

Exposed: the myth that there is such a thing as European union

Eighteen months into the debt crisis that has paralysed the European Union – and, in the words of German Chancellor Angela Merkel could bring down not only the euro but the EU itself – where exactly is the great beacon of peace, hope and prosperity for Europe?

The answer is, in a worse state than it was a year and a half ago.

After the bailouts for Ireland and Greece, the buying of government bonds by the European Central Bank, the proposal of a second bailout for Greece and the prospects of further cash being flung at Portugal and Italy, the EU is in an even deeper hole economically. Growth has stalled, markets have collapsed and the very things that the EU was supposed to bring, stability and cooperation, seem like a bad joke.

Finland says that if it is to contribute to a further rescue fund for Greece, it wants collateral. Germany says this is unacceptable, but Austria and the Netherlands argue that what's good for Finland should apply to them, too.

The European Commission says greater fiscal integration and supervision is the solution and that can be achieved without changes to the Lisbon “treaty to end all treaties”. The Germans say that is nonsense because the required tools are not available

under Lisbon, so there will have to be renegotiation, “no matter how difficult that would be”. They and other countries have even suggested a whole new treaty. Ireland is dismayed: after what happened over Lisbon, the chances of getting any new agreement through a referendum are vanishingly small.

A row has broken out over whether it is legally possible for a country such as Greece actually to leave the single currency and there are differing views about the financial turmoil that would follow any such exit. Some say that a Greek departure will bring down the euro, others that Greece's remaining in the single currency will have exactly the same effect.

France and Germany, the countries that have most to lose from a euro collapse, have come up with proposal after proposal to paper over the cracks, but none has stuck.

The latest – for coordinated economic and financial policies in the eurozone, binding balanced-budget provisions, budgetary supervision by the Commission and a tax on financial transactions – have been rubbish as not only inadequate but unworkable.

As the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* commented: “It is unclear whether and how much the other member states will follow the wishes

of the German-French directorate and the ‘fetish’ of budgetary discipline (as one French paper put it). The ‘harmonisation’ of economic, tax and social policies requires Europeans to yield sovereignty...And politicians need to finally open the books and take a look and see if the assets and liabilities of the eurozone compute – e.g. can they afford it?”

The fact is that the idea of union in Europe is and always has been a pipe-dream, a dewy-eyed myth that was bound to be exposed in a real crisis of the sort into which the EU has now landed itself. The time has come to admit it, to dismantle the EU and to start again with a simple free-trade area shorn of the naive and damaging, socialistic political aspirations that have been attached to it.

Earlier this month, we saw a blast from the hubristic past of the godfather of European federalism, Jacques Delors, who said the EU was on the edge of a precipice. “To avoid falling, the choice looks straightforward to me: either member states accept the robust economic partnership I always demanded, or they transfer more powers to the Union.”

To which we say exactly what *The Sun* said in its classic splash headline of November 1990:

“UP YOURS, DELORS”

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Transaction tax ‘an attack on London’

The financial transaction tax proposed by Nicolas Sarkozy and Angela Merkel, as they thrash about in their vain attempts to tackle the euro financial crisis, is being seen as yet another attack by our EU “partners” on the City of London.

Last month, the French and German leaders made it clear that although the purpose of such a tax would be to support the single currency, it would apply across all 27 EU member states.

They were reacting to lobbying by eurozone banks and financial centres such as Paris and Frankfurt, which are concerned that a tax on euro transactions would put them at a disadvantage against institutions outside the zone.

Mrs Merkel’s coalition partners the Free Democrats were completely

upfront about their concerns, saying that action must be taken “to ensure Germany is not put at risk as a financial centre compared to somewhere like London”.

That left the chief executive of the huge broking firm ICAP in no doubt about what was going on. Michael Spencer said: “This is another cynical threat by Sarkozy, who knows this tax would overwhelmingly hit London as this is where trillions of dollars are traded each day”.

That, however, is only part of the problems associated with the half-baked transaction tax proposal. As Mr Spencer pointed out, companies such as ICAP would simply leave the EU altogether if what he called “this silly tax” were to come into effect. They would find new and more congenial

homes in other global centres such as New York and Singapore. So rather than helping European economies, such a tax would cause them great damage. The only way to stop such an exodus would be to negotiate some sort of global transaction tax – and there is no chance of that happening.

The idea of a European levy on financial transfers has been about for some time but only came to the fore last month when Mr Sarkozy and Mrs Merkel realised that their previously favoured and equally barmy strategy of creating eurobonds also had serious disadvantages. They would serve to push up the borrowing costs of France and of Germany in particular towards the unsustainable levels already being experienced by the likes of Greece, Portugal and Italy.

This fiscal colonialism must be resisted

If that clever boy who informed the Emperor that he had no clothes was at last week’s EU Franco-German summit the sole question he would have asked Angela and Nicolas was “Who put you in charge?”... it is increasingly clear a new age of Franco-German imperialism has arrived. This is not signalled, in these ‘progressive’ times, by anything as vulgar as armies or war. Instead we are experiencing a fiscal colonialism where the lifeblood is being drained out of Ireland through an austerity programme that is clearly not working.

These same colonists oppose equally a solution that is becoming increasingly obvious – debt-forgiveness at all levels, including the individual distressed home-mortgage holder.

Ironically, the only institution which questioned last week’s démarche was the bond markets, who decided our

naked emperors were attempting to disguise the inability of the Franco-German Axis of Bluff to resolve the EU debt crisis... if Germany and the perfidious French partner lurking beneath her skirt are not prepared to show the colour of a eurobond, they have no right to interfere in the sovereign rights of other states.

The notion that the EU is to be run by the most unpopular French president since the collaborationist Pétain, an over-promoted German leader and some Belgian politician who would not be recognised by most of his own citizens, represents an intolerable evisceration of European democracy. Some pragmatists might be prepared to accept peace with dishonour if it at least brought prosperity. But before we acquiesce to such an amoral deal it is worth remembering the most rapacious colonists under the old age of imperialism were Germany, Belgium

and France. The German national character means should they take control of the Continent we are more likely to experience peace with poverty, as our future is looted to service the corporatist interests of Franco-German bankers.

However, before they overstep the mark our EU ‘partners’ should remember that palace coups that do not have popular support generally end badly. The time is coming where, to paraphrase Lord Randolph Churchill, the smaller European states ‘will fight’ against this new despotism and they will ‘be right’...

To paraphrase a slightly different politician, it is time to tell our overbearing partners that for this country at least it is a case of ‘Franco-German governance of Europe – no thanks’.

Sunday Independent, Ireland,
21st August 2011

The right to rule is what we really need

LAST MONTH, the independent Commission on a Bill of Rights, set up by the Government in the spring, published a discussion paper asking *Do we need a UK Bill of Rights?* Responses are due by 11th November. Here, *eurofacts* reader **Don Briggs** sets the ball rolling with an open letter to the members of the Commission.

Do we need a Bill of Rights? My answer is No. We already have one, the 1688 Bill of Rights. We also have the greatest Bill of Rights and Freedoms mankind has ever seen: Magna Carta.

Winston Churchill wrote that “our House of Commons is great because it does not attempt to usurp undue power”. But after his death in 1965, it did usurp undue power.

“The rights and liberties of Englishmen are more sacred than Parliament itself,” wrote Churchill.

Yet Parliament betrayed our people, our illustrious ancestors, and our laws and traditions, by demolishing our long-established form of self-government, by stealth and through downright untruths, by placing our people under the control of foreigners who have shown no love for this country, and who live in luxurious isolation from reality in Brussels and Strasbourg and Luxembourg.

Churchill again: “In this small island of Britain, we make laws for ourselves. Although we have a free, flexible Constitution at the centre... nothing is more rigid than the established practice, namely that we claim no powers to interfere with the affairs of its self-governing component parts. No supreme court is needed to enforce this rule. We have learned the lessons of the past too well.”

Today, in yet another betrayal, we do

have a Supreme Court thanks to our masters in Brussels.

Churchill wrote “The House of Commons is great... because it resigns the larger portion of its powers to a Council of State called the Cabinet, whom it allows to act for it, and to guide it in legislating, while reserving to itself the functions of criticism and supervision.... the British character abhors written constitutions... We have a profound distrust of the legal brain in matters which transcend purely legal processes. Let us beware that in trying to rectify the shortcomings of a system we have saved from the rigours and miseries of bygone centuries we do not, by new forms and short cuts and thoughtless adventures, slip back into those very miseries and rigours.”

Cynical, self-interested politicians, bureaucrats and defeatist intellectuals are blind today to what they are doing. Size is everything to you. Individuals are nothing.

Open your eyes. As I write this, thousands of youths in this country of all backgrounds and ethnic origins are laying waste to their communities, burning and looting, in anger and frustration. These youths have no country today in which to believe, no moral code to follow, no political leaders to admire and respect and to heed. They have no jobs and no future. They have nothing and no one to inspire them. They are just numbers, as I am, in the European Union’s scheme of things.

Until Parliament, or your Commission, addresses all the wrongs done by the political parties in Parliament these last 40-odd years, by addressing the issue of who should govern this country, there will only be more damage done. More stock market crashes. More riots and more violence.

And more waste of human creative power and resources.

Churchill defined the right to elect and to turn out those who make our laws as a fundamental right of a free people. The people of all 27 nations of the European Union have been deprived of that right by their elected politicians, including this nation’s.

Parliament has for centuries been the great sanction that binds every individual as a partner and a comrade, not as a servant or merely as a subject, to obey it and to sustain it.

It is obvious that the disenchantment with our political leaders, the party system, and the obsolescence of Parliament, an instrument so vital, which has played such a supreme part in forming our nation, is leading to the anarchy Churchill predicted. In place of a Parliament which makes our laws, we have a rubber-stamp institution doing the bidding of Brussels apparatchiks.

Churchill said there was only one alternative to our system of parliamentary government: a dictatorship or tyranny. One form of dictatorship he defined as “the rule of a caucus consisting of political sectaries banded together in the close confederacy of a common doctrine held and propagated with bigoted conviction”. That is a fair and accurate description of the European Union.

Under the Parliament Act of 1919, Clause 41, Parliament was granted the supreme discretion to retrace its steps on the issue of responsible government. It must do so, by repealing the European Communities Act of 1972 which, illegally and without any mandate to do so from our people, handed the right to rule this nation to a foreign institution that today calls itself the European Union.

A future of stagnation and erosion

For a variety of reasons, the heyday of the project for European unity and integration is behind us and we might as well face up to the fact that the only real prospect for the EU is steady decline

By Stephen M Walt

Robert and Renée Belfer professor of international relations, Harvard University

After dominating global politics from roughly 1500 to 1900, Europe's relative weight in world affairs has declined sharply ever since. Europe's population is shrinking and aging, and its share of the world economy is shrinking too. For example, in 1900, Europe plus America produced over 50 per cent of the world economy and Asia produced less than 20 per cent. Today, however, the 10 largest economies in Asia have a combined GDP greater than Europe or the United States, and the Asian G10 will have about 50 per cent of gross world product by 2050.

Europe's current fiscal woes are adding to this problem, and forcing European governments to reduce their already modest military capabilities even more. This isn't necessarily a big problem for Europeans, however, because they don't face any significant conventional military threats. But it does mean that Europe's ability to shape events in other parts of the world will continue to decline.

Please note: I am not saying that Europe is becoming completely irrelevant, only that its strategic importance has declined significantly and that this trend will continue.

The high-water mark of European unity is also behind us. This is a more controversial claim, and it's entirely possible that I'll be proven wrong here. Nonetheless, there are several obvious reasons why the EU is going to have

real trouble going forward.

The EU emerged in the aftermath of World War II. It was partly intended as a mechanism to bind European states together and prevent another European war, but it was also part of a broader Western European effort to create enough economic capacity to balance the Soviet Union. Europeans were not confident that the United States would remain engaged and committed to their defence (and there were good reasons for these doubts), and they understood that economic integration would be necessary to create an adequate counterweight to Soviet power.

As it turned out, the United States did remain committed to Europe, which is why the Europeans never got serious about creating an integrated military capacity. They were willing to give up some sovereignty to Brussels, but not that much. European elites got more ambitious in the 1980s and 1990s, and sought to enhance Europe's role by expanding the size of the EU and by making various institutional reforms, embodied in the Maastricht and Lisbon treaties. This broad effort had some positive results – in particular, the desire for EU membership encouraged East European candidates to adopt democratic reforms and guarantees for minority rights – but the effort did not lead to a significant deepening in political integration and is now in serious trouble.

Among other things, the Lisbon Treaty sought to give the positions of council president and High Representative for Foreign Affairs greater stature, so that Europe could finally speak with "one voice". Thus far, that effort has been something of a

bust. The current incumbents – Herman von Rompuy of Belgium and Catherine Ashton of Britain – are not exactly politicians of great prominence or clout, and it is hardly surprising that it is national leaders like Nicolas Sarkozy of France and Angela Merkel of Germany that have played the leading roles in dealing with Europe's current troubles. As has long been the case, national governments remain where the action is.

Today, European integration is threatened by 1) the *lack of an external enemy*, which removes a major incentive for deep cooperation; 2) the *unwieldy nature of EU decision-making*, where 27 countries of very different sizes and wealth have to try to reach agreement by consensus; 3) the *misguided decision to create a common currency*, but without creating the political and economic institutions needed to support it; 4) *nationalism*, which remains a powerful force throughout Europe and has been gathering steam in recent years.

It is possible that these challenges will force the EU member states to eventually adopt even deeper forms of political integration, as some experts have already advised. One could view the recent Franco-German agreement on coordinating economic policy in this light, except that the steps proposed by Merkel and Sarkozy were extremely modest. I don't think the EU is going to fall apart, but prolonged stagnation and gradual erosion seems likely. Hence my belief that the heyday of European political integration is behind us.

Extracted from *Foreign Policy* magazine blog, 18th August 2011

And still they cling to the false claims

The Bruges Group has reacted sharply to a letter sent by the Minister for Europe, David Lidington, in which he reiterates what passes for Government policy on the EU and trots out all the old canards about why the UK should remain inside the crumbling edifice.

Mr Lidington said:

The Government believes that membership of the EU is in the national interest of the UK, and as such, we do not intend to leave. In return for our membership, we receive a wide range of benefits. For example, access to the Single Market is of central economic importance to the UK and it is vital to our prosperity.

The Bruges Group says:

The Single Market is a customs union with the institutions of the European Union making regulations which govern businesses within it. There are no important customs unions anywhere else in the world. EU membership is not a prerequisite for access to the Single Market. Switzerland and Norway, which are outside of the EU, export more in relation to their GDPs and per capita than the UK does. Furthermore, both China and the USA each export more to the EU than the UK does and without having their economies burdened by EU regulation.

Mr Lidington said:

The EU is one of the world's most important trading zones, giving us access to 500 million consumers without the barriers of customs or tariffs and generating total GDP of €10.5 trillion in 2009. Seven of our top 10 trade partners are within the EU and there is huge potential to further increase trade in this area.

The Bruges Group says:

Less than 10 per cent of the UK economy is involved with trading with

businesses in other EU member states. However, 100 per cent of our economy must comply with the EU's excessive regulatory burden.

Single Market trade is also becoming less important to the UK. With the growth of emerging markets the amount of British foreign trade with the rest of the world is set to increase so that by 2020 around 70 per cent of Britain's foreign trade will not be with the EU. Presently, the EU accounts for approximately 40 per cent of UK trade.

Mr Lidington said:

For individuals, the benefits of EU membership are many and varied. They include free movement for British citizens to study and work within the EU without requiring a work permit...

The Bruges Group says:

Citizens of European Economic Area member states have the opportunity for free movement throughout both the EU and the EEA. If the government continues to support the free movement of people then this can be achieved via the UK's membership of the EEA. Free movement into the UK is also an issue of great political concern in the UK, yet government cannot address this whilst governed by EU rules.

Mr Lidington said:

The economic benefits for individuals are real too, with approximately 3.5 million jobs, 10 per cent of the UK workforce, reliant on exports to EU member states.

The Bruges Group says:

This misleading claim first emerged in the year 2000 from the now defunct Britain in Europe group which campaigned for Britain to join the euro. They apparently based this claim on research they commissioned into how many jobs were involved with the EU. However, Dr Martin Weale, the

Director of The National Institute for Economic and Social Research, described Britain in Europe's spin as "pure Goebbels" and said, "in many years of academic research I cannot recall such a wilful distortion of the facts". The report had in reality come to the conclusion that the jobs would still exist regardless of whether the UK was a member of the EU or not.

It is surprising that a Conservative minister is repeating that erroneous claim.

Mr Lidington said:

EU membership and collective action gives us more negotiating power and allows us to better achieve our international security objectives.

The Bruges Group says:

Britain, with only 8 per cent of the votes in the Council of Ministers, has little formal power over the determination of EU rules, whereas a sovereign state would have 100 per cent authority over its own affairs.

The Bruges Group concludes:

What Mr Lidington has failed to address is the enormous costs of Britain's EU membership:

1. Britain has to hand over to the EU more than £10 billion each year excluding contributions to the bailout schemes.
2. The Common Agricultural Policy costs Britain at least £16.8 billion per annum.
3. The Common Fisheries Policy costs Britain over £3 billion in lost commercial opportunities each year.
4. Over-regulation from the EU on business costs Britain over £20 billion per annum holding back UK economic growth by 2 per cent each year.

To read the minister's letter and the Bruges Group's complete rebuttal, visit www.brugesgroup.com

LETTERS

Tel: 08456 12 12 65 email: eurofacts@junepress.com

Flawed strategy?

Dear Sir,

The front page article of your August edition, "Why it makes sense to let the eurozone go its own way", advocates an appallingly ill-conceived strategy which would almost certainly prove fatal to our long term national interests.

The first flaw in your analysis is to visualise the eurozone as just a "core" of the EU, when it already encompasses 17 out of the 27 present EU member states, while eight others are under a legal obligation to join it once conditions are deemed correct – a requirement which is imposed on all new EU member states – and of course the treaties provide no mechanism for any country which has joined the euro to ever leave it.

So if the eurozone survives the present crisis, it will inevitably continue to expand.

Only the UK and Denmark are free of the legal obligation to eventually join the euro, and as we know many Danish politicians are still keen to abandon that treaty "opt-out".

Therefore, with the passage of time the countries which you describe as "the rest of us", those in the EU but not in the euro, would in all likelihood end up being just the UK; and at or before that point we would have a government which decided that this isolation was no longer tenable and so used its Commons majority to force us into the euro, irrespective of what it might have said or not said in its election manifesto.

Anyone who believes that the British people could prevent this through a referendum has not grasped how easily the so-called "referendum lock" could

be circumvented.

The second error in the article is to presume that closer integration of the eurozone would require further EU treaty changes, providing an opportunity for the UK to extract concessions during the negotiations, when the treaty change already agreed on 25th March 2011 may well prove sufficient for the eurozone countries to do whatever they want.

David Cameron agreed to that far-reaching treaty change, an amendment of Article 136 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, without asking for or getting any accompanying treaty changes to protect our national interests; and in due course Parliament will be asked to approve it through an Act, without a referendum.

It falls to Tory MPs to refuse to pass that Act, and insist that Cameron must go back and renegotiate; but what are the chances that a sufficient number will do that?

Dr D. COOPER
Berkshire

[EDITOR'S NOTE: There is some dispute as to whether exit from the euro is possible and whether any such action would also require departure from the EU. Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty suggests that a managed exit from the Union is allowed for (see eurofacts, January 2010). As for treaty changes, leading German officials have long held that Lisbon will have to be amended to produce greater fiscal integration etc. At the G7 meeting earlier this month, Germany was supported by France, Luxembourg, Italy and the President of the European

Central Bank in its view that "harmonisation" of economic policy across the eurozone would require a new treaty superseding Lisbon. Chancellor Merkel said Lisbon offered "no effective foundation" for closer cooperation in the eurozone and that "we won't get around making further treaty changes". Sources in Brussels have said that new treaty proposals could be submitted to heads of government as soon as next month and any such treaty would have to be ratified by all EU member states.]

Out of the back door

Dear Sir,

I wholeheartedly support George Osborne's endorsement of (ever) greater economic, fiscal and political integration of the eurozone. I see it, like you, as presenting an excellent opportunity for the UK to do some clever slipping out of the back door of the EU.

The main obstacle, as I see it, is how far we can count on the support of Clegg & Co. The seeds for the destruction of the Coalition may lie all too easily in this process; the positions of the "three Hs" in the Lords plus Kenneth Clarke and his supporters in the Commons may also be a handicap.

I think it is up to you and those you know to assess the relative strengths of the above problems and let us all know. You will not be alone; there are numerous bodies with the same thoughts: Bruges Group, Open Europe, Campaign for a Referendum, etc., etc.

A real opportunity may now be in the offing; we must seize it.

MARTIN ROWE
Oxon

MEETINGS

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Mark Seddon MP
Graham Stringer MP
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(formerly Anti-Common Market League)
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020 7287 4414

Monday **3rd October**, 2.30 - 4.00 pm

"Europe: Time For Action"
Mr Tim Soini, *Leader of the anti-EU bailout True Finns Party*
Dr David Starkey, *Historian and broadcaster*

The Comedy Store, Arches 3&4,
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West, Manchester M1 5LH
Admission Free

Conservative Way Forward
0207 403 3990

Tuesday **4th October**, 12.30 - 2.00 pm

"Defence"
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Tuesday **11th October**, 6.00 pm

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Labour - John Cryer MP, Kelvin Hopkins MP, Kate Hoey MP, Graham Stringer MP
Plus - Marta Andreason MEP, Dr Ruth Lea, Mats Person, Alex Gordon, Dele Ogun

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Bruges Group
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Saturday **5th November**, 10.30 am

Speakers include:
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UK Independence Party
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01202 420134

Tuesday **8th November**, 7.00 pm

Gerard Batten MEP

PUBLIC MEETING
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Conservative Party **2-5th October**
Conference
Manchester

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