



MESSAGES IN THE MEDIA

A Year in Review of EU-Member State Relations
as Depicted in National Media

THE EUROPEAN STUDIES STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Anna Korteweg, Edith Klein, Kate Korycki and Robert Austin for their tremendous support and guidance. In addition, we are sincerely grateful to the Arts & Science Student Union and the Centre for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies at the Munk School of Global Affairs for the financial assistance, which made this project possible. Furthermore, we express our gratitude to Georgina Steinsky-Schwartz for her invaluable contributions to this initiative. We also acknowledge and applaud the efforts and determination of the analysts, without whom this journal would not be a reality.



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GLOSSARY

CEPS	Centre for European Policy Studies
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EC	European Commission
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EFSF	European Financial Stability Facility
EFTA	European Free Trade Area
EMU	European Monetary Fund
ESM	European Stability Mechanism
EU	European Union
IMF	International Monetary Fund
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SGP	Stability and Growth Pact
WTO	World Trade Organization

NOTE

Maps and country-specific data on title pages were retrieved from the CIA World Factbook on April 1, 2012.

INTRODUCTION

In October of last year, when we first discussed the idea of producing a European Studies Students' Association Journal, we were unsure of what it would look like when complete. After many meetings and conversations, we decided to compile a comprehensive media analysis of how European Union Member States' popular media depicted the European Union and what issues and trends emerged in their relations over the course of 2011. While our original vision was to have reports on all twenty-seven Member States, due to the difficulty of finding participants who were both willing and had the necessary language skills, we were only able to cover eighteen Member States. In addition to these, we have included four reports on nations who have a profound effect on both the current state and future of the European Union. Although the final product is more limited in scope than originally anticipated, the diverse community of the University of Toronto made the realization of this journal much easier; outside of this environment it would have been an insurmountable obstacle to locate so many people with multilingual proficiency. We are all incredibly pleased with the result of our analysts' efforts, and hope that next year we will be able to build upon the success of this year and realize our original vision of providing reports on all European Union Member States.

The massive undertaking that this journal proved to be, not only due to its limited timeline, but also because of it being the first of its kind, was greatly lightened through the assistance, support, and encouragement we received from both faculty, members of the community, and our peers.

We sincerely hope that you find our journal interesting, informative and educational, and that you will look forward to reading next year's edition.

The ESSA Editorial Board,
March 30, 2012

AUSTRIA

By Aglaia Lowo



Ethnic composition: Austrians 91.1%, former Yugoslavs 4% (includes Croats, Slovenes, Serbs, and Bosniaks), Turks 1.6%, German 0.9%, other or unspecified 2.4% (2001 census)

Population: 8,219,743 (July 2012 est.)

GDP per capita: \$41,700 (2011 est.)

Member since: 1995

EU funding in 2010: net contributor

BACKGROUND:

Austria joined the EU in 1995, along with Sweden and Finland, marking the EU's fourth enlargement. Austria's decision was finalized by a national referendum, in which a majority voted in favor of membership.¹ Previously, Austria struggled with the idea of joining the EEC, as it was apprehensive of compromising its neutrality.² Despite years of deliberation concerning the EEC, Austria did not hesitate to partake in other European initiatives, such as the EFTA, of which it was a founding member. In 2002 Austria successfully implemented the euro as its official currency.

MEDIA SOURCES:

Der Standard

www.derstandard.at

Der Standard is a self-proclaimed liberal, national, daily newspaper, with no public affiliations to any political party. It is a widely read daily with over 100,000 copies in circulation daily. The online edition boasts a section explicitly concerning the EU, with updates made multiple times a day.³

Der Österreichische Rundfunk (ORF)

www.orf.at

Der Österreichische Rundfunk is the largest state-owned, national public service broadcaster in Austria, and provides the country with a combination of regional and nationwide television and radio channels.⁴

Die Presse

www.diepresse.com

Die Presse is a conservative liberal, national newspaper, issued daily, and closely linked to the Austrian Peoples' Party. The paper is considered elitist, with a daily circula-

tion of approximately 98,000 copies. Its online version is updated throughout the day.⁵

FINDINGS:

There were three prominent, inter-related topics that stood out in the Austrian media in 2011: the Eurozone crisis, EU enlargement, and Schengen reform with the potential for a unified EU-asylum policy.

Eurozone crisis

The topic with the most media coverage throughout 2011 was the Eurozone crisis and its implications for the EU and for Austria.

- In the New Year's speech delivered by the Austrian President, Heinz Fischer, the topic of the Eurozone crisis and Austria's role in it were addressed extensively.⁶

- Nevertheless, there was a general consensus among the press that Austria remained one of the most optimistic countries in the EU, concerning its future in the institution.⁷

This optimism is reflected in multiple articles concerning Austria scoring as one of the 'Top Four' most optimistic countries in the Eurozone, despite the economic hardship confronted by the EU throughout 2011.⁸ Most articles concerning this topic displayed a rather objective view of the discussion concerning the EU's "Rettungsschirm" (emergency parachute), presenting a balanced account of the opinions held on this topic.⁹

- However, some articles portray more radical views, which are usually denoted by the opinion of the prominent right-wing political party in Austria, *die Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* (FPÖ). Customarily, the FPÖ take a stance against Austria's greater involvement in the EU, especially when it comes to funding countries like Greece during the Eurozone crisis.¹⁰ Conversely, many articles were seen to condone the EU's aid to Greece and the EU's actions throughout the Eurozone crisis as a whole.¹¹

EU Enlargement

Another prominent issue in the Austrian media in 2011 was the further enlargement of the EU to Southeastern European states, such as Croatia and Serbia, and more controversially, Turkey. On this topic the articles gave an array of opinions and stances, especially in light of the economic crisis Europe faced.

- *Der Standard* reported that the President of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, Christoph Leitl, publicly announced that he believed Turkey is not ready for the EU, and the EU is not ready for Turkey; eight days later, the same newspaper reported a different opinion, which held that Turkey and the EU needed each other.^{12 13}

Schengen Reform and Asylum Policy

Another topic that was raised with some frequency was the reemergence of border control issues, specifically those pertaining to the Schengen Agreement.¹⁴

- Many of the articles on this topic addressed the uncertainty of the potential for future changes to the Schengen Agreement in relation to the growing question of the EU's stance on asylum.¹⁵

- Thus, the question of a unified EU-asylum policy was also discussed with some frequency.¹⁶

2011 IN REVIEW:

In 2011, discourse in the Austrian media underwent a significant transition from focusing predominantly on domestic issues to those concerning Austria in the EU. This shift became increasingly prevalent with the EU's response to the collapse of the Greek economy and the Eurozone crisis. During his New Year's address on 1 January 2012, Austrian President, Heinz Fischer placed great emphasis on the EU, and Austria's role in it.¹⁷ This was conflicting with the speech he had delivered on the 1 January 2011, which did not place the same emphasis on the EU or the economic plight of Europe.¹⁸

Overall, Austria's attitude to the Eurozone crisis was considered hopeful, as both *Die Presse* and *Der Standard* reported that Austria scored as the fourth most optimistic country in the EU.^{19 20} Thus, despite fiscal hardship, and some more radical views that called for Austria's withdrawal from Eurozone crisis funding, the population at large, as represented by the Austrian media, appeared to be content with the EU. Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Michael Spindelegger, also addressed the Eurozone crisis, reinforcing that this was a time to support the EU and its development; he went so far as to advocate for the enhancement of EU policy in foreign affairs and a move towards European political union.^{21 22} This suggests that the Eurozone crisis has, at least on a governmental level, enhanced Austria's ties and relationship to the EU throughout 2011.

The next major issue covered by the Austrian media was that of EU enlargement. While the growing possibility of Croatia, Serbia and the Ukraine joining the EU was discussed at great length, it was mainly Turkey's bid to become the newest EU member that caused the most heated debate among the media sources. While *Der Standard* reported on Christoph Leitl's public announcement that he believed Turkey is not ready for the EU, and the EU is not ready for Turkey, only eight days later the same newspaper reported a different opinion, which held that Turkey and the EU needed each other.^{23 24} This suggests that the media represented a balanced array of opinions on the topic of Turkey joining the EU. The media did not seem to notice a particular change in the Austrian public's feelings towards the EU and the politics of enlargement.

When it came to the issue of the Schengen Agreement, the Austrian media reflected a variety of views, especially in light of the Arab Spring and the increasing flow of refugees, asylum seekers, and illegal immigrants to Austria. The Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs stated explicitly that he wished to reinstate controls between the Schengen countries' borders in light of the Arab Spring, without inaugurating the reinforcement of permanent border controls.²⁵ This raised the question of the formation of a uni-

fied EU asylum policy. Once again, the Austrian media represented a variety of assessments, offering the public a diverse array of opinions on this topic. As with the issue of EU enlargement, the questions arising from Schengen reform and the creation of EU asylum law did not seem contentious enough to sway the Austrian public's opinion of the EU.

In conclusion, the issue dealt with most frequently by the media, the Eurozone crisis, did not stunt the growth of Austria's affection for the EU. The issues concerning EU enlargement, the Schengen border controls, and the growing issue of asylum seekers did not prompt a particular public reaction to the EU. Therefore, while Austria's relationship with the EU was, economically speaking, put to the test over the course of 2011, it did not fundamentally change the public's perceptions of or feelings towards the EU itself.

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- ¹ *Demokratiezentrum Wien*. Date of access: 29/01/2012.
- ² *ibid.*
- ³ "Source profile: Der Standard." *Presseurop.* Date of access: 01/04/2012.
- ⁴ *Österreichischer Rundfunk*. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
- ⁵ "Source profile: Die Presse." *Presseurop.* Date of access: 01/04/2012.
- ⁶ Fischer, Heinz. "2012 ist das Jahr der Entscheidungen und gemeinsamen Anstrengungen." Neujahrsansprache des Bundespräsidenten. Hofburg, Vienna. 01 January 2012. Date of access: 10/02/2012.
- ⁷ "Heimische Wirtschaftslage: Optimismus macht sich breit." *Die Presse*. 18 February 2011. Date of access: 05/02/2012.
- ⁸ *ibid.*
- ⁹ "Heftiger Streit um Paket zur Eurorettung." *Die Presse*. 23 March 2011. Date of access: 10/02/2012.
- ¹⁰ "FPÖ-Podgorschek: Kein Geld mehr für Griechenland." *Der Standard*. 07 June 2011. Date of access: 05/02/2012.
- ¹¹ "Österreicher wollen Griechenland nicht 'hängen lassen.'" *Der Standard*. 21 June 2011. Date of access: 05/02/2012.
- ¹² "Leitl an Türkei: Es geht auch ohne EU-Mitgliedschaft." *Der Standard*. 05 June 2011. Date of access: 07/02/2012.
- ¹³ Solana, Javier. "Die Türkei und Europa brauchen einander." *Der Standard*. 13 June 2011. Date of access: 07/02/2012.
- ¹⁴ "Grenzkontrolle: Dänemark Fordert EU Zu Klage Auf." *DiePresse*. 20 July 2011. Date of access: 06/04/2012.
- ¹⁵ "Das Schicksalspapier Der Flüchtlinge." *Der Standard*. 30 July 2011. Date of access: 06/04/2012.
- ¹⁶ "Einheitliche EU-Asylpolitik: Widerstand Aus Deutschland." *DiePresse*. 20 August 2011. Date of access: 06/04/2012.
- ¹⁷ Fischer, Heinz. "2012 ist das Jahr der Entscheidungen und gemeinsamen Anstrengungen." Neujahrsansprache des Bundespräsidenten. Hofburg, Vienna. 01 January 2012. Date of access: 10/02/2012.
- ¹⁸ Fischer, Heinz. "Die Neujahrsansprache des Bundespräsidenten im Wortlaut, 1. 1. 2011." Neujahrsansprache des Bundespräsidenten. Hofburg, Vienna. 01 January 2011. Date of access: 10/02/2012.
- ¹⁹ "Heimische Wirtschaftslage: Optimismus macht sich breit." *Die Presse*. 18 February 2011. Date of access: 05/02/2012.
- ²⁰ "Österreicher sehen Wirtschaftslage optimistisch." *Der Standard*. 18 February 2011. Date of access: 05/02/2012.
- ²¹ Spindelegger, Michael. "*Die Krise in der EU und Eurozone – Österreichs Reaktion*". Vienna: Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 26 October 2011. Date of access: 05/02/2012
- ²² *ibid.*
- ²³ "Leitl an Türkei: Es geht auch ohne EU-Mitgliedschaft." *Der Standard*. 05 June 2011. Date of access: 07/02/2012.

²⁴ Solana, Javier. "Die Türkei und Europa brauchen einander." *Der Standard*. 13 June 2011. Date of access: 07/02/2012.

²⁵ Spindelegger, Michael. "Rede von Vizekanzler und Außenminister Michael Spindelegger am Europa-Forum Wachau, Stift Göttweig." *Regionalpolitik – Weltpolitik. The Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Wachau, Stift Göttweig, Wachau*. 22 May 2011. Date of access: 07/02/2012.

BELGIUM

By Allison Gibbons



Ethnic composition: Flemish 58%, Walloon 31%, mixed or other 11%

Population: 10,438,353 (July 2012 est.)

GDP per capita: \$37,600 (2011 est.)

Member since: 1952

EU funding in 2010: net contributor

BACKGROUND:

Belgium is a constitutional monarchy and as of 2007 it became a federal state.¹ It was one of the three founding members of the EC in 1957, and of the Benelux Economic Union in 1958.² Belgium has always maintained a close relationship with the EU and has been at the forefront of pursuing European integration.³ The bilingual capital of Brussels hosts several international organizations: most of the European institutions are located in Belgium as well as the NATO headquarters.⁴ The country is culturally divided between the Flemish speaking north and the French speaking south.⁵ This has led to prolonged tensions, and Belgium's political instability has always been particularly worrying to the EU, especially in 2010 when it coincided with the country taking over the rotating 6-month Presidency of the EU Council of Ministers.⁶

MEDIA SOURCES:

Het Laatste Nieuws (The Latest News)

www.hln.be

Het Laatste Nieuws is a Dutch language newspaper based in Brussels, with a daily circulation of 300,000.⁷ It is owned by De Persgroep Publishing, which originated as a small local Flemish newspaper and has grown into the largest media company in Belgium and the Netherlands, with a turnover of almost one billion euros.⁸ *Het Laatste Nieuws* was established in 1888 as a moderate liberal Flemish newspaper,⁹ suggesting an anti-francophone stance and support for the Flemish movement. De Persgroep Publishing is the leading newspaper publisher in Belgium and also publishes daily newspapers *De Morgen*, *De Tijd*, and its French counter-part *L'Echo*.¹⁰

Le Soir

www.lesoir.be

Le Soir is seen as liberal and progressive, with politically federalist leanings. The newspaper's motto is: an "Evening" fighting for the rights of men and women, respect for human dignity, freedom of expression and multiculturalism.¹¹ It is one of the most popular francophone newspapers in Belgium.¹² The publication is owned by the Rossel & Cie and has a daily circulation of 90,000.¹³

De Staandaard

www.standaard.be

De Staandaard is a Flemish daily newspaper traditionally associated with the Christian-Democratic and Flemish Parties.¹⁴ Today, *De Staandaard* claims to be politically neutral.¹⁵ *De Staandaard* is a member of Raad voor de Journalistiek (RvdJ- Council for Journalism); the independent body for self-regulation of the Flemish press in Belgium.¹⁶ It was founded by and remains partially funded by the journalist unions and by publishers and media houses in Flanders.¹⁷ It is a widely read newspaper with a daily circulation of 95,000.¹⁸

Flanders News

www.deredactie.be

Flanders News is Belgium's online news website for the Flemish Radio- and Television Network Organisation (VRT). The VRT is the public broadcasting network for the Flemish Community.¹⁹ Its objective is to be a public broadcasting company "of everyone, for everyone".²⁰ The company provides audiovisual programmes and services to a wide audience on diverse platforms, and claims to be independent of commercial or political influence.²¹ The programmes aim to further the development of the Flemish cultural identity, and a democratic and tolerant society.²²

FINDINGS:

Assessment of Belgium's 6-month EU presidency

EU-Belgium relations commenced in 2011 on a high note.

- 18 January 2011: Members of the European Parliament have expressed praise for the Belgian presidency of the EU.²³ Speaking at a plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, several members complemented Belgium on its stewardship of the EU during the country's turn at the presidency that ran from 1 July until 31 December 2010.²⁴

Following this success, the relationship between Belgium and the EU concerned the following topics for the rest of 2011:

Belgium without a federal government for 541 days

- 20 March 2011: Belgium was criticized in *Het Laatste Nieuws* for failing to implement the EU Framework.²⁵ The deadline for implementing the EU Framework Decision in 2006 passed and with the fall of the government and the dissolution of parliament, the draft law could not be submitted by parliament.²⁶
- 30 March 2011: Belgian sets the new world record, surpassing Iran, as the country to have experienced the longest time period with no official government (289 days).²⁷ However, Belgian sentiment remains one of indifference; the record is not mentioned and in fact is denied in local media outlets, referring to Cambodia, which they claim went 353 days without a government.²⁸
- 30 March 2011: *De Standaard* reiterated this fact, stating that Bart de Wever N-VA (New Flemish Alliance) and Di Rupo PS (Socialist Party) still have two months to form a government before Belgium becomes the new world record holder.²⁹
- 20 July 2011: King Albert indicated his frustration with the current political impasse.³⁰ He points to the leading role that Belgium played in European integration and

notes that this role could be damaged if Belgium's political stalemate continues.³¹

- 1 September 2011: The European Commission issued an urgent warning to Belgium to take speedy action to form a fully-functioning government.³²

The Eurozone Crisis

- 11 April 2011: Didier Reynders, the finance minister, sought to "break the myths" of the budgetary situation of the country. The federal government and country focused on the revision of the Stability Programme and the Belgian National Reform Programme, which had been expected by the European Commission.³³
- 22 October 2011: Belgium agreed to the creation of the EFSF, which guaranteed investors bonds issued by Eurozone countries.³⁴
- 12 November 2011: A budget by Monday? The Flemish and Francophone Socialists, Christian democrats and liberals needed to find 11.3 billion Euros to ensure that the 2012 budget deficit did not exceed the 2.8% agreed upon with the EU.³⁵ Belgium was added to the EU black list and was reprimanded by the European Commission, as the growth predictions released by it put growth in Belgium at 0.9% for 2011.³⁶
- 14 December 2011: The "historic" summit of the ECB did little to convince either markets or analysts that³⁷ Europe was doomed to remain in "crisis".³⁸

The Arab Spring

- 4 February 2011: Over 200 protestors gathered in Brussels to demand the departure of former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and to demand the show of support from EU leaders for the democratic changes in the Middle East.³⁹
- 2 March 2011: The EU increased humanitarian aid for Libyan refugees from €3 million to €10 million.⁴⁰

- 25 May 2011: The EU pledged an extra €1.2 million of “conditional aid” for 2012-2013 to the Arab states undergoing revolution.⁴¹
- 8 September 2011: MSF (Médecins sans frontières) stated that the EU member states should help instead of closing their borders to “illegal immigration.”⁴² “We are questioning the double standards of the international community; at the European level, the answer is not closing the borders.”⁴³

2011 IN REVIEW:

The analysis of popular Belgian media indicates that there has been a noticeable deterioration in relations between Belgium and the EU in 2011. By year’s beginning the EU considered Belgium’s EU presidency, which ended on 1 January 2011, to be particularly successful. By year’s end the EU criticized and pressured Belgium to solve its ongoing political and economic impasse. These sentiments were echoed by King Albert, who in the *Flanders News*, urged the politicians to resolve their differences, as he made references to the special position of Belgium within the EU. He claimed: “Brussels has become the de facto European capital. Our country, with its cultural diversity has partly been seen as a model for the European Union.”⁴⁴

A country that has traditionally been an advocate of European integration, Belgium has had a difficult time maintaining this stance. Concerns of domestic turmoil and market volatility have strained its relations with the EU. The EU has come under fire domestically for its handling of the Eurozone crisis thus far. Beatrice Delvaux, chief editor of *Le Soir*, exemplifies this negativity in many of her articles. She writes that the majority of people are sceptical of the austerity measures implemented by Prime Minister Elio Di Rupo and his government.⁴⁵ She places blame on her own country for having “waited too long,” to implement these measures and notes that the entire euro area is now at stake.⁴⁶

It can be said with confidence that the Belgian media has played a significant role in portraying the EU in a

generally negative light over the past year. It has brought to the forefront the restrictions, limitations and demands of the EU at a time of Belgian domestic discord. At the same time, certain exogenous events, such as those in Egypt and Libya, demonstrate the circumstances under which Belgium is willing to support, and also pressure the EU to fulfill its obligations. Events throughout 2011, have not resulted in overtly hostile feelings between Belgium and the EU, but rather indicate a period of increasingly strained relations.

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- ¹ "EU facts." *Civitas*. 21 July 2011. Date of access: 05/01/2012.
- ² *ibid.*
- ³ *ibid.*
- ⁴ "Belgium." *Europa*. Date of access: 05/01/2012.
- ⁵ "EU facts." *Civitas*. 21 July 2011. Date of access: 05/01/2012.
- ⁶ *ibid.*
- ⁷ "Source Profile: Het Laatste Nieuws" *Presseurop*. Date of access: 30/03/2012.
- ⁸ "Toonaangevende krantenuitgever in België en Nederland." *De Persgroep Newspapers*. Date of access: 05/01/2012.
- ⁹ "Flemish Movement." *Multilingual Archive*. 2011. Date of access: 05/01/2012.
- ¹⁰ "Toonaangevende krantenuitgever in België en Nederland." *De Persgroep Newspapers*. Date of access: 05/01/2012.
- ¹¹ Original text : "Un « Soir » de combat pour les droits de l'homme et de la femme, le respect de la dignité humaine, la liberté d'expression, la multiculturalité." in "Le Soir se lève contre l'inacceptable." *Le Soir*. 2005. Date of access: 05/01/2012.
- ¹² "Belgian and EU Media." *International Press Centre Brussels*. Date of access: 05/01/2012.
- ¹³ "Source Profile: Le Soir." *Presseurop*. Date of access: 30/03/2012.
- ¹⁴ "Belgian and EU Media." *International Press Centre Brussels*. Date of access: 05/01/2012.
- ¹⁵ *ibid.*
- ¹⁶ "Raad voor de Journalistiek." *Raad voor de Journalistiek*. Date of access: 05/01/2012.
- ¹⁷ *ibid.*
- ¹⁸ "Source Profile: De Standaard" *Presseurop*. Date of access: 30/03/2012.
- ¹⁹ "Tasks." *Vlaamse Radio- en Televisieomroeporganisatie*. 2010. Date of access: 08/01/2012.
- ²⁰ *ibid.*
- ²¹ *ibid.*
- ²² *ibid.*
- ²³ "Praise for Belgian EU Presidency." *FlandersNews*. 18 January 2011. Date of access: 18/01/2012.
- ²⁴ *ibid.*
- ²⁵ "Belgium goes wrong money by failing to transpose EU framework." *Het Laatste Nieuws*. 20 March 2011. Date of access: 20/01/2012.
- ²⁶ *ibid.*
- ²⁷ "Belgian political crisis sets new world record." *Euractiv*. 01 April 2011. Date of access: 18/01/2012.
- ²⁸ "We do not yet have the record from Cambodia." *De Morgen*. 30 March 2011. Date of access: 08/01/2012.
- ²⁹ "Belgium no world record form of government." *De Standaard*. 30 March 2011. Date of access: 18/01/2012.

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- ³⁰ "King Albert warns the political class." *FlandesNews*. 20 July 2012. Date of access: 16/01/2012.
- ³¹ *ibid.*
- ³² "Ministers justify austerity." *Le Soir*. Date of access: 18/01/2012.
- ³³ *ibid.*
- ³⁴ "Belgium supports European emergency fund as guarantor." *Het Laatste Nieuws*. 22 September 2011. Date of access: 9/02/2012.
- ³⁵ "A budget by Monday?" *FlandesNews*. 11 November 2011. Date of access: 18/01/2012.
- ³⁶ *ibid.*
- ³⁷ "Europe wants a Belgium government that decides." *Le Soir*. 01 August 2011. Date of access: 18/01/2012.
- ³⁸ *ibid.*
- ³⁹ "Over 200 protesters demands departure Mubarak in Brussels." *De Morgen*. 04 February 2011. Date of access: 09/02/2012.
- ⁴⁰ "EU strengthens humanitarian aid to Libyan refugees." *De Morgen*. 02 March 2011. Date of access: 09/02/2012.
- ⁴¹ *ibid.*
- ⁴² "Die between Libya and Lampedusa." *Het Laatste Nieuws*. 08 August 2011. Date of access: 09/02/2012.
- ⁴³ *ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ "King Albert warns the political class." *FlandesNews*. 20 July 2012. Date of access: 16/01/2012.
- ⁴⁵ "Run for your Lives!" *Le Soir*. 28 November 2011. Date of access: 18/01/2012.
- ⁴⁶ *ibid.*

BULGARIA

By Anjela Deyanska



Ethnic composition: Bulgarian 83.9%, Turk 9.4%, Roma 4.7%, other 2% (including Macedonian, Armenian, Tatar, Circassian) (2001 census)

Population: 7,037,935 (July 2012 est.)

GDP per capita: \$13,500 (2011 est.)

Member since: 2007

EU funding in 2010: net recipient

BACKGROUND:

Situated in the heart of the Balkan Peninsula, Bulgaria is a parliamentary democracy with a long and colourful history, the impact of which remains visible in Bulgarian society today. Following the end of the Second World War, Bulgaria was ruled under a one party, communist regime and was widely recognized as one of the well-established Soviet satellite states in the communist bloc. Subsequent to the collapse of communism, during the early 1990s Bulgaria experienced political instability, which was a key factor in the country's slow transition process, only joining the EU in 2007, as opposed to 2004 as many had hoped.¹ Bulgaria's inability to institute lasting reforms combatting corruption and organized crime has continued to raise concerns, and led to the 2008 suspension of hundreds of millions worth of euros in EU funding.² Since that time, the EU has consistently insisted that Bulgaria's administration focus on implementing thorough reforms aimed at reducing corruption, especially in the judicial sector.³

MEDIA SOURCES:

A number of global media conglomerates have acquired a stake in Bulgaria's media market since the country's transition to a market economy in the 1990s.⁴ Privately owned press sources are common, and freedom of the press is protected under the constitution; however, as a 2009 report from the Paris-based Reporters Without Borders cautioned, investigative journalism and media pluralism in the country are being threatened by political pressure, organized crime and corruption.⁵

Trud

www.trud.bg

Founded in 1936, *Trud* is one of the oldest and most widely read newspapers in Bulgaria, with an estimated current daily circulation of 100,000.⁶ It is a self-proclaimed 'centre' paper, which takes pride in its lengthy history in Bulgarian

media.⁷ In 1997 the German press conglomerate WAZ, which currently owns several other news sources in the country, the most prominent being *24 Chasa*, bought the newspaper.⁸ *Trud* is well-known for publishing trivial news items; however, its investigative reporting is a respected feature, specifically when making revelations about the country's political elite.⁹

Standart

www.standartnews.com

Founded in 1992, *Standart* is owned by a private news agency, Standart News, and was the first Bulgarian newspaper to be published both in print and online.¹⁰ The newspaper also features an English version on its website and has a current circulation of about 100,000, making it one of the most widely read newspapers in the country.¹¹ At the time of its launch, the newspaper targeted business-savvy and intellectual audiences; however, since the turn of the century, its readership has shifted to a less-educated demographic, as the nature of its reporting became predominantly tabloid-like. It continues to feature a wide range of topics, from economics to revelations about Bulgarian celebrities, this range is suggested as the main reason for its continued popularity.¹²

Dnevnik

www.dnevnik.bg

Part of "Economedica", the largest private group of business media in Bulgaria, *Dnevnik* was launched in 1999 following the success of *Kapital*, a weekly business newspaper widely-recognized for its thorough, independent economic and political analysis.¹³ *Dnevnik* has featured a popular online edition, targeting mainly business audiences as well as intellectuals, who, for over 10 years have been attracted by the newspaper's independent and professional reporting. On October 31, 2011, with the launch of *Kapital Daily*, the new print edition Economedica offers to its valued business-

savvy readers, *Dnevnik* became an exclusively online news source.¹⁴

FINDINGS:

Over 400 articles were consulted from the three aforementioned media sources with broad readership in Bulgaria using the following keywords to search: "Bulgaria and the EU", "euro", "Schengen Area". Given the initial volume and range of articles, a limited search narrowed the results down to 318 articles relevant to current Bulgaria-EU relations. From these findings, the following four topics stood out as the leading issues reported on in 2011.

Bulgaria and Romania's accession to the Schengen area

- As 2011 began, the majority of reporting on the topic of Schengen discussed Bulgaria and Romania's expectations for accession according to the schedule set out by the EU, including articles indicating support for the two countries' accession to the border free zone.¹⁵ By mid-January 2011, all three newspapers reported on the EU's criticism which revealed the issues that stood in the way of Bulgaria's accession to the Schengen area,^{16 17} as well as the reaction of the Bulgarian administration, promising that the criteria will be met in time for the scheduled accession in March 2011.^{18 19 20 21 22} In addition several articles also indicated that Bulgaria and Romania demanded that the EU stick to its promises and 'not change the rules of the game, halfway through', questioning whether the accession criteria have been equal for all of its member states.^{23 24}
- In domestic politics, the issue of the delayed accession to Schengen was widely linked to a scandal that unfolded in the end of 2010, dealing with government authorized special investigative techniques ('CPC' in Bulgarian).²⁵ The opposition parties openly criticized the majority government's use of such methods, claiming that the invasion of privacy was a strong indicator of the 'police state' that the GERB administration had created.²⁶ The issue was al-

so viewed, by foreign political scientists, as having a negative impact on Bulgaria's accession to the Schengen area.^{27 28}

- All three news sources reported the German and French opposition to the acceptance of Bulgaria and Romania into the border free area, stating that issues of border security had not been completely resolved.^{29 30 31} In contrast, the papers also covered the position of numerous other EU states such as Spain, Poland, Hungary,³² Luxembourg³³ and the Czech Republic,³⁴ all of which openly voiced their support of Bulgaria and Romania, and in several instances criticized their colleagues' opposition.^{35 36 37 38}

- The issue was exacerbated in mid-2011 when both Bulgaria and Romania gained the support of several EU states in asserting that they had successfully met the necessary criteria for joining the Schengen area.³⁹ This meant that the divide between those in support of their accession and those opposing it grew even wider.^{40 41} The Bulgarian media reflected the opinions of prominent EU leaders calling for the support of the two countries' accession, insisting that anything less would severely damage solidarity within the union.^{42 43 44 45 46}

- Regardless of the obvious and widespread disappointment presented in the media,^{47 48} by June, the administration had shifted towards proactively seeking an exact answer as to when Bulgaria should expect to join the borderless zone,^{49 50 51} aiming for the first quarter of 2012,⁵² while France's prognosis in July stated the accession will likely happen towards the end of 2012.^{53 54} By the fourth quarter of 2011, Bulgaria and Romania's accession to Schengen had already become a sore topic, as the leadership of both countries insisted that the opposition of the Netherlands, France,^{55 56} Germany,⁵⁷ Denmark,⁵⁸ Sweden, Belgium and Finland^{59 60} was unfair, claiming that the criteria set out had been achieved.^{61 62 63 64} No final decision was made in 2011,^{65 66} however, there was an indication of a possible date of accession for air travel of March 2012.⁶⁷ The heavily reported and discussed topic of accession to the Schengen Area unsurprisingly continued well into January 2012.⁶⁸

The Euro crisis, Bulgaria's involvement in Euro-Plus and Bulgaria's own economic performance

- General reporting on the developments related to the Euro crisis,^{69 70} such as the troublesome economic decline of the Eurozone;⁷¹ focusing mainly on the situation in neighbouring Greece,⁷² with several reports also dealing with Italy, Spain,⁷³ and Portugal's⁷⁴ economic difficulties.
- Reports on the domestic economic reality⁷⁵ in comparison with that of the EU^{76 77} as a whole and several of the most fiscally troubled member states. These reports feature reviews of the Bulgarian economy^{78 79 80} and health of the financial sector,^{81 82 83 84} and discuss the country's eventual transition to the euro.^{85 86 87 88 89 90} Several reports also discussed the EU's request that Bulgaria alter its tax laws, specifically the conditions applied to its VAT refund, claiming that the practice was discriminatory to persons involved in activities within the European Union.⁹¹
- Bulgaria's participation in Euro-Plus^{92 93} and its contribution towards possible bailout funds;^{94 95 96} including several widely read interviews with the Minister of the Interior, the Premier,^{97 98} the Minister of Economics,⁹⁹ the Minister of Finance,^{100 101 102} and European leaders ¹⁰³ regarding the Euro crisis^{104 105} as a whole and Bulgaria's economic position within it.^{106 107} By the end of 2011, Premier Boiko Borisov proposed that the countries within the EU that have maintained a deficit under 3% should be rewarded for their fiscal discipline and others be encouraged to follow suit;^{108 109 110} this is referred to as 'the golden rule,'¹¹¹ and the Bulgarian administration has heavily advocated its implementation.^{112 113 114} Reports have also indicated that the administration, joined by other Eastern European states, does not want to financially support bailout funds for struggling EU countries such as Greece, where the standard of living is significantly higher than in Bulgaria.^{115 116 117}

Issue of reforms

Since Bulgaria's accession to the EU in 2007, its failure to implement lasting reforms in several key areas, such as the judicial sector, building and combatting corruption, has resulted in consistent criticism from the EU.

- The issue of reforms was significant in 2011, as 41 of the most read articles suggest, especially in the areas of infrastructure building,¹¹⁸ the fight against organized crime and corruption,¹¹⁹ and judicial reform.¹²⁰ Corruption, specifically customs fraud, was criticized by EU member states¹²¹ and institutions such as the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF),¹²² and was indicated as having a negative effect on Bulgaria's future.
- In June 2011, a report by the European Commission indicated that Bulgaria's labour market was worsening, as unemployment rose and productivity declined.¹²³
- In addition to these, the issue of improper and insufficient absorption of EU funds was a point of criticism and an area in which the European Commission insisted reforms were necessary.^{124 125}

Work permits

A less frequently reported on topic, but one of increasing importance in Bulgaria-EU relations, especially given the country's unrealized accession to the Schengen Area, is the issue of work permits¹²⁶.

- The media reported on the implementation of the 'blue card' system for foreign professionals in Bulgaria, following the example of the rest of the EU.¹²⁷
- Bulgaria and Romania have agreed to work together in their efforts to abolish employment restrictions for their citizens working within the EU.¹²⁸
- In the fall of 2011, the European Parliament requested that the EU's labour markets become open to Bulgarians by 2012,¹²⁹ and that no country in the union should restrict Bulgarian workers after 2013.¹³⁰ While some countries in the EU, including Belgium¹³¹ and Italy,¹³² abolished their restrictions as of January 1, 2012, others,

such as France,¹³³ Germany, the UK and the Netherlands, have insisted on maintaining them for as long as possible.¹³⁴

2011 IN REVIEW:

Throughout 2011, the following issues affected relations between Bulgaria and the EU: Bulgaria's accession to the Schengen Area; the Euro crisis and other economic developments; the matter of domestic reforms; and work permits and restrictions. While the articles consulted were of news reports, instead of op-ed pieces or commentaries, some general attitudes were depicted, indicating the portrayal of Bulgarian-EU relations in the popular domestic press.

The disappointment over the delay of Bulgaria's accession to the Schengen area, one of the most widely reported on topics in 2011, had a negative impact on the country's overall attitude towards the EU, especially after the administration claimed the requirements were completed, which was suggested by an EU-led inspection. The notion that the criteria for Schengen were not consistent, strongly affected domestic views of the delay imposed on Bulgaria and Romania, as politicians from both countries insisted that the necessary requirements had been met. Bulgarian reporting on the issue did reflect the increasing dissatisfaction shared by the vast majority of the population over what some perceived to be unfair treatment, while others saw the delay as a result of the existing corruption and lack of reforms. As 2011 came to a close, the issue of Bulgaria's accession to Schengen remained a hot topic, with reports mainly discussing the possible dates of accession set out for 2012.

The other prominent issue in the Bulgarian media was the Eurozone crisis and the economic turmoil that persisted throughout 2011, and more specifically its consequences for Bulgaria. As the economic reality of the Eurozone countries became increasingly dire, all three news sources consulted produced articles contrasting the domestic economic situation with that of other member

states, and the EU as a whole, indicating the high unemployment rate as the most pressing economic factor in Bulgaria, while praising the country's relatively stable financial sector. The portrayed strength of the domestic financial sector was further emphasized through the numerous articles quoting the Minister of Finance, the Premier and other members of the political elite, as well as statistical data demonstrating the relative health of the Bulgarian currency in comparison to the euro. Overall, the euro crisis had two major impacts on Bulgaria as can be analyzed through the compilation of articles: firstly, there were growing fears over the grim forecast for the Eurozone as a whole, some as far-reaching as the Minister of Finance himself announcing there was a high chance for the euro to collapse by mid 2011; and secondly, the formation of Europlus, and Bulgaria's role within it, increased concern amongst the population about the potential bailout packages that the country would fund. While the euro crisis created worrisome prospects for most Europeans, Bulgarians' fear that they would, in effect, have to contribute to bailout funds for countries with substantially higher GDPs and standards of living, was a concern unique to Bulgaria. As the poorest member of the EU, providing any financial aid to struggling Eurozone countries, such as Greece, was widely portrayed as a strain the country could and would not endure, for the sake of, what were frequently referred to as, 'irresponsible' states. In this regard, the euro crisis also negatively impacted public opinion of the EU, as the majority of Bulgarians felt it was unjust that they would provide financial assistance to countries with higher standards of living and overall economic output.

The issues of reforms and work permits, although less reported on, were still dominant topics that influenced the perception of the EU within Bulgaria. Since its accession to the union, Bulgaria has struggled to implement successful reforms, and has consistently been criticized by the EU in its annual reviews. 2011 proved to be no different in this regard, and the media's portrayal of the criticism was largely focused on the judicial sector and fighting organized crime. The link between the lack of successful re-

forms and the delay in the country's accession to the Schengen area was the only new development on the issue; it obviously had a negative impact, as the vast majority of Bulgarians have become increasingly discouraged and disillusioned by the topic.

Similarly, the topic of work permits and restrictions also had a negative effect on the perception of the union, as Bulgarians continue to face work restrictions within the EU. While the European Parliament called for the abolition of all work restrictions by the end of 2013, several member states such as France, Germany, and the UK announced that their labour restrictions on Bulgarian and Romanian workers would remain in place until further notice. While a few agreements were finalized, allowing certain professionals to practice within the EU and vice versa, the general attitude towards the issue of work permits was negative. Bulgaria's experience of receiving mixed treatment from other member states regarding the issue of work restrictions has left Bulgarians with the attitude that they are not being treated equally within the union. Receiving mixed treatment by member states on the issue of work restrictions was an off-putting experience, and it fostered a shared attitude that Bulgaria is not being treated equally within the EU.

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DENMARK

By Nikki Vukasovic



Ethnic composition: Scandinavian, Inuit, Faroese, German, Turkish, Iranian, Somali

Population: 5,543,453 (July 2012 est.)

GDP per capita: \$40,200 (2011 est.)

Member since: 1973

EU funding in 2010: net contributor

BACKGROUND:

Denmark became a member of the EEC (now the EU) in 1973 during the first enlargement of the community.¹ A referendum on the Maastricht Treaty was held in Denmark in June 1992 and was rejected by the Danish voters.² In response to the outcome of the referendum, in December 1992 an agreement was made in Edinburgh, at a European Council meeting that granted Denmark four exceptions to the Maastricht treaty including citizenship, economic and monetary union, defense policy and justice and home affairs.³ After the agreement was made, Denmark ratified the Maastricht Treaty in May 1993. Denmark became president of the EU on January 1, 2012.⁴

MEDIA SOURCES:

Berlingske www.b.dk

Berlingske (formerly *Berlingske Tidende*), is one of the oldest newspapers on the continent, and has a daily circulation of 152,000, making it the most read newspaper in Denmark.⁵ The newspaper is considered to have a centre-right political alignment.⁶

Jyllands Posten www.jp.dk

Jyllands Posten is regarded to be one of the most highly read, daily newspapers in Denmark.⁷ According to Presseurop however, the daily circulation of the paper is 148,000, making it the second most read. It is considered to have a liberal political alignment.⁸ However, the newspaper is also considered to be conservative by other media sources.⁹ In 2004, *Jyllands Posten* was accused of being anti-immigration, especially towards Muslim migrants after publishing cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad.¹⁰

Politiken

www.politiken.dk

Politiken is the third most read daily paid newspaper in Denmark,¹¹ with a daily circulation of 108,000.¹² In 2010, *Politiken* won the European Newspaper Award, a design award for European newspapers.¹³ *Politiken* is considered to be a centre-left newspaper.¹⁴ *Politiken* is owned by the same group that owns *Jyllands Posten*, a rival newspaper that is considered to have a liberal-conservative political alignment.¹⁵

BT

www.bt.dk

BT is a tabloid newspaper that is quite popular in Denmark, with a daily circulation of 152,000.¹⁶ Due to the tabloid nature of the publication, it favours sensational news stories and lacks any real analysis of current issues. This daily evening paper is owned by the Berlingske Officin, the same company that publishes *Berlingske*, and as a result it also exhibits centre-right political views.¹⁷

FINDINGS:

Denmark within the EU

- Denmark could possibly lose another seat in the European Parliament reducing Denmark's influence in the EU and diminishing their total number of seats to 12. Less than two years ago Denmark had 14 seats. As more countries are added to the EU in the future Denmark can expect to lose more seats. Morten Løkkegaard, a Venstre MEP, says that Denmark cannot be deprived of any more influence and disagrees with the mathematical model used to determine the number of seats a country has. He says that 15 of the EU's small and medium countries will lose seats while the larger countries will get even more seats in parliament. The current system favours larger

countries at the expense of small and medium countries including Denmark.¹⁸

- On 25 March 2011 reports indicated that the EU is at a real risk of disintegrating if it cannot display solid internal and external cooperation. The lack of cooperation can be seen in the EU's approach to recent events in Libya "apart from France and Great Britain, most of the EU countries have failed to defend humanitarian principles in the country." Leading EU countries have distanced themselves from the situation and Germany did not vote in the UN Security Council. The author argues that "indecision shows the disposition of a disunited Europe" and further that "it is a sign of infirmity in European cooperation if, in the midst of a crisis, we are unable to mobilize the political will to help a neighboring external country, and bind ourselves internally to a sustainable policy for economic growth."¹⁹

Border Control/Immigration Policies:

- Denmark's border control plans meant to keep out criminals and illegal immigrants has put the country at odds with the EU who has said that the border controls are in violation of the Schengen Agreement. Denmark's strict immigration legislation also puts it at odds with the rest of the EU.
- A ruling from the EU court, known as the Zambrano ruling, could have a major impact on immigration policy in EU countries including Denmark as reported on 26 March 2011. Danes are being urged to apply again for family reunification even if their previous requests were rejected. The ruling now makes it unlawful for a EU member country to reject residence and work permits for foreign nationals who support a child that has EU citizenship. It is possible that this ruling could affect several of the regulations passed by the Liberal-Conservative government aimed at restricting immigration. Lars Kynhau Hansen, the spokesperson for Marriage Without Borders, estimates that since 2002 at least 10,000 Danes have had their family reunification applications rejected.²⁰

- In an article from 20 March 2011, it was asserted that the claim that the ECJ frequently makes rulings with respect for the sovereignty of member countries has no basis in reality. The recent Zambrano ECJ ruling is a positive step for families who have kept apart due to Danish immigration legislation. This legislation dictated that Danish citizens could not bring a foreign spouse into the country unless stringent conditions were met leading to some Danes moving to Sweden or Germany.²¹
- Later on in June 2011 the media reported on criminal gangs from Eastern Europe making the Danish people fearful and as a result increasing number of Danes insist they must be kept out of the country. Moreover, border control prevents Denmark from being invaded by Germany according to some who say Germany's protests that border control violates the spirit of the EU serves as evidence that Germany has malicious plans. However, Denmark's prosperity is linked with open borders. Competition and openness are the reasons why Denmark today is a leading cultural and artistic nation. The policies of present bourgeois-liberal government of Denmark are not compatible with the desire for freedom that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union. The author believes that the next step of the government may be to leave the EU entirely which would cause the krone's value to free-fall and eliminate Danish goodwill.²²
- The Danish government had enough votes to go ahead with a plan for permanent border control, as reported on 16 June 2011. This move is said to send a message to the rest of the EU about how "open" Denmark wants to be. The Danish said the purpose of the border controls is to "prevent eastern European gangs from wreaking havoc in our country". The permanent border controls are not compatible with the Schengen Agreement, which guarantees free movement of people and goods according to critics. Denmark bowed to criticism with then Minister of Finance Claus Frederiksen acknowledging that the border plans had hurt Denmark's image internationally.
- On 1 July 2011 it was reported that Denmark's government is planning to introduce permanent customs border

controls despite backlash from Germany and the European Commission that the move will endanger the Schengen Agreement on mobility within the EU. Denmark's government has said the border controls comply with the Schengen Agreement and that they will present each phase of the plan to the EU Commission for comment.²³

- Also on 1 July 2011, the media indicated that the EU Commission will examine Denmark's border plans. The commission as guardian of EU treaties will look into whether Denmark's border plans are in line with European legislation. The border plans were developed by the Danish People's Party, a right wing political party.²⁴

The Eurozone

- Denmark's citizens have repeatedly voted no to joining the Eurozone and this left some of the country's leaders and those who support joining the Eurozone fearful that they will be sidelined when economic policies created to stem the debt crisis are created. However, consensus is that Denmark's presidency of the EU in 2012 creates an opportunity for cooperation and collaboration between countries that use the euro and those who do not.
- A reporting on 10 February 2011 stated that European Commissioner Connie Hedegaard indicated that it is time for Denmark to commit fully to EU membership by adopting the common currency. She says that without being a member of the Eurozone Denmark will not have a say in the development of new economic policies. Voters in Denmark have repeatedly voted against joining the monetary union.²⁵
- On 27 September 2011 the media asserted that a referendum on Denmark adopting the Euro is unlikely after a poll conducted by Danske Bank showing 50.6 per cent against joining the euro and 22.5 per cent in favor. There has been increased opposition to joining the monetary union in response to the debt crisis.²⁶
- On 31 October 2011 news reports stated that Angela Merkel had responded admirably to the debt crisis and acted in solidarity with vulnerable EU countries; Germany

should not be the focus of conspiracy theories or criticism. A German Europe is no threat and Germany is the only country capable of solving the European debt crisis according to the author "Merkel maps out the path on a battlefield where most have lost their sense of direction."²⁷

- In November 2011, Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt met with German Chancellor Angela Merkel to discuss Denmark's upcoming presidency of the EU. A media reporting from 18 November asserted that Merkel believes Thorning-Schmidt is well suited to "build a bridge between EU countries who use the Euro and those who do not. Merkel also said that Denmark's status as a euro outsider should not diminish the prospect of a successful Danish EU presidency. During the meeting Thorning-Schmidt stated that Denmark would not go ahead with planned border controls.
- On 9 December 2011 it was reported that Denmark is seeking to be a part of any new agreement that the Eurozone countries adopt to try to tackle the debt crisis. Denmark is concerned that any treaty changes may create a "two speed Europe" with non-Eurozone countries on the outside. There is concern that this could weaken Denmark's influence in the EU with Eva Kjer Hansen, EU issues spokesperson for Venstre (The largest Danish political party) stating "We are now seeing the consequences of Denmark having an exception to the euro as we are not amongst the core countries. Splitting Europe into different groups could weaken Denmark's influence."²⁸
- A report on 14 December 2011 indicated that the rise of euro skepticism in Denmark is a new phenomenon. Increased criticism of the euro and European integration is a result of the financial crisis where even core euro countries did not keep their financial houses in order. According to critics, the European Union has spent too much time engaged in power struggles and treaty discussions when it should have been working to liberalize their markets. As a consequence, the 40 billion dollars that Denmark may have to add to the EU crisis fund will hook Denmark to a doomed European project. The author does

not agree with the Eurosceptics and believes that Denmark would have more to lose by going alone than by assuming their share of responsibility for European integration.²⁹

2011 IN REVIEW:

The relationship between Denmark and the EU was generally positive but became strained at certain periods due to Denmark's border control plans and their strict immigration legislation. Denmark planned to implement border controls on the borders it shares with Germany and Sweden. Denmark claimed the border controls were needed to keep out criminals from Eastern Europe, but the EU felt the controls violated the Schengen Agreement. The country eventually decided not to go ahead with the controls but its reputation within the EU was already tarnished. An ECJ decision in March 2011 that determined that a non-EU citizen who is the parent of a EU citizen has the right to reside within an EU member state and also obtain a work permit. This brought negative attention to Denmark's strict immigration policies. Critics in the EU and within Denmark believe that the state's policies are barriers to family reunification, which has forced many Danes to live in neighboring Sweden or Germany in order to remain with their spouses.

Denmark's policies may sometimes conflict with the mandate of the EU but the relationship is usually positive and beneficial for each party. Maintaining influence in the Union is important to Denmark and they are concerned that the financial crisis will create a two speed Europe with non-Eurozone countries like Denmark left outside of any new economic or treaty discussions. Denmark is also concerned that the loss of seats in the European parliament due to further enlargement will decrease their influence.

Domestically, the financial crisis has led some Danes to believe that to maintain influence Denmark must fully commit to the union by adopting the euro. However, Danish citizens are opposed to adopting the euro and the financial crisis makes joining the Eurozone even less at-

tractive. The financial crisis has also led to a rise in euro-skepticism within the country and some citizens are resentful of contributing money to the bailout fund for a union they believe is doomed to fail. Denmark has always been reluctant to fully commit to European integration and it will be interesting to see how involved Denmark will be in policy and treaty discussions as Europe attempts to recover from its recent difficulties. Denmark's EU presidency in the first half of 2012 will most likely guarantee that Denmark will have some influence in upcoming discussions.

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FRANCE

By Emily Barrette



Ethnic composition: Celtic and Latin with Teutonic, Slavic, North African, Indo-chinese, Basque minorities

Population: 62,814,233

GDP per capita: \$35,000 (2011 est.)

Member since: 1952

EU funding in 2010: net recipient

BACKGROUND:

France is the second largest country in the EU, with a population of just over 62 million.¹ France's economy is the second largest in Europe and important sectors include agricultural exports, tourism, machinery, automobiles and chemicals.² The official language is French, but many regional languages are also spoken. France is a unitary semi-presidential constitutional republic. The President is Nicolas Sarkozy and the Prime Minister François Fillion.³

France was a founding member of the ECSC in April 1951, a precursor institution the EU. France has played an important role in the development and expansion of the EU: Franco-German cooperation has been essential to furthering European economic integration.⁴

MEDIA SOURCES:

Le Figaro

www.lefigaro.fr

Le Figaro is a national daily newspaper founded in Paris in 1826. It is the oldest daily newspaper in France and is the largest of the three main dailies, with a paid daily circulation of just over 332,000.⁵ *Le Figaro* is a conservative paper that generally supports the EU. It is also a supporter of the current French President, Nicolas Sarkozy.⁶

Le Monde:

www.lemonde.fr

Le Monde is the second largest main newspaper in France, with a paid daily circulation of just over 322,000.⁷ The newspaper was founded in 1944 in Paris and is known to have centre-left tendencies.⁸ Its website receives over 40 million hits monthly and is the most popular online news source in France.⁹

Libération

www.liberation.fr

The third quality daily newspaper in France, *Libération* was founded in 1973 by Jean-Paul Sartre and is a staunchly left-wing newspaper.¹⁰ In 2005, 40% of the newspaper was bought by Édouard de Rothschild, who took a very active role in the paper, which prompted several leading journalists to leave the publication. *Libération* has an average daily circulation of 115,000 copies.¹¹

FINDINGS:

The Eurozone Crisis

- The French media was critical of the EU's inability to agree on a solution to the Eurozone crisis.¹²
- In September 2011, the media reported that France agreed to push for increased budgetary discipline, a system of stricter controls on national deficits, and automatic sanctions on member states.¹³
- The media reported on continuing disagreement between France and Germany over whether the new accord would affect all EU member states or only the states in the Eurozone.¹⁴
- The media also focused on a disagreement within the EU about whether there should be a club of 'super-Europeans' (countries with a AAA credit rating), who would commit to a stability and growth pact.¹⁵
- The media reported that throughout these negotiations, France positioned itself strongly in favour of 'solidarité' among EU countries.¹⁶
- France does not favour providing the EU with the powers to intervene in the domestic economic affairs of its member states, whereas Germany and the Netherlands do.¹⁷
- With the exception of the UK, all member states at the European Council meeting on 9 December 2011,

agreed to a process of automatic sanctions for states whose government budget deficit exceeded 3% of their GDP.¹⁸

French-German Relations and the EU

- Germany and France cooperated early in the year when they declared a competitiveness pact.
 - o This was interpreted by the media as a sign of co-operation and compromise between the two states as it presented a united front vis-à-vis the euro crisis.¹⁹
 - o However, there was some scepticism, about whether or not France was truly an equal partner in the pact.²⁰
- Later in the year, there were diverging opinions between Germany and France on how to properly address the euro crisis.
 - o There was a difference of opinion on the use of European Emergency Funds for bailouts.²¹
 - o Berlin was in favour of sanctions, while Paris promoted solidarity.²²
 - o Germany wanted to reform EU treaties, which would have affected all 27 Member States. France was sceptical about treaty reform plan, and instead favoured "*un accord plus restraint entre les pays de l'euro zone qui souhaiteraient aller d'avant.*" [A more restrained agreement amongst euro zone countries that are willing to move forward].²³
- In December, leading up to the European Council meeting, conflicting interpretations of Franco-German cooperation were forwarded by the French media. The following headlines from the December 6 newspapers indicate several contradictions:
 - o "*Amitié, convergence, solidité.*" [Friendship, convergence, solidity].²⁴
 - o "*La France et l'Allemagne 'solidaires' dans la tempête.*" [France and Germany "solidarity" in the storm].²⁵

- *“Les divergences entre Paris et Berlin restent bien réelles.”* [The divergences between Paris and Berlin remain very real.]²⁶
- *“Deux cultures politiques qui s’opposent.”* [Two opposing political cultures.]²⁷
- The meeting concluded with France and Germany agreeing to move forward, and both sides compromising on their initial positions. The media portrayed Germany as being more successful than France in achieving its goals.²⁸

Renegotiating the Schengen Agreement

- Tensions arose between France and Italy over an influx of migrants into France from Tunisia and Libya, via the Italian border.
- France revoked the Schengen Agreement, refusing the admittance of Tunisian and Libyan migrants, even though they were in position of a temporary residential permit.
- France called for a review of the Schengen Agreement.
 - This position was defended in *Le Figaro*, which described it as *“La juste réponse au défi migratoires.”* [The just response to the migration challenge].²⁹
 - *Libération* was critical of the French government’s position, and cited several members of the French Socialist Party who argued that the move is a threat to the European right of freedom of movement.³⁰
- Nicolas Sarkozy, quoted in a *Le Monde* on April 26, stated: *“C’est justement parce que nous croyons en Schengen que nous voulons un renforcement de Schengen.”* [It is precisely because we believe in Schengen that we want to reinforce Schengen.]³¹
- Viviane Reding, the European Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights, and Citizenship, and Cecilia Malmström, the European Commissioner for Home Affairs, wrote an op-ed piece in *Le Monde*, criticizing France for threatening a fundamental principle of the EU.³²

- The EU agreed to consider revising Schengen. This was interpreted as an indication of France's ability to influence EU policy making in *Le Monde*.³³

2011 IN REVIEW:

The Eurozone crisis received a lot of attention in the French media in 2011. Overall, the major print newspapers refrained from alarmist reporting, and struck a tone that was pragmatic, yet slightly optimistic. The role of France and of President Nicolas Sarkozy in responding and solving the crisis was stressed throughout the year. In particular, the French government and the media picked up on the theme of solidarity, which perhaps best describes the French position towards the Eurozone crisis and its resolution. An article from *Le Figaro*, on October 28 quotes Sarkozy: "*Nous avons une obligation morale à l'endroit des pays membres de la zone euro et de l'Union Européenne. L'Europe, c'est une civilisation, une famille et une solidarité.*" [We have a moral obligation towards the member states of the Eurozone and the EU. Europe is a civilization, a family, and a solidarity.]³⁴ In conjunction with this position of solidarity, France also opposed reforms that would provide the EU with greater power to intervene in the domestic affairs of member states with regards to their finances. Although France's position on how to solve the Eurozone crisis differed at times from that of the EU and other member states, the media coverage of the economic crisis emphasized a willingness for compromise and an acceptance of the different opinions within the EU.

Another major theme in the French media dealt with the relationship between France and Germany, the two largest economies of the Eurozone. The media depicted this relationship in different ways throughout the year. For the most part, the French media emphasized the cooperation between the two countries. On several occasions divergent views between Paris and Berlin were noted, and in some cases, the nature of the

relationship explicitly questioned. This is apparent in articles such as the following, which appeared in *Libération* on November 25, "*La France doit-elle imiter l'Allemagne?*" [Should France be imitating Germany?] and on December 6, "*France le lièvre, Allemagne la tortue.*" [France the hare, Germany the tortoise.]³⁵ The levels of criticism varied depending on the political leaning of the newspaper, but even the right-leaning *Le Figaro* was at times critical of Franco-German cooperation.³⁶ In spite of these critical reports on the relationship between France and Germany, the cooperation between the two countries emerged as the dominant narrative across all three major newspapers. Overall the relationship between the two countries was portrayed in a positive light, and as yielding positive results. This was illustrated in an article from *Le Figaro* on December 10, in which the term 'Merkozy' was used to refer to the cooperation between the leaders of France and Germany: "*Le couple 'Merkozy' sort gagnant du marathon à Bruxelles.*" [The Merkozy couple leave as winners of the marathon in Brussels.]³⁷ Franco-German cooperation was also praised following the European Council meeting on 9 December 2011, during which the UK withdrew from plans aimed at increasing the centralization of the financial union.

A secondary theme worth noting is the effort made by France to renegotiate the Schengen agreement after an influx of North African migrants arrived in France via Italy, as a consequence of the Arab Spring. France's criticism of the Schengen agreement was reported favourably by the right-wing media, and was criticized by the left. Overall, the media coverage of this event suggests that France does not support the EU unequivocally, and is confident and willing to voice its criticism. Although most of the criticism in this case was aimed directly at Italy, rather than at the EU, this case is indicative of France's position as a leader of the EU, and of its confidence to push its agenda forward, be critical, and propose reforms.

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GERMANY

By Steven Mantifel



Ethnic composition: German 91.5%, Turkish 2.4%, other 6.1% (made up largely of Greek, Italian, Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, and Spanish)

Population: 81,305,856 (July 2012 est.)

GDP per capita: \$37,900 (2011 est.)

Member since: 1952

EU funding in 2010: net contributor

BACKGROUND:

Germany has the largest population in Europe with 81 million inhabitants.¹ The country is an economic powerhouse as the fifth largest economy in the world, which is based mainly on exports of automobiles, high-end technologies, chemicals and pharmaceuticals.² The official language is German but there are varying dialects spoken throughout the 16 *Länder* (states). The state is structured as a Federal Republic with a President, as the Head of State and a Chancellor, Angela Merkel, as the Head of Government.

Germany was a founding member of the ECSC in April 1951, which set the groundwork for the establishment of the modern-day EU. The creation of the ECSC was based on the principle that economic development could be better achieved at the supranational level. In the past year, Germany has remained a leading member in the EU, ensuring that economic cohesion is maintained.³

MEDIA SOURCES:

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

www.faz.net

The *Frankfurt General Newspaper* is a national daily German newspaper founded in 1949. It is based in Frankfurt and has a paid circulation of just over 360,000 reaching 120 countries.⁴ The organization has more than 300 reporters and 40 foreign correspondents.⁵ The paper is known for its centre-right slant. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* maintains a regularly updated website that receives more than 3.51 million visitors per month.⁶

Süddeutsche Zeitung

www.sueddeutsche.de

The “South German Newspaper” is a well-respected daily, based in Munich. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* has a paid daily circulation of over 430,000 and a readership of over 1.4

million.⁷ It maintains an up to date website with 455,000 users per month.⁸ Of its readership: 58% are between the ages of 20 and 49; 66% have a higher education degree; and 51% have a net household income of over €3,000 per month.⁹ In terms of political orientation, despite being based in the conservative state of Bavaria the paper has a left-of-centre slant.

Die Zeit

www.zeit.de

“The Times” in English is a weekly German newspaper founded in 1946 with about 503,000 paid subscriptions and above 2 million readers, making it the top weekly paper in Germany.¹⁰ It is highly respected for its quality journalism and is known for its left-of-centre slant. *Die Zeit* maintains a frequently updated website which had 16.5 million visits in 2010.¹¹

FINDINGS:

The Eurozone Crisis

The Competitiveness Pact

- On January 18th, 2011 Merkel (Chancellor of Germany), Schäuble (German Federal Minister of Finance), Westerwelle (German Foreign Minister) and Brüderle (German Federal Minister of Economics and Technology) met to discuss the transformation of the EMU. There was much internal debate within the German government and according to *Die Zeit* the rescue of the euro was dependent upon German leadership.¹²
- At the beginning of the year Merkel suggested to the EU the use of a “Competitiveness Pact”, designed following the framework of the German Constitution. The pact would alter such things as the age of retirement and inflation linked wages.¹³
- The increased integration of the German economy into the EU became increasingly unpopular in Germany. The Germans are in favour of economic integration with the

EU; however, believe that each state should maintain a degree of control.¹⁴

- At the March 2011 Summit, despite fierce lobbying by Merkel, the “Competitiveness Pact” was only partially adopted and used by the Member States in a non-binding letter of intent.¹⁵
- After the Summit in March 2011, the Chancellor faced the dilemma of choosing between the wishes of the Eurozone states and the expectations of the German public.¹⁶
- It was decided that the ESM would replace the EFSF, by mid 2013. The ministers also increased the nominal amount of the new crisis fund to €700 billion, for which the German capital share is 27.1 percent. The German guarantee for the ESM is 27.1 percent of €620 billion, or about €168 billion.¹⁷

European Financial Stability Facility

- It became apparent that there was a need for a new funding package. The EU and Germany both agree that Greek solvency would be calamitous. The European share of the new aid package is expected to take over the EFSF. The total size of the new program is 60 to 70 billion euro. The aid would come from the EU funded EFSF. The Germans favour this because it would not require ratification in their national parliament; however many EU countries are opposed to this because of the forfeiture of power to the EU.^{18 19} The Greeks will have to privatize many of their public assets in order to raise capital to pay back loans as well as reduce public expenditure.^{20 21}
- Merkel and Sarkozy met in Berlin ahead of a second summit on the Greek crisis to reach an agreement. While Merkel wanted private creditors involved in the EFSF, Sarkozy did not as he was worried that it could damage French banks.²²
- At a meeting in Paris, Merkel and Sarkozy proposed the creation of a European economic government to EU President Van Rompuy; this proposal advocated that Eurozone countries meet twice a year to vote on economic policy issues. According to Merkel and Sarkozy, there was a clear need for financial and economic policy integration

of the Eurozone countries. It was also suggested that the EU Commission should have more influence in the use of European Structural Funds. In addition to these recommendations, they opposed the introduction of common Eurozone bonds.²³

- The German President, Christian Wulff criticized the ECB's direct purchase of bonds, stating that this practice would only be justified if authorities fail to deal with extensive purchases on the secondary market. It is also a concern that the German Finance Minister has advocated the expansion of the powers of the EFSF. Critics see this potential expansion as encroachment on the right of national parliaments to determine their domestic budgets.²⁴
25 26
- Germany rejected the Eurobond proposal because the bonds were likely to have a negative impact on Germany's credit rating, thus leading to higher interest rates. Some Eurobond proponents argue that bankruptcies and the breakup of the Eurozone would cost Germany significantly more.^{27 28}
- The dispute over the tightening of the Stability and Growth Pact was overcome and an agreement was reached. The Parliament is to waive the quasi-automatic imposition of sanctions against financially unsound Euro countries. In return, Member States will agree to sanctions that must be supported in the future by only a simple majority of the EU states.²⁹
- The EFSF reform was officially approved in Parliament and is now a company under Luxembourg law. The owners of the legal company are the countries of the Euro and their ownership is based upon a private contract between the participating governments. The fund is intended as a temporary entity until 2013. After 2013 the ESM permanent aid fund will be launched. An international treaty between Eurozone countries will establish the ESM. All of this is in conjunction with debates on the reform of EU treaties that would allow the Commission more rights to monitor the economic and budgetary policies of the Member States.³⁰

- Over the weekend of 22 October 2011 the EU held another emergency meeting for the negotiations of a “comprehensive solution” to the sovereign debt crisis. Merkel stressed that this process took time because of its complexity and that another meeting would occur within the week. In a report from the IMF, ECB, and Commission, it was stated that Athens needed €252 billion by 2020 which means refinancing will not commence until 2021.³¹

32 33

- The Summit in Brussels on Wednesday, 26 October 2011 led to the agreement that would increase the core capital ratio for banks temporarily until 2012, to 9 percent. The EFSF should therefore be used as insurance to guarantee purchases of bonds. The remaining EFSF, €250 to €270 billion, will be used so that government securities valued over €1 billion can be secured. Merkel said the risk on the German guarantees totals €211 billion.³⁴
- The Commission proposed an increase in its control of the fiscal policies of the Eurozone members. The proposal would have the Eurozone countries develop a common framework and timetable for the preparation of national budgets, as well as the creation of independent national authorities to monitor them. In Germany it meant a new body for the financial supervision would need to be created. The President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso faced criticism from Germany regarding the euro-dominated bonds. There appeared to be a growing chasm between Barroso and Merkel.³⁵
- In December 2011, after another EU summit in Brussels, Merkel looked forward to the commitments of the summit. After ten hours of negotiations, the heads of state for the 27 Member States agreed to sign a contract in March. This would be an intergovernmental agreement that would have any breach of the Stability and Growth Pact lead to the commencement of legal proceedings against the country. The group wanted the Eurozone to enshrine a debt brake, of at most 0.5 percent of GDP, in their constitutions. Also, the permanent Euro rescue fund, ESM would be established mid 2012, a full year ahead of sche-

dule. Merkel expressed satisfaction with the agreement, stating it was a “good result”.³⁶

- In a policy statement in Parliament in December 2011, Merkel said the change of EU treaties failed due to Britain therefore inter-governmental agreements will need to soon be ratified. She expressed regret that Britain had gone that route but reaffirmed that the country is still a key partner, especially in foreign and security policy. She also stated that the IMF would back up the involvement of the private sector.^{37 38 39 40 41}

The Environment

European Union Climate & Energy Policy

- Industries are posing to be an obstacle for the EU Climate Commissioner, and are fighting reforms. The German Environment Minister, Norbert Röttgen, is supporting the reduction of CO₂ emissions a further 10 percent beyond the levels originally proposed.⁴²
- At the EU level, the German government strongly supports a reduction in emissions. Their reasoning is that Europe would fall behind other nations in the push to become less carbon-dependent. A further reduction of 40 percent from the original proposal in the German CDU/FDP coalition agreement was suggested.⁴³
- The EU Commission proposed an increase of 60 percent on the minimum fuel tax on diesel; however, as every second vehicle in Germany is a diesel car, the German government did not support this proposal because of the increased cost for consumers.⁴⁴ The Commission felt that the price of diesel was too low, considering the carbon content of the fuel. German farmers would be affected in two ways, while increased biofuel sales would translate into greater crop sales, their equipment's dependence on diesel would negate any potential benefit.^{45 46}

Agricultural Politics

- On January 22, 2011 thousands of protesters marched in Berlin against the EU's agricultural policy; they were pro-

testing factory farming, the use of genetically modified food and the destruction of the environment.⁴⁷

- The EU distributed more than 100 billion Euros in agricultural subsidies; however, some suggested that the elimination of EU agricultural funds would benefit German farmers more.⁴⁸ Currently there is a push by the French and Germans for increase in bio-agriculture and development of new technology.⁴⁹

EU Foreign Policy & Internal Policy

- The EU's intervention in Libya raised questions about the EU's foreign policy objectives. Polls showed that 80 percent of the German population was against intervention. The Member States' dispute over military interventions demonstrates how divergent their political cultures are.⁵⁰
- The events of the Arab Spring, the nuclear crisis in Japan and the Eurocrisis have demonstrated Europe's inability to act decisively. The EU lacked cohesion in its dealing with these crises.⁵¹
- Denmark wants to impose stronger border controls. Many countries, along with the Commission are against this as it goes against the Schengen agreement. The German government is strongly against this proposal and agreed with the Commission's opinion. Federal Justice Minister Sabine Leutheusser-Scharrenberger stated that permanent border controls would "take one of the achievements of the EU away."^{52 53} Much of this debate is in response to the large influx of North African refugees.^{54 55 56}
- Germany's decision to not participate in the NATO mission to Libya demonstrated the EU's lack of military unity. This was reflected through the fragmented Common Foreign Security Policy. Although 28 members of NATO have supported the mission, less than a third participated in the bombing of pro-Gaddafi forces.^{57 58}

2011 IN REVIEW:

Stating that Germany plays a crucial role in the EU would be an understatement. Upon analyzing the three

media sources mentioned above, a series of trends have emerged. The Eurocrisis has been at the centre of many debates and is reflected in the vast number of articles discussing it. At the beginning of the year the focus was on the role Germany's Chancellor, Angela Merkel, was playing in the Euro crisis. The real debate surrounded Merkel's push for a "Competitiveness Pact" as a solution to the debt crisis. The pact was sold as a German solution to the European problem, based on the German Constitution. This was received favourably in Germany but within the EU it was quickly rejected, as there was a fear that it would bind the Eurozone states together and isolate them from the non-Eurozone members, essentially creating a further division within the EU.

Before the summit in March 2011 it was already apparent that Merkel's Pact was not appropriate for the EU and was reduced to a regulatory framework for the final agreement. This was not well received by the German public. In the various articles on the Eurozone crisis it was expressed that the real decision-making was occurring in Berlin and not in Brussels. The reduction of Merkel's Pact to a framework therefore caused discontent among the German public and this was clearly reflected in the style and slant of many articles.

While the relationship between Germany and the EU did not change *per se*, the relationship of the German people and their government did. Germany is the main guarantor for the new crisis fund of the EU and therefore will play a crucial role in the shaping of EU policy. Some of the articles hinted that Merkel was preaching that Germany would not take the burden of the crisis fund, but behind closed doors she had realized that her Pact would fail and needed to quickly renegotiate the rescue package. This demonstrated the miscommunication between the German state and the German people, regarding the Euro crisis.

As the debt crisis progressed it was said that Chancellor Merkel, who at the beginning of the crisis took a hard line, was now stalling and making the situation worse.⁵⁹ It was clear though that the process of settling the EFSF required a great amount of time and planning. The Germans

were opposed to the ECB's plan to create Eurobonds in order to raise the funds necessary to assist Greece and other Member States' failing economies; Germans were unwilling to support the creation of Eurobonds as there was an explicit fear that it would damage their own country's interest rates. There was a clear division between Merkel and European Commission President Barroso on the topic of Eurobonds.⁶⁰ Despite this division, Merkel's plan for the Member States to have greater financial accountability was well received and she was praised as a leader in this respect.

The other two trends that have been identified offer a different perspective on Germany's role in the EU. In terms of pan-European security and foreign policy the German state is fairly limited in its abilities. Both socially and constitutionally, engaging in military interventions is negatively received by the majority of the domestic populace. The general consensus among the German population is that Germany should not partake in a European military intervention, which was discussed several times in the wake of the Arab spring. Later on in the year the number of refugees coming from North Africa brought the question of EU internal border policy into light. This resulted in some countries, specifically Denmark imposing border controls again, despite being in the Schengen agreement. Germany took this as a serious threat to the internal and free movement of people in the EU and sided with the Commission on this regard.

Another topic that is continually discussed is Germany's environmental role in Europe. Germany has consistently been a leader in environmental awareness and this is once again reflected in its stance on a European climate initiative. Internally however, there is great divide regarding the reduction of CO₂ emissions and nuclear power. Within the EU context, Germany has been actively engaged on environmental topics, but internally it has struggled with managing the industries that pollute. Furthermore, a proposed tax increase on diesel fuel sparked outrage in Germany, as it is a huge consumer of diesel fuel for person-

al as well as commercial vehicles. The proposed tax will make diesel more expensive than petrol.

Of the major topics identified in this summary, the relationship between Germany and the EU has remained strong, fortified by the role Germany has played in the Union. Despite disagreements on the topics of foreign policy and diesel taxation, the Eurozone crisis demonstrated the commitment Germany's government has to the stability and strength of not only the Eurozone countries, but also the EU as a whole.

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GREECE

By Maria Varelas



Ethnic composition: Greek 93%, other (foreign citizens) 7% (2001 census)

Population: 10,767,827 (July 2012 est.)

GDP per capita: \$27,600 (2011 est.)

Member since: 1981

EU funding in 2010: net recipient

BACKGROUND

In 1981, Greece became an official member of the EEC (now the EU), and in 2001 it became the twelfth member of the EMU. It is now considered to be the second-most corrupt member of the EU.¹ Since 2008, Greece has been on the precipice of a financial default. Greece's unsustainable fiscal policy – an overly generous welfare state, pervasive corruption and tax evasion – resulted in the market crisis the country is currently facing. Indeed, the prolonged economic turmoil in Greece played a significant role in the proliferation of financial crises in Europe.

MEDIA SOURCES

The following keywords were used to search the domestic media sources below: “Eurozone”, “economic crisis” and, “bailout”, and the results yielded thousands of articles, signifying the prevalence of the topic.

Kathimerini

www.kathimerini.gr

Kathimerini (“Daily”) is a national daily Greek newspaper founded in 1988. The newspaper has its headquarters in Athens and is owned by the Alafouzos Publishing Company. In 2011 its sales dominated the newspaper market with a 75.62% share, and a monthly average of approximately one million newspaper sales.² It collaborated with the *International Herald Tribune* and delivers an English version to Greece and Cyprus. The newspaper is considered to be centre-right.³

To Vima

www.tovima.gr

To Vima (“The Tribune”) was launched in 1984 as a centre-left weekly in Athens.⁴ Of the centre-left, it is closely associated with the PASOK political party, and their current leader and Greek Prime Minister, Evangelos Venizelos.⁵ It

features many interviews with domestic politicians. The Sunday edition, *To Vima Tis Kiriakis* has a weekly circulation of over 181,000 and is one of the most read publications on the market.⁶ The newspaper is owned by the Lambrakis Press Publishing group.⁷

Ta Nea

www.tanea.gr

Ta Nea ("The News") like *To Vima*, is a centre-left publication, also owned by the same publishing group, Lambrakis Press Publishing.⁸ It is a daily evening newspaper, and is one of the top-selling newspapers of the country with a daily circulation of 53,000.⁹

FINDINGS

Over 2011, Greek media was dominated by extensive coverage of the economic crisis the country had been suffering for the past two years. From the threats of Greece being kicked out of the Eurozone, to the question of whether or not the EU would agree to a bailout, the economy was the most significant topic of discussion in both domestic and international news.

2011 IN REVIEW

The major issues in the media, chiefly the Greek economic crisis and the debate over a bailout, have been the focus of domestic and international news, because of the fear of the impact the crisis would have upon the world economy. Greece's fate depended upon the involvement of the international community. Washington corresponded often with the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, and the French President, Nicholas Sarkozy, in order to create a plan to save both the EU and the euro. The fact that they have announced the need to coordinate actions to ensure a global recovery has been a popular topic in the media.¹⁰ The US in particular, has remained a staunch supporter of Greece, and has been putting pressure on Germany and

other Eurozone countries to find a coordinated solution to the Eurozone crisis.¹¹ In contrast, European citizens have not been as supportive. The majority of German citizens, for example, oppose the bailout option, for fear of what it will do to their domestic economy.¹² The future of the euro and rising interest rates, have also created cause for global concern as result of the economic crisis.¹³ As the European economy is restructured, fiscal rules are being implemented in order to ensure that the international community's fears of an economic collapse do not become a reality. One possibility for Greece is establishing fiscal rules similar to those currently in place in Germany, which provides a structural deficit of 0.35% of GDP in 2016.¹⁴

The economic crisis and the question of the bailout have been the two most important issues in the Greek media, as they are believed to determine the country's future. The role of the Greek government and its accountability in the crisis has been a prevalent topic in the news.¹⁵ Also, domestic news reports were generally infused with a sense of optimism. Nearly all articles focused on the need for Greece to cut its debts, yet none truly considered a complete collapse of the country as a plausible option. In general, the articles discuss the need for a debt "haircut",¹⁶ and the need for a new government.¹⁷ The belief that Greece would survive the crisis remained intact however.

Furthermore, the fear of the dissolution of the EU was also widely discussed, with a heavy burden placed on Greek shoulders. The possibility of a Greek collapse was seen as a threat to the stability of the EU as a whole.¹⁸ Even in addressing this scenario, articles were infused with a positive message, since, according to Sarkozy, the EU has a moral and economic obligation to Greece.¹⁹ The Greek Prime Minister, Evangelos Venizelos, was also optimistic concerning the future of his country, telling his citizens that it would take "commitment, patience and hope" to overcome the crisis.²⁰

An unavoidable consequence of the economic crisis was the degree to which the relationship between Greece and the EU changed over the course of 2011. A large number of articles reflected the responsibility that Greece

placed on the Eurozone for the crisis, as they were expected to ensure the success of European fiscal stability.²¹ Much blame is also placed upon the corrupt Greek government for the economic crisis in Europe, a fact that does not paint Greece in a favourable light amongst Europeans. The Greek community feels humiliated by the crisis, and the country is currently suffering a deficit in international pride, a notion that is not aided by the fact that Greece now depends upon, and expects, help from the rest of Europe.²²

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HUNGARY

By Shija Zhang



Ethnic composition: Hungarian 92.3%, Roma 1.9%, other or unknown 5.8% (2001 census)

Population: 9,958,453 (July 2012 est.)

GDP per capita: \$19,600 (2011 est.)

Member since: 2004

EU funding in 2010: net recipient

BACKGROUND:

Hungary is a parliamentary democracy located in central Europe. Hungary's history dates back to around 1000 CE, when the martyr Saint Stephen was crowned king. Following the First World War, the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Second World War, Hungary became a single-party state of the communist eastern bloc. After the collapse of communism, Hungary began the process of democratic transition, with the first free parliamentary election being held in 1990. This political transformation brought about the desire to 'reconnect' with the rest of Europe. In 2004, Hungary, along with nine other candidates joined the EU.¹

The initial celebration was soon overshadowed by doubt, as joining the EU did not deliver the promised benefits. In the recent 2010 parliamentary elections, Viktor Orbán and his centre-right party Fidesz won an absolute majority in the National Assembly, allowing them to implement policies without the need to consult the opposition.² Currently, due to the passage of the Fundamental Law, which replaced the previous constitution on 18 April 2011 and which violates several of the EU's founding principles, there is a major conflict between Brussels and Budapest.³ In essence, the way that Brussels handles this case will set a precedent for future dealings with Member States that violate the fundamental ideals of the EU.

MEDIA SOURCES:

In the past decade, the media industry of Hungary has experienced significant changes, largely as a result of the country's democratic transition and accession to the EU. The most important factor was the arrival of foreign – mainly German – conglomerates that currently control most of the Hungarian media. The press in Hungary is judged to be free,⁴ but due to a new media law passed by the current government, which allows for state monitoring and penalizing of private media, there has been speculation that this may no longer be the case.⁵ The EU is currently

reviewing the media law, along with many other policies enacted by the current government, to determine whether or not it complies with EU standards.⁶

With respect to the press, free online news portals have increased in popularity and readership compared to the traditional printed press.⁷

Origo

www.origo.hu

The most popular online news site in Hungary, *Origo*, has a daily readership of about 1.68 million.^{8 9} Like most media entities in Hungary, it is known to have a slight left-of-centre stance, but due to its wide readership, it aims to maintain a 'central' position. The website is owned by Hungarian Telekom – now a direct subsidiary of Deutsche Telekom – and was started in 1998 to address the lack of Hungarian content on the Internet.¹⁰

Index

www.index.hu

Index is the second most popular news site in Hungary, with a daily readership of about 1.3 million.^{11 12} It advocates and prides itself as being an independent provider of 'news + opinion + community.'¹³ Created in 1999, the portal is owned by the Central European Media and Publishing Corp., which is a Budapest based regional online media provider.

Blikk

www.blikk.hu

Blikk has the highest readership of all printed press in Hungary, approximately 1 million; comparable to the viewership of major network television channels.^{14 15} It is a daily newspaper with a very strong online presence. Established in 1994 as a tabloid magazine, through the years it has grown into full-fledged daily paper with a casual 'info-

tainment' style.¹⁶ *Blikk* is targeted towards the mass audience, and *Ringier* – the owner of *Blikk* – often characterizes the paper as “*Blikk* = Hungary.”¹⁷ The reality is that the paper is widely read among the low to middle class and often echoes their opinions and concerns.

FINDINGS:

Around 150 articles were consulted from the three media sources on the topic of ‘the EU and Hungary.’ The research is focused on the recurrent topics in media for 2011 however, due to some overarching issues this timeframe is extended in some cases.

EU reaction to Fidesz's reforms in Hungary

- Budapest vs. Brussels: Since the 2010 elections, the national parliament of Hungary (Fidesz supermajority) has been able to pass legislation, such as the 2010 media act, without the need to consult the opposition (However, Jobbik, which is a far-right radical anti-Semitic and anti-Roma party, is on the rise). These problematic new legislations, in essence, solidify the rule of Fidesz for many years to come.^{18 19}
- The new media legislation allows the state to monitor and intervene in the private media.²⁰ A new monitoring board was set up that has the power to censor the private press. The ruling party's argument was that they were looking out for the public, believing that some immoral and questionable topics should not be published without the approval of the new media board. Due to increasing pressure the government agreed to reform the media legislation (talks to amend the law in accordance with EU standards began on 31 January 2011.²¹ the Hungarian constitutional court ruled that the media law was unconstitutional because it limited the freedom of the press on 19 December 2011) in accordance with suggestions from the EU.²²

- Legislation concerning the banks: While most European governments tried to strengthen their banking system in an attempt to avoid a Greek-style bankruptcy, the Hungarian government punished its banks, as it saw them as chiefly responsible for the crisis.²³ Due to a period of irresponsible lending, most of it in Swiss Francs (the Euro-zone crisis caused the appreciation of Swiss Francs), many home and car owners saw their annuities increase by 40-50%. Fearing an economic collapse, the national government created legislation that held the banks responsible and proposed a way to opt-out. Under this new legislation, Hungarians who have loans in Swiss Francs are able to peg the exchange rate at an appropriate level, while banks are forced to absorb the losses. The current legislation is still in progress.
- Renationalization of the pension system: Hungary had a hybrid pension system with private providers and government support, but the new government decided to renationalize pensions in order to fill up a budget hole.²⁴ Critics argue that this is only a short-term solution and will result in insecurity for future pensioners. The EU has no legislative power over this, as pensions fall under national jurisdiction.
- Dependency of the Central Bank of Hungary: After the absorption of the pension funds, the current government looked for alternate ways to correct the budget imbalance, and one idea was to use the foreign exchange reserves – at an all time high - of the Hungarian Central Bank.²⁵ This was greatly criticized by the EU, and it looks as though the EU will force Hungary to abolish or reform this plan.^{26 27} With the inclusion of most recommendations made by the EU, the government passed the legislation concerning the Central Bank of Hungary.²⁸ It is expected that the EU will penalize Hungary by freezing its funding, as the new legislation is in conflict with the funding charters of the Union.²⁹
- The New Constitution of Hungary or ‘Alaptörvény’: The new constitution of Hungary was passed and came into

force in record time – one year – without the consultation of the opposition or the general public.^{30 31} It touches on a wide variety of topics, including the renaming of the country from the Republic of Hungary to Hungary, only recognizing marriage between a man and a woman, announcing the historic Christian heritage of the country.³² To some critics, the new constitution is guilty of curbing democracy. The Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orban, sees the Fundamental Law as the finalization of the post-Communist political and economic transformation. The EU and the IMF are using all necessary pressures to force Hungary back to a more democratic route.³³

The Eurozone crisis and Hungary's economy

- The Stability and Growth Pact (SGP): The SGP is an agreement between the 25 members of the EU (two members: the United Kingdom and the Czech Republic did not sign) to maintain the economic and monetary union.³⁴ It introduces a penalty system under which Member States could be penalized if their budget deficits and debts supersede the approved limit. At first, the Orban government considered requiring the vote of the Hungarian parliament, in turn delaying or simply not participating in the agreement. Due to increasing pressure from both the EU and the IMF, however, the government decided to enter the pact along with 24 other Member States.³⁵ However, it is expected that the Hungarian Parliament will require a vote on the issue, which is expected to pass as the ruling party enjoys an absolute majority.
- The Eurozone crisis: The Greek debt crisis that spread to Ireland, Spain, Portugal, and Italy was discussed thoroughly.^{36 37} Hungary, which is not a member of the eurozone and which is sheltered in Central Europe, became a cautious observer of the crisis.³⁸ While Orban recognized the vital role of banks in the economy, he advocated for banks to adopt more responsibility and for harder requirements on assigning bailouts to banks. While for years overspending and government debt made Hungary

an undesirable candidate to enter the Eurozone, the financial crisis has diminished Hungary's desire to join. While the common currency is still the next step in the European integration process, Hungarian politicians are increasingly putting that agenda on hold.

- The Hungary – IMF agreement: Due to the Eurozone crisis and the subsequent degrading of the Hungarian credit rating, the government has decided to formulate an agreement with the IMF in case of insolvency.³⁹ This agreement is currently stalled due to pressures from both the EU and the US in regards to the recent undemocratic changes in Hungary.⁴⁰ Further delays could occur, as it is unlikely the agreement would be signed without a conscious reform of problematic legislation.^{41 42}

The Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the EU

- Hungarian presidency of the Council of the EU: From January to June 2011, Hungary held the presidency of the Council of the EU.⁴³ It was the first instance of Hungary filling the position, and many feared that a small and inexperienced country like Hungary might not be able to meet the bureaucratic demands of the position. However, the presidency was deemed a success,⁴⁴ both by native and foreign media outlets.⁴⁵
- The European Roma Strategy: One of the legacies of the Hungarian presidency is the creation of the pan-European Roma strategy.⁴⁶ It is a joint effort by Hungary, Belgium, and Spain to encourage Member States to adopt a collective Roma strategy that could become the platform through which each Member State could devise and create their own Roma integration program.

2011 IN REVIEW:

With the recent electoral changes in Hungary - Fidesz obtaining a supermajority - the Hungarian political arena became increasingly polarized. When Fidesz was

first created with Orban at its helm, the party's main promise was to restore the glory of the Hungarian nation through the removal of the last discernible vestiges of communist rule. Whether the recent constitutional and legislative changes were enacted to eradicate the legacy of communism or to entrench the rule of Fidesz for many years to come is up for debate. These recent constitutional and legislative changes pose a challenge to the fundamental ideals and basic treaties of the EU.

Hungarian support for the EU was at an all-time high when the country joined in 2004. However, since then, enthusiasm has faded. A survey conducted by the European Commission shows that by 2008, less than one-third of the population expressed positive feelings towards the EU.⁴⁷ While the national agenda before 2004 was solely focused on joining the EU and the Eurozone, after 2008 the desire for further integration came to a halt.

The Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the EU – from January to June 2011 – was a perfect opportunity to restore good relations between Brussels and Budapest. The Presidency was considered a success by both local and foreign media outlets.⁴⁸ While bureaucrats and politicians fostered relations through cooperation and understanding, most of the Hungarian public remained uninvolved and uninterested with the achievements of the presidency.

Furthermore, what started out as a polite political approach between Brussels and Budapest quickly turned into an ideological standoff. The small victories during the EU presidency were quickly overshadowed by the undemocratic domestic legislation and the new constitution produced by the Fidesz government. For many observers, the changes proposed by the Fidesz government were undemocratic; entrenching Fidesz as the leading party for many years to come.

The complexity and underlying consequences of the current situation is what makes it so hard to propose a solution for Hungary. For the EU, the Hungarian nuisance comes at the worst time possible, given the financial turmoil that has recently plagued it. Bureaucrats and politicians in Brussels are fully aware of the magnitude of the

problem (which would set a precedent for future dealings with members that step out of line), but have limited tools to coerce Hungary to return to democratic principles.

This explains why the proposed punishment for Hungary is simply the reduction of some EU subsidies and funds for the coming years. For Fidesz and Orban, this unprecedented political climate has allowed them to shape Hungary to their vision. The ruling party counts on the support of the majority and increasing pressures from the EU and the US are generally portrayed in official and public discourse as a breach of national sovereignty. The opposition is in shambles, thus even forcibly removing Orban or Fidesz (such as the case with Italy) is out of the question, as there is no viable alternative. The overwhelming support for Fidesz, and a concomitant cultic obsession with Orban, governs the national political arena. Increasingly, as pressures and punishments from both the EU and the IMF mount, the public is becoming ever more critical of the intent of these actions. Instead of being the champions and safeguards of democracy, the EU is increasingly viewed as an imperialist tool dominated by foreign interest that is against the wishes of the Hungarian public. Ultimately, the EU is trying to preserve democracy for the people of Hungary, but with mounting ultimatums and looming punishments in a depressed economy, the EU is only succeeding at pushing Hungary further away.

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IRELAND

By Chris Granicolo



Ethnic composition: Irish 87.4%, other white 7.5%, Asian 1.3%, black 1.1%, mixed 1.1%, unspecified 1.6% (2006 census)

Population: 4,722,028 (July 2012 est.)

GDP per capita: \$39,500 (2011 est.)

Member since: 1973

EU funding in 2010: net recipient

BACKGROUND:

Ireland has experienced a dramatic economic transformation since its accession to the EU in 1973. Prior to its accession to the EU, Ireland was a largely agricultural society; Ireland has undergone sweeping reforms and has developed a modern, technologically advanced economy.¹ Highlights of its EU membership include rapid progress in both agricultural and industrial capacities, as well as the strengthening of economic ties with countries both within and outside of the EU.² Ireland averaged 6% GDP growth between 1995 and 2007, but the world financial crisis had a profoundly detrimental effect on the country's economy. Ireland entered its first recession in over a decade in 2008. As a result, Ireland's GDP suffered severely, falling 3% in 2008, and subsequently, decreasing by nearly 8% and 1 % in 2009 and 2010 respectively. These setbacks culminated in Ireland receiving a \$112 billion loan package from the EU and the IMF.³ Ireland, along with Greece and Portugal, are the only 3 EU countries to have received formal bailouts from the EU.⁴

MEDIA SOURCES:

The Irish Independent

www.independent.ie

The *Irish Independent* is Ireland's largest selling daily newspaper with a daily circulation of 181,000 copies that espouses a centre-right and populist political and social bias.⁵ Owned by the Independent News and Media conglomerate, the *Irish Independent* has been accused of having an "unhealthy dominance" of the Irish newspaper market. The website includes substantial regional and national content.⁶

The Irish Times

www.irishtimes.com

The *Irish Times* newspaper is in wide circulation across Ireland, with approximately 119,000 units circulated daily.⁷ It is Ireland's "newspaper of record," trusted by the government to publish public or legal notices. The *Irish Times* is politically liberal. The website launched in 1994, provides live news updates with a broad readership, particularly among the Irish diaspora.⁸

The Irish Examiner

www.irishexaminer.com

The *Irish Examiner* is a national daily newspaper with an average daily circulation of 57,000 units.⁹ The newspaper possesses a centrist political bias. The website for the *Irish Examiner* includes all news articles and publications found in the print edition, and is readily accessible to the general public.¹⁰

FINDINGS:

Three Irish media outlets were consulted for these findings. Due to the state of the Irish economy and the subsequent EU and IMF bailout, the country's media has provided extensive coverage on Ireland's economic relationship with the EU. Consequently, the troubled economy has figured as the most salient topic in the Irish media in 2011. Keywords that were used to narrow down the hundreds of articles relating to Ireland's relationship with the EU include: "Irish domestic perception and the EU," "Ireland and the Euro," "Financial crisis and Ireland," "Leaving the EU." After narrowing down this research, the findings were categorized and three major topics stand out as the main issues reported on in 2011.

2011 IN REVIEW:

Ireland's current relationship with the EU is quite tumultuous. Recently, a bleak economic performance aggravated by poor Irish leadership has resulted in demands of Irish separation from the Eurozone. Conversely, there are also those that feel Ireland's image within the EU is suffering due to their poor economic status and that it must be repaired.

Throughout 2011, numerous articles calling for Irish separation from the EU were published. An article in December of 2011 blamed Ireland's EU membership as the root cause of the nation's current economic crisis and the cause of a seven-fold increase in Irish bank lending from 1997-2007.¹¹ Another author, in December 2011, called for Ireland to abandon the euro for a national currency and to reaffirm its ties with the most powerful EU countries.¹² A poll conducted in May 2011 revealed that one in five Irish people felt that Ireland should begin a gradual process of disengagement from the EU.¹³ Although 23% of those polled felt that leaving the EU was necessary, 73% felt that the status quo of EU inclusivity was necessary. Other reports indicated Ireland's discontent with the EU's overarching authority, especially in terms of Germany's leading role in decision-making.¹⁴ It is not surprising to see Irish dismay toward inclusion in the EU; however the country has made great strides to repair its position in the institution, especially after receiving a \$112 billion loan package.¹⁵ Moreover, some reports have argued that EU membership has benefited Ireland greatly; blaming the current economic crisis on a flawed international banking system.¹⁶

One of the major reasons for the Irish media's depiction of a strain in the country's relationship with the EU is its domestic leadership. The leader in Ireland, known as the "Taoiseach," is Enda Kenny. Taking on a role similar to a Prime Minister, the Taoiseach is expected to be Ireland's leading voice in international affairs. However, since elected in March of 2011, Enda Kenny has yet to "hold a single substantive meeting with any leader in the Euro-zone."¹⁷ Kenny has also been accused of failing to recognize

the urgency of the European situation and of taking on the role of a spectator in the sovereign debt crisis that is ravaging his country.¹⁸ The leader of Ireland's third largest party, the Fianna Fáil, Michael Martin feels that the "Governments policy of sitting on the sidelines is achieving nothing...Europe's leaders are making the crisis worse everyday."¹⁹ There are those within Ireland that feel the country will become a pauper state if its people do not stick together and fight the protectionism emanating from the European banks.²⁰ The Irish leadership is under pressure domestically for their casual approach to dealing with other European leaders.

There has been a call in the media for Ireland to reaffirm its ties with Europe and to repair its tainted image. In March 2011, an article was published that urged Ireland to adopt a foreign policy approach that would restore Ireland to her former position as a strong unit within Europe.²¹ Being a small nation, greater sensitivity to their neighbours is argued as a key driver in the hopes of restoring past ties with the other Eurozone members.²² To most EU members, the economic implosion of Ireland came as a great surprise.²³ While Ireland was once an exemplar for other nations, the reverse is now true.²⁴ Repairing the Irish image seemed to be the top priority on the agenda, however, when the article was written on March 22, 2011, the world was transfixed by the popular uprising in Libya and the natural disasters in Japan. In light of these events, the reparation of Ireland's image was delayed.²⁵

In conclusion, there is a great amount of evidence proving that Ireland's relationship with the EU throughout 2011 was troubled. The destabilized economy required a massive European-led bailout package to prevent the continents economy from collapsing. Europe will likely view Ireland warily until its economic situation is fixed. Simultaneously, the majority of Irish feel that greater EU inclusivity is necessary for the nation's well being and a more assertive role by the country's leadership is essential to fostering this relationship.

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ITALY

By Alessandro Gemmiti



Ethnic composition: Italian (includes small clusters of German-, French-, and Slovene-Italians in the north and Albanian-Italians and Greek-Italians in the south)

Population: 61,261,254 (July 2012 est.)

GDP per capita: \$30,100 (2011 est.)

Member since: 1952

EU funding in 2010: net recipient

BACKGROUND:

Italy was one of the six founding members of the EC in 1957 and maintains a significant position in the EU to date.¹ With a population of 61 million people, Italy has one of the largest populations and one of the largest economies in the EU to date.²

Italy has traditionally been supportive of European integration and has been at the forefront of all major EU initiatives promoting greater European integration, including the EEC, the Schengen Agreement, and the Eurozone. Italy has occasionally drawn criticism from other fellow member states, for a possible contravention of Maastricht Treaty in terms of high level of its debt.

Recently, Italians have begun to question their country's position in the Eurozone as slow growth and lack of competitiveness characterized its economy.³ Some have suggested that the economy's sluggish growth can be attributed to the Eurozone itself. This slow growth culminated in a massive economic downturn in 2008, which forced the centre-right coalition led by Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and his Forza Italia party out of power amid the soaring national debt crisis in 2011.⁴ The current Prime Minister former EU Competition Commissioner and economist Mario Monti is heading a caretaker government of technocrats, which aims to restore stability to the Italian economy.⁵ For the moment, the Italian government remains committed to its EU membership.

MEDIA SOURCES:

Italy's approach to its media has often made headlines at home and abroad, "with concern regularly being expressed over the concentration of media ownership in the hands of one man - former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi."⁶ The Italian press is highly regionalized, reflecting the country's strongly regional history and character.⁷ Most newspapers are privately owned, often linked to a political party or run by a large media group.⁸

Newspaper readership figures are low compared to other European countries. Reporters Without Borders ranked Italy as 61 on its press freedom index for 2011/2012, as the country failed to address issues of media freedom violations.⁹

Corriere della Sera

www.corriere.it

Founded in 1876, *Corriere della Sera* is Italy's best-selling daily newspaper. Corriere has maintained its independence throughout periods of political turmoil in Italy.¹⁰ Headquartered in Milan, the *Corriere* is owned by the RCS Group (Rizzoli Corriere della Sera), and has several shareholders, including Fiat and Mediobanca, two of the biggest industrial firms in Italy. From the outset, *Corriere* established itself amongst its peers as an authority, "voicing the opinions of the industrial bourgeoisie from the North."¹¹

La Repubblica

www.repubblica.it

La Repubblica is an Italian daily newspaper founded in 1976 by the Roman journalist Eugenio Scalfari. The paper is the second most widely read and circulated paper in Italy, with an average daily circulation in 2010 of 448,544 copies.¹² The paper is owned by L'Espresso Group, headed by Carlo de Benedetti, and has both a common national edition, as well as regional editions in Rome, Milan, Turin, Bologna, Genoa, Florence, Naples, Palermo and Bari.¹³ The paper has been known for its moderate left wing tendencies; however it is impartial in its criticism of Italian politics.

Il Messaggero

www.ilmessaggero.it

Founded in 1878, Roman daily *Il Messaggero* is the largest selling newspaper in Rome and provides different local

editions for the provinces of Lazio, Umbria, Marche, Abruzzo, and Tuscany.¹⁴ *Il Messaggero* ranks fourth for readership in Italy and claims to “give a voice to a remarkable group of regions, provinces and municipalities in the heart of Italy.”¹⁵ It is noted for its national politics and local news pages, which feature reports on municipal politics, sport, and cultural events.¹⁶ Throughout its 140-year history, *Il Messaggero* has been bought and sold many times. Today, it is owned by one of Italy's main industrial groups, Caltagirone.¹⁷

FINDINGS:

Several hundred articles were consulted from the three aforementioned media sources. The keywords “Italy and the EU”, “the Schengen Treaty”, “Lampedusa”, “Italian economic crisis”, “Eurozone crisis”, and “Italian pension reform” were used to conduct the search. Of the articles consulted, a rough tally was kept of the frequency that certain issues appeared both monthly and annually. From the results, the following four issues were the most prominent in 2011.

The Arab Spring and the Schengen Treaty

- The Arab Spring in early 2011 led to a drastic increase in the number of North African refugees seeking asylum in the EU. Italy, and in particular the small island of Lampedusa, became the landing ground for thousands of Libyan refugees in the midst of the Libyan civil war.¹⁸ This posed significant logistical and ethical problems for the Italian government, as it was forced to provide accommodation for many of these immigrants until their future could be decided.
- Prime Minister Berlusconi emphasized that illegal North African migration was a “European problem” and not an exclusively Italian one.¹⁹ It was noted that many migrants used Italy as a landing zone to gain access to the EU before heading to France or Germany where their relatives resided.²⁰ Due to the fact that the vast

majority of the refugees arriving on Lampedusa were asylum seekers, they could not be denied entry and free movement within the EU.²¹ In response, Italy demanded “real support” from the EU in the form of payments in order to support the massive influx of migrants.²²

- France responded by threatening to unilaterally suspend the Schengen Treaty with Italy. In order to stem the flow of asylum seekers into France, the French government temporarily suspended the movement of trains between the countries. The German Interior Minister responded by telling Italy to “stop its complaining about arrivals...and fulfill its obligations to the EU.”²³
- The tensions between Italy and France were diminished, following a meeting between Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi and French President Sarkozy at Villa Madama. A bilateral agreement was established between the two countries that laid the groundwork for a joint review of “exceptional cases” of the mechanisms of the Schengen Treaty.²⁴

Italian debt and the Eurozone crisis

- The decline of the Italian economy was met with significant pessimism by the Italian press in early 2011. Articles highlighted Italy’s poor economic performance in comparison to other EU Member States and implied that this was a result of excessive spending and lax economic regulation. Pessimism was prevalent in many of the articles and Italy was often portrayed as a threat to EU stability. Although Italy’s role within the EU was questioned, there was no indication that Italy intended to remove itself from the organization. Instead, the solution to the Eurozone crisis was to be found in greater cooperation and coordination with the rest of the EU.²⁵
- Italy’s economic woes were seen to compromise its national integrity. Although comparisons were drawn between the financial situations of Italy and that of Greece, Spain, and Portugal, it was determined that the

Italian economy was more stable and therefore unlikely to need a bailout from the EU. Furthermore, the austerity measures implemented by Prime Minister Monti were seen as an improvement to those implemented by Prime Minister Berlusconi.²⁶ It was recognized that recovery would be slow and that GDP would initially decrease; however, this was seen as a necessary step toward recovery.²⁷

- The majority of the early articles emphasized the inability of Prime Minister Berlusconi's government to properly respond to the economic crisis. Prime Minister Berlusconi's lack of professionalism marginalized him in the eyes of many.²⁸ This trend was reversed when Mario Monti's government took power in November 2011, as an increasing number of articles highlighted the cooperation between the leaders of Italy, Germany and France over the crisis.²⁹
- A number of the articles also focused on the increasing debt level of Italian households. This debt was paired with increasing national levels of inflation and it was made clear that the situation was not likely to improve in the near future.³⁰ Italian indebtedness was portrayed as a result of a worsening economic crisis and was paired with increasing levels of unemployment, primarily among women and youth and increased layoffs.³¹

Pension Reform and Labour Legislation

- The EU pressed Italy to undertake a pension reform in September and October of 2011. The reform was passed on October of 2011 and saw the retirement age increase to 67 years.³² This was part of a plan to see Italy achieve a balanced budget by 2013 and a budget surplus by 2014, while simultaneously decreasing its public debt.³³ Labour legislation was also passed that made it easier for industries to implement layoffs in order to remain competitive.³⁴
- Both pieces of legislation were met with significant criticism domestically, as the Italian government was seen

as acquiescing to the European Commission's demands at the expense of its own citizens. The European Commission applauded Italy for implementing the legislation, as did many at the EU headquarters in Brussels.³⁵ The implementation of the legislation was seen as a firm commitment by the Italian government to diminish its public debt and combat the Eurozone crisis.

2011 IN REVIEW:

Given the dire state of the Italian economy over the past year, it is unsurprising that the country received particularly harsh criticism from the EU over its need to reform its economy and refinance its debts. As Europe's fourth largest economy, the possibility of an Italian bankruptcy was seen as particularly worrying, as there was a very real possibility that it would lead to a collapse of the Eurozone. Due to the size of the Italian economy, the EFSF was unlikely to have the capital necessary to fund an Italian bailout. Core Eurozone states, such as France and Germany, had already shown their reluctance to fund the bailout of much smaller economies, such as that of Greece and Spain. It quickly became apparent that the solution to Italy's financial woes would involve internal financial reform and austerity measures. Given the political stalemate that characterized Italian domestic politics, and mounting accusations of political scandal against PM Berlusconi, the implementation of these measures proved to be increasingly problematic.

PM Berlusconi was forced to resign on 12 November 2011 after losing his parliamentary majority; he was replaced by Mario Monti, a former member of the European Commission, and his government of technocrats. PM Monti quickly stabilized the Italian financial system as he implemented measures proposed by the ECB to help Italy reduce its \$2.6 trillion public debt and increase its economic growth. Although the Italian public resented the austerity measures, they accepted them as a necessity in order to ensure the country's sound economic recovery and the maintenance of its position of influence in the EU. The Eu-

ropean Commission applauded Italy for implementing the measures, as did many in Brussels.

The possibility of Italy exiting the Eurozone or EU as a result of its financial woes was not widely discussed within the Italian media; this can be attributed to the country's strong historical ties with these institutions and its consistent advocacy of European integration. Because the EU continues to hold a position of authority in Italian society the potential for an Italian withdrawal from the EU is unlikely.

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³ *ibid.*

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ "Italy Country Profile." *BBC News*. 14 February 11. Date of access: 21/02/2012.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ *ibid.*

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¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² "La Repubblica." Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso. Date of access: 21/02/2012.

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¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ *ibid.*

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²⁰ *ibid.*

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²² *ibid.*

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ "Faccia a Faccia Berlusconi e Sarkozy 'Cambieremo Schengen Insieme.'" *La Repubblica*. 26 April 2011. Date of access: 21/02/2012.

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²⁶ "Draghi: Nessuna Alternativa All'austeritàUe Taglia Stime Italia: Nel 2012 Pil -1,3%." *Il Messaggero*. 23 February 2012. Date of access: 21/02/2012.

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ "Rehn Da Monti: L'Italia Può Farcela" Merkel-Sarkozy: Se Crolla Roma Crolla Euro." *La Repubblica*. 25 November 2011. Date of access: 21/02/2012.

²⁹ "Sostegno All'Italia Di Merkel E Sarkozy Ma Il Vertice Lascia Insoluta La Crisi Dell'euro." *Corriere Della Sera*. 24 November 2011. Date of access: 21/02/2012.

³⁰ "Cresce Il Debito Delle Famiglie Italiane Roma La Provincia Con Più 'sofferenze'." *Il Messaggero*. 14 August 2011. Date of access: 21/02/2012.

³¹ "Licenziamenti per crisi, pensioni a 67 anni il governo convince l'Ue: 'Ma ora monitorare.'" *La Repubblica*. 26 October 2011. Date of access: 21/02/2012.

³² "Pensione a 67 Anni E Licenziamenti Facili Primi Sì Di Bruxelles Al Piano Dell'Italia." *Corriere Della Sera*. 26 October 2011. Date of access: 21/02/2012.

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ "Intesa Su Misure, in Pensione a 67 Anni Stop Di Bossi Sui Trattamenti D'anzianità." *Corriere Della Sera*. 25 October 2011. Date of access: 21/02/2012.

MALTA

By Adrian Zita-Bennett



Ethnic composition: Maltese (descendants of ancient Carthaginians and Phoenicians with strong elements of Italian and other Mediterranean stock)

Population: 409,836 (July 2012 est.)

GDP per capita: \$25,700 (2011 est.)

Member since: 2004

EU funding in 2010: net recipient

BACKGROUND:

Though only officially becoming a member on 1 May 2004, Malta has enjoyed increasingly close relations with the EU since its independence in 1964. The relationship was forged on the basis of trade, as the countries have sought to gradually remove trade barriers to allow greater access to each other's markets. As of 2002, trade with the EU accounted for 46% of Malta's exports and 67% of its imports.¹ In addition to this, the EU provided financial assistance to Malta intermittently during the late 1970s and early 1980s. In the 1990s, Malta applied for membership in the EU and by December 2002, all negotiations concerning accession were completed. In a March 2003 referendum, 53.6% of Maltese citizens voted in favour of membership, and Malta acceded to the Union on 1 May 2004.²

MEDIA SOURCES:

Di-ve

www.di-ve.com

Di-ve is a leading online news media portal in Malta. It is owned by the telecommunications company *GO* and is not affiliated with any particular political party though the NGO Network for Reporting on Eastern Europe has labelled *Di-ve* as liberal in terms of its political orientation.³

The Malta Star

www.maltastar.com

The Malta Star is a free online newspaper established and owned by the social democratic Malta Labour Party. Its political orientation is social democratic and it is characterized as having a strong amount of scepticism towards the EU.⁴ It is the main online competitor of *di-ve.com*.

The Times of Malta

www.timesofmalta.com

The Times of Malta is the largest Maltese daily newspaper. It is owned by Allied Newspapers Limited and is considered to have a conservative political orientation and is strongly in favour of the EU.⁵ It is not affiliated with a political party.

Malta Today

www.maltatoday.com.mt

Malta Today is a newspaper circulated only on Wednesdays and Sundays. It was founded by a former member of the Green Democratic Alternative Party along with a former functionary of the Nationalist Party. It is currently owned by MediaToday Co. Ltd. It has a liberal political orientation, though it is not officially affiliated with a political party.⁶

The Malta Independent

www.independent.com.mt

The Malta Independent is a daily newspaper owned by *Standard Publications Ltd.* The paper is not affiliated with a political party, though it appears to have a “liberal conservative” political orientation.⁷

FINDINGS:

The Eurozone Crisis

- On 11 March 2011, Malta backed the Franco-German Competitiveness Pact because, as Prime Minister Gonzi stated, it represented a tool “to strengthen the financial foundation of the ESM” and is important for EU members to improve their economies.⁸
- On 21 July 2011, at a Council of the EU Summit Meeting in Brussels, Malta agreed to contribute €400 million as part of a broad €159 billion Eurozone commitment to the

EFSF in order to “decisively improve the debt sustainability and refinancing profile of Greece.” Prime Minister Gonzi said that the summit underscored the importance of EU Member States’ ability to achieve the kind of “fiscal consolidation” that “sends a positive message to the financial markets [and] creates stability.”⁹

- On 9 September 2011, the EC released its 2011 *Public Finances Report*, which offered several recommendations for Malta. It stated that Malta must adopt a “binding, rule-based” framework to push its deficit to below 3% of its GDP and reduce its growing debt. Also, the EC urged that Malta “take action” to ensure the sustainability of its pension system.¹⁰ On 11 November 2011, the EC again warned Malta of an economic downturn, citing the fact that the country’s deficit and debt were projected to increase next year despite projected GDP growth.¹¹
- On 8 November 2011, Malta, together with Bulgaria, Cyprus, and the Czech Republic, backed Sweden and Britain’s opposition to the so-called ‘Tobin Tax’ proposal (placing excise tax on cross border currency transactions) supported, most notably, by France and Germany.¹² The states in opposition argued that the levy would negatively impact both business and consumers. The ruling Nationalist Party led by Prime Minister Gonzi was supported in their position by the Opposition Labour Party; however, the Green Party (Alternattiva Demokratika), expressed “disappointment”, calling for banks and financial institutions to “participate in responsibility sharing for the economic crisis.”¹³
- On 10 December 2011, Malta, along with 25 other members of the EU reached a consensus on a new treaty (the European fiscal treaty) to be signed in March 2012. The treaty called for greater fiscal discipline and integration amongst members by reducing bloated deficits, mutually “approved” budgets, and progressing towards balanced budget legislation.¹⁴

Libyan Conflict

Diplomacy

- On 10 March 2011, ahead of the emergency EU summit scheduled for 11 March, Prime Minister Gonzi strongly advocated for an end to hostilities in Libya and stated that Malta would not help the Libyan government because it was “not a matter of mediation” and that the Libyan government “had to listen to the wishes of the Libyan people.”¹⁵
- On 11 March 2011, Malta, along with the other Member States, condemned the Gaddafi regime in Libya for its “use of military force against the civilian population,” with Prime Minister Gonzi stating that Malta expected the exit of Colonel Gaddafi from the political scene to be “inevitable.”¹⁶
- On 13 March 2011, Malta, along with a “handful” of other Member States, called for a ceasefire in Libya during an informal meeting of EU foreign ministers in Budapest. The ministers also discussed imposing more sanctions on the Gaddafi regime.
- On 26 February 2011, Maltese Foreign Minister Dr. Tonio Borg reiterated the government’s position that it would be “neither a mediator” nor “play any military role,” so as to not “burn bridges.”¹⁷
- On 31 March 2011, Malta froze “millions of Euros” in Libyan assets following the EU/UN directive to freeze the assets of the Libyan Investment Authority as well as those of Gaddafi and his family.¹⁸
- On 21 June 2011, Foreign Minister Borg, in conjunction with the foreign ministers of all other Member States, froze the assets of 6 Libyan port authorities controlled by Gaddafi’s forces. In a joint statement, the ministers added that Gaddafi had “lost all legitimacy to remain in power” and that there could be no impunity for crimes against humanity.¹⁹

Migration

- On 30 March 2011, Malta issued a “strong appeal” to the EU for help in dealing with the large influx of migrants

from Libya. It also reaffirmed its commitment to serve as a humanitarian base for refugees and treat those injured in the conflict.²⁰ On 1 April, however, the request was rejected by the EU Home Affairs Commissioner, Cecilia Malmström, who stated that Malta was not yet in “an emergency situation,” so such protection was not necessary.²¹

- While the EU refused to allow the activation of the ‘solidarity mechanism’ which would have forced Member States to assist with the management of the illegal migrants flowing into Malta, on 13 April 2011, it did create a “pilot project” with similar provisions. The difference was that the pilot project would be entirely voluntary.²² On 12 May 2011, 12 Member States, in addition to 3 non-members, agreed to resettle 323 refugees who arrived in Malta as part of this resettlement initiative. The Maltese government saw this as a positive development, though it was noted that there was still room for improvement, given the nearly 2700 refugees that had entered the country.²³ A 3 June 2011 EU report confirmed the unenthusiastic mood amongst Member States towards Malta’s appeal for burden-sharing, despite the “talk of solidarity,” as only 10 other Member States committed to this resettlement initiative.²⁴
- On 28 November 2011, Interim Libyan PM Abdurrahim el Keib and Prime Minister Gonzi agreed to cooperate regarding the influx of Libyan migrants into Malta.²⁵
- On 3 December 2011, Malmström announced a tentative plan to “force” Member States to “show solidarity” with those burdened with illegal immigration (i.e. Malta) because such solidarity had been “lower than expected.” The voluntary pilot project currently in place would be replaced by a permanent relocation scheme to encourage the full participation of all EU Member States.²⁶

2011 IN REVIEW:

Despite their diminutive stature in terms of economy and geography, Malta still has a distinct role in the EU. Two main trends dominated popular discourse regarding

Malta's relationship with the EU in 2011: the Eurozone crisis and the Libyan war. Regarding the Eurozone crisis, Malta saw the improvement of Europe's fiscal situation as crucial and actively participated in such efforts. In this way, Malta proved that it was not a so-called 'lapdog' of the EU, as it did not automatically support every initiative put forth by the bigger powers, such as France, Germany, or the UK. Malta opposed the Franco-German 'Tobin Tax' precisely because of their belief that it would drive away foreign investment — a move that put them at odds with many of the EU's major players. In addition, Malta did not support its long-time ally, the UK, when Prime Minister David Cameron suggested that the European fiscal treaty be signed in March 2012. The realities of Malta's own burgeoning debt and deficit give grounding to its statements that Member States must exercise greater fiscal discipline and restraint. By the third quarter of 2011, Malta had cut its debt by 1.6% of its GDP. Along with Italy, this represented the deepest cuts of all EU Member States.²⁷ This strong adherence to its rhetoric, in addition to its willingness to push back against 'bigger' Member States to safeguard its national interests, is ample proof that Malta's EU policy is not necessarily an extension of the wills of the majority of the Member States. The Maltese attitude perhaps was best reflected when Prime Minister Gonzi vowed on 27 June 2011 that Malta would not be "humiliated" like Greece because, as Finance Minister Tonio Fenech later stated on 13 November, Malta "has never shied away from taking the politically difficult but responsible decisions" on economic matters.^{28 29}

Similarly, while Malta participated actively in discussions regarding the EU's approach to the situation in Libya, it did not always agree with all EU positions on the matter. Malta denounced and imposed sanctions on the Gaddafi regime on several occasions throughout 2011, yet made sure to stay aloof from the conflict, preferring to neither 'mediate' nor 'play a military role'. The EU did not criticize the country's limited participation as vigorously, due to the war's direct impact on Malta in terms of the influx of illegal migration. As discussed, it was only on 3 December that the EU realized it could not merely encourage, but ra-

ther needed to “force” other member states to assist in the resettlement of these migrants, as most members, by and large, offered little in terms of aid.

The ambivalent role of Malta in the EU is perhaps a major reason for the ongoing debate on the efficacy of the organization between some of Malta’s aforementioned press outlets. In many respects, the EU’s treatment of Malta in the Libyan case is indicative of the EU’s attitude toward Malta more broadly speaking. In general, it is clear that Malta is not a top concern for the EU. In addition to the EU’s slow response to Malta’s refugee issues, the EU committed – and then delayed – offering help to fund the financial restructuring of *Air Malta*, the country’s national airline.³⁰

Thus, in 2011, Malta and the EU engaged in sometimes amicable and always dynamic relations. Malta demonstrated a strong commitment to the organization on such matters and proved to be an important ally over the course of the year. Despite this fact, there is room for improvement in this relationship, as the EU needs to refrain from treating Malta merely as a ‘peripheral interest’ in the future.

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 - ⁶ "Malta Today media article." *eurotopics Press Review: The Network for Reporting on Eastern Europe*. Date accessed: 03/01/2012.
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 - ¹⁶ Camilleri, Ivan. "EU Summit: All 27 leaders to agree on Gaddafi's departure." *Times of Malta*. 11 March 2011. Date accessed: 06/02/2012.
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 - ¹⁹ "EU Foreign Ministers Freeze Assets of Libyan Ports." *Malta Star*. 21 June 2011. Date accessed: 06/02/2012.
 - ²⁰ Bonella, Chiara. "Malta appeals for help in dealing with influx of immigrants." *The Malta Independent*. 30 March 2011. Date accessed: 06/02/2012.
 - ²¹ Camilleri, Ivan. "Malta isolated on urgent appeal to EU over migrants." *Times of Malta*. 02 April 2011. Date accessed: 06/02/2012.

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- ²³ Camilleri, Ivan. "323 migrants from Malta to be resettled in Europe." *Times of Malta*. 12 May 2011. Date accessed: 06/02/2012.
- ²⁴ Camilleri, Ivan. "EU report confirms lukewarm reaction to Malta's appeal for burden-sharing." *Times of Malta*. 03 June 2011. Date accessed: 06/02/2012.
- ²⁵ "Libyan PM ready to cooperate with Malta on immigration, pollution, and fishing." *Malta Star*. 28 November 2011. Date accessed: 06/02/2012.
- ²⁶ Camilleri, Ivan. "Brussels puts foot down on migrants' relocation." *Times of Malta*. 03 December 2011. Date accessed: 06/02/2012.
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THE NETHERLANDS

By Farbod Saatsaz van Driel



Ethnic composition: Dutch 80.7%, Europeans 5%, Indonesian 2.4%, Turkish 2.2%, Surinamese 2%, Moroccan 2%, Caribbean 0.8%, other 4.8% (2008 est.)

Population: 16,730,632 (July 2012 est.)

GDP per capita: \$42,300 (2011 est.)

Member since: 1952

EU funding in 2010: net contributor

BACKGROUND:

The Netherlands is a constitutional monarchy, with Queen Beatrix as head of state, and Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the right liberal People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) at the head of government.¹ Although a small country with only 16 million inhabitants, the Netherlands has always been an active member of the international political arena. It was one of the founding members of both the EEC and NATO.² The Hague, seat of the Dutch government, is also home to many international organizations such as the ICC, evidence of the importance the Dutch place on their participation in the international arena. The Netherlands has a strong international trade economy with strong business and service sectors; trade makes up most of the country's GDP (60%) with 80% of its export and 70% of its import transactions taking place with other EU Member States.³

MEDIA SOURCES:

NRC Handelsblad

www.nrc.nl

NRC is the national evening paper, with a history of liberalism⁴. With 218,000 readers *NRC* ranks as the country's 4th most read paper.⁵

Elsevier

www.elsevier.nl

Elsevier is the largest weekly opinion journal of the country with a circulation of 150,000, and focuses on current domestic and international issues. The magazine claims it is "read by more than half a million readers, half of whom are so-called decision makers."⁶

De Volkskrant

www.volkskrant.nl

Although founded as a Roman Catholic workers' paper, *The Volkskrant* became a secular paper in 1965. *De Volkskrant* is the country's third national daily paper in circulation. Its audience is mainly young progressives.⁷

FINDINGS:

The Eurozone Crisis

The Eurozone crisis was the most discussed topic in the articles. About 44% of the articles deal with this issue.

- The population had difficulty understanding the Greek crisis and the decisions that politicians make in Brussels. The Dutch Prime Minister faced strong criticism in late July 2011, because he was unable to accurately disclose how much financial support Greece was supposed to receive from the Eurozone and the IMF. The Prime Minister had mistakenly stated that Greece would receive €109 billion, €50 billion of which would be paid by the banks. In reality, the sum that would be paid by the banks was not included in the €109 billion. In an *Elsevier* commentary, Syp Wynia writes: "During a briefing of the Parliament it became clear that it's not clear what happened [*in Brussels*] and what the consequences are for the Netherlands. It became clear that nothing is clear."⁸
- In December 2011, uncertainty is still the main characteristic of the portrayal of the Eurozone crisis with headlines such as: "Uncertainty remains, even after the 'summit of all summits'"⁹
- Dutch voices opposing financial support to Greece argue that the Greeks do not work hard enough and retire too soon. However, some articles attempt to correct this image and claim: "The Telegraph [*populist*] propaganda against Greece provides Europe, including Holland, with a convenient and exploitable scape goat."¹⁰
- In July, Standard & Poor's downgraded France to AAA-status. This made the financial crisis more tangible for the rich countries in Europe: "The crisis hit the heart of the

Eurozone because of the credit rating devaluation. One of the most important financiers of the European financial support was now under fire.”¹¹

- Future of the EU: The financial crisis has raised questions about the powers of the EU. Amidst Euroscepticism, some call for a deepening of the EU. On this issue, Spanish philosopher Fernando Savater stated: “You need common institutions for common economic and education policies. Europe’s hard drive has to be communal. I also think Europe needs a common military.”¹²

Migration Regulations

- Refugees: In January 2011, the European Court for Human Rights decided that member states are not allowed to send refugees back to Greece, even if it is their first country of arrival in the EU, as the handling of refugees in Greece is not considered to be up to EU standards.¹³
- Illegal immigration: In September, the European Commission demanded that the Netherlands change its policy with regards to deporting illegal immigrants. The Commission argued that it is against EU regulation to imprison illegal immigrants, and the Netherlands would be faced with financial and legal charges if this situation was not improved.¹⁴

External Affairs

- Egypt: In February, Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, travelled to Egypt and Tunisia to discuss the uprisings with various parties. Mubarak had not yet stepped down at this point. Ashton faced criticism because the EU was unable to speak with one voice. The situation in Egypt caused Europe to become more involved with itself than Egypt: “The past few days, Europe has come up with one statement after the other about Egypt. Critics wonder where Ashton’s authority is.”¹⁵
- Libya: Again, the EU is unable to speak with one voice; instead France takes the lead in responding to the upris-

ing in Libya. The *NRC* editorial: "Even now that the violence is escalating, the EU has no clear policy toward Gadaffi."¹⁶

- Iran: In December, the EU was considering the boycott of Iranian oil. A decision was not made at that point because some member states required time to find alternate suppliers. At the same time, the UK asked for stricter sanctions on Iran because the British embassy in Tehran had recently been attacked by government-backed mobs. "This week, Europe stayed clear from an oil boycott, on which the UK and France had insisted. Such a move could cause the oil prices to rise rapidly."¹⁷

2011 IN REVIEW:

The Euro crisis has been at the centre of Dutch media coverage on the EU. As the summary of the reporting shows the Dutch population has difficulty understanding how the government and the EU are handling the Greek crisis. The fact that Prime Minister Rutte caused confusion over the total amount of financial support that was agreed on in Brussels emphasized the complexity of the Greek crisis. The public has little confidence in a positive outcome, as Greece's problems seem to be never ending. Many are starting to feel fed up with bailing Greece out and the Dutch Minister of Finance is in a continuous challenge of defending the decisions to financially support Greece. Many Dutch citizens believe that Greece will never be able to repay its debt to the Netherlands.

Another widely discussed topic was that of regulation and governance within the EU. The Eurozone crisis raised questions about the future of the EU, and while Eurosceptics used the crisis as an argument against the EU, Europhiles argued that the crisis demonstrates a need for deeper integration and a stronger union. The Eurozone crisis has led to calls for a common budgetary policy and a move towards a stronger political union.

Other topics involving regulation dealt with human rights issues such as immigration policies; the Netherlands has faced criticism from EU institutions for its handling of

illegal immigrants. The freedom of press was another popular topic as Hungary imposed its controversial media laws just as it assumed the EU presidency.

The EU's external affairs, in particular, were portrayed negatively in the media. The reason for this is the EU's apparent inability to decide upon a common action regarding the Arab Spring. The fact that member states made responses individually, or within a NATO framework, challenged the legitimacy of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs in the eyes of the public.

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- ¹ "The world factbook - the Netherlands." *CIA*, 2011. Date of access: 18/01/2012.
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- ³ "Economy and Finance." *The Embassy and Consulates / Kingdom of the Netherlands Canada*. Date of access: 18/01/2012.
- ⁴ "Source Profile: NRC Handelsblad" *Presseurop*. Date of access: 18/01/2012.
- ⁵ "De lezers van NRC Handelsblad." *Motivaction research & strategy*. Date of access: 18/01/2012.
- ⁶ "About Elsevier." *Elsevier.nl*. Date of access: 08/02/2012.
- ⁷ "Source Profile: De Volkskrant." *Presseurop*. Date of access: 19/01/2012.
- ⁸ "Syp Wynia, Weet Rutte wel wat hij afsprak in Brussel?" *Elsevier.nl*. 11 August 2011. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
- ⁹ Mark Beunderman and Melle Garschagen. "Onzekerheid blijft, ook na 'top der toppen.'" *NRC*. p.13. 10 December 2011. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
- ¹⁰ Ingeborg Beugel. "Heus, Grieken werken 41 uur per week en zijn niet verder uit te persen." *NRC*. p.40. May 2011. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
- ¹¹ Melle Garschagen. "...ja, en dan offeren we onze eigen begroting." *NRC*. p.20. 16 July 2011. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
- ¹² Pieter Giesen. "Gaat Europa uiteenvallen of groeien?" *Volkskrant.nl*. 29 October 2011. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
- ¹³ Folkert Jensma. "Principe van asielbeleid EU doorbroken." *NRC*. p.3. 22 January 2011. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
- ¹⁴ Jeroen Langelaar. "Brussel eist aanpassing illegalenbeleid Nederland." *Elsevier.nl*, 29 September 2011. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
- ¹⁵ Petra de Koning. "Het gezag van Ashton lijdt onder Egypte." *NRC*. p.7. 05 February 2011.
- ¹⁶ "Libische glimlachspiegel." *NRC*. p.2. 12 March 2011. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
- ¹⁷ Hanneke Chin-a-Fo. "Olie-embargo schaadt Europa meer dan Iran." *NRC*. p.18. 03 December 2011. Date of access: 01/04/2012.

POLAND

By Stanislaw Pelc



Ethnic composition: Polish 96.7%, German 0.4%, Belarusian 0.1%, Ukrainian 0.1%, other and unspecified 2.7% (2002 census)

Population: 38,415,284 (July 2012 est.)

GDP per capita: \$20,100 (2011 est.)

Member since: 2004

EU funding in 2010: net recipient

BACKGROUND:

Poland joined the EU on May 1, 2004,¹ following the June 2003 Referendum. On 7-8 June 77.45% of those who voted were in favor of the accession and 22.55% were against it.² The referendum was a victory for the pro-EU political parties, among them, the then ruling Social Democratic Party. Euroscepticism has never surfaced as a prominent trend in Polish mainstream political discourse, though it would be unfair to say that it does not exist outside the mainstream media.

MEDIA SOURCES:

Gazeta Wyborcza

www.wyborcza.pl

With a circulation of over 300,000 copies *Gazeta Wyborcza* is, and has been, the leading Polish newspaper since the post-communist transition.³ It dates back to the Round Table Talks of 1989. Its main aim then was to represent the Solidarity movement in the 1989 legislative elections. Journalism presented by *Gazeta Wyborcza* has often been the subject of sharp criticism from other newspapers and opinion leaders, because of its perceived biases. The strongest condemnation was levied for allegedly biased coverage of such issues as post-communist vetting (lustration), and a perceived attempt to whitewash former communists.

Rzeczpospolita

www.rp.pl

With a circulation of around 200,000 copies, *Rzeczpospolita* considers itself to be the most serious competitor of *Gazeta Wyborcza*.⁴ *Rzeczpospolita* was the first newspaper to provide a platform for discussion about lustration among journalists. In 2006, when Pawel Lisicki replaced Grzegorz Gauden as *Rzeczpospolita's* chief editor, the newspaper switched its profile from moderate to more conservative.

Rzeczpospolita employs many of *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s staunchest critics.

Uważam Rze

www.uwazamrze.pl

A weekly magazine with a circulation of 294,000 was launched in February 2011 by some of the *Rzeczpospolita* journalists. It calls itself a "conservative-liberal voice in the public debate," and is often critical of the current government and its policies.⁵ *Uważam Rze* articles and op-eds frequently appear in *Rzeczpospolita*, and vice versa.

Wprost

www.wprost.pl

Wprost is a politically centrist magazine, with a circulation of 179,280 copies.⁶ From 2007 to February 2010, when Stanisław Janeczek was *Wprost*'s chief editor, the paper aligned itself with the right-wing government of the Law and Justice party. Since May 2010, however, when Tomasz Lis became editor-in-chief, the political profile of the magazine became moderate.

Newsweek Polska

www.newsweek.pl

Newsweek Polska is one of the eight non-English editions of the American *Newsweek* magazine. With an average circulation of around 180,000, it is one of the biggest and most popular weekly magazines in Poland.⁷

FINDINGS:

The Polish Presidency in the Council of Europe

While some written media approached this topic with a good dose of criticism and condemnation, others did not. For instance, in *Rzeczpospolita*, the very idea of the EU presidency was portrayed as a façade. The newspaper's

contributors blamed the 2007 Lisbon Treaty for “narrowing the mandate of the presidency.”⁸

- *Gazeta Wyborcza*, on the other hand, stated that “given the Eurozone crisis, the half-year Polish presidency was probably the toughest period in the history of this enterprise.”⁹ The newspaper also noticed that there were “no fireworks, but also no mishaps.”¹⁰
- *Wprost* magazine tackled the subject from a slightly different perspective. Its editors drew attention to the geopolitics of East Central Europe, and postulated that the Polish presidency in the EU, seven years after accession, had to be three-dimensional. It should have promoted Poland, provided East Central regional leadership, and assisted internationally as the EU faced the financial recession.¹¹

The Bailout of Greece

Concurrently, Greek financial crisis put into question Poland’s accession to the Eurozone, and Eurozone’s chances of survival. *Rzeczpospolita* concluded that “pessimists talk about the break-up of the Eurozone, cautious optimists say that only Greece will abandon the Eurozone. Optimists, whose numbers have been shrinking, commented that the Eurozone will come out of the crisis even stronger, due to an ever-growing fiscal union between member states.”¹² The rhetoric presented by the newspaper has to be perceived as EU-cautious.

- *Newsweek Polska* debated the €200 billion needed in order to rescue the Eurozone. According to its source, a Polish diplomat in Brussels, a number of countries from Eastern Europe – the Czech Republic and Bulgaria – declared that they would not financially support richer EU countries. Moreover, Hungary and Romania had no input, because they were in the process of repaying their IMF loans.¹³ Countries outside of the Eurozone questioned the burden that they would have to bear for the principle of collective responsibility, responsibility for problems created elsewhere.

Eastern Partnership

Finally, the matter of Eastern Partnership (EaP) appeared quite regularly in the popular media's coverage of events and topics. The reason for such interest was twofold. Firstly, it had been a brainchild of the Polish and Swedish diplomatic cooperation, giving it a lot of traction in the media. Secondly, it was widely believed that with the Polish EC presidency, the EaP would come to the forefront of the EU agenda. In fact, for the sixth month period of its presidency, the EaP was "one of Poland's priorities".¹⁴ Moreover, the EaP Summit in Warsaw on 29-30 September 2011 was not only the most significant event organized under the Polish EC presidency, but also more importantly, it was meant to show that "the project was not forgotten, and it keeps on giving the EU neighbours ever growing opportunities."¹⁵

- In contrast to the optimist tone emanating from Poland, one of the directors of Brussels based think-tank: the Centre for European Policy Studies, H. Onno Ruding announced just two days before the summit that "given the situation in Belarus and Ukraine, and a lack of engagement and interest in the western EU countries' side, the initiative seems unrealistic."¹⁶
- Igor Lyubashenko, a Ukrainian political scientist who works at the Polish Institute of International Affairs, criticized the EaP in his editorial in *Rzeczpospolita*. He wrote that one of the weaknesses of so many European projects that deal with the EU neighbours is that they "offered nothing that could help the average citizen to understand and realize the advantages and profits that the EU integration brings."¹⁷

2011 IN REVIEW:

The way different sources depict information varies slightly and ideological differences are most clearly revealed in editorials. This was demonstrated by strong reactions to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Radoslaw Sikors-

ki's, speech in Berlin, which was given at the end of 2011 and demanded "Germany take the lead in solving the euro crisis."¹⁸ There is a clear dividing line in Polish mainstream media between those aligning with the current government, and those supporting the right-wing opposition. The former tends to depict the EU in a more optimistic way while the latter, has a tendency to criticize the government and its initiatives.

In 2011, several clearly definable topics have surfaced. The first and most important was the Polish presidency of the Council of Europe. The debate that this issue initiated was not only over the shape that the presidency should assume, but also what issues the Polish government had to address. It was also a discussion of a larger and overarching issue of the role of Poland in the EU itself, and an evaluation of its past seven years of membership. Although there was a broad understanding that the image of Poland had improved, there was a lack of agreement as to the future of Poland in the EU.

The Polish presidency was a chance for the right-wing opposition and their sympathizers to criticize and condemn the government not only for their vision of Poland in the EU, but also for a number of their internal policies. It started with an accusation over the total cost of the presidency, which was estimated at €110 million (almost as high as the French presidency in the past).¹⁹ For many commentators, the sum was too excessive, given the fact that the role of the presidency was diminished with the ratification of the 2007 Lisbon Treaty.

The real controversy occurred much later in the year, with the speech that the Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski gave in Berlin in November 2011. Sikorski's call on Germany to rescue the Eurozone and especially his concluding remarks, "I fear German power less than I am beginning to fear German inactivity,"²⁰ echoed in the Polish media for days. It pitted those who saw the EU as an integrated international body and those who saw it as a union of nation-states against one another.

Other prominent topics were the bailout of Greece and the EaP. These two were connected to the theme of the

role of Poland in the EU. They divided the political and media scene. The bailout of Greece was met with harsh criticism by the conservative media, and the right-wing opposition. There was a sense that the Eurozone crisis should be managed and solved only by Eurozone members. The left wing and centrist media and politicians, on the other hand, saw the recent financial crisis as an opportunity for Poland to participate in shaping the future of the EU. For them, it was imperative that collective action be taken, because if it were not, European unity would be at stake.

The issue of EaP was approached with both optimism and caution. By the time Poland began its six-month period of Council of the EU Presidency, the issue of Greece was looming. As a result, even though the EaP was one of the top priorities of the presidency, it lost some of its initial momentum and relevance due to pressing financial problems of the Eurozone. Therefore, Poland was relatively limited in its ability to address this matter, especially because the western EU countries were more concentrated on their domestic economies.

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- ¹ Along with Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Slovakia, and Hungary.
- ² "Referendums in the accession candidate countries - performance information." *PolandEU.gov.pl*. 2011. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
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PORTUGAL

By Camilla Guiguer



Ethnic composition: homogeneous Mediterranean stock; citizens of black African descent; since 1990 East Europeans

Population: 10,781,459 (July 2012 est.)

Member since: 1986

GDP per capita: \$23,200 (2011 est.)

EU funding in 2010: net recipient

BACKGROUND:

The EU has been a top priority on Portugal's agenda for the past two decades. Portugal acceded to EC in early 1986 and subsequently became one of the contracting states that established the EU in 1994. Portugal has consistently been in favor of EU expansion, including the potential entry of Turkey. From an economic standpoint, Portugal has benefited greatly from its membership to the EU as it has been able to provide low-cost labor to the rest of Europe, thus attracting investment. With the entry of the East-Central European states in recent years, this competitive advantage was lost and Portugal's economy has floundered. In the first half of 2011 Portugal became the third EU country to request a financial bailout from the EU.

MEDIA SOURCES:

Expresso

www.expresso.sapo.pt

Expresso is a weekly newspaper, published on Saturdays, that enjoys the largest circulation of all newspapers in the Portugal, with more than 136 000 copies sold weekly.¹ It is chiefly known for its editorial independence and inquisitive political reporting, making it a good newspaper of reference.

Jornal de Noticias

www.jn.pt

Jornal de Noticias is a daily newspaper that is widely circulated. It sells just over 109 000 copies daily.² The newspaper is owned by Controlinveste – a predominantly centrist company and thus, this newspaper's political affiliation is also centrist.³

Diario de Noticias

www.dn.pt

Diario de Noticias is another popular newspaper circulated daily throughout the country. It is predominantly considered the country's most prestigious publication.⁴ Like *Jornal de Noticias*, this publication is also owned by Controlinveste.⁵

FINDINGS:

EU financial aid to Portugal

Due to the country's economic difficulties and the impact of the Eurocrisis, the topic of EU financial support was a prevalent one in the Portuguese media throughout 2011.

- Reports early on in the year indicated that the EIB (European Investment Bank) stated its desire to help the floundering economies of Eurozone countries, of which Portugal was included.⁶
- The EIB declared its intention to aid Portugal in order to prevent from the country from falling into a recession, as was predicted if economic conditions in Portugal continued to worsen.⁷ Germany and France echoed this concern by insisting that the country accept financial aid as soon as possible.⁸
- In the later half of 2011, data from the Transatlantic Trends survey indicated that majority of Portuguese citizens (58%) considered the euro 'bad' for the economy while 80% admitted they had been affected by the economic crisis.
- Despite these trends the majority surveyed (68%) still supported the EU.⁹ The data was released shortly before the EU allotted EUR 2 billion in financial aid to Portugal in September 2011, meant to ease the sustainability of its debt and improve the liquidity of the country.¹⁰ The Eurozone countries expressed confidence in Portugal's capacity to complete the financial aid program set out by the 'troika' (the EU, the ECB, and the IMF) and applauded the

efforts of the Portuguese government consolidating public funds and initiating the necessary structural reforms.¹¹

Causes of the Eurozone crisis

Considering the magnitude of the Eurocrisis and Portugal's floundering economy, it is not surprising that the topic of potential causes of the economic downturn were widely discussed in Portugal's domestic media.

- While some reporting focused on explaining the difficulties and challenges facing EU leaders,¹² others indicated the shortcomings of the EU resulted from a lack of leadership.¹³ Certain reports called for the increased centralization of the EU, in hopes that this would prevent a repeat of Eurocrisis.¹⁴

Portugal and the Future of the EU

Another widely discussed topic in Portuguese media addressed the country's disadvantaged economic status in the EU.^{15 16 17}

- Although certain reports focused on distinguishing Portugal's economic situation from that of Greece and Ireland¹⁸ a majority stressed the lack of foreign investment in Portugal and its negative impact on the nation's economy.^{19 20}
- In mid 2011, economist Nouriel Roubini stated that economic recovery for Portugal would be a long and difficult ordeal, however he expressed hope that an agreement could be reached with the EU, the ECB and the IMF, that would enact less severe austerity measures than those imposed in Greece and Ireland.²¹
- Nevertheless, most of the reporting on the topic of Portugal and the future of the EU remained optimistic, indicating that the EU would contain the crisis.²²

2011 IN REVIEW:

Over the course of 2011, Portugal's relationship with the EU has been significantly affected. Surprisingly,

Portuguese faith still exists in the supranational organization. In domestic media, the EU's crisis was increasingly attributed to its internal workings – primarily in the areas of leadership. At first, the Portuguese perception of this problem was nominal, as there was hope of a turnaround after policy implementations took effect. For example, in February 2011, *Expresso* labeled the problems that leaders were facing as “big challenges” rather than insurmountable tasks.²³ The media's focus remained on the EU leaders themselves rather than the EU as an institution. Gradually, the economic crisis received greater attention in the media and episodes of leaders meeting to discuss the EU's next course of action were highlighted. Perhaps a somewhat naïve idea, but seemingly accepted among the Portuguese population, was that the solution to the Eurozone situation could be found in changing the organizational structure and governance of the EU itself. One *Jornal de Noticias* article from October 4th stated that the economic governance of the region should be more preventative and punitive.²⁴ By the year's end, the media had clearly labeled leadership as a key contributing factor in the Eurocrisis, focusing on statements like Sarkozy's “deficit of leadership” as quoted in a *Diario de Noticias*' article from 3 November.²⁵

The Portuguese media attributed the majority of the Eurocrisis to the organizational structure and leadership failings, of the EU. Throughout 2011 Portugal's faith in the EU's determination to help it was fairly consistent. As early as January, there were articles stating that the EIB wanted to help Portugal avoid a recession.²⁶ This element of assistance appears throughout the year and rarely can one find articles depicting the EU as giving up on Portugal. Assisting Portugal was portrayed as the EU's duty in many articles as seen by *Expresso*'s September 22nd publication stating: “The EU will pay 4 Billion in financial obligations to Portugal and Ireland”.²⁷ Note the usage of the term ‘obligations’ which exemplified the perception in Portugal of the EU's commitment to Portugal's economic survival. In sum, Portugal has approached the shortcomings of the EU with less vitriol than expected, partly due to the fragile status of the Portuguese economy. In a sense the message seems to

be: “it’s a shame its turning out this way – but at least they are trying with good intentions.”

Another important topic was Portugal’s position as one of the weakest economies in the EU. Articles such as *Diario de Noticias*’ March 11 publication express national concern for the status of the Portuguese economy. It labeled Portugal as ‘one of the most “closed economies” in the EU.²⁸ This view continued throughout the year, with several articles expressing stronger opinions by the end of the year, such as a *Jornal de Noticias* article from December 2nd entitled “The Gate of Hell”.²⁹ The article stated that the EU’s organizational faults falls on the shoulders of the most fragile economies in the EU, of which Portugal was included.

In conclusion, the Portuguese media depicted the Eurozone crisis as primarily the result of leadership and organizational deficiencies in the EU itself. Portugal was portrayed as one of the economies most negatively affected by the crisis. That being said, throughout the year Portugal still held the EU in a positive light. These views were relatively consistent throughout 2011. However, as the Portuguese economy worsened, there was an increase in the negative outlook towards the situation in the Eurozone, reporting on which continued into 2012.

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ROMANIA

By Alexandra Savilo



Ethnic composition: Romanian 89.5%, Hungarian 6.6%, Roma 2.5%, Ukrainian 0.3%, German 0.3%, Russian 0.2%, Turkish 0.2%, other 0.4% (2002 census)

Population: 21,848,504 (July 2012 est.)

GDP per capita: \$12,300 (2011 est.)

Member since: 2007

EU funding in 2010: net recipient

BACKGROUND:

Located in South-eastern Europe, Romania currently functions as a unitary semi-presidential republic. Shortly after the end of the Second World War Romania was forcibly turned into a socialist republic. The Ceausescu regime collapsed in 1989, leaving Romania politically and economically fragile. Given its susceptibility to corruption, Romania's growth and development was slow. In 1993, four years after its transition to democracy, Romania applied for EU membership and became the first post-communist country to have official relations with the EU.¹ In 1995 it became an Associated State of the EU.² During the 2000s several reforms were implemented to prepare for the EU accession that it received in 2004.³ Romania finally became a Member State on January 1, 2007.⁴

MEDIA SOURCES:

Domestically, Romania is viewed as having one of the most dynamic media markets in all of Southeastern Europe.⁵ However true this may be, the constitution has imposed limits upon the freedom of expression. More specifically, it limits reporting that places Romania in a derogatory context.⁶ In 2010, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) announced that Romania "now considers the media a threat to national security and plans to legally censor its activities."⁷

Adevarul

www.adevarul.ro

Arguably the oldest and most well read newspaper in Romania, *Adevarul* was founded in 1871 and has evolved in a manner similar to the transformation Romania has undergone.⁸ Its current daily circulation is 187,000 and is owned by Dinu Patriciu, a prominent Romanian businessman and former politician.⁹ *Adevarul's* ideological stance conflicts with the beliefs of its founder.¹⁰ Patriciu, founder of the National Liberal Party, follows a centre-right liberal policy

and the newspaper upholds a strong commitment to the free market.¹¹ Socially conservative, and fully privatised, it is one of the most popular and trusted press outlets in Romania.¹²

Evenimentul Zilei

www.evz.ro

Founded shortly after the transition in 1992, *Evenimentul Zilei* has a daily circulation of 150,000.¹³ It is not only one of the leading newspapers in Romania, but also one of the most accessed internet pages. In the early 2000s, the Swiss press conglomerate Ringier owned it; however, journalists complained that the foreign owners were interfering editorially and lessening the political coverage and toning down negative reports of the government.¹⁴ This caused a considerable scandal, after which the paper became one of the most fervent attackers of government corruption.¹⁵ After the 2004 elections, the paper began changing its editorial policy to become a tabloid.¹⁶ In 2007, it came under the ownership of by Bobby Paunescu, a director and screenwriter.¹⁷ The newspaper now addresses largely urban and educated public.¹⁸

Gandul

www.gandul.info

Gandul was created in 2005 by Mircea Dinescu, a former writer for *Scinteia* (the only newspaper published during the communist era). Since then, it has converted to an online source, and records 35,000 daily hits.¹⁹ In 2006, MediaPro (based in the United States) took over the majority of the company.²⁰ MediaPro owns many magazines, websites and TV channels both in Romania and Moldova.²¹ Central European Media Enterprises own 95% of their MediaPro's stock.²²

FINDINGS:

These sources yielded over 500 articles related to “Romania and the European Union”, “EU funds”, “Euro” and “Schengen”. Out of these, 200 were selected randomly for the purpose of this study, with 60 being quoted below.

Accession into the Schengen Zone

Without question, the topic most widely discussed was Romania’s difficult path to accession into the Schengen Zone.

- In the beginning of the year, French and German interior ministers demanded the postponement of Romania’s accession.^{23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30} During the EU’s spring hearing, Romania’s accession was delayed due to the country’s problems with corruption.^{31 32 33} Romanian president Basescu urged the government not to denounce the Cooperation & Verification Mechanism on justice developed by the European Commission as well as not to block Croatia’s accession to the EU as a response to Romania’s delay in accession to the Schengen.^{34 35} Following the original delay, Germany, France and the EU tried to reach a compromise that would allow Romania’s accession in the fall.³⁶ On 22 September, however, the Polish Minister of the Interior said the decision to integrate Romania into Schengen was impossible at this time.^{37 38 39} Schengen Head of the Administration and Interior, Marian Tutescu reported after the hearing that there is a 90% chance that Romania will receive Schengen accession in 2012.^{40 41 42 43}

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EU Funds: Amounts, Allocation and Absorption

The second most discussed topic in Romania-EU relations pertains to EU funds. The funds are important, as they affect Romania’s development.

- The negotiation about the future budget cycle (2013-2020) began in 2011.⁴⁵ By the end of 2011, Romania had absorbed a low percentage of the European funds de-

voted to it; even though it was only a quarter of what had been allocated to Romania, the 2011 spending doubled compared to the previous four years.⁴⁶ Given this, it was reported that Romania could become a net contributor of the EU. Furthermore, the reduced use of funds could serve as an argument for limitations on future funding.⁴⁷

⁴⁸ Despite the information that Romania could become a net contributor of the EU, it remained in last place during 2011 in both East and Central Europe to have access to EU funds with an absorption rate of 7%.⁴⁹ As a result, Romania created a Ministry of European Funds, responsible for improving the absorption rate of funds as well as attracting further funding.⁵⁰ Later in the year, the EU declared that Romania's term of repayment of the EU funds had been reduced from 60 to 45 days.⁵¹ Per schedule, in the fall Romania received €1.2 billion as its fourth installment of European Commission loans.⁵² ⁵³ In the latter part of the year the European Parliament increased co-financing for European projects, companies and authorities in Romania.⁵⁴ ⁵⁵ ⁵⁶

The Ability for Romanian Citizens to Work Across the EU

Another widely reported topic focused on work restrictions imposed on Romanian workers within the EU.

- Romanians currently cannot access jobs in 15 EU countries, while Ireland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Malta, and Luxembourg proposed employment restrictions for Romanians that will begin in 2012.⁵⁷ ⁵⁸ ⁵⁹ ⁶⁰ ⁶¹ ⁶² In 2011, Germany and Austria opened employment doors to Eastern Europe, excluding Romania.⁶³ ⁶⁴ Romanians will regain employment access to the aforementioned nations in 2014.⁶⁵ EU States were forced to grant employment access to Romanians by the end of 2011.⁶⁶

Adoption of the Euro

Though this topic was significantly less discussed when compared to the other leading issues mentioned in this report, it is nonetheless included due to its significant impor-

tance to the evolving relationship between Romania and the EU.

- A new convergence report from the European Commission outlined the goals and timelines of when Romania can adopt the euro. The report specified that Romania hopes to adopt the euro for 2015 as it already meets two of the five convergence criteria of the exchange rate and public debt.^{67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75}

2011 IN REVIEW:

Though deteriorating throughout the course of 2011, Romania's relationship with the EU generally finished on a hesitantly hopeful note. The most widely debated topic throughout the year was Romania's accession to the Schengen Group. Initially, France and Germany, with the approval of other EU Member States, demanded the postponement of Romania's accession to the Schengen Zone due to its current corruption and problems with the Roma population.^{76 77} Though this development was not a surprise to Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Teodor Baconschi, he still made the accusation that the reason for such a decision lies in the inherent double standard within the EU.^{78 79 80} He therefore applied pressure on the EU, and argued that "regulations should not be changed to block accession".^{81 82} In response to Baconschi's actions, as well as surmounting Euroscepticism, EU Member States adjusted their stance on Romania's Schengen accession and agreed to another hearing later in 2011.⁸³ No agreement was reached upon the second Schengen accession hearing, despite Romania's completion of the criteria required to accede.⁸⁴ There is a lack of reporting of the discussion on the specific reason why Romania was not admitted, aside from the vague response from Finland and the Netherlands stating that the issue was political and electoral.⁸⁵ Generally frustrated, Romanian EU officials consistently presented Romania as a victim of EU bullying and that their opinions were clearly in the right as would be seen in the predicted successful accession in the spring of 2012.⁸⁶

Over the course of the year, most articles on Romania's attempt to adopt the euro by 2015 referred to it as an undesirable but necessary move. The main reason for the adoption of the currency is further integration with the EU community, and the change in status from a Member State that is simply "helped along".⁸⁷ While this is the argument most publicised, there is an uncertainty about the adoption of the euro, as it might be used only as a national fiscal instrument during the upcoming presidential campaign.⁸⁸

Romania's view of the EU in relation to availability and use of EU funds has fluctuated greatly in 2011. Ambitiously, Romanian EU officials planned twice the normal absorption funds when compared to those received in the past four years. They used the argument that Romania had the lowest absorption rate in East and Central Europe.⁸⁹ However, the plan was difficult to implement as the EU changed Romania's terms of repayment from 60 to 45 days.⁹⁰ In an effort to appear more responsible, Romania imitated Bulgaria when it was granted the capacity to have a Minister for European Funds.⁹¹ While EU officials were quoted to be happy with this development, it is as of yet uncertain to what extent such developments have aided Romania in attracting EU funds.

The inability for Romanians to work in approximately 15 Member States beginning in January 2012 has caused a great deal of tension between Romania and the EU. Some nations have created extensions of their restrictions until 2014, claiming that economic recession prevents absorption of new workers, or temporary migrant workers.⁹² Other nations such as Austria and Germany are distrustful of newly acceded nations and believe that Romania should wait as long as the other post-communist countries did: seven years after full accession (the maximum amount of time according to EU law).⁹³ Many Romanian journalists expressed frustration about their nationals' inability to work in other countries.⁹⁴

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THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

By Amina Abdullayeva



Ethnic composition: Russian 79.8%, Tatar 3.8%, Ukrainian 2%, Bashkir 1.2%, Chuvash 1.1%, other or unspecified 12.1% (2002 census)

Population: 138,082,178 (July 2012 est.)

GDP per capita: \$16,700 (2011 est.)

BACKGROUND:

The relationship between the EU and Russia has been one of conflict. As an authoritarian state, Russia does not share many of the EU's values. Its government understands international relations in the Westphalian sense, where state sovereignty is equated to territoriality and the exclusion of foreign actors from domestic governance.

In a speech given in Bologna, Italy on 20 April 2007, EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson said that the EU-Russia relationship contains a "level of misunderstanding or even mistrust we have not seen since the end of the Cold War."¹ In general, there is a lot of distrust between Europe and Russia.² The reason for this distrust lies in the geopolitical competition over certain overlapping spheres of influence in countries such as Ukraine and Georgia, as well as the question of energy exports from Russia. Secondary to this is the EU's criticism of human rights violations in Russia and the Kremlin's intolerance of "the slightest comment on its internal policy."³ The most recent survey of Russian public opinion from 2010, suggests that 55% of Russian citizens view the EU positively (while only 13% regard it negatively, with the rest divided between unsure - 23% - and people who do not know what the EU is - 9%), and 46% believe that the EU is not interested in a strong Russia and would prefer that Russia stays weak.⁴

MEDIA SOURCES:

Эхо Москвы

www.echo.msk.ru

Ekho is considered to be one of the few truly independent media outlets in Russia.⁵ It tries to report on and illuminate the issues as objectively as possible by inviting all points of view, including some that are harshly critical of the government. According to its editor-in-chief, Aleksey Venediktov, *Ekho* is "not an opposition radio, but an information radio."⁶ It was the most cited news source (among all newspapers, magazines, and radio- and TV-stations – 6000

in total) in Russia in 2011.⁷ Despite being a radio-station, transcripts of its programs are available online, as well as blogs, surveys, news, and notable articles from foreign press sources (in translation).

Lenta.ru

www.lenta.ru

Lenta.ru is one of the most popular internet-based news resources in Russia. It gets 100,000 hits a day on average, with approximately 30,000,000 hits in 2011.⁸ Extensive research yielded no information indicating any sort of political bias on its part. Its high popularity in the blogosphere (evidenced by the frequency of its articles appearing on blogs, Facebook, and other types of social media) also testify to its objectivity and esteem among the readership. It is updated 24 hours a day.

Izvestia

www.izvestia.ru

Izvestia is another widely read daily newspaper. In 2011 it was the third most-cited Russian newspaper.⁹ It is available in print, with a daily circulation of 234,500,¹⁰ and online. It is also considered a trusted source.

These three sources were searched for the combination of the words “European Union” and “Russia” for the period from 1 January 2011 to 1 January 2012. *Ekho* yielded 320 results, of which 55 were relevant to this study; *Lenta.ru* returned 364 results, of which 28 were found pertinent; *Izvestia* produced 570 results, of which 36 were used for the current analysis.

FINDINGS:

Over the course of 2011, media outlets were dominated by the following topics, which particularly influenced Russia-EU relations in that period:

Elections in Belarus

Russia and the EU compete for influence in their neighbouring countries, what Russia calls its “near-abroad.” A prominent illustration of this ongoing competition was the case of Belarus.

- President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko was re-elected a third time and was inaugurated for his fourth term in office on 21 January 2011.¹¹
- The EU was displeased with the treatment of the opposition in Belarus and overall restriction of civic rights, which prompted the European Parliament to adopt a resolution condemning Lukashenko.¹² The resolution forbade Lukashenko’s entry into the EU, imposed economic sanctions on Belarus in the form of an embargo on business with large Belarusian companies and froze assets of Belarusian state structures and some government officials.¹³ The resolution also expressed regret that Russia accepted the results of Belarusian presidential elections.¹⁴
- The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs criticized the resolution stating that its aim was “to undermine socio-economic stability in the country.”¹⁵ Russia announced that in response it would have to take “proportionate and adequate measures” in order to strengthen Belarusian sovereignty.¹⁶ Deputy chair for international affairs in the Russian Duma (Parliament), Leonid Slutskiy, said that international sanctions such as these are “destructive.”¹⁷
- Some people in the Russian media went further by stating that at a time when the EU is weak and wracked by a crisis, the case of Belarus was taken up as a cause to show that the EU stands by its principles.¹⁸ The report asserted that in reality, such righteousness is exercised only with respect to small states with little influence, which exposes the hypocrisy of the EU. In essence, Belarus was simply a field where Russia and the EU contested each other’s geopolitical influence.¹⁹

Arab Spring

The operation in Libya was called “a full-blown colonial war.”²⁰ Russia was against Libyan intervention and called it “unreasonable.”²¹

- Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an interview that Russia was against the Western line taken in Libya, namely, forcing a ruler out of power and killing him.²² He went on to say that such an approach would only provoke other people discontented with their government to rise up in arms and expect the West to fight alongside them.²³ Lavrov also stated that Russia was against such provocative destabilisation and preferred an open-minded dialogue.
- At the same time, Moscow was convinced that the EU played little part in the unfolding of the operation, and thus, at the end of the day, paid little attention to European actions, placing all emphasis on the US instead.

Human rights violations and the rule of law in Russia

Two cases are significant in this section: the Magnitsky case²⁴ and the December 2011 Duma elections.²⁵

- Sergey Magnitsky was a lawyer imprisoned for investigating a case of high-level corruption, who died in prison because he was denied medical treatment.²⁶ The European Parliament stressed the need to investigate the case of his death.²⁷ In February 2011 the EU approved a resolution criticizing the state of the Russian judiciary, which was deemed “not independent enough.”²⁸ EU debated following the US example and prohibiting entry into the EU to some of the officials implicated in the Magnitsky case, but that never materialised. In Russia the view was that such sanctions were a political tool meant to exert influence, and that the EU would never actually implement them.²⁹ The unsatisfactory state of the Russian judiciary was also underscored by the negative European evaluation of the Khodorkovsky case.³⁰
- The Duma elections were criticized as unfair in a resolution passed by the European Parliament on 7 July 2011.³¹

A Belgian deputy of the European Parliament, Guy Verhofstadt, called on the EU “not to repeat mistakes of the past and support the people, not governments that break the law and abuse human rights”³² – clearly a hint at the European dealings with certain Arab states. In response to the condemnation of these elections, President Medvedev stated that he did not care what was said in Europe: “I have nothing to comment, because these are our elections. The European Parliament has nothing to do with them. [...] I will not comment on their decisions, they do not mean anything to me.”³³

Economic relations

Three issues dominated the debates on the economic front: EU-Russia trade relations and Russia’s entry into the WTO, EU-Russia visa regime, and energy policy.

- Entry into the WTO was very important to Russia. After eighteen years of negotiations, Moscow finally signed the protocol of entry into the WTO on 16 December 2011.³⁴ Among the many new obligations the membership imposed on Russia was also the commitment to suspend payment from European airplanes crossing Russian airspace. The EU had earlier threatened Russian entry into the WTO, because Russia had banned imports of vegetables from Europe after an epidemic of E-coli broke out; Russia had to restart vegetable trade in order to be able to proceed with its WTO bid.³⁵
- The visa question has plagued Russian-EU relations for quite some time, with one Duma deputy describing the EU policy in question as “a step forward, two steps back”.³⁶ The year culminated in the two parties signing an agreement that outlined four-steps Russia needed to take in order to start a visa-free regime with the EU.³⁷ Specifically, it called on Russia to introduce biometric passports and impose strict control of identity papers; to implement common standards in fighting illegal immigration; to cooperate with the EU in fighting terrorism; and to provide equality and protection against discrimination for all citizens crossing the common borders.³⁸

- Finally, the question of energy has remained a difficult one. Russia places a huge emphasis on energy trade, as that is a significant source of its income. In January Russia announced that it planned to buy even more gas, than it already did, from Azerbaijan in order to ensure the success of the South Stream project and to prevent Europe from accessing alternative sources of energy.³⁹ In response, the EU denied South Stream a special status that would exempt third parties from using the pipeline – a status that Nabucco, for example, was granted.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, Russia criticized the EU's decision to conduct three-way negotiations with Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan regarding the Trans-Caspian pipeline project.⁴¹ Moscow asserted that this decision was made without taking into account the existing geopolitical and legal situation in the Caspian basin. At the same time, both sides realize that energy is a sphere in which they will have to find a way to cooperate, and thus are in the process of discussing a roadmap on gas relations lasting until 2050.⁴²

2011 IN REVIEW:

The Russian opinion of the EU is divided among the Russian government and conservative layers of society, and liberal citizens and intellectuals. The latter's view is much less sceptical and more positive. In addition, the two factions base their judgement on different issues: those who oppose the EU see it as politically weak, yet attempting to impose its hypocritical views and practices on the world; meanwhile, those who support the EU, stress its promotion of human rights and civil liberties, especially when compared with Russia.

The EU has little credibility in the eyes of many, because it is seen as a weak coalition that has no military might and cannot reach a political consensus. This is why Russia prefers to deal with EU countries on a bilateral basis; it sees it as more convenient and according to its habits. The Russian government does not fully understand the workings of the EU bureaucracy, and it is convinced that the EU does not understand the workings of the Russian

society. Russia's government subscribes to the realist doctrine of world affairs, whereby military power and strategic national interests play the decisive role. That is why energy and membership in the WTO are so important to Russia – a strong state needs a strong economy.

People who emphasize human rights and civil liberties point out that their government is afraid of the European liberalism. They believe that the European example and pressure make the state, which detests any attempt to interfere with its internal affairs, apprehensive. This is because “free-thinking people are enemies of arrogant thieves.”⁴³

Russia and the EU held a summit meeting in December 2011, which prompted the Russian Institute of Modern development to produce a 30-page report on the state of relations between the two parties.⁴⁴ While the report criticized Brussels' technocracy and the propensity of the EU to get into matters outside of its competence – “[b]ig questions related to politics should be left up to appropriate negotiation forums” – it also recommended that the Russian government should remember the importance that the EU accord to human rights.⁴⁵ Experts asked the government not to ignore the EU's calls for the development of democracy.

In summary, from the Russian perspective, the EU is not unified: those who hold power are sceptical of it, except when it comes to economic questions. On the other hand, intellectuals and educated citizens look to it for promotion and protection of human rights and civil liberties.

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- ⁴⁴ Sidibe, Pierre. "Institute For modern development has Prepared For Medvedev A New Report On Relation With The EU." *Izvestia*. 07 December 2011. Date of access: 01/02/2012.
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SERBIA

By Petar Dodic



Ethnic composition: Serb 82.9%, Hungarian 3.9%, Romany 1.4%, Yugoslavs 1.1%, Bosniaks 1.8%, Montenegrin 0.9%, other 8% (2002 census)

Population: 7,276,604 (July 2012 est.)

GDP per capita: \$10,700 (2011 est.)

BACKGROUND:

Over the past decade, Serbia's future has become increasingly locked into a path towards the EU. The relationship has drastically changed since the fall of the Milošević regime in 2001.¹ In 2003, at the Thessaloniki Summit, the EU made it clear that Serbia and the region's future belongs within the EU.² However, achieving candidate status has proved to be more complicated than anticipated by the Serbian government. Progress has been slow for much of the past decade, but it has gained pace in recent years as meeting EU criteria has become more effective.³ Serbia surpassed some substantial obstacles when it signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) in 2008, has fulfilled all of its obligations to the ICTY by late 2011, and has enacted some major reforms.⁴ At the same time, there have been disappointments for both sides.

Despite being recommended for candidate status by the European Council on October 12, 2011, Serbia did not achieve this by the end of the year as it had hoped.⁵ Kosovo remains a major issue and in December the European Commission insisted that relations between the two must be normalized before Serbia could receive candidate status.⁶

MEDIA SOURCES:

Politika

www.politika.rs

This is the premier daily newspaper in the country, being the oldest in the Balkans.⁷ As such, it is considered to be the newspaper of record and a leading authority in journalism. It has a daily circulation of 135,000.⁸

RTS (Radio Television of Serbia)

www.rts.rs

The national public broadcaster of Serbia whose daily news program is the most watched in the country.⁹ Since the end

of the Milosevic regime, *RTS* has undergone reforms and restructuring so that currently, according to its website, it is committed to promoting democratic values free of political bias.^{10 11}

B92

www.b92.net

A national radio and television broadcaster that began as a youth radio station in 1989 and has since expanded to become one of the main news services and television broadcasters in the country.¹² Its primary audience is largely urban, young and it is associated with liberal political views.¹³ Its online news service receives on average 200,000 visitors daily.¹⁴

Blic

www.blic.rs

Blic is one of the most popular tabloid newspapers in Serbia with a circulation of 120,000.¹⁵ It was founded in 1996 by a group of Austrian businessmen and is currently owned by the company Ringier, which also owns tabloids around the world.¹⁶ Its name means “flash” in Serbian and although it has slightly more in-depth coverage than the other tabloids, its format remains focused on quick, attention-grabbing news.

FINDINGS:

2011 was a very eventful year when it came to issues concerning the EU’s relationship with Serbia and has thus provided many news stories covered in the country’s domestic media. The key issues were those surrounding Serbia’s prospects for receiving candidate status, Kosovo, and EU’s financial crisis.

Candidate Status

The major topic regarding the relationship between the EU and Serbia has been that of Serbia’s hopes for candidate

status and the issues surrounding this. The year began with reports in the media of the possibility of Serbia achieving this goal.

- According to a poll conducted by *Politika* at the beginning of 2011, the year commenced with high hopes, with the majority of the respondents answering that they expected Serbia to gain candidate status in 2011 as well as that the war fugitive, Ratko Mladic, would be caught.¹⁷
- These hopes continued to increase throughout the year. Politicians on both sides expressed hope and optimism that Serbia would be able to achieve candidate status in 2011. Serbia's president, Boris Tadic, set candidate status as a goal for 2011.¹⁸ Interviews and statements by top Serbian and EU politicians reinforced these hopes, such as during the visit of EU Commission president Jose Manuel Barroso on 19 May.¹⁹
- Perhaps the biggest event for Serbia and its EU prospects was the apprehension of war fugitive Ratko Mladic, followed by the last remaining alleged war criminal Goran Hadzic. These developments signaled the crossing of one of the biggest hurdles to candidate status.
 - On 26 May 2011, Ratko Mladic, war crime fugitive, was arrested. This was one of the biggest events of the year in terms of Serbia's hopes for candidate status and it made international news, as Ratko Mladic was one of the most high-profile war crimes suspects of the Bosnian war.²⁰
 - Following the arrest of Mladic, Serbia's last war crimes suspect, Goran Hadzic was arrested on 20 July, signaling the fulfillment of the country's obligations to the Hague tribunal.²¹
 - Newspapers report optimism among politicians, especially Serbian ones, that the country will receive candidate status by the end of the year.²²
- Angela Merkel's visit to Belgrade on 23 August 2011 sent mixed messages. Although the German Chancellor issued statements in support of Serbia's European integration ef-

forts, she also criticized the government for its support of parallel institutions in northern Kosovo.²³ This raised the question of whether Serbia would have to recognize Kosovo in order to achieve candidate status.²⁴

- On 12 October, the European Commission recommended that Serbia should receive candidate status based on the country's progress with reforms, its cooperation with the Hague tribunal, and its regional reconciliation efforts. It was also stated that Serbia should receive candidate status provided that Belgrade-Pristina dialogue resumes.²⁵
- However, at the summit of the European Council on 9 December, it was decided to delay granting candidate status to Serbia.²⁶ This was largely due to the dissatisfaction of the EU over the progress of Serbia-Kosovo dialogue and the clashes between Serbs and EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) soldiers in northern Kosovo over the removal of the road blockades set up by the residents.²⁷

Kosovo

The fear that Serbia might have had to choose between the EU and Kosovo has been one of the most common threads throughout the year with various reports as to whether such a question would even arise.

- One of the first reports in the year suggested that Serbia would not have to choose between the two and that the question will not even rise.²⁸
- Throughout the year however, various news sources reported various statements and conclusions over the issue. One report covered statements by Angela Merkel's party that Serbia will eventually have to recognize Kosovo if it hopes to become a member of the EU.²⁹
- The establishment of road blockades by Serbs in northern Kosovo as well as the clashes between Serb residents and EULEX forces was another topic heavily covered in the media. The incidents brought up questions over the role of the EU in the situation.
 - On 26-27 July clashes erupted at the customs posts at Jarinje and Brnjak between Serbs and Kosovo police

forces after an attempt to staff the customs posts with Kosovan police.³⁰

- In September, tension rose again after Serbs set up barricades on major roads in northern Kosovo.³¹
- The barricades remained despite calls from Serbia's president, Boris Tadic, to remove them. There were several attempts in October at removing the barricades by force by EULEX troops.³²
- By the end of the year, some barricades remained, some were torn down, and new ones were still put up.³³ By the end of 2011, this situation had not been resolved and the tension in Kosovo contributed to Serbia's failure to receive candidate status in December as it had hoped.

The Eurozone Crisis

One of the major topics covered in the media throughout 2011 has been the financial crisis in the EU. The events covered have generally been the same major events covered in the international media. However, some reports have also covered some specific aspects of the crisis, such as one article discussing how, while most European countries have experienced a decline, the German economy has grown and even profited as the article suggests, from a weak euro.³⁴

- Within the media, the Eurozone crisis has triggered various reports of what the crisis could mean for Serbia's EU future. The crisis has sparked the question of whether the EU will even want to enlarge given its difficult situation.³⁵
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- Another aspect of the Eurozone crisis covered in the media was its effect on Serbia's economy. Many news stories pointed out that Serbia was by no means unaffected by the crisis since its economy is so integrated into the European one.³⁷

2011 IN REVIEW:

The major topic discussed in Serbia's media throughout 2011 has been that of candidate status and the various issues surrounding it. This is not surprising given that most of the major events throughout the year, such as the arrest of Ratko Mladic, have been related to the country's prospects for joining the EU. The large number of articles written on this subject is indicative of the public's interest and hopes of receiving candidate status; if the population had been indifferent to the issue, it would not have been such a prominent topic. Several interesting trends emerged within this category of news stories as well. One such trend was that throughout the year, many reports were written predicting whether or not Serbia would receive candidate status by the end of the year. There were many articles suggesting both outcomes, however, in general, most foresaw a positive change in Serbia's prospects. Such reports would often highlight the many promises and statements of EU officials that supported their arguments, while simply mentioning that most of the promises made by EU officials were conditional on the progress of bilateral relations of Serbia and Kosovo. This suggested a generally hopeful attitude in the media over the country's prospects of achieving its goal. About halfway through the year however, following Angela Merkel's visit to Belgrade, the excitement over the issue had dissipated as the German Chancellor made it clear that Serbia would have to give up its parallel institutions in Northern Kosovo in order to receive candidate status. Thus the general atmosphere of hopefulness gradually diminished as it became increasingly clear that receiving candidate status would be more difficult than originally anticipated.

Kosovo was another major theme in the media throughout the year. This issue closely ties into that of Serbia's future within the EU, since developments in Kosovo would inevitably affect the outcome of Serbia's bid for candidacy. As such, there appears to have been a great deal of anxiety over the issue of Kosovo and the developments in that region. One trend, which demonstrates this anxiety, is

that many articles discussed whether recognizing Kosovo would be a condition for receiving candidate status or for joining the EU. The large amount of articles written on this debate point to the fears of the public that they may have to eventually choose between one or the other and that the current policy of pursuing both may not be viable in the long run.

Apart from the domestic issues, the major international topic relevant to Serbia's relationship with the EU that has received coverage has been the Eurozone crisis. As with the media of many countries, the reports covering this topic have been generally negative. This has led to some articles analyzing the implications of the crisis for Serbia's economy, but also, the implications it may have on EU enlargement. One interesting trend is that many articles have dealt specifically with the role of Germany in the Eurozone crisis and its attempts to solve it. This trend is not just isolated to the issue of the crisis but is also noticeable in the other two categories. For example, when Serbia did not receive candidate status on 9 December, many articles pointed to the fact that the main countries that opposed the action were Germany and Austria. This trend reveals the recognition in the media that Germany is largely responsible for Serbia's future within the EU. As such, there have been hints of slight suspicion in the media towards Germany, such as an article discussing how the German economy has continued to grow despite the crisis, even suggesting that they have profited from a weak euro.³⁸ It must be mentioned however, that evidence of such suspicion is minimal.

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- ⁵ "European Council." Conclusions 9 December 2011. pp. 5. 2011. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
- ⁶ *ibid.* 5.
- ⁷ "O Kompaniji." *Politika Akcionarsko Drustvo*. Date of access: 23/02/2012.
- ⁸ "Source Profile: Politika." *Presseurop*. Date of access: 23/02/2012.
- ⁹ "RTS i dalje obara rekorde gledanosti." *RTS*. 08 January 2009. Date of access: 28/01/2012.
- ¹⁰ "Transforming national broadcasting in Serbia." *BBC World Service Trust*. 04 October 2007. Date of access: 27/01/2012.
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- ¹³ *ibid.*
- ¹³ *ibid.*
- ¹⁴ "Source Profile: Blic." *Presseurop*. Date of access: 23/01/2012.
- ¹⁵ *ibid.*
- ¹⁶ *ibid.*
- ¹⁷ "Vecina gradjana ocekuje da cemo u 2011. dobiti status kandidata." *Politika*. 03 January 2011. 27/01/2012.
- ¹⁸ Tomic, L. "Tadic: Prvo kandidatura pa izbori." *Blic*. 02 April 2011. Date of access: 27/01/2012.
- ¹⁹ "Barozo: Kljuc za EU u rukama Srbije." *B92*. 19 May 2011. Date of access: 27/01/2012.
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- ²¹ Teleskovic, Dusan. "Uhapsen Goran Hadzic." *Politika*. 21 July 2011. Date of access: 28/01/2012.
- ²² "Jeremic: Nadamo se statusu kandidata do kraja godine." *Blic*. 25 July 2011. Date of access: 28/01/2012.
- ²³ "Tadić: Srbija neće napustiti svoj narod na KiM i neće odustati od evrointegracija." *Politika*. 25 August 2011. Date of access: 10/02/2012.
- ²⁴ "Merkelova - Dobre i lose vesti." *B92*. 24 August 2011. Date of access: 28/01/2012.
- ²⁵ "EK odobrila Srbiji status kandidata." *B92*. 12 October 2011. Date of access: 28/01/2012.
- ²⁶ Spaic, Tamara. "EU: Odluka o kandidaturi Srbije u februaru." *Blic*. 09 December 2011. Date of access: 28/01/2012.

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- ²⁷ "Merkel: Srbija ne ispunjava uslove." *B92*. 02 December 2011. Date of access: 28/01/2012.
- ²⁸ Clajak, B. "Nerealno je pitanje Kosovo ili EU." *Politika*. 08 January 2011. Date of access: 27/01/2012.
- ²⁹ "Nema EU bez priznanja Kosova." *B92*. 22 June 2011. Date of access: 28/01/2012.
- ³⁰ "Eston trazi od Tadica i Tacija da smire situaciju." *Politika*. 27 July 2011. Date of access: 28/01/2012.
- ³¹ "Blokada Kosova, ispaljeni prvi meci." *B92*. 17 September 2011. Date of access: 28/01/2012.
- ³² "Kfor uklanja barikade." *B92*. 20 October 2011. Date of access: 28/01/2012.
- ³³ "Brnjak i Jarinje ponovo blokirani." *Blic*. 08 December 2011. Date of access: 28/01/2012.
- ³⁴ "Evropska nocna mora, nemacka bajka." *RTS*. 12 January 2012. Date of access: 28/01/2012.
- ³⁵ "Uprkos krizi, EU najbolja za Srbiju." *B92*. 03 October 2011. Date of access: 28/01/2012.
- ³⁶ "Jeremic: Ekonomska Kriza ce uticati i na sirenje EU." *Blic*. 20 June 2011. Date of access: 28/01/2012.
- ³⁷ Rabrenovic, J. "Svetska kriza opet kuca na vrata." *Politika*. 09 August 2011. Date of access: 28/01/2012.
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SPAIN

By Ariadna Pauliuc



Ethnic composition: composite of Mediterranean and Nordic types

Population: 47,042,984 (July 2012 est.)

Member since: 1986

GDP per capita: \$30,600 (2011 est.)

EU funding in 2010: net recipient

BACKGROUND:

After its 1986 entry into the EU, Spain helped establish Mediterranean and South American dimensions within the organization.¹ As a strong supporter of the EU's Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), Spain has sought to strengthen its ties with, and promote a European-Mediterranean dialogue. In addition, Spain has been successful in increasing relations with Mediterranean, Arab, and African nations. As the UfM headquarters are in Barcelona, Spain's involvement and the success of the initiative are pivotal to the nation. More regionally, Spain's accession to the EU helped resolve trade frictions between itself and its neighbouring countries.²

MEDIA SOURCES:

El País

www.elpais.com

El País is Spain's top-selling newspaper with a daily circulation of 440,000. Its online edition is the second most visited in the country, and is internationally recognized among the world's twenty best newspapers. The publication was founded in 1976 and remains closely connected to the Spanish Socialist Party, PSOE.³

The Barcelona Reporter

www.barcelonareporter.com

Founded in 2005, the *Barcelona Reporter* is a Spanish online paper providing daily news in English.⁴

Libertad Digital

www.libertaddigital.com

Libertad Digital is an online paper with 6,458,000 visits per month, as reported in 2008. Its political orientation ranges between conservative, liberal, and centrist.⁵

FINDINGS:

The following major topics were widely discussed in the domestic media over the course of 2011.

The Eurozone Crisis

The domestic economic downturn as well as the Eurozone crisis dominated the national Spanish press.

- In January 2011, *ABC de Seville* and the *Barcelona Reporter* reported that despite the rising debt and the subsequent debt crisis, China is still willing to absorb a debt of €5.65 billion while the EU is expecting Spain to request a bailout, despite protestations from Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero⁶
- In the same month, *El Pais* reported that if the EU were to absorb the Spanish debt it would be the largest of the European bailouts, as the Spanish economy is twice the size of Ireland, Greece, and Portugal combined.⁷
- On 1 March 2011, the *Barcelona Reporter* noted that despite the Spanish government's optimism for an economic recovery, the fact that Spain is affected by both the international financial crisis and its own sovereign debt crisis, limited the prospects of an economic upturn. Prime Minister Zapatero promised to lower unemployment from 20 percent (the highest of any EU member) as well as to reduce the deficit.⁸
- Later in March, European leaders set a date to analyze a package that would help resolve Spain's sovereign debt crisis after Moody downgraded Spain's credit rating, as reported in the press. Prime Minister Zapatero insisted that it would only cost 20 billion euro to refinance the banking sector while Moody estimated the effort would require between 40 to 50 billion euro. The package proposed by the EU would help consolidate the debt and take pressure of the public sector.⁹
- Media reports from 21 June 2011 indicated that the Spanish Government confirmed that while EU ministers were meeting to discuss further emergency funds for debt re-

lief, Spain would not be requesting a debt bailout from the EU.¹⁰

- On 6 September 2011, *Libertad Digital* published an analysis of the political and economic costs of reshaping the EU along with considerations of a changing euro and a plausible fiscal confederation. While Spanish officials acknowledged that a restructuring or withdrawal would be economically beneficial for Spain, the Lisbon Treaty makes that extremely difficult.¹¹
- On 20 November 2011, the press reported that despite economic hardship the Spanish government announced a wage increase as well as pension boosts scheduled for November 2012. The EU reported that Spain is able to borrow money from international money markets although at higher interest rates¹²

Migration

- It was reported on 18 June 2011, that while the Spanish government was hoping the EU would help close its labor market to Romanian workers in order to lower Spanish unemployment, the opening of a new Mercedes plant in Hungary actually helped absorb the influx of Romanian workers into Spain.¹³ Spain's request to close its borders came after several months of experiencing the highest unemployment of any other EU member nation. In August *El País* reported that although the EC was hesitant to authorize the proposed labour restrictions at first, the extraordinary economic circumstances, chiefly the Spanish unemployment rate of 21%, have persuaded the Commission to consent to the proposed limitations.¹⁴

The Environment

- The media reported in October 2011, that Spain must pledge to help restructure the fishing industry as it places the most strain on the industry and severely taxes the EU as a result. Restructuring should include fleet size reduction, fishing bans and the creation of marine reserves said a EU official.¹⁵

2011 IN REVIEW:

In 2011, the relationship between Spain and the EU was largely based on the economy. The international financial crisis and the sovereignty debt crisis in Spain were at the forefront of EU considerations. While the Spanish Prime Minister did not request a bailout, the EU was concerned it would have to help consolidate Spain's debt which would have essentially crippled the EMU along with the EU. Despite being straddled with one of the largest debts in Europe as well as the highest unemployment rate of any other EU member, Spain was able to improve its economy by the end of the fiscal year. Largely due to EU deliberations and the Lisbon Treaty, Spain was forced to actively seek new ways of improving its economy as well as to suggest new ways to help improve the Euro and thus the economy of the union. The EU was not optimistic in Spain's economic recovery, especially after its credit rating downgrade by Moody. The Spanish government remained optimistic in its belief of a recovering economy. Spain not only did not request a bail out from the EU, but it managed to increase the minimum wage and boost pensions by the end of 2011. Particularly, the main economic concern the EU had with regards to Spain was the sovereign debt crisis and the "downloading" of this debt on the private sector while trying to refinance the banking system. This consideration dominated in Lisbon Treaty deliberations and detracted from Spain's usual zeal in pressuring the EU to get involved with the ongoing problems in Mediterranean and Arab countries.

Another important topic relates to Spain's high unemployment rates and its influence on the country's attempt to close its labour market to workers from Romania. This was chiefly motivated by the government's desire to protect its economy and decrease the unemployment rate. Also noteworthy is the fact that while having Europe's largest fishing industry, the lack of any Spanish restructuring of this industry to ensure preservation, prompted the EU to offer potential solutions for the amelioration of the situation. Despite many other crucial issues, such as the

environment and foreign relations with Mediterranean and Arab nations, in 2011, Spain mainly engaged with the EU on matters pertaining to the economy and the economic crisis. This relationship is telling of the economic conditions in Europe during 2011.

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- ¹ Miguel Sebastian (2001): "Spain in the EU: fifteen years may not be enough," Centre for European Studies, Harvard University, Working Paper Series #96.
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- ³ "Source Profile: El País." *Presseurop.* 2012. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
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- ⁵ "Libertad digital media article." *eurotopics Press Review: The Network for Reporting on Eastern Europe.* 2012. Date of access: 03/03/2012.
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- ¹¹ "Euro break-up: the consequences." *Libertad Digital.* 6 September 2011. Date of access: 12/02/2012.
- ¹² "Spain minimum wage rise 2011 and pensions boost." *The Barcelona Reporter.* 20 November 2011. Date of access: 14/02/2012.
- ¹³ "Romanians to return home to work in the new Mercedes plant." *The Barcelona Reporter.* 18 June 2011. Date of access: 12/02/2012.
- ¹⁴ Sáiz, Eva. "Brussels approves Spain's request to re-institute work permits to Romanians." *El País.* 11 August 2011. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
- ¹⁵ "Spaniards must eat less fish to help preserve fish stocks worldwide." *The Barcelona Reporter.* October 2011. Date of access: 14/02/2012.

SWITZERLAND

By Rabiya Asad



Ethnic composition: German 65%,
French 18%, Italian 10%, Romansch
1%, other 6%

Population: 7,655,628 (July 2012 est.)

GDP per capita: \$43,400 (2011 est.)

BACKGROUND:

Switzerland is geographically situated in the center of Europe, and trades primarily with its European neighbours; however it has not become a member of the EU. In a referendum in 2002, the Swiss public voted against opening talks on joining the EU, and currently Swiss-EU relations are based on a series of extensive bilateral agreements. In 2005, Swiss-EU relations became closer as a result of a referendum which revealed that the Swiss public was in favour of Switzerland signing onto the EU Schengen and Dublin agreements. These agreements brought Switzerland into Europe's passport-free zone and allowed Switzerland to collaborate with other EU members on security related issues.¹ More recently, Switzerland brought its legislation in line with that of the EU in order to avoid discrimination as a non-EU member.²

MEDIA SOURCES:

Tages-Anzeiger

www.tagesanzeiger.ch

Tages-Anzeiger (TA) is a national daily newspaper based in Zurich. In comparison to other Swiss newspapers it has a wide readership and circulates to approximately 204 000 readers daily.³ Although it is politically and economically independent, the newspaper is generally considered to be politically left and government friendly.⁴

Neue Zürcher Zeitung

www.nzz.ch

The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ)* is another national daily newspaper based in Zurich, with a daily circulation of 137 000.⁵ NZZ shares political opinions that are linked to the liberal Free Democratic Party of Switzerland.⁶

Swissinfo

www.swissinfo.ch

Swissinfo is a news and information platform that serves as the international branch of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SBC). Its role is to cover events in Switzerland and to offer a Swiss perspective on international events. The main readership consists of expatriate Swiss and an international audience with an interest in Switzerland. The [swissinfo.ch](http://www.swissinfo.ch) website and mobile platforms are available in up to nine languages. *Swissinfo.ch* is based in Bern with offices in Geneva and Zurich.⁷

FINDINGS:

The following major topics were covered extensively in Swiss national media over the course of 2011.

Foreign Policy

- As part of an initiative to slow Iran's nuclear development program, the EU has issued a number of tough economic sanctions against Iran as of 23 January 2012. All EU countries are banned from importing oil from Iran, and existing contracts can last as long as 1 July 2012. Restrictions have also been placed on investments made by European companies in Iran's petrochemical industry. The Iranian Central Bank has also been subject to sanctions, to make it harder for the country to finance its nuclear program.⁸
- Maria Avet, the spokesperson of the state secretariat for Economic Affairs in Switzerland commented that as a non-member, Switzerland has not yet decided whether or not it will support the sanctions.⁹
- However, Switzerland has recently tried to replicate EU sanctions in order to harmonize its laws with those of its European trading partners, although there was a delay in their implementation. If Switzerland stalls its decision to impose current EU sanctions this could reduce the efficacy of the sanctions themselves.¹⁰

Bilateral Relations among European Countries

- In April 2009, Switzerland was placed by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on a grey list of countries for failing to provide bank details of foreign tax evaders and helping them hide their assets. The Swiss government decided to sign two ground breaking deals with Germany in August 2011 and Britain in October 2011 to close the accounts of current tax evaders and to ensure that backdated taxes are paid on longstanding assets. These deals were known as the Rubik system.¹¹
- While the Rubik system has been praised by the OECD for its transparency, the EU is not fond of the bilateral relations between these two countries.¹²
- The EU Finance Committee has criticized the Rubik System as it claims that the contracts may not comply with EU directives. The EU instead wants to impose a uniform solution for tax evasion across Europe that is in line with EU rules and regulations.¹³

Free Movement of People

- The Swiss People's Party has launched a campaign to restrict the free movement of people between the EU and Switzerland (currently permitted by bilateral treaties between Switzerland and the EU).¹⁴
- Under Swiss law, which adheres to the principles of direct democracy, the initiative requires 100,000 signatures before Swiss voters can be asked to express their views on the matter. As of now, the deadline for collecting the 100,000 signatures has been set for the end of 2012 or the beginning of 2013.¹⁵
- Though the Swiss private sector and most politicians have been strongly in favour of the free movement of people (along with much of the public which has voted three times in favour of the referendums) there has been a recent increase in those opposed to the passport free zone. The demographic growth has translated into a lack of

- available resources for Swiss nationals and has created problems particularly with regards to housing.¹⁶
- If the initiative does gain popularity, it could undermine the treaties signed between the EU and Switzerland harming Swiss-EU relations.¹⁷

2011 IN REVIEW:

Switzerland and EU relations have traditionally been complex. While the Swiss people want to maintain their independent identity, the fact that Switzerland is surrounded by so many EU member states has meant that the Swiss government has concluded a series of treaties with the EU to keep up with the progress achieved by the EU member states. It is unlikely, however, that Switzerland will join the EU anytime soon. The year 2011 was marked by tense relations between the two. Throughout the year, Switzerland displayed an interest in following EU policy under its own terms. This was shown when the Swiss government suggested that it would take its time to decide if it wanted to adopt sanctions against Iran. Clearly, the Swiss government was trying to prove its independence over its foreign policy and that it could act independently in order to resolve international crisis. This is rooted in the fact that the Swiss have historically tended to prioritize their national identity over their European one. This in turn has created tension between Switzerland and the EU, as Switzerland only seems willing to follow EU policy when it results in clear social and economic benefit for its people (such as the passport free zone or collaborated efforts to resolve security related issues).

As Switzerland engaged in bilateral relations with Britain and Germany to prevent tax evasion, the EU felt that its power to create policies and enforce them upon its member states was being threatened and its authority being challenged. As a result, it issued a notification condemning the bilateral engagements and suggested instead that the EU take up the responsibility of creating a unified tax evasion system all across Europe. Like any global institution, the EU is sensitive to the fact that it only has as

much power as countries associated with it, and that Switzerland does not fully recognize the EU's authority in Europe. Therefore, it tried to re-assert its influence and make its position known on the issue. This bid for power displayed the deterioration of Swiss-EU relations more than anything else.

The Swiss people's attitude towards the EU suggests that Swiss-EU relations have been weak in 2011. Traditionally, the passport free zone has been appreciated for making it easier for people to move across the continent in search of employment. However in recent years this has come under attack as there are not enough resources available to sustain a growing immigrant population. The Swiss People's Party has used this opportunity to promote its right wing anti-immigration agenda. While there is no guarantee that the movement will garner enough support to become a referendum, it does reveal the growing concern that the EU's limited influence in Switzerland is already being challenged. This opens up multiple avenues for challenging inroads made by the EU. In 2011, room for compromise between the EU and Switzerland seemed to be shrinking. It seems unlikely that relations will improve and that Switzerland will join the EU any time soon.

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- ¹ "Switzerland Country Profile." *BBC News*. 04 January 2012. Date of access: 6/01/2012.
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 - ⁵ "Source Profile: Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ)." *Presseurop*. Date of access: 06/03/2012.
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 - ¹³ "Die EU hat Mühe, ihre Schäfchen im Zaum zu halten" *Tages Anzeiger*. 11 February 2012. Date of access: 29/01/2012.
 - ¹⁴ "SVP-Initiative gegen Freizügigkeit eingereicht". *NZZ*. 15 February 2012. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
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 - ¹⁶ Schaffner, David. "Wirtschaft zittert um freien Personenverkehr". *Tages Anzeiger*. 08 July 2011. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
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TURKEY

By Isa Topbas



Ethnic composition: Turkish 70-75%,
Kurdish 18%, other minorities 7-12%
(2008 est.)

Population: 79,749,461 (July 2012 est.)

GDP per capita: \$14,600 (2011 est.)

BACKGROUND:

Turkey's relationship with the EU (formerly the EEC) dates back some time. Turkey secured a customs union deal with the EU in 1995, after applying for associate membership to the EEC in 1959. This was followed by the signings of the "Ankara Association Protocol" in 1963 and the "Additional Protocol" in 1970.¹ A recurrent element in EU-Turkish relations, thus far, is the slow pace of the negotiations between the two sides.

In 1997, Turkey was declared eligible for EU Membership, and was officially made a candidate two years later on "equal footing" with the other candidate countries.² Since then however, there has not been much progress in terms of Turkish accession. It took six years to officially open negotiations for accession and the Accession Partnership guiding the process has been revised twice since.³ Many chapters have been opened and only one has been closed, meaning that any hope among Turks for accession to the EU is diminishing rapidly.

MEDIA SOURCES:

Zaman

www.zaman.com.tr

Zaman is the paper with the highest readership and circulation rates in the country; its daily circulation is approximately 1 million.⁴ The paper is known for its conservative views and is sometimes linked with the Gülen movement. Launched in 1986, the publication belongs to a large media group, consisting of a media agency, a TV channel, a daily in English, a radio station, and others.⁵

Hürriyet

www.hurriyet.com.tr

Hürriyet is a popular daily with 360,000 copies circulated daily. Its reporting is often provocative, but generally sympathetic to national pride particularly targeting working

class readers.⁶ The newspaper launched in 1948 is currently owned by the large industrial group, Doğan. The company also owns several other daily publications in the country.⁷

Sabah

www.sabah.com.tr

Sabah is one of Turkey's most popular daily tabloids with close to 400,000 copies circulated daily.⁸ It is a moderate, centre-right newspaper that was recently acquired by Çalık Holding,⁹ whose CEO, Berat Albayrak, is the son-in-law of Prime Minister Erdoğan. The company publishes over 50 other publications such as regional and national daily newspapers, weekly papers and magazines.¹⁰

FINDINGS:

The articles found in the aforementioned news sources throughout 2011, revealed the following trends:

Loss of Interest in Accession

- There is the notion among the Turkish people, which is represented by the domestic media, that the EU is sort of a "Christian Club"¹¹ in which the major players France and Germany will not tolerate the accession of a largely Muslim country that would also significantly alter the balance of power.¹²
- There is a consensus that the government in power has fulfilled its requirements to bring Turkish standards up to the level necessary for acceptance into the EU. The EU's complex system of bureaucracy is mostly blamed for the lengthy process.¹³
- The media consistently reflects the Turkish public's declining enthusiasm for accession to the EU. In a survey conducted by the German Marshall Fund, only 38% of Turks say that EU membership would be a good thing, compared to 73% in 2004.¹⁴

The unfair use of Cyprus as a bargaining chip

- Turkish people are annoyed by the fact that the issue of Turkish Cyprus is constantly brought up by the EU.¹⁵ This issue even caused a stir between Prime Minister Erdoğan and then Greek Prime Minister Papandreou at the Ambassadors Conference held in Erzurum, during which Papandreou stated: “unless Turkey ends its invasion of Cyprus, it can never become a member of the EU.”¹⁶

EU Accession as a dividing force within Turkish society

- Due to the fact that no actual progress has been made in Turkey’s bid for accession, the government feels compelled to continually restate that they have not given up.¹⁷ This is particularly important, as the opposition blames the government for the lack of success in the accession process. The topic of EU membership mostly ends in heated debates and arguments between members of parliament, just like the one that broke out between Egemen Bağış, the Minister for EU Relations, and members of the opposition parties during the 13 December session of Parliament.¹⁸

2011 IN REVIEW:

2011 was an uneventful year in terms of Turkey’s relations with the EU. The fact that not much has changed in the accession process is not a good sign, and has served as a substantive factor for the deterioration of the EU’s image in the eyes of the Turkish public. Public opinion demonstrates an unwillingness to accept the government’s rhetoric that it is working towards making Turkish accession to the EU a reality. The fact that there are occasional policy stand-offs between Turkey and the EU does not help the situation. This was the case in February 2011 when Turkish citizens were exempted from obtaining EU visas. Turkish officials continue to insist that the EU needs Turkey more than it needs the EU; most Turks share this view, although Europe’s political elite does not recognize it.¹⁹ Eu-

ropean politicians only acknowledge this opinion when trying to attract votes in constituencies with a large Turkish population.²⁰ Egemen Bağış, the Turkish minister for EU affairs, has publicly stated that the patience of the Turkish government and people is dwindling, and that the EU must take decisive steps towards resolving what seems to be a political deadlock.²¹

The issue of Cyprus has been raised more frequently than ever before and has had the effect of galvanizing opposition to joining the EU. Opponents point to EU reforms as an attempt to use the accession process to infringe upon Turkish sovereignty.²² Şahin Alpay, a well-known columnist, has been one of the most active media personalities in following the unfolding of events between the EU and Turkey. In an op-ed written in June 2011, he stated that the EU had lost its power over the Turkish government and more recently, in December 2011, he questioned the significance of the accession process entirely.²³

²⁴ The EU remains hostile towards Turkey and often treats it like a second-class country. The Turkish people recognize this, which is reflected in the dwindling approval rate of Turkish EU membership.²⁵

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 - ² "EU-Turkey Relations." *European Commission*. 07 January 2011. Date of access: 13/01/2012.
 - ³ "EU-Turkey Relations." *European Commission*. 07 January 2011. Date of access: 13/01/2012.
 - ⁴ "Haftalık Ortalama Gazete Satışları." *Netgazete*. Date of access: 13/01/2012.
 - ⁵ "Source Profile: Zaman." *Presseurop*. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
 - ⁶ "Source Profile: Hürriyet." *Presseurop*. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
 - ⁷ "Source Profile: Hürriyet." *Presseurop*. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
 - ⁸ "Turkuvaz Media Group." *Global Media Market Intelligence*. 2010. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
 - ⁹ "Turkuvaz Media Group." *Global Media Market Intelligence*. 2010. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
 - ¹⁰ "Turkuvaz Media Group." *Global Media Market Intelligence*. 2010. Date of access: 01/04/2012.
 - ¹¹ "Babacan AB 'Hristiyan Kulübü' dedi, İsveç 'ortak değer' savunması yaptı." *Hürriyet*. 30 January 2011. Date of access: 15/01/2012.
 - ¹² Aköz, Emre. "Avrupa Birliği bizi ne Zaman alacak?" *Sabah*. 20 March 2011. Date of access: 15/01/2012.
 - ¹³ "Bağış: Türkiye'de basın, tarihinin en özgür dönemini yaşıyor." *Hürriyet*. 18 March 2011. 15/01/2012.
 - ¹⁴ "Ve Türk insanı sonunda AB'den vazgeçti." *Hürriyet*. 15 March 2011. Date of access: 15/01/2012.
 - ¹⁵ "Bağış: Kıbrıs, AB yolunda konulmuş muz kabuğudur." *Zaman*. 21 July 2011. Date of access: 15/01/2012.
 - ¹⁶ "Erzurum'da AB atışması." *Hürriyet*. 07 January 2011. Date of access: 15/01/2012.
 - ¹⁷ "Bağış: Avrupa'nın bittiğine inanmıyorum." *Zaman*. 15 December 2011. Date of access: 15/01/2012.
 - ¹⁸ "AB süreci AKP ile başlamış bir süreç değil." *Zaman*. 13 December 2011. Date of access: 15/01/2012.
 - ¹⁹ "Cumhurbaşkanı Gül'den Avusturya'da AB'ye mesaj." *Hürriyet*. 02 May 2011. Date of access: 15/01/2012.
 - ²⁰ "Alman Politikacıdan Türkiye'nin AB üyeliğine destek." *Hürriyet*. 30 January 2011. Date of access: 15/01/2012.
 - ²¹ "Bağış: Kıbrıs, AB yolunda konulmuş muz kabuğudur." *Zaman*. 21 July 2011. Date of access: 15/01/2012.
 - ²² "Bağış: Kıbrıs, AB yolunda konulmuş muz kabuğudur." *Zaman*. 21 July 2011. Date of access: 15/01/2012.
 - ²³ Alpay, Şahin. "AB Türkiye üzerindeki etkisini yitirdi." *Zaman*. 21 June 2011. Date of access: 15/01/2012.
 - ²⁴ Alpay, Şahin. "Türkiye'nin AB'ye katılım süreci sona mı erdi?" *Zaman*. 10 December 2011. Date of access: 15/01/2012.

²⁵ "Ve Türk insanı sonunda AB'den vazgeçti." *Hürriyet*. 15 March 2011.
Date of access: 15/01/2012.

UKRAINE

By Tanya Branitska



Ethnic make up: Ukrainian 77.8%, Russian 17.3%, Belarusian 0.6%, Moldovan 0.5%, Crimean Tatar 0.5%, Bulgarian 0.4%, Hungarian 0.3%, Romanian 0.3%, Polish 0.3%, Jewish 0.2%, other 1.8% (2001 census)

Population: 44,854,065 (July 2012 est.)

GDP per capita: \$7,200 (2011 est.)

BACKGROUND:

In 2008, the EU and Ukraine launched the Association Agreement negotiations. During the fifteenth EU-Ukraine Summit the European Council President Herman Van Rompuy stated that “the support of European public opinion to Ukraine’s political association and economic integration to the EU is an important asset.”¹ However, recent political events in Ukraine resulted in the following statement: “The perceived deterioration of the quality of democracy and the rule of law in Ukraine has a direct impact in our Member-States, in our public at large, and in the European Parliament.”²

MEDIA SOURCES:

Ukraine’s news media field is dominated by television as the primary source of information for most of the population. Ukraine’s media watchdog *Mediasapiens* has published a report indicating the numbers of media standard violations and censored TV news reports. *1+1* scored as the second channel with the greatest number of instances of censorship.³ In general, the current regime and its representatives have dominated TV news commentaries and very little time has been afforded to the opposition.⁴ Moreover, in 2005 the current Head of the State Security Service of Ukraine bought 61% of the channel *Inter*. Concerns regarding the transparency of the transaction⁵ and the new owner’s conduct⁶ have been raised.

Inter

www.inter.ua

Inter is Ukraine’s most popular TV channel⁷. Its web page, *Podrobnosti*, gets over 13.4 million hits a month⁸. The website also has an RSS feed running non-stop.

1+1

www.1plus1.ua

1+1 is the country's second most popular TV channel.⁹ Its news program "TCH" (TSN) has a monthly rate of over 19.7 million hits¹⁰. The website has a Ukrainian and Russian version.

Korespondent

www.ua.korrespondent.net

Korespondent is Ukraine's most popular online news source. The monthly hit rate of the website reaches the number of 42.2 million.¹¹ The website has a Ukrainian and Russian version. Apart from their own journalists' reports, *Korespondent* also publishes news and expert reviews by the *BBC Ukraine*.

FINDINGS:

Between 1 January 2011 and 1 January 2012 the following EU-related events received the greatest coverage in the Ukrainian media:

The Tymoshenko Case and the European Values and Identity

The case of the ex-Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko was one of the most prevalent topics in the Ukrainian media. A lot of attention was paid to the European reaction to the development of the case and its influence on EU-Ukraine relations.¹²

Financial assistance and energy sector cooperation

One of the most prominent themes in the media was that of the EU providing financial assistance to Ukraine.¹³

- Cooperation within the energy sector was also a prominent topic in the media.^{14 15} Several dimensions of the energy sector were discussed in this respect. The most prominent aspect of this topic is Ukraine's relation with

Russia as the major provider of energy resources. The other topic of discussion on energy was focused on alternative ways in which the EU could deliver the necessary energy sources while avoiding Ukraine – the Nord Stream and the South Stream.^{16 17}

Public opinion on the EU

A number of media reports discussed how Ukrainians perceive the EU.

- In the recent year, the publication of opinion polls that assess the Ukrainian attitude towards the EU and Ukraine's "European choice" have become common in the Ukrainian media. The most notable of these reports evaluate the attitudes in eastern Ukraine and the Crimea, where a large Russian minority is present, toward Ukraine's geopolitical alignment.¹⁸

2011 IN REVIEW:

The Ukrainian media presented the EU from two perspectives that were strongly linked to Ukraine's foreign policy. In one of his interviews, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Kostiantyn Hryshchenko stated the following: "I am certain that there is no alternative course to the European integration. This is the only foreign policy strategy that unites all our society, all regions of our state, and all fractions of our political elite."¹⁹

The first point of reference to the EU involved the topic of European values and identity – democracy, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights. These issues were discussed in the news reports on the EU reaction to the Arab Spring and the crackdowns on the protesters in Belarus. Therefore, the values of the EU represent a normative standard for Ukrainian society. The Ukrainian authorities may be using the positive associations of the EU to promote their own image.

With regard to the human rights, one of the most notable news stories involved the EU member states' reactions to the Tymoshenko case. The Tymoshenko case has

become a notable point in the relations between the EU and Ukraine. The perspectives of both sides differ. The EU states that the violations of human rights and the questionable political practices of the ruling government represent an obstacle to the deepening of Europe's cooperation with Ukraine. In her interview with *BBC Ukraine*, Amanda Paul, an expert from the Centre of European Politics stated: "Brussels wants to see the improvement of the democratic standards in Ukraine before signing these documents ... As it is widely known, many EU states tie this process to Tymoshenko's release..."²⁰

The Ukrainian authorities presented the case in a different light: "The President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, claims that none of the previous administrations in Ukraine have done more for European integration than the current one. And the *only obstacle* [author's emphasis] to integration is the situation with the ex-prime minister of Ukraine Yulia Tymoshenko."²¹ Therefore, the opposition has blamed the government's failure to fulfill its promises of European integration.

It appears that the European idea was sold to the Ukrainian public through the media. The EU has become the major point of comparison in terms of political, economic, and social standards. Ever since Ukrainian independence, the most prominent discussion has concerned the question of Ukraine's political orientation, "with the East or with the West?" The divergence in public opinion was perceived as the most prominent marker of national division. Today, the news report that the "Youth in Donetsk and Crimea claims its European choice."²² It is true that European integration is recognized by the youth as the preferred vector in foreign policy. However, the survey of an influential Kyiv-based think tank, Razumkov Centre, demonstrated that the support of different foreign policy vectors still varies from region to region.²³

Notably, a fair amount of media attention was paid to the issue of the Eurozone crisis and economic developments in the EU itself.²⁴ The most critical news was that which involved the state of Euro and the possible dissolution of the Eurozone.²⁵ ²⁶ The news articles mostly focused

on the developments in the Eurozone and the steps taken by its member states to overcome the crisis. Some of the expert opinions commented on the chance of the dissolution of the Eurozone.²⁷

In conclusion, the prominent trends in the news reports concern the recognition of Ukraine's European identity, European values, and the benefits of cooperation with the Western partners. The general tone of the messages is perhaps too optimistic when weighed against the political reality in the country. The media's overabundant use of the word "success" is rather alarming. The much-discussed summit did not end with the signing of any milestone agreements. For instance, the negotiations of the visa regime are still on the table. While Van Rompuy, Barroso, Fule, and Teixeira point to numerous inconsistencies that need to be settled, the representatives of the incumbent regime in Ukraine underline the new "successes".

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- ¹ Van Rompuy, Herman "Remarks of President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy, following the 15th EU-Ukraine Summit." 19 December 2011. Date of access: 19/01/2012.
- ² *ibid.*
- ³ "Про що мовчали новини у листопаді?" *Телекритика*. 27 January 2012. Date of access: 27/01/2012.
- ⁴ "Влада маніпулює українцями через телевізор?" *Академія Української Преси*. 07 November 2011. Date of access: 27/01/2012.
- ⁵ "Експерти виявили підроблений підпис экс-власника "Інтера", за яким продали канал." *ТСН*. 21 April 2009. Date of access: 24/01/2012.
- ⁶ Руденко, Євгенія. "Суд позбавив частот 5 канал і ТВі." *Українська служба БіБіСі*. 08 June 2010. Date of access: 24/01/2012.
- ⁷ Данькова, Наталія "Склалися на трьох." *Телекритика*. 11 January 2012. Date of access: 19/01/2012.
- ⁸ "Media sources popularity ratings." *i.ua*. Date of access: 03/02/2012.
- ⁹ Данькова, Наталія. "Склалися на трьох." *Телекритика*. 11 January 2012. Date of access: 19/01/2012.
- ¹⁰ "Media sources popularity ratings." *Bigmir*. Date accessed: 04/02/2012.
- ¹¹ "Media sources popularity ratings." *i.ua*. Date accessed: 03/02/2012.
- ¹² "МЗС Франції: справа Тимошенко заважає асоціації між ЄС та Україною." *Кореспондент*. 04 September 2011. Date of access: 28/01/2012.
- ¹³ "Украина получит от ЕС 17 миллионов евро для развития местных общин." *Подробности*. 31 May 2011. Date of access: 27/01/2012.
- ¹⁴ "Модернизация украинских трубопроводов остается приоритетом для ЕС." *Подробности*. 31 May 2011. Date of access: 30/01/2012.
- ¹⁵ "ЕС: Модернизировать украинскую ГТС выгоднее, чем строить новую." *Подробности*. 01 June 2011. Date of access: 30/01/2012.
- ¹⁶ "Європа почала закачувати газ в обхід України." *ТСН*. 21 October 2011. Date of access: 02/02/2012.
- ¹⁷ "Грищенко: 'Южный поток' - это политический проект." *Подробности*. 29 December 2011. Date accessed: 30/01/2012.
- ¹⁸ "51% молоді Донбасу та Криму підтримують вступ України в ЄС." *Кореспондент*. 15 December 2011. Date of access: 29/01/2012.
- ¹⁹ "Константин Грищенко: Модель взаимодействия Украины с Таможенным союзом должна базироваться на основе принципов прагматизма и взаимовыгодного сотрудничества." *Подробности*. 29 December 2011. Date of access: 30/01/2012.
- ²⁰ "Експерт: до виборів в Україні угоду з ЄС не підпишуть". *Кореспондент*. 07 January 2012. Date of access: 30/01/2012.

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- ²¹ "Янукович назвав єдину перешкоду на шляху євроінтеграції України." *Кореспондент*. 03 February 2012. Date of access: 03/02/2012.
- ²² "51% молоді Донбасу та Криму підтримують вступ України в ЄС." *Кореспондент*. 15 December 2011. Date of access: 29/01/2012.
- ²³ "Яким інтеграційним напрямом має йти Україна?" *Центр Разумкова*. 2011. Date of access: 01/02/2012.
- ²⁴ "Саркозі вважає, що Європі залишився крок до розвалу." *Кореспондент*. 08 December 2011. Date of access: 01/02/2012.
- ²⁵ "Європа готується до відмови від євро." *TCH*. 08 December 2011. Date of access: 01/02/2012.
- ²⁶ Рудь, Борис "Союз ради євро." *Подробности*. 13 December 2011. Date of access: 01/02/2012.
- ²⁷ "Єврозона не зникне, бо занадто вагома у світі." *TCH*. 02 December 2011. Date of access: 02/02/2012.

THE UNITED KINGDOM

By Debbie Butts



Ethnic Groups: white (of which English 83.6%, Scottish 8.6%, Welsh 4.9%, Northern Irish 2.9%) 92.1%, black 2%, Indian 1.8%, Pakistani 1.3%, mixed 1.2%, other 1.6% (2001 census)

Population: 63,047,162 (July 2012 est.)

Member since: 1973

GDP per capita: \$35,900 (2011 est.)

EU funding in 2010: net contributor

BACKGROUND:

While the UK initially rejected membership of the ECSC it joined the EEC in 1973, which would later become the EU. Dubbed Europe's "awkward partner,"¹ they opted out of the EMU in 1991.² Despite this, the UK still plays a leading role in the day-to-day workings of the EU, and EU law supersedes its national law.³ Today the UK is one of the largest economies in the EU.⁴

MEDIA SOURCES:

BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation)

www.bbc.com

BBC News is the largest public service broadcaster in the UK,⁵ providing ongoing radio, television and online news coverage. BBC News online is the most popular news website in the UK.⁶ Although there have been allegations made of a political bias from all parties, the BBC claims to be neutral: "we are independent, impartial and honest."⁷

The Guardian

www.guardian.co.uk

The *Guardian* is a left of center British national newspaper published daily, claiming to be "without party affiliation, and faithful to its liberal tradition."⁸ The *Guardian Online* is one of the most popular British newspaper websites behind the *Daily Mail's Mail Online*.⁹

Daily Mail

www.dailymail.co.uk

The *Daily Mail* is a British conservative middle-market tabloid owned by the Daily Mail and General Trust. It is one of the most popular newspapers in the UK, and has the most popular online offering.¹⁰

FINDINGS:

In January, there were suggestions of refashioning the EU-UK relationship.¹¹ A EU Bill was proposed to prevent the handover of further powers to Brussels without a public vote.¹² Tory Eurosceptics expressed dissatisfaction with UK Prime Minister David Cameron and concerns over UK sovereignty as the transfer of powers to the EU continues.¹³ The government initially rejected calls for a UK referendum on EU membership, but Conservative pressure for one returned in September.¹⁴ In October, Cameron refused the call for a referendum despite a 100,000 strong petition in September.^{15 16} The result was the resignation of several Tories and rebellion against Cameron.^{17 18} Statistics showed that 70% of voters want a referendum on the UK's EU membership.¹⁹ In October and November the majority of the new intake in government also desired a different relationship.²⁰ The issue of regaining UK power was ongoing throughout the year, and there was a general increase in Euroscepticism.^{21 22}

UK influence in EU affairs

- In February and March, the UK exercised its influence over the EU, encouraging them to take action over the situation in Libya²³ and was perceived to be taking control of EU action in the matter, along with France. Cameron's approach reveals a conflicting EU stance; he was pro-EU in March²⁴ and a "practical Eurosceptic" by September.²⁵ In October, Cameron said that any change to a EU treaty would not be against UK interests,^{26 27} yet in December he refused to cooperate.²⁸ During the Eurozone crisis his focus was on protecting British interests,²⁹ and reports emerged of arguments between Member States and the UK, with no movement from either side.³⁰

The Eurozone crisis

- In December the Eurozone crisis put treaty changes back on the EU's agenda.^{31 32} David Cameron reiterated that

none of the proposed changes about the future shape of the EU would trigger a referendum in the UK.³³ David Cameron blocked a EU-wide deal to tackle the euro crisis,^{34 35} leading to suggestions that the UK will be isolated from the EU.^{36 37} Reports revealed a divide in opinions within government.^{38 39 40} Concern was expressed from business and industry sectors over the economic implications for the UK.^{41 42} The reaction from member states suggested a loyalty to the UK, as France and Germany both reiterated their support.⁴³

The Environment, Immigration and Financial Aid to the EU

- Other issues regarding the environment,^{44 45 46} immigration,^{47 48 49} and, in particular, financial matters recurred throughout the year and revealed ongoing tensions between the UK and the EU. The UK has shown reluctance to give financial aid to the EU, yet wishes to remain influential and included in EU decision-making processes (Portuguese and Greek bailouts in March and June; IMF package targeted at the Eurozone towards the end of 2011).⁵⁰
⁵¹ The UK's 2012 2% increase in its EU budget contribution was labelled a "victory" over the EU.⁵²

2011 IN REVIEW:

The UK's relationship with the EU has clearly deteriorated, and over the course of 2011, tensions between the EU and the UK have increased, resulting in their relationship being arguably more fragile than ever. The most frequent debate in the media has centered on the issue of a UK referendum on EU membership. At the beginning of the year, Tory Eurosceptics voiced their concern over the issue, although MPs rejected a Tory MP's call for a referendum.⁵³ However, pressure on the UK government to hold a referendum returned in September, with MPs from across all parties calling for a "EU overhaul."^{54 55} Over the year, as events unfolded, Euroscepticism gathered considerable support and momentum within the government, spreading

into the public arena and being granted much media coverage.⁵⁶

Throughout the year, Conservative MPs have called for Cameron to take a tougher line on issues such as Europe, immigration and social policy.^{57 58} There appears to be the need to reassure the general public that the UK government is taking a firm stance in its approach to relations with the EU. There is a lack of reports promoting or even acknowledging the benefits of EU membership. Repeatedly there are discussions of “safeguarding” the UK from closer integration,^{59 60} and the need to regain lost power and resist any further loss of powers to the EU. The EU is often portrayed as a negative force infringing on UK sovereignty and meddling in UK law;⁶¹ both by the media and by MPs. Reports reveal unwillingness from the UK to fall in line with the EU ideals of unity and cooperation. Instead, the relationship is presented as a competition between the two,⁶² with a substantial amount of negative coverage and bitter negotiations regarding issues such as budget, immigration and environmental issues.^{63 64 65 66} The UK clearly wishes to remain an important player in the decision making process of the EU, despite their reluctance to accept responsibility or give financial aid.⁶⁷

Throughout the year, Cameron has supported EU rhetorically, for the benefit of relations with the EU. In March he stated that he wanted Britain to stay within the EU and influence its future. The UK's influence within the EU was apparent in February and March, when the UK and France cooperated over the Libyan civil war and Libyan no-fly zone. The UK was seen as an instrumental part of the proceedings, leading meetings and working closely with other EU member states.

The Eurozone crisis brought tensions to a head towards the end of the year, both with the EU and between political parties within the UK government. David Cameron reiterated that no reworked EU treaty designed to solve the Eurozone crisis would be signed unless it contained safeguards to protect British interests.⁶⁸ But while some wanted to use Eurozone negotiations to help return more powers to the UK,⁶⁹ the Liberal Democrats believed efforts

to regain UK powers were deeply damaging.⁷⁰ Within the UK government, the divide in opinions over the UK's membership in the EU has led to David Cameron attempting to appease all parties. The PM's inconsistent stance on the EU over the year does not present a stable picture of the EU to the UK public.

In December, Cameron's veto over the Eurozone crisis would dramatically alter the UK's position within the EU and separate it from other EU Member States. His move threatened the stability of the EU in order to prioritize the UK's agenda. There are reports that the majority of the UK public supported his decision, falling in line with the Eurosceptic trend.⁷¹ Internally, the coalition government has remained divided throughout the year. Deputy PM Nick Clegg has warned of the dangers of "fragmentation"⁷² and other senior government officials have also expressed disdain over the outcome.⁷³ France and Germany have shown a loyalty towards the UK, despite Cameron supposedly agitating relations.⁷⁴ It remains to be seen what the consequences are, but initial responses suggest the UK could easily become isolated from EU affairs.⁷⁵

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