a three year mandate... [Read more](#)

Court/Justice :

The Court condemns the reduction of the age of retirement of judges in Hungary



The EU Court of Justice condemned Hungary over reducing judges' retirement age from 70 to 62 on 6th November 2012. "The Court concludes that the radical reduction of 8 years in the retirement age of the professions involved is not a necessary measure to achieve the goal of harmonising the retirement age in the public services," it said in a press release. It believes that this is unjustified "discrimination" based on age... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Meeting between the Serb and Kosovar Prime Ministers in Brussels



On 7th November 2012 the Serb and Kosovar Prime Ministers Ivica Dacic and Hashim Thaçi met in Brussels with the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and the Security Policy, Catherine Ashton. The aim of the meeting was to extend discussions over the measures designed to foster the normalisation of relations between the two countries and to improve living conditions of Albanian Kosovars and of the Serb minority in Kosovo. A further meeting is planned soon... [Read more](#)

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Accounts/Court :

Member States and the Commission must manage spending better



The European Court of Auditors delivered a report on 6th November 2012 on the implementation of the European budget 2011. It concluded that overall accounts stayed in line with estimated income and commitment payments. However the Court notes a 3.9% error regarding payments made to the entire Union budget -which is a comparable level with 2010. For the court certain payments were not used as best they might and sometimes failed to reach their key destinations. Moreover the Commission and Member States' supervisory systems are only partly effective. The Court is therefore asking for a simplification in the payment channels in order to facilitate their supervision... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Unemployment at its lowest and moderate growth in Germany in 2012 and 2013



According to their annual report delivered to the German Chancellor Angela Merkel on 7th November 2012, the five experts - high ranking economists who advise the German government - are expecting unemployment to be at its lowest ever rate this year since reunification in 1990 (6.8%) and growth to lie at 0.8% in 2012 and 2013 (instead of a previous forecast of 0.9% by the IMF and 1% according to the German government). The five experts do however acknowledge the first "successes" in the bid to break the vicious circle of the public debt crisis. Firstly, "budgetary imbalances have been significantly reduced" and the adoption of the fiscal pact as well as the growth pact, that have already been decided upon by the Member States, provide the start of "a regulatory framework which is working" for the euro zone... [Read more](#)

Lack of Nurseries in Germany



Germany is Europe's leading economy but it is in demographic decline and lacks thousands of nursery places according to figures presented on 6th November 2012. On March 1st 2012 558,000 children under three had found a place in a nursery or with a state approved nanny, ie 27.6% of all of the children in that aged group according to the German Statistics Office (Destatis). But Germany has set the goal of having 780,000 places on 1st August 2013, a figure that will be difficult to achieve. "The increase in the number of places should be greater in 18 months time (from March 2012 to August 2013) than it has been in the last four years, " commented Karl Müller, director of Destatis... [Read more](#)

France :

Growth outlook in France still weak



On 5th November the IMF published a report on the state of the French economy. It stresses that the country's low competitiveness is a major obstacle to "macro-economic stability, growth and the creation of jobs." In order to remedy this state of affairs, the Fund recommends that France undertake a reduction and rationalisation of its public spending as well as major structural reforms involving the labour market and services. Moreover the IMF is forecasting growth in 2013 of 0.4% instead of the 0.8% expected by government. In this context the Fund estimates that if weak economic activity continues the speed of budgetary adjustment would have to be revised in order to support greater economic recovery... [Read more](#)

A Woman takes over management of Interpol



Mireille Ballestrazzi, Deputy Central Director of the French Judicial Police was elected President of Interpol on 8th November 2012 in Rome thereby becoming the first woman ever to chair this international police cooperation organisation... [Read more](#)

Greece :

The Greek Parliament adopts further savings measures



On 7th November 2012 the Greek Parliament adopted a framework law on "the public finance strategy 2013-2016" planning to make savings of 18 billion euros by 2016. 153 of the 299 MPs (out of a total of 300) voted in support of this text demanded by the country's international creditors, the EU, the ECB and the IMF, in order for them to resume their financial support to the country. "We have taken a decisive step towards recovery," declared Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras... [Read more](#)

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Parliament adopts the government's draft bill on the 2013 budget

In the night of 11th to 12th November 2012 the Greek Parliament adopted the government's draft bill on the 2013 budget. 167 of the 299 MPs present (out of a total of 300) voted in support of this budget that is forecasting 9 billion euros in savings in 2013. Greece will then



be entering its sixth year of recession. However Finance Minister, Yannis Stournaras, said that the adoption of this budget would guarantee the payment of a further tranche of aid of 30.2 billion euros by the EU and the IMF... [Read more](#)

Lithuania :

The Constitutional Court confirms the Election Results



The Constitutional Court of Lithuania confirmed the results of the general elections that took place on 14th and 28th October last thereby opening the way to the formation of a government coalition. The Court did however say that several candidates from the Labour Party, a centre-left populist party, should not sit in Parliament due to accusations of voting purchasing that have been brought against them. They should be replaced by other candidates who feature on the same lists. It concluded that there had been fraud in the vote counting in only one constituency, which would make a further vote necessary in six months time. On 6th November 2012 the Social Democratic Party signed an agreement with the Labour Party and the small Order and Justice Party to form a coalition that is due to be reviewed given the Court's decision... [Read more](#)

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UK :

David Cameron and Angela Merkel discuss the difficult issue of the European budget



On 7th November 2012 German Chancellor Angela Merkel travelled to London for a working dinner with the British Prime Minister David Cameron. The two leaders tried to overcome their differences in opinion over the budgetary outlook 2014-2020. The Prime Minister intends to achieve a "freezing" of the budget. Angela Merkel stressed in Brussels on the same day that she wanted a "stronger UK in the EU"... [Read more](#)

Sweden :

Differences between Men and Women continue in Sweden



In Sweden "men are paid more for their work than women, who spend more time on housework" said the Swedish statistics office in a report published on 6th November 2012. Graphs show that there are significant differences at the start of professional life, totalling 37% amongst the 20-24 year olds, even though "women are more qualified than men". This report stresses moreover that a major factor for equality between the sexes could be the possibility of combining parenthood with work. The differences are greater still - indeed women take more parental leave (76% in 2011). The Robert Schuman Foundation has published a comparative table, that is regularly updated regarding the place of women in Europe... [Read more](#)

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Montenegro :

Milo Djukanovic appointed Prime Minister



On 9th November 2012 the President of Montenegro, Filip Vujanovic announced that he had appointed the DPS leader, Milo Djukanovic as Prime Minister. His coalition won the general elections on 14th October... [Read more](#)

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Citizenship :

An internet site on the law governing couples in every European country

The Council of Notariats of the European Union is launching an internet site "Couples in Europe" which will be devoted to the law governing couples in the 27 EU countries. This unique site is available in the EU's 21 official languages and aims to "respond better to the requirements



of legal security of couples in Europe, the shape of which is developing rapidly," stresses the President of the Council, Tilmann Götte. The EU has 16 million binational couples... [Read more](#)

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Studies/Reports :

Innovation, a key factor in Economic Growth and Employment



On 6th November 2012 the European Commission published a regional results table on innovation 2012. The latter presents a comparative analysis of 190 EU regions. It ranks the regions into four groups: 41 are in the 1st group of "innovation leaders", 58 regions are in the second group of "followers", 49 regions are "moderate innovators" and 52 are "modest innovators". According to this report innovation results vary more regionally than nationally. The countries in which this trend is the greatest are France and Portugal. The most innovative regions are "typically" found in the most innovative countries: Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Finland... [Read more](#)

Economic Outlook 2060



On 9th November 2012 the OECD published a report on the development of balances between economic powers over the next fifty years. This study presents a new model to calculate growth forecasts of the 34 OECD countries and of the 8 major G20 non-OECD member countries over the next fifty years. The international economic hierarchy is due to change immensely over the next half a century "because the high growth economies of the emerging markets will have increasing influence in world output.".. [Read more](#)

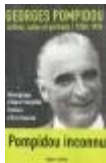
Publications :

The Belarus Satrap



François Bourin Publishing has released the first biography of Europe's last dictator Aleksander Lukashenko as part of its "Black Sheep" Series. Using things that Lukashenko has himself said, author Valery Karbalevych attempts to explain how Belarus managed to slip into dictatorship just three years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and how the manager of a farming enterprise, without the support of any party or social structure, succeeded in rising to the top of the State. This is the only biography available in French of the "Europe's last tyrant"... [Read more](#)

Georges Pompidou - Letter, memoranda and portraits (1928-1974)



Robert Laffont Publishing has released memoranda and letters written by former French president Georges Pompidou (1928-1974). This work offers unique documents written by the former Prime Minister and President of the Republic. The texts that were collated by his son Alain, a member of the Foundation's Scientific Committee, bear witness to the intimate way that Georges Pompidou followed his career... [Read more](#)

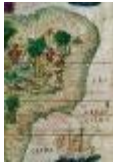
Culture :

Illuminations on show in Munich



The Kunsthalle of the Hypo-Kulturstiftung in Munich is presenting precious books and manuscripts until 13th January 2013 most of which have never been exhibited before. These are manuscripts, bindings encrusted with ivory, enamel or precious stones. The works mainly come from the sumptuous collection of the National Library in Munich and Bamberg. Amongst the treasures on show is Henri II's (973-1024) pericope has been included on the World Documentary Heritage register since 2003... [Read more](#)

When Europe discovered the world



The National Library of France is hosting an exhibition entitled "The Golden Age of Maritime Maps, when Europe discovered the World" until 27th January 2013. Around 200 pieces of work are on display: works of art and ethnographical objects, maps, globes and instruments used in astronomy. Amongst the main elements on show are "the portulan charts", which are illuminated sea maps on parchment that often have gold reliefs showing a series of ports along the coasts. The exhibition addresses various themes amongst which are the discoveries of Africa, Asia and the Americas, iconographical developments and issues of rivalry between the major maritime powers... [Read more](#)

International Film Festival in Rome 2012



Chaired by former director of the Mostra of Venice, Marco Mueller, the International Cinema Festival in Rome is opening its doors until 17th November 2012. An international jury chaired by Jeff Nichols will award prizes to the best works, the Gold Marcus Aurelius being the most prestigious of these. In all 59 full feature films including 8 first films will be presented as a world premiere, and 26 countries are taking part in the festival... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



12th November
Eurogroup



13th November
Brussels
Economic Finance Council



19th November
Luxembourg
Foreign Affairs Council



19th to 22nd November
Strasbourg
Plenary Session of the European Parliament

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