



## The Europeans' Attitudes about Europe: a downturn linked only to the crisis?



Author: Julien Zalc

Since 2007 Europeans' attitudes about the European Union have constantly worsened. Image, confidence, optimism about the Union's future - these three indicators in the Eurobarometer have plummeted sharply. As we explain this downturn we immediately turn to the financial and economic crisis. But a national analysis illustrates that the key factors in attitudes to Europe are not just economic. Increasingly Europeans are being tempted by a type of national withdrawal and this phenomenon is clearly linked to a weakening in support to the European Union. In a bid to restore support, more now than ever before, the European Union must act and show that it is supporting the citizens of Europe.

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#### Front page! :

"Talking Europe" hosts Bernadette Segol and Markus Beyrer



As part of the partnership between the Robert Schuman Foundation and Audiovisuel extérieur de la France (AEF), the Foundation is broadcasting its most recent programme "Talking Europe" on its site which, exceptionally, is hosting two guests this week: Bernardette Segol, General Manager of the European Trade Unions Confederation and Markus Beyrer General Manager of BusinessEurope... [Read more](#)

#### Europe Day :

### 9th May, let's celebrate Europe Day!



On 9th May the Robert Schuman Foundation will put a special page on-line in celebration of Europe Day. You will be able to read the declaration made by French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman on 9th May 1950 in which the creation of the European Community of Steel and Coal (ECSC) was announced. Explanatory files will illustrate what we are celebrating on 9th May and will recall who the main founders of Europe were. Moreover a calendar will show the main events organised across Europe and in other parts of the world on this occasion. The Foundation also invites you to order Robert Schuman's only book "For Europe" which is available on the Foundation's site in French, English and German. This brings together Robert Schuman's main thoughts about Europe; it comprises the very core of what he thought and his vision of the nascent European Union - the issues he addresses remain topical today... [Read more](#)

### Europe Week in Scy-Chazelles



The Robert Schuman House at Scy-Chazelles is putting on a week of events to celebrate Europe until 12th May 2013. On 9th May at 10am an exhibition "Schuman-Adenauer: the two craftsmen of Franco-German reconciliation" will be inaugurated. This exhibition is being organised on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Elysée Treaty on 22nd January 1963; it shows the decisive work invested by General de Gaulle in pacifying relations with Germany. His approach continued Robert Schuman's work in support of Franco-German reconciliation... [Read more](#)

### The Schuman Parade will take place on 11th May



The 14th Schuman Parade will take place on 11th May 2013 at midday. This event that is unrivalled in Europe is the central point of the 20th European Meeting in Poland... [Read more](#)

### Financial Crisis :

#### The ESM provided with half of its capital



The European Stability Mechanism (ESM) now has more than half of its paid-in capital after the contribution by Member States of the third tranche announced the ESM on May 1st 2013 in a press release. "As planned, the 17 Member States of the euro zone paid the third tranche of paid-in capital to the ESM on 30th April 2013. The total amount of the paid-in capital rose therefore from 32 to 48 billion euros," indicated the ESM recalling that the last two tranches of 16 billion were due to be paid by the Member States in October this year and in April 2014. In the end the ESM's paid-in capital which has been operational since October 2012 is due to reach 80 billion euros which says the ESM, will make it the international financial institution with the greatest reserve of paid-in capital in the world.. [Read more](#)

#### Adoption by the Cypriot Parliament of the European bail-out plan



On 30th April the Cypriot Parliament adopted a European bail-out plan that includes a loan of 10 billion euros in exchange for austerity measures. The agreement that was reached with the Troika - the EU/IMF/ECB - was adopted by 29 MPs, 27 voted against. There were no abstentions. The vote by the Cypriot Parliament opens the way to the payment of a first tranche of 10 billion euros in aid in May... [Read more](#)

#### Spain: GDP contraction



Spain's GDP contracted by 0.5% in the first quarter of 2013 according to official provisional figures published on 30th April 2013 by the Spanish National Institute for Statistics (INE). The country is continuing along the path of recession although there has been a slight improvement in comparison with the last quarter of 2012 when activity contracted by 0.8%... [Read more](#)

## The Italian government should use the recent reforms according to the OECD



According to an OECD report published on 2nd May 2013 Italy has made significant progress by strengthening its public finances and adopting reforms that are designed to boost economic growth. The report indicates that it will be vital to maintain budgetary consolidation to orient Italy's GDP/Debt ratio downwards mid-term. Budgetary measures should focus mainly on long term reductions in spending in order to avoid increasing taxes which are already high. A reshaping of the fiscal system would also be necessary to reduce ineffective spending and to make fiscal discipline simpler and cheaper... [Read more](#)

## Portugal: cuts in public spending



On May 3rd 2013 Portuguese Prime Minister Pedro Passos Coelho addressed the country to lay out the measures contained in the mid-term budgetary programme that aims to save nearly 6 billion euros by the end of 2016. In a speech to the nation, Mr Coelho announced that the age at which full retirement could be taken would be raised to 66 and that there would be an extension of working hours from 35 to 40 for civil servants, whose number is due to be reduced by 30,000. The government hopes to receive a further tranche of aid totalling 2 billion euros (as part of a bail-out plan) from its creditors and the final confirmation of the extension of the reimbursement deadlines on loans granted to Lisbon... [Read more](#)

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## Czech Republic: main rate at its lowest since the country's independence



The Central Bank of the Czech Republic (CNB) announced on 2nd May 2013 that it had left its main rate unchanged at 0.05%, its lowest ever level since the country's independence in 1993. The Lombard rate applied by the central bank will also remain unchanged at 0.25% and the discount rate at 0.05%. The CNB's main rates are amongst the lowest in the region. The Czech Republic's economy - an EU member since 2004 but not of the euro zone - has been in recession since 2012 after growth of 1.9% in 2011. The Finance Ministry is forecasting zero growth this year and 1.2% in 2014... [Read more](#)

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## Slovenia's rating taken down a notch and deficit figures reviewed



On May 1st 2013 the financial ratings agency Moody's took Slovenia's rating down a notch from Ba1 to Baa2 relegating it to the borrowers at risk category ("speculative") because of the situation of its banks and the worsening of public accounts. The next day the Slovenian government reviewed its public deficit figures upwards. Unlike the budgetary forecasts of 2013 given by the previous government (deficit of 2.8% of the GDP) the Slovenian deficit is due to rise to 1.8 billion euro at the end of this year which equals 4.98% of the GDP. The most recent estimate is closer to that published by the EU in February last (5.1% of the GDP)... [Read more](#)

## European Council :

### Visit by Herman van Rompuy to Portugal



On 2nd May 2013 the President of the European Council, Herman van Rompuy met the Prime Minister of Portugal Pedro Passos Coelho. He highlighted the economic progress achieved by Portugal over the last two years. External deficits had been reduced thanks to a recovery in exports, deficits had contracted and the banking sector as well as competitiveness had been strengthened. However efforts had to be continued so that this progress impacted growth and employment positively. Three priority axes were defined: budgetary consolidation; structural reform; measures in support of growth and employment... [Read more](#)

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## Commission :

### New economic forecasts by the Commission

On 3rd May 2013 the European Commission presented its new



economic forecasts estimating that the European Commission was recovering slowly from a long recession. After stabilisation in the first half of 2013 growth might return in the second half, notably thanks to external demand. Private consumption and investments should also recover slowly. The Commission does stress however that budgetary consolidation may slow. In the euro zone and the EU growth is due to lie at -0.4% and -0.1% in 2013 and 1.2% and 1.4% in 2014... [Read more](#)

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#### CAP: the Commission demands the reimbursement of 230 million euros



On 2nd May 2013 the European Commission announced that it was going to demand the reimbursement of nearly 230 million euros in aid from the Member States received as part of the Common Agricultural Policy. This measure sanctions the practices of various States who have not fallen in line with European standards or which have not done so adequately, notably in terms of financial control and traceability. Greece will have to reimburse more than 107 million euros, Poland nearly 80 million and the UK 10 million... [Read more](#)

#### French state aid under close scrutiny



On 2nd May 2013 the European Commission announced that it had asked France to recover aid that was unduly paid to the SNCM, a maritime company that notably ensures the links between mainland France and Corsica. It believes that the aid received by the company for the service it provides to the public is not justifiable and a distortion to competition. On the same day the Commission declared that it was opening an in-depth investigation into the restructuring of the PSA group, as agreed when the French authorities gave a guarantee of 7 billion euros plus 85 million in repayable subsidies... [Read more](#)

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#### Presentation of the quarterly report on reform in Greece



On 29th April 2013 the European Commission presented the quarterly report by the Task Force which is advising Athens on the reforms to undertake in exchange for the EU and IMF's aid. According to Olli Rehn, Vice-President of the Commission responsible for Economic and Monetary Affairs "the Task Force is playing a major role in supporting Greece in terms of the introduction of deep structural reform. These reforms are creating conditions for a more competitive Greek economy which can generate sustainable growth and jobs." According to this report the assistance provided by the Task Force in conjunction with the Member States, international organisations as well as specialist agencies has notably facilitated the reform of the central civil service, and it has also encouraged exports and even the development of settlements which have avoided expensive litigation in court... [Read more](#)

#### ECB :

##### Reduction in the ECB's main rates



The Council of Governors of the European Central Bank (ECB) decided on 2nd May 2013 to reduce its main rates by a quarter of a point in order to support economic activity in the euro zone. The interest rate on the main refinancing operations in the Eurosystem has been reduced by 25 base points to 0.50%; the rate on the marginal lending facility by 50 basis points to 1.00%. The rate on the deposit facility will remain unchanged at 0.00%. The ECB will continue its accommodative policy "as long as is necessary" declared Mr Draghi during a press conference. He called on European governments not to give up in their efforts to reduce deficits inviting them to cut spending rather than increase taxes... [Read more](#)

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##### The launch of the new 5 euro note



On 2nd May 2013 the European Central Bank (ECB) launched the new 5euro note. It is the first note in a series called "Europe". The main novelty is the appearance of the goddess, Europe - whence the

continent's name - on the notes. This portrait will enable the inclusion of new security mechanisms in order to make counterfeiting more difficult. The old notes will be progressively withdrawn from circulation... [Read more](#)

## Germany :

### Young people and Europe



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On the occasion of Europe Day and for the 7th year running the German Chancellor Angela Merkel and members of the German government paid visits to German schools on 6th May to meet young people and to speak to them about Europe. The Chancellor notably met pupils of the Johann Gottfried Herder High School in Berlin... [Read more](#)

### Wolfgang Schäuble: "Germany and France have a particular duty with regard to Europe"



In an interview published on 6th May 2013 in the French daily "Les Echos" Wolfgang Schäuble, German Finance Minister and member of the Robert Schuman Foundation's board reacted to the European Commission's decision to grant additional time to France. In his opinion the rules of the strengthened stability and growth pact plan for a certain amount of room to manoeuvre enabling States with excessive deficits to achieve their budgetary goals. However he recalled that the European Commission had also asked for "any delays in the deficit reduction goals to be accompanied by clear commitments in terms of necessary reforms". Asked about Franco-German friendship Mr Schäuble warned against prejudice and old clichés; he insisted on the healthy cooperation between the two governments because "France and Germany had a particular duty with regard to Europe".. [Read more](#)

## Spain :

### New Berlin-Madrid Agreement to promote Spanish SMEs



On 29th April 2013 the Spanish Economy Minister Luis de Guindos and German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble met in Grenada, Spain. During their meeting the two ministers reached an agreement that aims to attract German private investments towards Spanish SME's, notably via sponsoring and patronage. The technical details of this project will be drafted by the two executives, one in each country by the end of May. This bilateral plan will be a pilot project that might be used as an example in other countries notably to counter youth unemployment, stressed Mr Schäuble during a press conference... [Read more](#)

## Italy :

### European Tour by New Italian President of the Council



After having obtained the vote of confidence of both the Italian Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, the President of the Council Enrico Letta started a European tour. He travelled to Germany on 30th April to meet German Chancellor Angela Merkel and to repeat his intention to continue budgetary consolidation and to strengthen European integration - the only remedy to the crisis in his opinion. On May 1st he met French President François Hollande. The two men notably called for the investment of the same energy in growth as in budgetary austerity in Europe. Enrico Letta's tour was completed in Brussels where he spoke to the President of the European Council Herman van Rompuy and the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso. The latter notably said that he was sure that Italy could soon settle the European excessive deficit procedure... [Read more](#)

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## The Netherlands :

### HM Prince Willem-Alexander is the new King of the Netherlands

On 30th April 2013 HM Prince Willem-Alexander became the new King of the Netherlands after his mother, Queen Béatrix signed the act of her abdication. At 46 he is the first in the new generation of European





kings to rise to the throne as well as the first male king in the Netherlands since 1890... [Read more](#)

#### Poland :

##### Polish Justice Minister dismissed



On 29th April 2013 Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk dismissed his Justice Minister Jaroslav Govin, after the declarations he made about in-vitro fertilisation and about a possible trafficking of embryos between Poland and Germany, which caused uproar in the country. This decision is of political importance since Mr Govin is deemed to be the leader of the conservative wing of the ruling party Platforma Obywatelska (PO). The Prime Minister did say however that "Mr Govin's opinions were not the cause of his dismissal," but that the way he expressed them was a problem. Jaroslav Govin has been replaced by Marek Biernacki, the former Interior Minister... [Read more](#)

#### UK :

##### British tax havens will have to act against tax fraud



On 2nd May 2013 the British Finance Minister, Georges Osborne announced that some areas under British sovereignty and likened to tax havens will be subject to an automatic exchange of information as part of the fight to counter tax evasion. A certain number of overseas territories including the Cayman Islands, Bermuda, the Isle of Man and other properties in the Caribbean were involved. This information will be mainly shared between the UK, France, Germany, Italy and Spain according to an agreement signed in June 2012 on the fight to counter tax evasion. These new measures come just as David Cameron made tax transparency a priority as part of the British presidency of the G8... [Read more](#)

#### Slovenia :

##### Slovenia: failure of negotiations on constitutional reforms



On 5th May 2013, after a meeting with the leaders of all parties represented in Parliament, Slovenian Prime Minister Alenka Bratusek indicated that she had not be able to reach an agreement with the main opposition party of former Head of Government, Janez Jansa (SDS). This agreement that was due to bring about constitutional reforms in view of consolidating public finances, notably in the banking sector, would help prevent having to turn to the EU and the IMF for emergency aid. As a result and "in line with the opposition's request," she announced the delay of the debates planned for 6th and 7th May 2013 at the Parliament on the restriction of using the referendum and the adoption of a "golden budgetary rule" limiting spending commitments. Alenka Bratusek has to present a plan to the European Commission on 9th May along with a timetable of public financing, reform of the banking system and economic recovery... [Read more](#)

#### Iceland :

##### Iceland



On 30th April 2013 Icelandic President Olafur Ragnar Grimsson asked the leader of the Progress Party (centrist and agrarian) to form a coalition government, after the sharp breakthrough made by this party in the general elections. "I have decided to ask the chairman of the Progress Party, Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson to form a new government," declared President Grimsson to the press. This decision is a surprise because traditionally it is the head of the party that won the legislative election who is asked to form the new government. The Independence Party (right) with 26.7% of the vote came out ahead of the Progress Party (24.4%) with both parties winning the same number of seats each, 19... [Read more](#)

## ECHR :

### The ECHR condemns Ukraine for the detention of Yulia Tymoshenko



In a decision delivered on 30th April 2013 the European Court of Human Rights 'ECHR' upheld the appeal made by former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, who has been in prison in her country since 2011, saying unanimously that her provisional detainment was "arbitrary and illegal". The judges in Strasbourg condemned Ukraine for four infringements of Ms Tymoshenko's fundamental rights. The ECHR did however reject the allegations of poor treatment and the denial of medical care that the complainant alleges she has suffered whilst in prison. This decision does not concern either the trial nor the conviction of the former head of government which the Court in Strasbourg is to decide upon at a later date. Will she finally be freed?.. [Read more](#)

## Eurostat :

### Unemployment at 12.1% in the euro zone and 10.9% in the EU



On 30th April 2013 Eurostat indicated that unemployment had risen again in March in the euro zone to total 12.1%, in comparison with 12% in February and that it was stable in the European Union at 10.9%. More than 26.5 million Europeans are without work including 5.7 million young people under 25. Unemployment is below 5% in Austria and over 25% in Greece and Spain... [Read more](#)

### Annual euro zone inflation rate down to 1.2%



According to a Eurostat estimate published on 30th April 2013 the annual euro zone inflation rate contracted in April in comparison with the previous month dropping from 1.7% to 1.2%. It is being kept high by alcohol and tobacco prices and is being brought downwards by the decline in energy tariffs... [Read more](#)

## Studies/Reports :

### New "world freedom of the press" index



On the occasion of the World Freedom of the Press Day that took place on 3rd May 2013 the association "Reporters without Borders" published its new world freedom of the press index. From the point of view of European countries "16 of them are still in the first 30". However the association stresses the threat of the "slow erosion" of this in the face of "worrying situations in 11 other Member States". Hungary lost 16 places, and now lies 56th in the ranking. It "is still paying the price of the freedom damaging legislative reforms," explains the report. Greece is also a source of concern. It lost 14 places and now lies 84th notably due to a "disastrous social and professional context". The last EU country is Bulgaria (87th - up by 2 positions)... [Read more](#)

### German and French perspectives for security and trade



The Genshagen Stiftung has published a text by Lisa Brandt and Barbara Kunz which analyses German and French perspectives for security and trade. This text looks into key issues in these two areas which are vital to the transatlantic relationship. What should a sound transatlantic relationship look like in terms of security and trade in the 20th century? What room is there to manoeuvre in a world typified by decreasing financial resources? And what measures are European governments prepared to take? According to the authors continued close transatlantic cooperation is beneficial for both partners... [Read more](#)

### Europe on the Internet



The review "Etudes européennes" has published a paper entitled "L'Europe sur internet." A certain number of sites, which are more or less complete and devoted to Europe, are presented to the reader. Amongst these the study presents sites that lead to thought on European policy and stresses the importance of the Robert Schuman

Foundation's site in this area. On-line publications by the Foundation and notably "European Issues" and the "European Interviews" as well as the "European Elections Monitor" help to analyse European news and deepen thought about the major themes ongoing in the Union... [Read more](#)

#### Publications :

Find out everything you need to know about the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe



The 11th issue of the book "Parliamentary Assembly - Practice and Procedure" has just been published. It highlights the practical functioning of the Assembly and describes the political and institutional context. The work is addressed both to Members of the Assembly and also a wider public: members and agents in national parliaments, representatives of civil society and all of those who want to know more about this institution that forms the core of the Council of Europe... [Read more](#)

#### "Italy, Europe and the Crisis" according to Enrico Letta



The recently published 64th issue of the review 'Géoéconomie' devoted an exclusive interview to Enrico Letta entitled "Italy, Europe and the Crisis" just weeks before his appointment as President of the Italian Council. The Italian politician provides a careful analysis of the political situation in Italy and in Europe. He deems it necessary to "restructure leadership and the executive" of the European Union. He also maintains that "decisions must be made in a more democratic manner and with direct exchange with the citizens of Europe." Finally he advocates a variety of reform to enhance political union... [Read more](#)

#### Culture :

##### Paul Klee's Angels



The "Kunsthalle" of Hamburg is devoting an exhibition to Paul Klee's Angels until 7th July 2013. Most of the 80 pictures on show were created between 1938 and 1940, during the last years of the painter's life. These works were influenced by Paul Klee's illness and the start of the Second World War although happiness and humour were still present. Paul Klee's Angels are on show with work representing angels ranging from the Middle Ages to the modern day... [Read more](#)

##### Alberto Giacometti Exhibition in Grenoble



The Museum of Grenoble is hosting an exhibition on Alberto Giacometti until 9th June 2013. His obstinate quest for the human shape found a particular echo in the art movements of the 1930's. Comprising 70 sculptures, paintings, graphic works and photographs which mainly come from the Alberto and Annette Giacometti Foundation and also from both public and private, French and foreign collections this exhibition offers a precise, didactic approach to how the artist worked... [Read more](#)

##### Art Nouveau and Tamara de Lempicka at the Pinacothèque I and II



Two exhibitions are being presented simultaneously at two different Pinacothèque sites until 8th September 2013. Visitors will be able to view the first retrospective of French Art Nouveau and its development into the Art Deco movement via one of its most famous artists, Tamara de Lempicka. From 1895 on Art Nouveau played a dynamic, controversial role for two decades in the Parisian art world before declining and ceasing to exist just before the First World War... [Read more](#)

##### "Moving-Norman Foster on Art"

As part of the Marseille-Provence 2013 European Capital of Culture of which it is one of the guest towns, Nimes will be hosting an exhibition "Moving-Norman Foster on Art" from 3rd May to 15th September





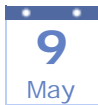
2013. For its 20th anniversary the Carré d'Art, the town's contemporary art museum has invited its famous architect, Briton Norman Foster, to be the curator of its summer exhibition. For the very first time the exhibition reveals his choices and presents the works of renowned artists like Turner, Giacometti, Soulages and Rothko - alongside other emerging artists... [Read more](#)

#### The secrets of the Palace's bedchambers



Hampton Court in London is devoting an exhibition devoted to the "secrets of the royal bedchamber" until 3rd November 2013. The exhibition presents old royal beds that have been magnificently restored, including those belonging to Mary, Caroline, Anne and Charlotte and the travelling bed of King George II. The beds date back to the 17th and 18th centuries. The exhibition allows visitors to take on board the importance of the beds of the kings and queens in terms of how power was exercised. Many ceremonies were indeed held in the royal bedchambers... [Read more](#)

#### Agenda :



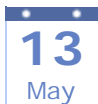
9th May  
Europe Day



10th-11th May  
London  
G7 Finance Ministers' Meeting



12th May  
General Elections in Bulgaria



13th May  
Euro Zone Finance Ministers' Meeting



13th and 14th May  
Agriculture and Fisheries Meeting

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