



Europe and Globalisation: the dangers and the assets



Author: Nicole Gnesotto

The euro crisis has been so strong that Europeans have tended even more toward their traditional occupation of navel-gazing. But scrutiny of the Greek debt and the intricacies of the agreements made on banking supervision may indeed have led us to forget the main context i.e globalisation to which the Union is trying to adjust. Of course globalisation significantly weakens what has been achieved, the comparative assets and the very model of European integration; this adds to the economic crisis a series of crises and challenges which are vital for the future of Europe. But globalisation also brings to the fore the considerable assets held by the Union in the international arena, which political leaders have to acknowledge and make use of.

[Read more](#)

Contents

Front page! : App/Mobile - Healthcare - France/Hungary **Financial Crisis** : Cyprus - Spain - Finland - Greece - Netherlands - Portugal - Slovenia
Commission : Secret/Business - Taxation/Businesses - Confidence - EUROSUR
Council : Eastern Partnership - Budget - Competitiveness **ECB** : Note/10€
Germany : Government **Belgium** : Competitiveness **Spain** : France-Spain
Italy : Berlusconi - Budget **Latvia** : Resignation **Luxembourg** : Government
Poland : France **Romania** : China **UK** : Scotland - Immigration
Slovenia : Resignation **Ukraine** : Demonstrations **NATO** : Estonia **Council of Europe** : Turkey **Eurobarometer** : Development **Studies/Reports** : Retirement
Eurostat : Unemployment - Inflation - Nationality **Culture** : Christmas - Exhibition/Rome - Museum/Malaga

[Agenda](#) | [Other issues](#) | [Contact](#)

Front page! :

Download our app "Fondation Robert Schuman"!



The new app "Fondation Robert Schuman" is available on Apple Store and Google Play. It replaces the existing application Euscope for those who know it. Where ever you are you can follow European affairs in real time. You can also read our most recent publications, events, opinion papers. Subscribe, it's free. The app will soon be available in English... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

What kind of healthcare for Europe in the future?



As part of the 13th "Rencontres de la Fédération de l'Hospitalisation Privée" (FHP), which will take place in Marseilles on 3rd and 4th December, Jacques Barrot, former Healthcare and Social Security Minister and Member of the Robert Schuman Foundation Board is holding a conference on the theme "What kind of healthcare for Europe in the

future?" on 4th December at 3pm... [Read more](#)

France/Hungary Relations



In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the strengthening of relations between France and Hungary the Robert Schuman Foundation and the Embassy of Hungary in Paris are organising a conference on 17th December 2013 entitled "France, Hungary and Central Europe. Franco-Hungarian Views". Various personalities from the Franco-Hungarian political, academic world and the media will contribute to debates moderated by Jean-Dominique Giuliani, Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation... [Read more](#)

Financial Crisis :

Mitigated results for the Bank of Cyprus in the first half of 2013



On 26th November 2013 the Bank of Cyprus published its financial results for the period January to June 2013. It emerges that it has lost 1.8 billion euro. This loss has been caused in part by major provisions to liquidate its operations in Greece and to pay back unprofitable loans. Since March 2013 Cyprus has undertaken a great deal of restructuring as part of an international aid programme on the part of the European Commission, the IMF and the European Central Bank... [Read more](#)

Spanish economy records growth of 0.1% in the third quarter of 2013



On 28th November 2013 the Spanish Statistics Institute (INE) published a report on the state of the country's economy. The GDP recorded growth of 0.1% in the third quarter of 2013. This growth is mainly linked to an improvement in domestic demand. However foreign demand, both in terms of exports and imports grew less than in the previous quarters... [Read more](#)

Finland: reform plans



On 29th November the Finnish government agreed on a reform plan that aims to reduce public spending by around one billion euro by 2017. The government hopes that this plan will help to re-balance public finance of a country which is one of the last in Europe to enjoy a triple A rating amongst the three main international ratings agencies. "After these decisions everyone can have greater confidence in the future of Finland," commented Finnish Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen during a press conference... [Read more](#)

OECD: perspectives in Greece



Greece will remain in recession in 2014 for the seventh consecutive year and will probably need further financial aid announced the OECD on 27th November thereby contradicting the Greek government which is forecasting a return of growth. According to a study on Greece's economic perspectives the OECD forecasts that the country's economy will contract by 0.4% next year... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Netherlands loses its triple A



On 29th November 2013 the Netherlands lost the best rating AAA from the agency Standard and Poor's which took the Dutch long term rating down to AA+, speaking of the country's low growth prospects... [Read more](#)

Portuguese Parliament adopts an austerity budget for 2014



On 26th November 2013 Portuguese MPs approved the 2014 budget which is marked by public spending cuts and tax increases totalling 3.9 billion euro. Measures will enter into force on January 1st 2014 targeting in particular civil servants and pensioners who will witness a reduction in their wages and pensions. Moreover the draft 2014 budget plans to push back the age of retirement from 65 to 66 years. In his speech to Parliament Finance Minister Maria Luis Albuquerque defended the bill stressing that it had to be seen as a necessary step to enable the country to recover its financial autonomy... [Read more](#)

Slovenia: bill to recapitalise banks



On 29th November 2013 the Slovenian Parliament approved a bill allowing the government to use up to 4.7 billion euro for a rapid recapitalisation of the main banks in difficulty which are mainly owned by the Slovenian State. The text which amends the finance bill was approved by 47 of the 90 MPs in Parliament. It provides a legal framework for a recapitalisation of the country's banks which might follow the announcement of the resistance test results undertaken on 10 of Slovenia's main banking institutions, expected on 13th December... [Read more](#)

Commission :

European Commission steps up the protection of trade secrets



On 28th November 2013 the European Commission put forward new rules aiming to protect business know-how and information - so-called trade secrets against their legal obtention, use and publication. Via this proposal the Commission aims to offer businesses an appropriate level of protection and an effective means to protect themselves against theft and the abusive use of their trade secrets... [Read more](#)

The Commission toughens up on tax evasion



In view of countering tax evasion the Commission suggested toughening up business tax rules on 25th November 2013. The proposal aims to make good the lacuna in the "parent companies" directive used by some businesses to escape taxation. Particularly, companies will no longer be able to use differences between Member States in tax processing applied to intragroup payments in order to avoid paying the slightest amount of tax... [Read more](#)

Economic Sentiment improves in November in the euro zone



On 28th November 2013 the European Commission indicated that economic sentiment had improved in November 2013 in comparison with October 2013 for the seventh consecutive month in the euro zone (+0.8 points) and in the EU (+0.4 points). The confidence index lay at 98.5 points in the euro zone which is the highest level in 27 months. However the Commission notes that the improvement has been slowing over the last two months. Confidence improved most in Italy (+1.9 points), Spain (+1.4 points), Netherlands (+1.3 points) and in Germany (+0.8 points), whilst it fell in France (-0.9 points)... [Read more](#)

EUROSUR operational



On 2nd December 2013 the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR) came into operation. EUROSUR aims to provide significant help in saving the lives of those who try to reach the shores of Europe. It will also equip the EU and its Member States with better tools to prevent cross-border crimes, such as trafficking in human beings or trafficking in drugs, while at the same time detect and provide assistance to small migrant boats in distress, in full compliance with European and international obligations, including the principle of non-refoulement... [Read more](#)

Council :

Conclusions of the Eastern Partnership Summit



On 28th and 29th November 2013 during the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius European leaders signed association agreements with Moldova and Georgia. They signed a visa facilitation agreement with Azerbaijan and a framework agreement with Georgia concerning Tbilissi's participation in EU crisis management operations. Finally European leaders regretted the decision taken by the Ukrainian authorities to suspend the signature of their association agreement. This refusal has led to demonstrations in Ukraine... [Read more](#)

Adoption of the 2014-2020 budget

On 2nd December 2013 EU Member States adopted the multi-annual



financial framework (MFP) for 2014-2020, after European Parliament's approval on 19th November 2013 which brought two years of negotiation to an end. For the next seven years the EU is to have a budget of 959.99 billion euro for commitments and 908.40 for payments. Emphasis will be placed on spending to foster growth and employment. Moreover the Member States approved the inter-institutional agreement on budgetary discipline, budgetary cooperation and good financial management as well as declarations that are part of a political agreement on the MFP that were made at the end of June... [Read more](#)

Conclusions of the Competitiveness Council



On 2nd December 2013 the EU's 28 Competitiveness Ministers adopted a joint position on electronic invoicing in the field of public procurement to improve market accessibility and on damages for breaches of the anti-trust laws. Moreover they discussed views on the European Semester 2014 and adopted three texts on industrial policy, single market policy and smart regulation. Finally ministers studied the community trade mark system to modernise it and make it more accessible to European businesses... [Read more](#)

ECB :

A new ten euro note for the summer 2014



The European Central Bank (ECB) announced on 26th November 2013 that a new 10 euro note would enter into circulation after the summer of 2014 in the euro zone. It will feature a hologram of the princess from Greek mythology, Europe. Additional safety measures will be added to make counterfeiting harder. This is the second series of new notes baptised "Europe" after the introduction of the five euro note in the spring of 2013. Gradually new versions of other notes (20,50, 100, 200, 500€) will also be launched... [Read more](#)

Germany :

German: coalition agreement between the CDU/CSU and the SPD



Angela Merkel's Christian-Democratic Union (CDU) and Bavarian Christian-Social Union (CSU) came to an agreement on 27th November 2013 with the Social Democratic Party (SPD) for a joint government. The agreement plans for the introduction of a minimum salary in Germany of 8.50€ per hour and to improve retirement pensions for small wage earners and mothers. But there will be no major change in Germany's European policy. This agreement is to be approved by SPD militants by 12th December. On 28th November 2013 the Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation, Jean-Dominique Giuliani analysed the issues at stake in this agreement in the TV programme "28 minutes" on Arte on the theme of "The German Coalition: what changes will this bring to Europe?".. [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Belgium :

Revival and competitiveness plan



The Federal Government and the Regions of Belgium adopted "revival and competitiveness plan" on 29th November 2013 which will notably imply a reduction in VAT on electricity and a reduction in business charges announced Prime Minister Elio Di Rupo. On April 1st 2014 VAT on electricity will drop from 21% to 6%, which should lead to annual savings of 100 euro per Belgian household said Mr Di Rupo during a press conference. The plan also includes business charge reductions of 450 million euros in 2015, then again in 2017 and 2019 ie around 1,350 billion euros in all. One third of these reductions will target low wages, one third sectors in difficulty and the rest all businesses... [Read more](#)

Spain :

Franco-Spanish Summit in Madrid



French President François Hollande travelled to Spain on 27th November 2013 on the occasion of the 23rd annual bilateral summit between France and Spain. He met the head of government Mariano Rajoy with whom he wanted to define a joint position on banking

union. During a joint press conference the head of the Spanish government stressed that France and Spain had the "same vision and interests" concerning growth and employment in Europe. Both leaders maintained their support for the project of banking union and the creation of a direct recapitalisation mechanism for banks in difficulty. They also indicated that the first Paris-Barcelona high speed train would be launched on 15th December next... [Read more](#)

Italy :

Silvio Berlusconi, excluded from the Italian parliament



On 27th November 2013 the Senate voted in support of depriving Silvio Berlusconi of his mandate as Senator of Molise after his final conviction for tax fraud and his prison sentence. Most senators voted confirming the conclusions of the parliamentary commission and rejecting proposals by "Forza Italia" to prevent the destitution of its leader. On the tribune "Via del Plebiscito" and speaking to his loyal followers Silvio Berlusconi declared that it was "a day of mourning for law, rights and democracy". He promised to "continue" the fight... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Italian Senate approves the 2014 Budget, "Forza Italia" passes over into the opposition



On 27th November 2013 the Italian Senate approved the 2014 budget which still has to receive approval by the Chamber of Deputies. Enrico Letta's government won the upper chamber's confidence with 171 votes against 135. "Forza Italia" Silvio Berlusconi's party decided not to approve it and has therefore left the government majority. On 28th November 2013 the President of the Italian Republic, Giorgio Napolitani met a delegation from "Forza Italia" with whom he discussed the political situation. The president stressed the need for Letta's government to request Parliament's confidence. On 29th November 2013 the President of the Council, Enrico Letta declared to the press that he was going to suggest a vote of confidence to the Head of State after 8th December 2013... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#) | [Other link](#)

Latvia :

Latvian Prime Minister announces the resignation of his government



On 27th November 2013 after his weekly interview with the President, Andris Berzins, Latvian Prime Minister, Valdis Dombrovskis, announced the resignation of his government. With this resignation he is assuming political responsibility for the catastrophe that took place on 21st November 2013. The roof of a supermarket collapsed in Riga, at peak hours, leading to 54 deaths. The Latvian President hopes to form a new government before the end of this year... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Luxembourg :

New Luxembourg Government



Three Luxembourg parties (liberal, socialist and ecologist) agreed on 29th November 2013 to form a grand coalition. The liberal leader, Xavier Bettel, appointed to form the government after the general elections on 20th October, announced that they had finalised the government programme with the socialists of the LSAP and the ecologists of the Dei Greng (The Greens). He said that his government would comprise 15 ministers (6 liberals, 6 socialists and 3 ecologists). Xavier Bettel is due to be sworn in on 4th December next... [Read more](#)

Poland :

Franco-Polish Agreement on seconded workers



On 29th November 2013 French President François Hollande and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk came to agreement to work together on a compromise for seconded workers. The French president deemed it necessary to counter the "use of workers for wage levels which were incompatible with European criteria"... [Read more](#)

Romania :

Summit between Central and Eastern Europe and China



On 26th November 2013 16 Heads of State and government from Central and Eastern Europe (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Czech Republic, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia) met with Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang during his official visit to Bucharest.

The aim of this summit was to strengthen economic ties with China. The latter is interested in infrastructure investments, renewable energies and agriculture. The heads of State and government of Central and Eastern Europe stressed the strategic importance of a partner like China in the modern world... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

UK :

Scottish government unveils its Whitepaper on Scotland's independence



On 26th November 2013 the Scottish government unveiled its Whitepaper on Scotland's independence entitled "The Future of Scotland: your guide to independent Scotland." This 670 page document answers questions set by the Scots showing the advantages which Scotland might benefit from as an independent State. In a press conference Scottish nationalist Prime Minister Alex Salmond recalled that the "future of Scotland was now in the hands of the Scots". He laid out his project for an independent Scotland: it would join NATO and the EU, it would have its own defence and would retain the Queen as its monarch and the pound sterling as its currency. On 18th September 2014 the Scottish people will vote in a referendum on the independence of their country vis-à-vis the UK... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

David Cameron wants to reduce social aid to European immigrants



British Prime Minister David Cameron announced that he wanted to reduce social aid to European immigrants before the end of restrictions on migrants coming from Romania and Bulgaria come to an end on January 1st 2014. Mr Cameron wants European immigrants to be unable to claim unemployment benefit during the first three months of their stay whilst limiting the payment of this benefit to six months to those who cannot prove any real prospects of finding work. Other benefits will also be subject to conditions. On 29th November 2013 four Foreign Ministers from Eastern Europe warned against the British project to restrict certain social rights for European migrants. "The free movement of people is one of the key elements to integration, a vital part of the functioning of the single market," maintained the heads of Hungarian, Czech, Polish and Slovakian diplomacy in a joint letter... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Slovenia :

Resignation of Slovenian Healthcare Minister



The Slovenian Healthcare Minister handed in his resignation on 25th November 2013 which is the second departure within one week in this euro zone country in crisis. "There is simply no other solution (for the healthcare system) which might satisfy all of the parties," declared Tomaz Gantar, who belongs to the small pensioners party, (DeSUS) in his resignation letter... [Read more](#)

Ukraine :

Protests rise in Ukraine against the refusal to draw closer to the EU



Since the end of the Summit in Vilnius on 29th November 2013 more than 100,000 Ukrainians, including former world boxing champion, Vitali Klitchko have rallied in Kyiv in demonstration against President Viktor Yanukovich's refusal to sign an association agreement with the EU. This is the biggest turnout since the Orange Revolution of 2004. On 2nd December several demonstrators blocked government HQ with the intention of forcing the authorities in power out. Demonstrators are demanding the departure of Mr Yanukovich and the organisation of early elections. Some young people in the demonstration shouted "Azarov in prison!" and "Long Live Ukraine!" before singing the national anthem. They are complaining about a government of "gangsters" - which is too "corrupt" in their opinion... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#) | [Other link](#)

NATO :

Cyber-Defence

On 26th November 2013 NATO launched a vast cyber-defence exercise - the biggest of its kind designed to counter massive, simultaneous



cyber-attacks against Member States and their partners. "Cyber-attacks are a daily reality and they are increasingly sophisticated and complex," declared Jamie Shea, Delegate Deputy Secretary General for NATO's Emerging Security Challenges... [Read more](#)

Council of Europe :

Concern about Human Rights in Turkey



After a visit to Turkey on 1st to 5th July last the Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe, Nils Muižnieks published his report on 26th November on the misconduct of the Turkish police regarding the respect of human rights during the Gezi events that took place in May and June 2013. The Commissioner recommends the lifting of obstacles which presently prevent judicial inquiries into the police forces and their suspension when they are the focus of credible allegations of human rights infringements... [Read more](#)

Eurobarometer :

More aid for developing countries



On the occasion of European Development Days, Eurobarometer indicated on 26th November 2013 that more than six Europeans in ten (61%) supported increasing aid to developing countries in spite of the economic crisis in Europe and more than eight Europeans in ten (83%) believe that it is important to help these countries. The survey highlights EU citizens' commitment, since 48% of those interviewed say they were "ready to pay more for products, including groceries, which support developing countries..." [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

OECD publishes its "Pensions at a Glance 2013"



On 26th November 2013 the OECD published a report on the retirement reforms and on social sustainability in Europe entitled "Pensions at a Glance 2013". In this study the organisation analyses the reforms of the retirement systems in each of the European countries and lays out various perspectives for these countries in terms of reducing inequality and poverty amongst pensioners. Hence in 2015 it forecasts that the age of retirement will be at least 67 in the countries of Europe. Governments are being invited to consider the problem of the ageing population and therefore the rise in retirement costs whilst taking on board the social sustainability of reforms... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)

Eurostat :

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



On 29th November 2013 Eurostat indicated that unemployment totalled 12.1% in the euro zone and 10.9% in the EU in October 2013. This represents 26,654 million men and women in the EU, 19,298 million of whom are in the euro zone. The most vulnerable countries are Spain and Greece with respectively 26.7% and 27.3%. The countries with the lowest rates are Austria (4.8%), Germany (5.2%) and Luxembourg (5.9%)... [Read more](#)

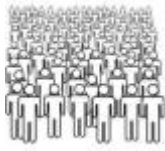
Inflation rate at 0.9% in the euro zone



On 29th November 2013 Eurostat indicated that inflation in the euro zone was up in November 2013 totalling 0.9% whilst it lay at 0.7% in the previous month. Food, alcohol and tobacco are due to experience the highest annual rate in November (1.6% against 1.9% in October), followed by services (1.5% against 1.2% in October), industrial goods except for energy (0.3%, stable in comparison with October) and energy (-1.1% against -1.7% in October)... [Read more](#)

783,100 new citizens in the European Union in 2011

According to figures published on 27th November 2013 by Eurostat in



2011 more than 783,100 people acquired the nationality of an EU Member State which represents a decline of 4% in comparison with 2010 after rising for three consecutive years. Nationality acquisition fell significantly in the UK (-9% in comparison with 2010), France (-20%), Spain (-7%) and Italy (-15%). However Germany recorded an increase of 5%. These new EU citizens have a median age of 32.5; nearly one third of new citizens are aged under 25 and nearly half are aged between 25 and 44... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Christmas Markets



It's Advent! The Christmas Markets have opened their doors in several towns of Europe. From Germany to Austria, without forgetting some towns in France, the streets are now illuminated, Christmas trees are being decorated and in the markets the perfume of mulled wine, chocolate and gingerbread go together with Christmas carols. Several towns including Nuremberg, Salzburg and Strasbourg have been decorated magnificently on this occasion... [Read more](#)

Carlo Saraceni, a Venetian between Rome and Europe



Until 2nd March 2014 the National Museum of the Palace of Venice in Rome is running an exhibition devoted to Carlo Saraceni entitled: "Carlo Saraceni, a Venetian between Rome and Europe". Carlo Saraceni was one of Caravaggio's biggest disciples and interpreters. Born in 1579 in Venice he spent a significant share of his career in Rome, returning to Venice until his death in 1620. His artistic output is linked to his religious and aristocratic patrons. The exhibition focuses on the development of the artist's style of Nordic naturalism in his first landscapes to the Caravaggian style he is well known for... [Read more](#)

Opening of a Pompidou Centre in Malaga in 2015



The Pompidou Centre, which hosts one of the biggest collections of modern art in the world will open its first foreign centre in 2015 announced the townhall of Malaga in Spain on 29th November 2013. The town council "approved an agreement between the town council of Malaga and the Pompidou Centre in Paris to "set up the first HQ of this prestigious institution of French culture outside of France" explained the council in a press release. "This agreement focuses on a renewable five year period." "Opening to the public is planned for 2015," indicated the press release... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



2nd and 3rd December
Brussels
Competitiveness Council



3rd-6th December
Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation



5th December
Frankfurt
ECB Governors Council



5th and 6th December
Brussels
Justice and Internal Affairs Council

Brussels
Transport, Telecommunication and Energy Council



9th and 10th October
Brussels
Eurogroup Meeting

Brussels
Employment, Social Policy, Healthcare and Consumer Council



9th to 12th December
Strasbourg
Plenary Session at the European Parliament

The Letter is also available in:



 I love the Robert Schuman Foundation's Letter

The Letter's Editorial Team :

Inga Groth, Pauline Massis Desmarest, Charles de Marcilly ;
Antonello Cadinu, Victoria de Posson, Anouk Richard

Chief Editor: Pauline Massis Desmarest
Publishing Director: Pascale Joannin

Contact/Suggestions
info@robert-schuman.eu

The Robert Schuman Foundation, created in 1991 and acknowledged by State decree in 1992, is the main French research centre on Europe. It develops research on the European Union and its policies and promotes the content of these in France, Europe and abroad. It encourages, enriches and stimulates European debate thanks to its research, publications and the organisation of conferences. The Foundation is presided over by Mr. Jean-Dominique Giuliani.

You no longer wish to receive our letters. [{LINK}](#)