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EDITORIAL

By Antonio Missiroli

May Days

Over the past few weeks a string of elections – in different countries, at different levels, with different stakes – had a direct impact on the course of EU policy development. France has changed its President; Greece has not found a workable majority to run the country; Germany's biggest region has also experienced a clear political shift; and, right on the outskirts of the Union, Serbia has also changed its President and may now need extra effort to stay the course on its path towards EU accession.

Last but certainly not least, a comfortable majority of Irish voters – albeit with a low turnout – has approved the intergovernmental “fiscal pact” treaty signed earlier this year, thus joining the other EU countries under EFSF assistance (who have all ratified it already) and dispelling the fears of another potential blow to the euro zone.

The arrival of a new President in France has always triggered a partial “reset” of EU policy-making. Five years ago, the first effect of Nicolas Sarkozy's election was the speedy negotiation that led to the Lisbon

Treaty. Francois Hollande's victory, in turn, may speed up an already tangible realignment of priorities prompted by the worsening economic and fiscal situation in many member states.

After May, however, comes June. Both the French and the Greek voters are set to return to the polls for another round of elections that will have repercussions well beyond their countries. Only after that will it be possible to try and find a consensual collective response to conflicting policy demands within the euro zone. Because the paradox is that, despite all the complaints about the lack of a European *demos*, both votes will be primarily about EU policy, which has stood firmly at the core of the respective campaigns. Could these become building blocks for a different method of constructing a more integrated Europe?

Spheres and spaces

This issue of BEPA Monthly Brief is in large part devoted to exploring what margins may exist for recalibrating fiscal consolidation at EU level in the current political and economic context in order to spur short-term growth – for thinking, so to speak, “outside the box but inside the pact”.

Any reflection to this end should take into account that such trade-offs and (re)balancing acts as the one

in the offing now are not uncommon. In the 1990s, after the big leap forward represented by the Maastricht Treaty, Germany wanted to be reassured that there would be life – a stable, sound and prosperous one – after the *Deutsche Mark*. This led to the Growth and Stability Pact, whose negotiation and approval followed Maastricht's entry into force yet preceded the actual launch of the euro. This time around, after Germany has been given treaty-based guarantees about the “fiscal compact”, other member states want to be reassured that there will be life after protracted austerity and recession.

Such mutual reassurances matter enormously for both policy effectiveness and political legitimacy: in various combinations, they have been at the core of the European construction throughout the decades. Yet they are not always easy to agree upon – let alone enforce.

In a book recently translated into French (*Le passage à l'Europe: histoire d'un commencement*: the original Dutch edition dates back to 2009) the writer and journalist Luuk van Middelaar argues that EU policy-making is increasingly conducted in a sort of intermediate sphere between the two traditional ones of times past, namely the “external” sphere (the Europe of intergovernmental fights and deals) and the “internal” one (the integrated EUrope of common institutions). This new sphere – which he compares, inspired by French historian Jacques Le Goff, to the space that medieval culture assigned to the Purgatory – is where the current discussions and negotiations over the euro zone are taking place, at the intersection between different priorities, actors, and jurisdictions. His main conclusion is that a European *res publica* is indeed taking shape but it is still articulated in a number of national debates and deliberations – thus resembling what Kalypso Nicolaïdis once called a *demi-cracy*.

Styles and symmetries

The EU construction has often been portrayed through architectural metaphors. Reforms deemed insufficient were seen as “façade”, and of course the whole building seen in need for radical “refounding”. Philippe Schmitter famously compared the EU institutional system to a “condominium”, and Sergio Fabbrini

labelled it as a “compound” democracy. Critics have long defined the Union as “Baroque” – meaning convoluted, opaque, formalistic (although 17th century buildings were quite different from Bavaria to Sicily, from Poland to Portugal) – as opposed to the “Romanesque” design (solid, essential) of the Founding Fathers.

More recently, in an article published in *Le Monde* (18/12/2011), Jacques Keller-Noëllet and the same Luuk van Middelaar compared the EU system to a Gothic cathedral, and not only for its Franco-German roots – one could in fact argue that Durham and Burgos are no less typical than Chartres, Reims, Strasbourg and Ulm – but also for the unique ability of late medieval architects to find innovative solutions to intractable problems.

Accordingly, one of these problems was the UK opposition to keeping the “fiscal compact” inside the main institutional building as just another one of the many dedicated chapels (EMU, Schengen) already enshrined within the Union's broad walls. The solution found with the “fiscal compact” treaty would thus correspond to a flying buttress (*arc-boutant*), provided it rests on the main body of the cathedral, is made with the same materials and is stylistically in line with it. By the same token, one could argue that the pressure mounting for a “growth pact” – as a side-effect also of the May elections – could now be seen as a symmetric flying buttress (*contrefort*) to balance off the fiscal treaty and reinforce the whole building.

Gothic architecture – not unlike the EU – is indeed based on symmetry and balance as well as on spires, vaults and pinnacles. Yet the EU construction may now need also a pinch of modernism and *Art Nouveau*, of lean functionality and fresh creativity – as much as, after the Gothic era, came the Renaissance.

Perhaps Europe's main point of architectural reference should be the Sagrada Familia, and not only for the uniqueness of its style: after all, it is still under construction, as a quintessential work in progress; its original design has been adapted and updated over the decades; and it is enormously popular, with visitors relentlessly flocking to it from all over the world.

1 On the edge – and off

*By Philippe Legrain**

The euro zone appears to be on the edge. After a deceptive lull in the early months of the year, the financial crisis is back in force. If Greece is forced out of the euro, political and financial mayhem could cause a slump more devastating than the post-Lehman collapse. But even assuming (and hoping) that this nightmare scenario does not materialise, the situation is pretty grim. Excluding Germany, the euro zone is in recession. France is flat-lining (as is Britain). Spain and Italy are sinking into deeper recession. Greece is in its fifth year of slump. And euro zone unemployment is at record highs, with nearly one in two young people jobless in Spain and Greece. A whole generation of young people risks being thrown onto the scrapheap. Urgent action is clearly needed.

The economic headwinds are formidable: fiscal austerity, high interest rates outside AAA-rated countries, credit cutting by banks, deleveraging households, weak private-sector investment, and declining exports as the global slowdown undermines demand. Until recently, Europe's strategy has focused on the measures needed to boost and sustain long-term economic growth, while neglecting the need to support it in the short and medium term. That is finally beginning to change.

Nobody disputes the fact that countries need to stabilise their public debts eventually; yet excessive, across-the-board austerity in a recession can actually destabilise the economy – and hence public finances – instead. Thus, while gradual adjustment is essential, faster and deeper cuts are largely self-defeating: big reductions in private credit and government spending will cause a sharper slowdown – and thus a vicious downward spiral.

Similarly, structural reforms that unblock labour and product markets are essential for boosting future productivity and flexibility, and the crisis provides a political opportunity for bold moves on this front in many countries. But such reforms will not generate growth and jobs immediately – indeed, they may generate negative side effects.

For example, making it easier to fire workers ought, in time, to make businesses more willing to hire them and smooth the shift of workers from less productive jobs to more productive ones that helps generate growth. At the same time, however, the immediate impact would be a shakeout of less productive workers, thus raising unemployment, worsening public finances (as workers stop paying taxes and start claiming benefits) and reducing spending in the economy (since the newly unemployed workers, and those who fear unemployment, will spend less). At best, it takes a while for the growth-enhancing benefits of structural reforms to come through. But now – at a time when spending is depressed, credit is squeezed and barriers to starting a new business are often high – businesses are generally unwilling or unable to make the investments necessary to enable reforms to bear fruit.

Slower and smarter

The starting point for boosting growth in Europe is slower and smarter fiscal consolidation. Governments that cannot borrow cheaply (or at all) from markets have no option but to tighten their belts. But they should do so gradually. Shrinking economies struggling with high private-sector debts that weigh down on spending need more time to meet their deficit targets, as the European Commission has recognised in the case of Spain. And ideally, budget cuts ought to focus on desirable medium-term measures such as pension reforms while safeguarding growth-friendly investment in areas such as research, skills and infrastructure. At the same time, governments that can borrow at unprecedentedly low rates – 1.26% over 10 years in the case of Germany – must play their role in supporting demand.

Less stringent austerity needs to be complemented with increased and targeted investment. This would both support demand and jobs now and enable structural reforms to boost future growth (and tax revenues). Already last year, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso called for a big increase in the

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capital and lending capacity of the European Investment Bank (EIB). A doubling of its paid-in capital is now finally on the cards and further increases should be considered. EU structural funds could be reallocated to investments targeted at vulnerable economies. A rapid expansion of the pilot programme to issue project bonds to finance pan-European infrastructure investment could also make a difference.

Measures to encourage companies to bring forward investment are also needed (for example, governments could provide temporary 100% capital allowances). It is also vital to attract increased foreign direct investment and to boost investment in new businesses, by making it easier to start them and easier for them to attract venture capital. All of this is important not just for struggling economies like Spain but also for Germany, where business investment remains low and barriers to enterprise high: according to the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings, it is easier to start a business in Albania or Sierra Leone than it is in Germany.

The European Central Bank (ECB) has acted decisively to prop up European banks; now it needs to support the real economy, too. While official interest rates are only 1%, solvent sovereigns such as Spain pay nearly 7% to borrow for ten years, while creditworthy businesses in Italy can borrow only at punitive rates, if at all. So the ECB should do more to unblock the transmission mechanism for monetary policy; the European Banking Authority should discourage excessive deleveraging by insisting that banks raise specific capital amounts rather than hit a uniform 9% ratio; and measures to support credit to small and medium-sized businesses are needed.

Work to do for the stronger economies, too

Boosting exports in economies that have a current-account deficit is also essential. Businesses need to become more competitive, increasing productivity while cutting costs. A more competitive currency would be welcome: just as the sterling's collapse since 2008 has lifted UK exports, a weaker euro would help Mediterranean economies regain competitiveness for price-sensitive exports. A fiscal devaluation – slashing payroll taxes and replacing the revenues with a higher VAT – would also help.

A big new push to complete the single market and expand international trade would stimulate trade more generally.

Surplus countries, too, must do their part, which is in their own interest. Just as China needs to allow the renminbi to rise, so Germany – whose current-account surplus exceeds China's both as a share of GDP and in absolute terms – needs a higher real exchange rate. That means that Germans need to earn higher wages, commensurate with their increased productivity, so that they can afford more Greek and Spanish holidays.

One of the age-old problems in international economics is that there is more pressure on economies with a current-account deficit to adjust (if foreigners will no longer lend to them) than on those with a current-account surplus. This makes adjustment asymmetrical, with a deflationary bias: deficit countries must contract, but surplus countries need not reflate. Fortunately, the euro zone now has a new Excessive Imbalance Procedure that can be used to put pressure on economies with dangerously large imbalances. It ought to be applied symmetrically. Just as Spain needs to take measures to shift the balance of its economy from domestic demand towards exports, the opposite shift is needed in Germany. In addition to higher German wages, a cut in VAT that stimulated consumption would be desirable. And reforms to liberalise its hidebound service sector are essential.

The biggest boost to growth, however, would come from calming the growing panic in financial markets. The uncertainty about the future of the euro and its banking system that is crippling business decisions needs to be resolved. President Barroso has proposed steps towards a "banking union" that would break the link between weak banks and weak sovereigns. On the fiscal front, we need a roadmap towards Eurobonds – not as a means of collectivising existing debts, but of stabilising the future borrowing of prudent governments. Since markets think ahead, this would stabilise bond markets and banks right now, while giving time for the political process to act.

2 Growing out of trouble

By Fabian Zuleeg*

Growth is the current buzzword in the EU. Everyone has finally realised that austerity without growth cannot work. The growth crisis in many European countries, with the associated collapse in public revenues, is aggravating the public finance situation, necessitating further cuts and leading to an economic downward spiral. Without growth, Europe is finding it increasingly difficult to deal with the social and political impact of the crisis.

But creating growth is not easy, nor is it necessarily clear what works: Europe tried for a decade with the Lisbon Strategy, with very mixed results. It is also doubtful whether merely cutting wages will work: despite fast falling real incomes, crisis countries such as Greece and Portugal are not regaining competitiveness fast enough, not least due to their lack of industry or services to exploit any improvement. The “orthodox” economic view that real wage cuts are the route to growth seems increasingly unrealistic in light of ever increasing uncertainty – let alone economic, social and political disintegration, which reduces the availability of capital and lending and dampens consumption and investment.

A fast-acting large Keynesian-type public spending injection is very unlikely, given the dire situation of public finances across the EU. But while structural and public finance reforms are clearly necessary, not all are linked to growth. Public and social investment in areas such as education, innovation, health or infrastructure – crucial for future growth – is being hurt by indiscriminate spending cuts. Mass unemployment is deteriorating human capital, raising the risk of a “lost generation” as well as adding to the burden on public purses. But even the right reforms have a fatal flaw: they will take time to work – time which we do not have.

At EU level, there are a number of policies which can help to encourage growth: fixing Europe’s banking system, completing the Single Market (including the Digital Single Market),

deepening the transatlantic economic space, developing and deploying new financial instruments (such as the Connecting Europe Facility and the use of “EU project bonds”), implementing “Europe 2020” and reorienting the Multi-Annual Financial Framework to focus on growth. Moreover, public and social investment which promises long term returns (such as education expenditure which increases a country’s human capital) should be exempted from severe cuts and be treated akin to private investment rather than unproductive public expenditure. But even if these policies can be successfully delivered they are, in essence, European-level structural reforms which will take time to work.

There are some interventions which promise to work faster such as expanding European Investment Bank’s asset base to maintain lending at the levels reached during the crisis. It is also important that relatively loose monetary policy continues, entailing an acceptance of a modest increase in inflation. Some collateralisation of debt, whether in the form of Eurobonds or some other, might also alleviate some of the debt-financing pressures for some countries – although the link to growth here is, at best, indirect.

A tale of two growth crises

But there is a more fundamental challenge: Europe is facing two growth crises at the same time. Not only is there a sluggish overall growth level, in part pre-dating the crisis; but there is also growth divergence, with a widening gap between the countries in trouble and the best-performing ones. Most of the measures mentioned above will not address the growth divergence crisis: they do not specifically benefit the countries deepest in crisis while, in most cases, the better performing countries have greater capacity to exploit the opportunities which may arise.

The crisis countries need a more focused growth pact to alleviate the current situation and provide investment for future growth. The focus should

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be on identifying the negative consequences of the crisis on growth – arising for example from uncertainty, limited credit or high unemployment – and to address these as far as possible. This will not completely reverse the current situation – there is no silver bullet – but it should mitigate its negative impact, build a foundation for future growth, and provide hope and solidarity for citizens in the countries most affected by the crisis. This, in turn, would help address political and social challenges, for example by providing electorates with a positive reason to vote for continued reform.

A fast-acting remedy could be the use of unspent structural funds for the debtor countries, which also have the advantage that they would not require further transfers from such countries as Germany. But, in order to be fast and effective, they have to be spent differently than in the past – and aim rather to:

- finance basic public services (when education and health systems break down and when the state can no longer support people who need help, very little can be done to encourage growth);
- enhance credit availability for viable companies in the crisis countries, especially SMEs, which can be channeled through commercial banks via the EIB (building on the recently-announced SME guarantee fund);
- support people who have to move, for instance through language training and relocation advice: given falling labour demand in these countries, for many individuals it will only be possible to maintain their skill levels abroad – and more mobility can alleviate unemployment in the crisis countries and skill shortages in the better performing areas of the EU;
- finance public service digitalisation projects, turning the crisis into an opportunity to enhance public administration efficiency;
- provide SMEs in the crisis countries with support to put their business on the web and expand beyond the country's borders;
- support creativity and innovation in companies and the educational system by matching each euro spent on R&D and by investing in e-literacy;

- develop and target new financial instruments which can combine public and private investment, e.g. EU infrastructure bonds;

- support infrastructure projects in the crisis countries: while these are unlikely to have a major impact on long-term growth, they could absorb some of the overcapacity in construction in the short term and thus alleviate mass unemployment.

Critically, public money alone will not be enough: private investment is needed, not only from within the country but also from abroad. This will require a more radical approach: for example, an insurance and guarantee scheme providing security against the additional risk which arises from the possibility of a country exiting the euro (and the subsequent economic melt-down).

No panacea, but...

The economically stronger countries should also help reduce imbalances within the euro zone by encouraging domestic consumption and imports, as well as extending support schemes – e.g. for renewable energy – to the crisis countries. A more generous (temporary) transfer mechanism could also provide social relief in the crisis countries, helping to maintain a minimum level of private consumption. While it will not be easy to convince the better performing countries of the need for these measures, they might be a more attractive alternative than the proposed Eurobonds.

None of these measures will restore growth in the crisis countries, at least in the short term. They also do not remove the need for further reforms and for public finance consolidation. Nor do they address the fundamental governance issue, which requires more fiscal, economic and political integration. But they can, to some degree, alleviate the current situation and sow the seeds for future growth. This can demonstrate to the citizens in the crisis countries that they are not left alone and can help provide hope for the future – hope without which reforms cannot be sustained. This should buy Europe some time in which current reforms can start to work and the more fundamental political reforms can be implemented.

3 Think Tank Twitter

Think Tank Twitter (TTT) aims to provide regular information and updates on what is produced by think tanks and research centres across Europe (and beyond) on EU policy issues. As an analogy to the original Twitter, each summary – or tweet – does not exceed 140 words, rather than characters. Those who wish to signal new publications for possible inclusion can send them to the email address bepa-think-tank-twitter@ec.europa.eu

EU Budget Negotiations: Need for a healthy and constructive debate

The negotiations of the 2014-2020 EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) are starting to heat up, almost one year after the Commission published its first proposals and in view of their finalisation by the end of 2012. Nobody expected these negotiations to be easy. In fact, the first discussions at ministerial level in the General Affairs Council meeting of 27 March were probably worse than expected. To avoid long and acrimonious negotiations which would have high political costs, it seems necessary to move from dogmatic arguments and entrenched positions to a more pragmatic and constructive approach. Indeed, policymakers should work on the Commission's proposal, to agree on a well-spent budget which benefits all countries, and simultaneously on a reform of the EU financing system to set new EU own resources.

<http://www.notre-europe.eu/en/viewpoint/publication/eu-budget-negotiations-need-for-a-healthy-and-constructive-debate/>

Europe's Misguided Search for Growth

A few months following the signature of the “fiscal compact” that committed 25 Member States to putting tough deficits limits into their national constitutions, the urge to be seen to be “doing something” is leading Europe's policy-makers to rely on the EU few instruments available to foster growth. But they should recognise that today's growth crisis is quite different than it has been in the past. In the author's view, the real bargain should not be austerity plus a Marshall Plan for the south, but rather continued austerity plus labour market reforms in the south, combined with more infrastructure investment in Germany and other AAA-rated countries – such as the Netherlands. Deep service-sector reforms in Germany would also help unlock the country's productivity potential and open its market to services exports from southern Europe.

<http://www.ceps.eu/book/europe%E2%80%9999s-misguided-search-growth>

Eurobonds, Flight to Quality, and TARGET2 Imbalances

This brief illustrates how the introduction of Eurobonds may provide an effective if still partial solution to some of the fundamental problems that have been raised during the sovereign debt crisis in the eurozone. In a five part analysis, it demonstrates how the structure of European banking collateral and the geographic flight to quality across European financial markets have strong negative interactions in sovereign debt markets. The brief also considers the advantages and disadvantages that Eurobonds would present as a potential solution to this underlying dynamic. It concludes by focusing on the challenges associated with implementation of any Eurobond proposal. While it makes some suggestions, the most important message from this analysis is that implementation should be the focus for debate: political leaders have to decide about whether to pursue Eurobonds in principle.

http://www.sieps.se/sites/default/files/2012_4epa%20EN_A4.pdf

Who Lost Greece? The geopolitical consequences of the Greek crisis

This paper argues that the geopolitical dimensions of Greece's (and Europe's) economic crisis that have been largely ignored by analysts and decision makers, should not be underestimated. If Greece fails to recover, it may well be forced to leave the Eurozone and this will have a huge economic and political impact on the Euro and the EU. There will also be severe repercussions for regional stability in Southeastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as the EU's and NATO's ability to play a substantial role in those regions. Three simplified scenarios are outlined in an effort to predict the potential evolution of Greece's foreign policy: (1) Greece leaves the Eurozone and the EU; (2) Greece leaves the Eurozone only; (3) Greece remains in the Eurozone and the EU.

<http://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/dokos1.pdf>

Indignados in Perspective

This report questions whether social democracy is still relevant in the West in the post-industrial era. The rise of new social movements (e.g. the indignados and the Occupy movement) attempt to create a new alternative. De-industrialization in the West and the concomitant decline of trade unions in manufacturing, has led social democratic parties to jettison their traditional constituencies and join conservatives in dismantling the welfare state. This has also led to the greater salience of finance and speculation and has vastly increased inequalities in income and wealth. The new social movements claim that the policies of the diverse groups in the political elite do not differ: conservative and social democratic parties in the West pursue the same policies of fiscal discipline and austerity, with the burden of mistakes of the rich falling on the poor.

http://www.cidob.org/en/publications/notes_internacionals/n1_53/indignados_in_perspective_is_social_democracy_irrelevant_in_a_post_industrial_era_in_the_west

After the China-EU Summit: Reaffirming a comprehensive strategic partnership

This paper focuses on the EU-China strategic partnership after the 2012 summit. It argues that following a low point in 2008, the latest China-EU summit has injected new confidence and momentum in their strategic partnership. Some progress on such issues as trade, investment, cultural and academic exchanges resulted from dialogue and consultation between parties. Yet, the EU-China partnership falls short of realising its potential due to the reluctance of parties to make reciprocal concessions and bridge their differences. China and the EU take divergent approaches to their partnership, which are not incompatible but demand more mutual understanding: China follows a top-down approach, whereas the EU prefers a bottom-up one. The relationship is in great need of a real and substantive meeting of minds.

http://www.egmontinstitute.be/papers/12/secgov/PB3_China_EU_Summit.pdf

Lost in Transition: The world according to Egypt's SCAF

This report discusses the performance of the SCAF (Supreme Council of the Armed Forces) since taking power in 2011 post-Mubarak. This move aimed to: preserve as much as possible from the previous system; restore normalcy; marginalise a protest movement it viewed with considerable suspicion; and both work with and contain the Islamists. It did not wish to remain in the spotlight and be blamed for what would go wrong. But it also did not intend to be sidelined, lose its self-ascribed role as guarantor of the country's safety and interests. The authors view the latest presidential elections as an opportunity for the SCAF to consult broadly and seriously with all political representatives and reach agreement on the powers of the presidency, the constitutional committee's make-up and the basis of civil-military relations.

http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/North%20Africa/Egypt/121-lost-in-transition-the-world-according-to-egypts-scaf.pdf?utm_source=egyptemail&utm_medium=pdf&utm_campaign=mremail

Reversing the Vicious Circle in North Africa's Political Economy

This report analyses the policy failures behind the process of marginalization and exclusion that was at the origin of the popular uprisings at the beginning of 2011, with a view to discussing alternative policy responses and assessing the prospects for seriously rethinking previous economic policies. Despite the differences among North African countries, in the last decade, relatively good macroeconomic performances were accompanied by growing inequalities, worsening poverty levels, and deteriorating labour market conditions. These challenges are investigated from the perspective of three different – but interrelated – groups: the rural population, urban population, and youth. To overcome these difficulties, the authors recommend rethinking agricultural policies through the new concept of food sovereignty; redefining urban policies by developing new forms of participatory democracy; and promoting decentralization and youth economic inclusion.

http://www.gmfus.org/wp-content/files_mf/1336582148PacielloEtAl_ViciousCircle_Apr12_web.pdf

4 BEPA News

Evénements

En coopération avec l'unité de planification politique du Secrétariat Général de l'OTAN, le BEPA a organisé le 7 mai un déjeuner autour du thème "L'Union européenne, l'OTAN et la montée en puissance de l'Asie", auquel des représentants de la Commission européenne, du Service européen pour l'action extérieure et de l'OTAN ont participé et échangé leurs vues sur ce sujet.

A l'occasion de la journée de l'Europe le 9 mai, de nombreux conseillers ont participé à des activités pour célébrer cette journée, notamment à Athènes, Rio de Janeiro et Washington.

Le 3 mai, le chef adjoint du BEPA, Margaritis Schinas, a participé à la présentation du projet ESPAS (*European Strategy and Policy Analysis System*) à Paris, lors de la célébration du 10^{ème} anniversaire de l'Institut d'études de sécurité de l'UE (EUISS). Le 15 mai, la Task Force du projet ESPAS s'est réunie à Bruxelles en vue de faire le point sur la progression du projet et d'avancer sur plusieurs dossiers d'ordre administratif, financier et concernant le site Internet dédié au projet ESPAS.

Les 15 et 16 mai, le Groupe Européen d'Ethique a tenu sa 14^{ème} réunion à Bruxelles. Le Groupe a accueilli des présentations centrées sur le thème de la gouvernance de l'énergie dans l'UE de la part de: Prof. Henk Zandvoort (Delft University of Technology), Dr. Richard Adams (Comité Economique et Social Européen), Prof. William D'Haeseleer (Université de Leuven, Energy Institute) et Prof. Mariano Marzo (Université de Barcelone).

Le 21 mai, le BEPA a tenu conjointement avec le bureau moscovite de Carnegie Endowment un séminaire consacré aux relations entre l'UE et la Russie. Cet événement a réuni plusieurs membres du BEPA, des représentants du SEAE, de l'OTAN, le Prof. Dusan Sidjanski – conseiller spécial du Président Barroso – ainsi qu'une douzaine d'experts russes. Les débats ont porté sur les conséquences possibles de l'élection de Vladimir Poutine à la présidence sur la situation en Russie. Spécifiquement, le débat a porté sur

l'impact des élections récentes sur les réformes économiques, la politique de voisinage entre l'UE et la Russie, l'unité économique eurasiennne, des questions relatives à l'énergie, à la sécurité et aux échanges commerciaux, avec une attention particulière portée sur l'accession récente de la Russie à l'OMC.

Activités à venir

Le 6 juin, la conseillère scientifique en chef du Président, Anne Glover, accueillera des représentants du domaine des sciences et technologies pour un échange de vues avec le Président de la Commission, José Manuel Barroso.

Le 7 juin, le BEPA recevra dans les locaux de la Commission 40 jeunes leaders européens dans le cadre du projet "40 under 40", en lien avec Europanova et Les amis de l'Europe. Au cours de cet événement, les jeunes leaders auront l'occasion de discuter avec le président du Conseil de l'Union européenne Herman van Rompuy. De plus, Philippe Legrain, conseiller principal et chef de l'équipe Analyse du BEPA participera à la session sur l'avenir économique de l'Europe et Anne Glover, la conseillère scientifique en chef du Président discutera avec les jeunes leaders de la manière dont l'UE doit agir pour rester en tête au sein de la compétition mondiale.

Du 18 au 20 juin aura lieu à Copenhague, sous la présidence danoise du Conseil de l'Union européenne la réunion du Groupe européen d'éthique et la table ronde internationale sur la bioéthique.

Le 21 juin, le directeur général du BEPA Jean-Claude Thébaud présentera le projet ESPAS au Centre d'étude et de réflexion prospective Futuribles à Paris.

Le 27 juin le BEPA co-organisera avec l'OTAN un déjeuner sur le thème des Balkans occidentaux. Des représentants de la Commission, du Service européen pour l'action extérieure et de l'OTAN auront ainsi l'opportunité de se rencontrer, faire l'état des lieux du processus d'élargissement et échanger leurs vues sur l'avenir de la région.