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# THE PARLIAMENT

POLITICS, POLICY AND PEOPLE **MAGAZINE**



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for street children

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## EXCLUSIVE

# ALEX SALMOND

Issue 389  
28 April 2014

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... says EU membership is central to the 'vision of an independent Scotland'

## EUROPE NEEDS GAS AND FLUXYS BRIDGES THE MARKETS

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## **1 Caritas Europa calls on candidates for the European Elections 2014 to create a more social Europe, a Europe of solidarity**

We need a new European social model based on social inclusion, investment and social protection, and Human and Social Rights.

The European Parliament must use every means within its powers to strengthen the social dimension of the EU's Economic and Monetary Union in order to ensure its stability, the future of the European project and the position of people in poverty in the first place.

## **2 The European Parliament must ensure adequate protection of migrants and refugees**

We urge the European Parliament to safeguard the existing minimum level of protection, in particular through protection-sensitive budget priorities. We urge the European Parliament to develop extraordinary financial assistance for countries whose asylum system is under pressure.

## **3 Caritas Europa calls on the European Parliament to set the EU's target to end world hunger by 2025**

The EU must engage with the Beyond 2015 development framework process - the future framework aims at being universal, including the EU. We call upon the EP to champion 'the fight against hunger', to ensure food and nutrition security for all. Hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition can be ended sustainably by 2025.



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## Scottish referendum could have ‘fundamental implications’ for EU

EU enlargement, democratic deficits, single currency squabbling, rebates and opt outs, national sovereignty and that good old speechwriter’s standby, the ‘future of Europe’. You’d all be forgiven for thinking that this issue of the Parliament Magazine was focused on trying to decipher the outcome of yet another gathering of EU heads of state and government. Thankfully, you’ll be glad to read, not this time.

With MEPs scurrying back to their constituencies to campaign for the EU elections and most of the remaining Place Lux crowd pondering on who will be elected as next European commission president, it’s a very different, but just as potentially game changing, vote that takes up our key cover story in this issue. September will see Scotland go to the polls in a referendum that will decide whether the country becomes independent of the four-nation United Kingdom.

With just a few percentage points now separating the yes and no campaigns and a fifth of the country still undecided on which way to opt, the campaign for the hearts and minds of Scotland’s voters is now in full swing. The debate has been fierce and no doubt will become scrappier in the weeks and months ahead.

The Scots relationship with the rest of the UK is of course at the heart of the referendum debate, but just as importantly – and something that has been somewhat overlooked by the Brussels bubble until commission president José Manuel Barroso’s ill-advised intervention a few weeks ago supporting the no campaign – is what exactly would happen at EU level if the ‘Jocks’ vote yes.

Would, as the Scottish first and deputy first ministers Alex Salmond and Nicola Sturgeon contest, Scotland simply assume its rightful place as the 29th EU member state, negotiating its terms under a so-called ‘continued membership’ platform, or as British secretary of state for Scotland Alistair Carmichael and ‘Better Together’ campaign director Blair McDougall argue, have to negotiate membership from scratch, losing all the hard won, but UK negotiated opt outs and rebates.

At this point in time, nobody quite seems to really know the answers to these questions, although the contributors to this issue have no doubts in their minds what would happen. However, a fully independent Scotland – essentially a country seceding from a current EU member state – could have fundamental implications on the future development on the union.

Brian Johnson is managing editor of the Parliament Magazine

### ON THE COVER | Scottish independence

Scotland’s first minister Alex Salmond kicks off our Scottish independence feature by saying that his “ancient European country... has a great future as an independent and equal member of the 21st century family of European nations”. “Continued membership of Europe is central to our vision of an independent Scotland,” writes Salmond, adding that “Scotland’s membership will surely be central to any vision of the EU which is true to the union’s founding ideals”. Salmond is critical of “virulent Euroscepticism” affecting the UK’s government and underlines that an independent Scotland would be “an enthusiastic, engaged and committed contributor” to the European project. **See pages 24-34**





# EU must 'strengthen' partnership with eastern countries

'Poor integration' of eastern Europe into 'critical' EU infrastructure has been highlighted by events in Crimea, says Algirdas Butkevicius

When I hear a question about Europe's vision for the near future, it always comes to my mind that there is only a little over five years for the Europe 2020 strategy to be completed. We have to take careful stock of the progress achieved in terms of the objectives of individual European Union member states. As regards Lithuania, the government is fully supportive of the EU progress programme, and is actively involved in its implementation, while focusing on better quality of education and alleviation of social exclusion. This is of equal relevance for both Lithuania, as well as the entire EU, as we move towards our ever more effective competition in global markets. The global financial downturn has in many respects adversely affected the European population. Unemployment has touched the lives of millions of people, particularly the most vulnerable social groups, including


the youth. Despite the efforts and adjusted targets of the national authorities, it is clear that the restoration of public confidence in the financial sector and government must be preceded by calls for increased efforts to reach out to the most disadvantaged. Therefore, I believe that Europe 2020 objectives related to better quality in education have acquired a particular importance. Improved education will produce an increased number of market-required professionals, who will be able to find a job and provide for a dignified life for both themselves, as well as their families.

History has shown that the social democrats have always aspired for all-embracing social welfare, higher quality employment and a better life for everyone living in socially just societies. The European left-wing have paved the way for a welfare state, universal access to education and health-care and equal rights for all, that's why I think that, in the

near future, Europe must become more left-facing. When Lithuania joined the EU in 2004, the Lithuanian population

were among the most enthusiastic supporters of the European Union. However, the public attitude has been changing over the 10 years of Lithuania's membership. Just to compare, in 2004 it was two-thirds of Lithuanians who said that European Union's image was positive. While now only four in 10 respondents say so. It is possible that the Lithuanians have gotten rid of unfounded expectations that

EU membership will solve domestic problems, ensure economic prosperity and social protection. In this respect, Lithuanians are becoming like the people in the old EU member states, who have a more sceptical attitude towards the EU. I hope that all EU states do their best to increase the involvement of citizens in union's processes. Obviously, not all avenues have been exploited in order to raise voter

A portrait of Algirdas Butkevicius, a man with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a blue patterned tie. He is smiling and looking towards the camera.

*"Despite the efforts and adjusted targets of the national authorities, it is clear that the restoration of public confidence in the financial sector and government must be preceded by calls for increased efforts to reach out to the most disadvantaged"*



turnout in European parliament elections, and the overall public participation in EU decision making.

At the beginning of the EU, the Marshall plan funding was primarily used for the restoration of transport infrastructure. The destruction of the roads, bridges and ports in the second world war prevented the development of the European economy, and this became the first priority to be attended to. Today, more than 60 years from the final disbursement of the Marshall funds, the EU still has some countries whose transport and energy systems are not properly joined with the western European network. Like France or Benelux after the war, who were not able to become fully-fledged European countries without the restored roads, railways and ports, today's Baltic states are prevented from full integration into the European family without adequate critical infrastructure. Poor integration into the European logistics network is not the only problem of the new European Union states. The Baltic states still remain as energy islands, entirely dependent on a single supplier

in Russia. In the context of the recent events in Ukraine, the need to advance diversification processes has become extremely urgent.

This year, we will be celebrating a quarter of a century from the fall of the Berlin wall. Over these 25 years, we believed that we turned a new page not only in the history of Europe, but also of the world, promising us a joy of ever stronger peaceful cohabitation among the countries. What we witness in Crimea, which is in close proximity to European Union borders, raises great concern. Therefore, I am firmly convinced that the EU must strengthen the eastern partnership programme and provide a clear action plan for countries that are willing to comply with EU standards. I want to believe that it will not take five years and that the eastern neighbour-

hood countries will not have to make a choice between east and west. Their target will be clear and guaranteed – that is a strong partnership with the European Union. Let me conclude by wishing us all in Europe more optimism, solidarity and openness. ★

*“What we witness in Crimea, which is in close proximity to the European Union borders, raises great concern”*

**Algirdas Butkevicius**  
is prime minister of the  
Republic of Lithuania

# KOSOVO'S IRREVERSIBLE PATH TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

By Enver Hoxhaj  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kosovo



Over the past six years, Kosovo has been a success story in many ways. Kosovo has preserved its political, economic, and social stability, while building multi-ethnic and democratic institutions, modernizing the economy, resolving outstanding bilateral and regional issues, and expanding international recognition and membership, and above all advancing its European integration agenda. Most importantly, since gaining independence in 2008 we have built political institutions, preserved stability, conducted free and fair elections, promoted political pluralism, and enhanced community rights.

Last year, Kosovo and Serbia reached a historic agreement with the support and facilitation of the EU. This important agreement builds on other technical agreements, paving the way for the normalization of inter-state relations, while regulating the modalities of how to provide democratic opportunities and integrate the Serb community in the north of Kosovo into the institutional, legal, and administrative structures of Kosovo. Most importantly, the agreement unlocks the EU integration path for both countries. The role of the EU in this process has been highly important, illustrating the effectiveness of the EU's common foreign policy and the leveraging effect of the enlargement process for peace, stability, and prosperity in the region. The European Parliament has an important role to play in ensuring that Kosovo is duly rewarded for its constructive role during this dialogue with Serbia.

In recent years, Kosovo has undertaken comprehensive reforms and made steady progress on the path to EU integration, as illustrated by reforms of public administration, improvements in

the area of the rule of law and justice, economic development, community protection, and fight against corruption and organized crime. We have also been stability factor and strong promoter of constructive neighbourhood with all the countries in the region. Almost two years have passed since Kosovo began the dialogue on visa liberalization with the EU and we have made significant progress in the list of reforms required by the EU. However, the visa liberalization criteria for Kosovo have been more complicated than for other countries in the region. Kosovo remains the only country in the region whose citizens cannot travel to the EU without a Schengen visa. As a result of recent achievements, Kosovo is in the final stage of concluding a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the European Union, which will seal Kosovo's contractual relations with the EU. This decisive step for Kosovo's EU integration will benefit domestic and regional stability, democratic and economic development, and societal modernization.

In view of the recent dramatic events within the EU's neighbourhood, we must ensure that Enlargement remains a priority for the incoming Parliament and the European Commission. Kosovo has been a success policy for EU Enlargement so far, and support for EU integration remains high within Kosovo, so we must be careful not to lose this positive momentum. For its part, Kosovo is committed to conclude and implement the SAA, to fulfil the criteria to achieve visa liberalization and to continue the normalization of relations with Serbia and to undertake further domestic reforms. However, unity within the EU is crucial for ensuring that the progress made by Kosovo is duly recognised and rewarded so that Kosovo remains on this constructive path towards the EU.



# Cyprus on 'the right path', says president

Safe driving requires that you look ahead, but also that you keep an eye on the rear view mirror: assessing the future with a clear understanding of the past, learning from the past because it may creep up on you. From its beginnings over 60 years ago as a coal and steel community, the EU has managed to transform itself into a political and economic union based on the idea that democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights not only foster peace, but are also conducive to development and prosperity. The EU's 2004 enlargement – its biggest in scope, during which Cyprus also became a member – demonstrated to the world that Europe was determined to be vocal and a source of inspiration throughout the European continent, and also beyond.

In our increasingly interdependent world, the global economic crisis has adversely affected Europe and the eurozone states, revealing that the multifaceted problems that had arisen could not be dealt with at national level. The crisis has taught us an invaluable lesson: we need more Europe.

Resolving the sovereign debt crisis is an essential condition if the EU is to move forward. The crisis has led Europe into a phase of hibernation, introspection and self-questioning. Despite the divergent views among the member states as to the way forward, steps are being taken in the right direction. There is agreement on the need for more robust financial regulations, and for developing rules and institutions that address our problems and avoid the pitfalls of the past. Our efforts are focused on making the EU and its institutions more accountable, more transparent and more effective for the benefit of its citizens. We should not be afraid of change. The Lisbon treaty was one example of correcting past problems, as it addressed the democratic deficit issue by strengthening the democratic tradition of the European Union and making the European parliament a co-legislator on the vast majority of legislation. This is an example that shows how a solid future is based on a concrete understanding of history, and on correcting mistakes of the past.

In relation to this, Cyprus, as a member state, has learnt and accomplished a lot since entering a financial adjustment programme in the spring of 2013. Despite its difficulties, Cyprus is now in a position where the forecasts are indicating that its economy is slowly but assuredly back on track. Furthermore, the financial sector is also showing signs of stabilisation in

terms of deposit outflows, and its restructuring is on the right path. These positive developments are recognised by the troika (the ECB, the European commission and the IMF) and international credit rating agencies.

It is also my personal belief that only through the judicious application of the financial adjustment programme can foreign investors' confidence be restored in the Cypriot economy and ensure that in the near future, Cyprus will have completely

**Nicos Anastasiades** outlines his vision for a reunified Cyprus of peace and stability within the next five years



*"The crisis has taught us an invaluable lesson: we need more Europe"*





*“Resolving the sovereign debt crisis is an essential condition if the EU is to move forward”*

overcome the adverse effects of the economic crisis. I also hope that with new institutions and mechanisms in the European Union dealing with the problems that have become apparent due to the crisis, we will be able to better protect member states, and therefore the European Union as a whole, so that our peoples can weather all potential economic storms ahead.

The discovery of natural gas reserves in Cyprus' exclusive economic zone holds a dynamic promise for the development and future prospects of our island's economy by creating tremendous prospects for investments and cooperation in the energy sector and auxiliary services. It is also a most encouraging development in terms of energy cooperation, requiring all countries in the region of the Levantine basin to work together, bilaterally and regionally.

My government's energy policy decisions are considered in terms of their larger impact on the energy security of Cyprus,

the European Union, as well as our geographic neighbourhood, in full acknowledgement of the fact that the decisions taken today will have a decisive effect on the EU's future as well as that of the eastern Mediterranean, by providing an alternative energy corridor for Europe, a diversified energy portfolio and increased energy security.

In closing I wish to state that within the framework of my vision for Europe for the next five years, I will include a very personal one, one with which I am sure all Europeans will agree: a vision that a reunified Cyprus, where Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots can once again enjoy a prosperous future, will be a beacon of peace and stability, to the benefit of all Cypriots, as well as to the benefit of our European family, the eastern Mediterranean and the world. ★

Nicos Anastasiades is  
president of Cyprus



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*Basque Coast - Bay of  
Saint-Jean-de-Luz*



*Pic du Midi d'Ossau*

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# EU must lead 'by force of example'

**Victor Ponta** calls on the EU to continue to lead the way in combating climate change and promoting democratic principles

**T**he upcoming European parliament elections are a very important moment, not only due to the natural importance of the electoral moment in a democratic system. The elections are important because of parliament's major role in the functioning of the European Union. The European project has come under attack for a variety of largely invented reasons and has seldom been the focus of unwarranted trade-offs between real economic benefits and principles and voting interests.

The rise of Euroscepticism and the rise of populist actors is one of the major threats to the European project – a project that has brought freedom of movement, peace and the expansion for democratic values and principles all over Europe.

We must not forget, at the same time, that there are still security challenges and threats that threaten not only the European project, but the security and the welfare of regular European citizens. Taking these problems into account and building a more comprehensive, more efficient European foreign policy is one of the main tasks of the next five years.

In spite of the many diverse critical arguments directed at 'Europe', I believe that the EU's future depends on increasing the pace and the scale of the integration process, on bringing together the European societies, on building a more inclusive society and a balanced economy that can ensure sustainable growth.

I think there is room for reform. I understand the qualms of many ordinary citizens about the lack of transparency in many aspects of European policy. In addition, I believe their voices must be heard. However, I do not think for a single moment that European states and societies stand a chance in today's globalized world and economic system by pursuing solitary or even selfish paths. The future is there for us, but so are the challenges and, as recent events show, the dangers.

Europe is facing the aftermath of the economic and financial crisis. Rules and institutions have been put into place in order to prevent another crisis. However, European leaders must look towards encouraging growth. Fiscal discipline is paramount. I see, nevertheless, a European

Union that does not only abide by clear fiscal regulations, but one that also looks to support growth, to increase the competitiveness of our economy, to harvest the creative energies of our brilliant researchers and scientists, and to create jobs.

I believe that over the next five years, EU leaders must find an adequate solution to the problem of youth unemployment and the parliament is essential in contributing to the drafting of strategies that will enable European economies to move along the path of sustainable and inclusive development.

The EU can boast of being the largest market on the planet, the most innovative system, a space of freedom and diversity. In order to maintain its place, Europe needs to continue its policies and to remain the leading actor in combating climate change, in promoting democratic principles and in pursuing the spread of democratic principles and values, by force of example. ★



*"I do not think for a single moment that European states and societies stand a chance in today's globalised world and economic system by pursuing solitary or even selfish paths"*

**Victor Ponta** is prime minister of Romania

## Policymakers must do more to protect and support the rights of street children

Street children are among the ‘most vulnerable and least protected’ groups in the world and more must be done to give this crucial issue the attention and support it deserves, a roundtable discussion in the European parliament has heard

The event, organised by the Parliament Magazine in association with Aviva, was hosted by EPP deputy Gay Mitchell and looked at how member state and EU policymakers can support the rights of street connected children in Europe and across the world.

The international day for street children is marked every year on 12 April, providing a platform for children to assert their rights, and Mitchell underlined the importance of securing “official UN recognition” for the day. “Street children in all parts of the world are at increased risk of physical and emotional harm,” warned the Irish MEP, who praised Aviva for their street to school programme which has helped more than 800,000 children. “We need to encourage others to get involved in corporate social responsibility,” added Mitchell.

Also speaking at the event was UK MEP Jean Lambert, who said the “best interests of the child” must always be taken into consideration. “Some say that charity begins at home,” said the Greens/EFA deputy, adding, “this is fine if you have a home. For these children the streets are their home.” Lambert stressed that with “no access to good nutrition, no access to education and no home and no stability in their life” street children were among the “most vulnerable and least protected” groups in the world. “These are powerful social determinants,” she said, adding that these children “need a good start” to their lives that they were being denied. “We can see this problem very clearly and dramatically. There are also, in the EU too many children spending too much time connected to the streets.”

Charlotte Brierley, who works in corporate responsibility for Aviva, said that, “Every child should have access to education and a brighter future,” adding, “Aviva’s purpose is to free people from fear of uncertainty and perhaps no one faces more uncertainty than street children.” Aviva were keen to create a legacy



and worked with the consortium for street children to launch the international day for street children in 2011, and events, campaigns and individuals across more than 130 countries are currently involved. “With the help of our partners, we pledged to help 500,000 children by 2015 and we achieved this two and a half years early. Our employees are committed to the initiative, they volunteered 25,000 hours of their time in 2013 and this had a significant impact on children’s lives.” For Brierley, the day “shines a light on street children” and can act as a “catalyst for action and change” and promote “collaboration and coming together” on the issue of defending and promoting the rights of children.

Louise Meincke, advocacy director for the consortium for street children, also stressed the importance of highlighting the issue of street children, saying, it “not only deserves attention, but demands it”. “There are millions of children who call the streets their home - including in Europe - and they continue to fall through the gaps. We need to give them a platform to speak for themselves,” she said. Meincke stressed that these children had “fallen off the agenda for 20 years”, but added that if the UN “officially recognises the day then this cannot happen again”. “Street children need champions,” she added.

Dima Yared, from the UN high commission for human rights regional office for Europe said there is a “global figure of 100 million street children, but we do not know the actual number”. For Yared, “The most complex challenge for street children is





*"No child should face life on the street"*  
Jean Lambert

### Making a difference

In the European parliament we are increasingly aware of the importance of a child's early years in determining their life chances. We now have a commission recommendation on that very topic for the EU. In my role as chair of the parliament's delegation for relations with countries of South Asia, I have seen some of the important work the EU helps to fund in terms of sound nutrition in the early months of life – absolutely fundamental for brain development – as well as access to healthcare and education.

Without a stable home, all of this becomes more difficult. Delivering services to the street is tough, especially when people continually have to move. Even in the comparative wealth of the EU, we see a large number of children who spend much of their life linked to the street and it's not simply to play there. Some estimates put the figure for London as high as 100,000 a year – most of them runaways.

The work done by the organisations within the consortium for street children is impressive – and their corporate supporters are important in helping to change the lives of many children. However, much more needs to be done. We can help countries develop social safety nets and invest in vital public services: these are an economic plus, as we have seen ourselves in the EU. We can work to improve collaboration between governments and their different departments and non-governmental organisations and other bodies able to assist. We also have to ensure that forces of law and order recognise that these children are vulnerable and need support. That many of these children survive on their own resources is amazing.

By supporting a formal UN international day, we also help to highlight the issue and bring it greater political attention. Within parliament, we should aim to increase support and encourage our own member states to propose and support such an initiative. We can also work with other countries with which we have significant links to back the proposal. No child should face life on the street.

*Jean Lambert is a member of parliament's employment and social affairs committee*



*"The international day for street children is an opportunity for all sectors to focus on the issue and provides a platform for street children to be heard by governments"*

*Charlotte Brierley*

### A positive legacy

Our job as an international insurance company is to free people from fear of uncertainty and perhaps no one faces more uncertainty than children living or working on the streets. While these children and young people may never be our customers, we believe we have a responsibility to help the most excluded in our communities.

There are many millions of children living or working on the streets. They are found in every continent and every country. Wherever they live, they can face many of the same daily risks and lack of opportunities, often going unseen and unheard.

We are determined, as a global company, to play our part. It is why we've been running the global 'street to school' programme for nearly five years, helping more than 800,000 street-connected children in 17 countries to get off the street and into education. Education is insurance for a brighter future, a positive legacy that we can create in our communities.

But it's not just about financial support. It's about working with other people and other organisations to pool our experience and expertise, so we can make a real, practical difference and can catalyse change on a national and global scale. Non-governmental organisations, community groups, business and of

course governments: we all have a role in ensuring our response is systemic and sustainable.

The international day for street children is an opportunity for all sectors to focus on the issue and provides a platform for street children to be heard by governments – that's why we've supported the day since its launch in 2011. This year we've led a social media campaign, along with the consortium for street children and other partners including Plan UK and Save the Children, under the hash tag #TweetForTheStreet. Through this campaign we've shared the voices of street children with politicians, celebrities and other businesses.

With 130 countries now celebrating the international day for street children the campaign for UN recognition is gaining momentum. The evidence from other global challenges shows that the involvement of the UN and the annual profile of the day can lead to renewed efforts to tackle the issue. Both within Europe and internationally we need to ensure that street children's rights are kept on the agenda. UN recognition of this international day will help to ensure these children don't keep falling through the gaps.

*Charlotte Brierley is corporate responsibility consultant for Aviva plc*



the perception of them. They are either victims or delinquents. We must strengthen national child protection programmes.”

EU representative for SOS Children's Villages International Kélig Puyet said that it was vital to “break the cycle of disadvantage” that leads to the rights of street children being ignored or marginalised. For Puyet, who warned that “across the EU, 26.5 million children are at risk of poverty and social exclusion”, it was vital to ensure “child participation” in the process of asserting these rights. “We must acknowledge the influence children have over their own situation,” she said, highlighting the need for this issue to be given “priority at national level” as “while children are much more on the agenda, their rights are not really recognised”. Puyet underlined the importance of implementing integrated strategies, including access to adequate resources, access to affordable quality services and children's right to participate, in line with the 2013 European commission recommendation ‘Investing in children – breaking the cycle of disadvantage’. “Recently, EU social affairs ministers called on EU member states to invest in children and young people. Implementation will now require concrete action to confront child poverty and social exclusion”. She also stressed that there were “opportunities for better synergies between the UN, the EU and the Council of Europe”.

Wayne Stanley, research and policy analyst for Focus Ireland – a leading national homeless NGO in Ireland – highlighted that since it was first established in 1985 Focus Ireland has campaigned for radical changes in the services offered →



*“Even the most seemingly insurmountable problems can be overcome with political will”*

Wayne Stanley



*“Street children in all parts of the world are at increased risk of physical and emotional harm”*

Gay Mitchell



*“The most complex challenge for street children is the perception of them. They are either victims or delinquents”*

Dima Yared

#### A complex challenge

The 1989 UN convention on the rights of the child is the main international instrument for the promotion and protection of children's rights. It applies to all children in all circumstances, without discrimination. It covers a whole range of rights, and recognises all children as rights holders.

In 2012, the office of the UN high commissioner for human rights, in a unique cross-sector partnership with Aviva, the consortium for street children and Unicef, prepared a seminal report on the rights of children living and/or working on the street. Resolution 16/12 of the human rights council, which requested the report, was particularly important since the subject of children in street situations had not been part of a discussion at the UN since the early 1990s.

The report gathered the views of children living and/or working on the street in several countries, identified multiple violations of their rights, and noted that most children have experienced violations of their rights before arriving to the streets, be they at home or in care, including institutions such as care homes, detention centres, rehabilitation centres and juvenile justice institutions. On the street, they are more likely to be seen as delinquents or as a threat, or else as

victims (and thus passive objects of care), rather than as rights holders.

The report makes a number of recommendations to states, including ensuring birth registration to all children, and the decriminalisation of survival behaviours (begging, loitering, vagrancy, running away). States should develop and strengthen national child protection systems, which include ensuring support to vulnerable families, early detection of domestic violence, access to education, healthcare and reporting mechanisms, and other specialised interventions that enable children to access their rights and help them to reconnect positively to their communities. The report also recognised the importance of collaborating with the private sector in this area.

On 14 April 2014, the third optional protocol to the convention on the rights of the child came into force. It provides for an international complaints procedure where children whose rights have been violated can take their cases to the committee on the rights of the child.

Dima Yared is human rights officer for the office of the UN commissioner for human rights regional office for Europe

## INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR STREET CHILDREN



*"Across the EU,  
26.5 million  
children are at  
risk of poverty and  
social exclusion"*  
Kélig Puyet

### Breaking the cycle

The consortium for street children launched, in partnership with Aviva, the international day for street children on 12 April 2011. The day provides a platform for the millions of street children around the world – and their champions – to speak out so that their rights cannot be ignored. In 2014 we asked street children: 'If the whole world was listening, what would you say?' The answers were compiled into an animation, which included some of the many responses to the question that we received from around the world: <http://www.streetchildrenday.org/the-day/animation/>.

Street children are a worldwide issue, including in Europe, affecting every country whether developed or developing, although the manifestations, consequences and interventions may vary. Some estimates of street children worldwide run as high as 100 million, but the truth is that no one really knows.

Street children are some of the most vulnerable and stigmatised children in societies worldwide. Despite this, and their presence on the streets in every country of the world, they have been overlooked and relegated to the sidelines of international and national policy debates on poverty reduction, social justice and development.

Efforts have been made to ensure that street children could form part of national celebrations around 20 November on the annual child rights day, but it became clear that the issue was drowned out among the more general celebrations, leaving street children once again marginalised. In 2013, over 315 events and activities took place in 132 countries – an increase of 275 per cent and 247 per cent respectively from 2012. Over 5000 people from 103 countries supported the call for official UN recognition of the day. We believe that with official UN recognition comes greater permanence, exposure and accountability.

In order for UN recognition to be established, at least two countries have to propose a resolution to the UN general assembly in New York. The EU, both as a block and as individual countries, can play a significant part in ensuring that street children's rights are not forgotten or ignored. To support our campaign use the hashtag #TweetForTheStreet on social media, sign our petition for official UN recognition <http://www.streetchildrenday.org/>, and be a champion for street children's rights at EU policy level.

*Louise Meincke is advocacy director for the consortium for street children*

### Breaking the cycle

The latest Eurostat figures estimate that 26.5 million children across the European Union are at risk of poverty and social exclusion and due to the economic, financial and social crisis even more children are being put at risk. Integrated strategies at national levels are needed to ensure that these disadvantaged children have access to adequate resources and to affordable quality services. Furthermore, their rights to participate in decision making processes that affect their lives should be recognised. The European commission recommendation 'Investing in Children – breaking the cycle of disadvantage' is based on these pillars and provides a helpful framework and guidance for member states to recognise, protect and promote the rights of children, including those that are most vulnerable. Furthermore, EU social affairs ministers recently called on EU member states to invest in children and young people. Concrete action is now needed to ensure that the investing in children recommendation is implemented at national levels. This will not only lead to preventing the negative impact of growing up in poverty and being socially excluded, but it will as well have positive cost-effective consequences for society. Furthermore, opportunities for better synergies between the UN, the EU and the Council of Europe need to be explored further to better protect and promote the rights of children.

*Kélig Puyet is EU representative for SOS Children's Villages International*

to children who are out of home and that huge progress has been made in tackling the issue in his home country and there is now rapid provision of shelter to children who are out of home so children do not end up on the street. Stanley stressed the importance of identifying the issue and bringing it to the attention of the public and policymakers. After working to promote the issues surrounding child homelessness, Stanley said that it had been possible to overcome the idea that "child homelessness was not a big issue". "Now, in Ireland, child street homelessness is all but eradicated." "Even the most seemingly insurmountable problems can be overcome with political will," he concluded. ★

### Parliament Magazine roundtable events

Thinking of organising an EU policy-focused discussion in Brussels? Let the Parliament Magazine events team manage your event.

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*"There are millions of  
children who call the  
streets their home -  
including in Europe -  
and they continue to  
fall through the gaps"*  
Louise Meincke



## New parliament must 'restore confidence and trust' in markets

**B**etween 2007 and 2009 the global financial system experienced its worst crisis in almost 80 years with banks worldwide facing losses of more than €1.4 trillion. The eurozone economy was plunged into a crisis which threatened the very survival of the euro as a currency and the long-term stability of the eurozone economy. These two events shaped the policy agenda of the economic and monetary affairs committee of the 2009-2014 European parliament.

The key priority for legislators was to restore trust and confidence in financial markets. The financial crisis revealed weaknesses not only in global regulation but in regulatory coordination across the European Union. This fragmented approach aggravated irresponsible risk taking behaviour in financial institutions. Financial institutions deemed 'too big to fail' and operating outside and beyond national supervisory systems were those most prone to engaging in highly leveraged risky lending.

The GDP loss from the eurozone and financial crisis from 2008 to 2012

forced legislators to focus attention on putting in place effective measures at all levels to prevent or mitigate the effects of any future potential financial crisis in Europe. The economic and monetary affairs committee embarked on a programme to implement the G20 reforms and ensure our banking and financial systems are stable, safe and serve the needs of citizens and the real economy. Banks have to hold more capital, hedge funds and short selling have been regulated, derivatives traded in the EU must be centrally cleared and the EU has passed rules to tackle market abuse. We have put in place a new EU supervisory architecture ensuring that banks and financial markets come under both EU and national supervision. The EU is in the end of the phase of its biggest ever programme for financial services reforms. Around 62 measures have been proposed or adopted.

During the crisis, eurozone countries had to bail out their banks but doing so raised their levels of sovereign debt leading to a situation where eurozone countries were unable to repay their debts. In response, the EU has

**Arlene McCarthy** reflects on the eurozone crisis as she looks back over her time as a member of the European parliament

*"The financial crisis revealed weaknesses not only in global regulation but in regulatory coordination across the European Union"*





established a banking union to tackle these structural weaknesses. Eurozone banks will now be properly supervised by the European central bank, depositors' money will be protected up to €100,000 and a eurozone fund will be set up through levies on banks to ensure taxpayers no longer have to bail out failing banks.

Regulatory change gives us reason for cautious optimism about the future of financial markets, however, cultural change – the most difficult to achieve – is still a priority for the reform agenda and depends on the industry to take up the challenge and self-regulate. The Libor scandal and allegations surrounding manipulation of the energy markets in the oil and gas sectors, as well as potential manipulation in forex and foreign exchange markets, have hit market confidence hard and caused massive reputational damage to firms involved. It is clear that cultural change is needed to tackle what one financial commentator has described as “greed in finance getting the whip hand over judgement, prudence and probity”.

Policymakers dealing with complex financial markets, regularly grapple with the challenge of achieving the balance between stability and safety of financial markets and choice, flexibility and competition. The litmus test of the new regulatory architecture will be whether in a fast-moving, hi-tech global financial system, these rules will result in markets becoming more transparent and stable through effective risk management, supervision and an effective cross-border surveillance system that keep one step ahead of those who make use of the fragmented landscape to manipulate markets.

Can we say with confidence at both a global and EU level that financial sector reforms are delivering safer, more stable markets and are operating in the service of the real economy? Is the system in good shape to prevent future crises? Are we confident that we have key tools in place and policies to tackle excessive risk and to better regulate markets, in particular the new types of manipulation we witnessed in the Libor scandal? The parliament must ensure that the raft of technical standards, which the EU supervisory authorities will propose over the coming years, are suitably tough to assist in preventing future crisis and flexible enough to enable the industry to thrive in a competitive global environment.

As a vice-chair of parliament's economic and monetary affairs committee, I had the privilege of being at the negotiating table for the shaping of many of these laws. It is now for the 2014–2019 parliament to take up the challenge of ensuring proper and effective implementation of all the laws introduced since 2009 and to ensure that legislators, regulators and industry to continue the work to restore confidence and trust in markets. ★

*“The EU is in the end of the phase of its biggest ever programme for financial services reforms”*



**Arlene McCarthy**  
is a vice-chair of  
parliament's economic  
and monetary affairs  
committee

# Health inequality provoking ‘patient migration’

**W**e often take life and health for granted, relying on recent tremendous medical progress, but we realise how fragile health is when losing a beloved person whom we were unable to help although proper treatment exists. Yes, it does exist... but in another country, and there are patients in Europe who have no access to quality healthcare where they live.

Many patients do not receive timely diagnosis and proper therapy in their home countries. Insufficiently reformed healthcare systems, especially in the former communist countries, as well as crisis austerity measures exacerbate the problem further. In some EU member states citizens' fundamental right of access to healthcare, as stipulated in the charter of fundamental rights of the European Union, is being violated – patients do not even have access to minimum standards of healthcare and prevention. Limited access to healthcare services reduces lifespan, and therefore the workforce, and further burdens our social and pension funds.

Inequalities in healthcare services provoke migration of patients towards EU member states where medical treatment is better, in some cases life-saving. The same holds true for healthcare professionals (doctors and nurses) who are leaving their countries for better jobs and this makes the problem a common EU challenge. Therefore, it must be addressed at European level, but the EU does not have enough power.

If we are taking more care of animal welfare than of human health, why should we expect support from EU citizens for the European project? The problem should be tackled urgently and voices in favour of more commitment from the EU institutions need to be raised.

To outline possible first steps to improve the situation in June 2013 – together with the European patients' forum (EPF) and the Bulgarian national patients' organisation (NPO) – I organised a conference in the European parliament that gave a platform for discussion on health inequalities. Stakeholders – patients, doctors, nurses, pharmacy industry – discussed possible solutions. They agreed to establish a European partnership on equity of access to quality healthcare that will serve as a platform combining the efforts and expertise of all stakeholders

to identify new mechanisms for ensuring that patients have access to affordable and quality healthcare. The process of partnership's creation that I strongly support is in its final stages. The EPF and NPO will be the co-founding members of the access partnership to ensure it is patient-led. The partnership will be established as a non-profit legal entity, in order to be able to receive funding. It will work as a network of partners that brings together the patients' movement, the medical community, the industry, policymakers, and politicians to move forward on solutions and approaches to access that really work for patients and addresses the current barriers and inequities.

The good news is that the European commission is reaching out a hand to stakeholders. In its answer to the written question that I tabled together with MEP colleagues at the beginning of this year, the commission called on stakeholders to contribute to its efforts in creating a tool to measure access to healthcare.

I understand that alone the European commission, the European parliament and the member states are not up to solving the problem. But I do consider our joint efforts able to make a difference and improve access to quality healthcare for patients in Europe. ★

Healthcare inequalities across the EU must be addressed at European level to improve access to quality treatment for patients, writes **Andrey Kovatchev**

**Andrey Kovatchev** is a vice-chair of parliament's foreign affairs committee

*“Inequalities in healthcare services provoke migration of patients towards EU member states where medical treatment is better, in some cases life-saving”*



# 'Reliable information' key to improving Europe's health

Preventative medical measures through vaccinations help 'cut costs' and 'reduce poverty', argues Karin Kadenbach

Karin Kadenbach is a member of parliament's environment, public health and food safety committee

Physical health is the greatest commodity a person can have – not only in Europe but across the globe. Nowadays, the challenges we face come from accessibility to health-promoting activities and the provision of reliable information on immunisations against diseases. Vaccinations are not only one of the most important advancements in modern medicine but they are also one of the most effective preventative measures available in human medicine. A long and healthy life is our primary objective and something that should be enjoyed by everyone.

Widespread vaccination programmes, the provision of information and the raising of public awareness about how important immunisations are for human health have made it possible to almost completely eradicate poxes and infantile paralysis. The excellent health enjoyed by Europeans is due, in no small part, to the use of vaccinations. Diseases that were still a major threat to public health until well into the 20th century are now a thing of the past. Effective preventative measures are not only of benefit to the population in general, but also help public health systems cut costs. With the resources freed up

through prevention, public health-care providers are able to focus more intently on other areas. Despite this, there are still many diseases over which vaccine immunisation has not yet been able to gain control. In this respect, there is still a great need for action.

The success of immunisation programmes can be seen not only in Europe, but also in other parts of the world, especially in developing countries. Much has already happened to protect the weakest in society, particularly children. However, it is clear that there is still much to do and preventative medical measures need to be further developed and promoted by the international community. The European Union supports health activities as part of the United Nations millennium development goals. In pursuit of its aim to reduce infant mortality, the EU is working to deliver essential healthcare services in developing countries to enable sick children and those at risk of disease access to the medical care they need. This is primarily through the organisation and provision of financial contributions as well as through policy dialogue to support international health initiatives.

The EU contributed to the immunisation against measles for around five million children in developing countries between 2005 and 2010, and it supported the global alliance for vaccines and immunisations in preventing a total of 5.4 million prenatal deaths. However, it is evident that the EU's development policy must focus more heavily on preventative health measures and vaccination campaigns within its programmes – also as an effective way to reduce poverty and social exclusion.

There is a lot more to be done in Europe, too. Given the trend of increasing vaccine fatigue in European countries, it appears action still needs to be taken. Based on today's abundance of information in our part of the world, people have to face the onerous task of taking responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. Thus the key lies in education and 'reliable information'. This aims to enable people to fully develop their health literacy. The right comparison of the risks and benefits is the utmost priority when it comes to immunisation. Each individual must draw their own comparison in terms of this risk/benefit balance. Politicians have also called for the provision of reliable information on vaccines. This is our mission and we intend to continue to pursue it rigorously. ★

*"The excellent health enjoyed by Europeans is due, in no small part, to the use of vaccinations"*





# Former members' association offers life after parliament

Some members of the European parliament will come to the end of an important phase of their political life in May. The vast majority will be sad to say goodbye to their political workplaces in Brussels and Strasbourg, particularly those who have been in parliament for many years and have achieved so much. But for those who do not want to leave Brussels and Strasbourg behind, there is good news. You can still keep in touch in your 'life after parliament' through the former members' association (FMA), which provides services to all former members and offers special benefits for FMA members.

The handbook given to outgoing members, with lots of useful tips, has become something of a tradition. The FMA's offices in Brussels and Strasbourg are available for all members to use. They are equipped with phones, fax machines, computers and information material, but they

cannot be used for professional or political activities. The FMA's staff in Brussels are always happy to help.

For the last five years, the FMA has organised an annual memorial service, with flowers, music, speeches and a booklet of obituaries, in remembrance of former or serving members who have died. Relatives of the deceased are invited to the service, which is held the day before the general assembly. The quarterly bulletin, copies of which are sent to all members and many office holders outside the FMA, acts as a link between members. It is packed full of news, articles written by members, guest contributions and plenty

of photographs. The English and French language versions of the bulletin and reports on FMA events and activities in other languages are published on the FMA website.

Dinners with eminent guest speakers are held twice a year. Around a fifth of our 600 members buy tickets for these

With the upcoming parliamentary elections in May, the former members' association offers outgoing MEPs 'life after parliament', says **Karin Junker**

*"In previous years, we have visited the European central bank in Frankfurt, the European anti-fraud office in Brussels, and the council of Europe, the European court of human rights and the European culture channel Arte's head office in Strasbourg"*



events. The first dinner is held in spring and is combined with the general assembly. The second is at the end of the year and includes a political seminar where current affairs are discussed with experts. One highlight of the year is the study visit which takes place around the end of September or beginning of October. Unfortunately, numbers are limited to 25 participants. Nevertheless, you can still have a taste of the trip by reading all about it in the bulletin. The last two visits were to Turkey and Tunisia; the next will be to Kosovo.

The study days, which take place every year in early summer, are always very popular. In previous years we have visited the European central bank in Frankfurt, the European anti-fraud office in Brussels, and the Council of Europe, the European court of human rights and the European culture channel Arte's head office in Strasbourg. The next visits will be to the international criminal court and Europol in The Hague.

The FMA has close ties with its sister organisation, the European association of former parliamentarians, of which I am a vice-president. Its next seminar will be hosted by the FMA in the European parliament. Interest in taking part in European parliament election observation missions is as high as ever, but unfortunately we have not yet found a practical solution.

The FMA is on the case. The international election monitors institute, made up of former parliamentarians from the US, Canada and the European parliament, has now become the global democracy initiative. It regularly attends international conferences, the most recent of which was a meeting of the organisation for security and cooperation in Europe in Warsaw.

A new foundation for promoting democracy has also been founded. All of this is thanks to the hard work and determination of the unremunerated 10-member management

committee and the highly qualified, three-person full-time team led by secretary general Elisabetta Fonck. But it does not come cheap. Although the FMA receives an annual grant from the European parliament, it still needs to ask for an annual membership fee of €100. Revenue and expenditure details are published regularly in financial statements. As a member you can enjoy exclusive perks such as access to the European parliament intranet.

2014 marks the 35th anniversary of the first direct elections to the European parliament. There are now 28 member states and the EU is still growing. Wherever you come from, we are always eager to welcome new members. Welcome to the FMA. ★



*"Interest in taking part in European parliament election observation missions is as high as ever, but unfortunately we have not yet found a practical solution"*

**Karin Junker** is vice-president of the European parliament's former members association (FMA)



## New commission figures show progress on EU deficit

Eurostat – the EU’s official statistical office – has released new figures showing progress from European governments in tackling the bloc’s financial problems. The budget deficit for the whole EU dropped to 3.3 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). This is a 0.6 per cent drop from 2012 figures, despite the total accumulated level of debt across the EU rising as member states continued to borrow large sums. The eurozone shows a drop from 3.7 per cent to three per cent, in line with the upper limit of what the EU expects its member states to meet. In the final quarter of 2013, Eurozone debt levels hit 2.6 per cent – the first time the currency area had dropped below the agreed upper limit since the beginning of financial crisis in 2008. The overall eurozone figures, however, were skewed by the large variation in borrowing levels between members of the single currency. Two of Europe’s largest economies – Spain and France – failed to match the three per cent of GDP limit, while Germany maintained a balanced budget with no new spending and Luxembourg achieved an actual reduction in government debt



## From the Twittersphere

**@KGeorgievaEU** International cooperation, humanitarian aid and crisis response commissioner Kristalina Georgieva



On my way to Luxembourg: a country pitching above its size in generosity for humanitarian aid and as a champion for children in emergencies

**@grahamwatsonmep** Graham Watson MEP

European minority status for #Cornwall will help champion unique heritage - and shows how Europe celebrates continent's diversity #Kernow



**@RogerHelmerMEP** Roger Helmer MEP

Why can't the media understand that UKIP is against mass immigration, not against employing any and every well-qualified non-Brit?



**@JunckerEU** EPP European commission presidency candidate Jean-Claude Juncker



I want to become @EU\_Commission President because I believe the @EPP has the right recipe for getting #Europe out of the crisis #withJuncker

**@DanHannanMEP** Daniel Hannan MEP

A question to everyone Tweeting that there's a difference between profit and greed. Where do we draw the line - and who gets to draw it?



**@StefanFuleEU** Enlargement and European neighbourhood policy commissioner Štefan Füle



#Turkey Welcome statement of PM #Erdogan on Armenians, reconciliation is key EU value. Hope steps in this spirit will follow.

**@ER\_Korhola** Eija-Riitta Korhola MEP



To combat repetitive strain injury, I tried voting with my left hand but I was getting socialist tendency so I stopped. #votemachine

**@AlynSmithMEP** Alyn Smith MEP

Office packed up, leaving Strasbourg for last time. Proud to be an @theSNP candidate, bring on the election! :-)



**@SeanKellyMEP** Sean Kelly MEP

that's it folks, final plenary vote of 2009-2014 #EP term. Almost 21000 votes in total these past 5 yrs. Back to campaign trail for #EP2014



**@CHedegaardEU** Climate action commissioner Connie Hedegaard



#China & #EU can prove to the world that green growth is smart answer to many challenges

## EU institutions 'vulnerable to corruption', says report

A report released by Transparency International – a global civil society organisation – says the EU’s institutions are ‘vulnerable to corruption’ because of loopholes and poor enforcement of regulations. The 244-page document, made public last week, looked at the commission, parliament and council, as well as the European court of justice, the European court of auditors, and the anti-fraud office. Among its findings were the increasing incidences of content being written into EU regulations in behind closed-doors ‘trilogue’ meetings.

The report, entitled ‘The European Union integrity system’, presented a number of options for overcoming the bloc’s vulnerabilities to corruption, including EU institutions pushing



ahead with the effective implementation of rules that exist in statute, but not in practice. In addition, the report calls for the EU to harmonise whistleblowing and conflict-of-interest policies across its different institutions. Furthermore, the watchdog also recommended the establishment of a European public prosecutor with broad anti-corruption powers.

A recent survey carried out by Eurobarometer, found that 70 per cent of European citizens believe that corruption is present in the EU institutions, but this still represented a lower figure than that for national institutions, where 80 per cent of respondents believe corruption exists.





## Scotland part of European 'family of nations'

**Alex Salmond** argues that contrary to the 'virulent euroscepticism' rife in Westminster, an independent Scotland would be 'an enthusiastic, engaged and committed contributor' to the European project

Scotland is an ancient European country which has a great future as an independent and equal member of the 21st century family of European nations. And, contrary to the claims of opponents of Scotland taking its place at the top table in Europe, the tide of history is with those who favour Scottish independence.

It was Winston Churchill who, in 1946, observed that European cooperation would mean "small nations will count as much as large ones and gain their honour by their contribution to the common cause." Recent years have demonstrated the truth of that claim.

Of the 10 countries which joined the European Union in 2004, more than half became independent since 1990 and seven are smaller or around the same size as Scotland in population terms. All of those nations now have a seat and a voice at the top table in Europe, influencing policy and making their own distinct and meaningful 'contribution to the common cause'. And a quick glance at the modern EU shows just what influence

its smaller members can wield.

Ireland's presidency of the council last year was a major success, concluding negotiations on the EU's finances until 2020. It handed over the presidency to Lithuania, a country with a population of three million. The previous year, Denmark used its presidency of the council to lead major reforms to the common fisheries policy. Scotland worked closely with Denmark on that – on issues such as discard-free fisheries, the recovery of cod stocks and more regional-level decision making. But we had no capacity to lead reforms in the same way that Denmark could.

And the common fisheries policy is just one very real and meaningful example of how having a seat at the top table will benefit Scotland. Scotland has 13 per cent of European waters – the second largest of any EU country – and we have the richest fishing waters in the EU, at four tonnes per square nautical mile in Scotland, as opposed to an EU average of one tonne. And despite all of that, we have less formal say in fisheries

*"Of the 10 countries which joined the European Union in 2004, more than half became independent since 1990"*

*“Continued membership of Europe is central to our vision of an independent Scotland. And Scotland’s membership will surely be central to any vision of the EU which is true to the Union’s founding ideals”*

policy than landlocked countries such as Austria and Slovakia.

Independence will mean that we will have our own voice in the council of ministers. Where we agree with the UK government, we would work with them; but where we disagree, we would no longer be bound to a position which harms our interests. Not being at the top table has harmed our interests for four decades. Ruled by Westminster, we are occasionally consulted. With independence, we will contribute as equals.

In reflecting on Scotland’s place in Europe, we need to reflect on two referendums – the proposed referendum in 2017, in which the people of the UK will be given the option of leaving the EU, and the referendum in September this year, in which the people of Scotland have the chance to become an independent member of the international community.

In the past quarter of a century, ever since Margaret Thatcher’s Bruges speech, euroscepticism has flourished at Westminster. The British Conservative party founded a Bruges group of Europhobes and Eurosceptics. The UK Independence Party (Ukip) has become a serious political force in parts of England, without ever gaining a significant share of the vote in Scotland.

It is illuminating that, reading Thatcher’s Bruges speech now, it seems more moderate than much of the mainstream debate which currently emanates from Westminster. In that 1988 address, the UK’s membership of the EU was accepted as a reality. In David Cameron’s speech on Europe last year, it was used as a negotiating point – something which would be subject to a referendum unless unspecified concessions were granted.

In contrast, there is an overwhelming consensus in Scotland in support of EU membership. And so an independent Scotland will be an enthusiastic, engaged and committed contributor to the European project. The key reason for Scottish independence is that the best people to take decisions about the future of Scotland are the people who live and work in Scotland. That applies to domestic policy – how we create a fairer and more prosperous country. And it applies to international policy – how Scotland contributes to the world.

At present, the leading party in the UK government only has one seat out of the 59 Scottish constituencies at Westminster. That isn’t an occasional aberration. For more than half of my life, Scotland has been governed by parties which could not



command a majority in Scotland. It's a profound democratic deficit which affects all areas of Scottish life. And it now poses a real threat to Scotland's place in Europe. Polls consistently show a higher level of support for the EU in Scotland than in the rest of the UK. Virulent euroscepticism – of the kind which stifles the debate about Europe at Westminster – has no significant support in Scotland. And Ukip has never won a seat in any election in Scotland.

And so David Cameron's proposal to hold a referendum in 2017 is a tactic which no politician in Scotland would ever have considered. There would be virtually no support for such a step in the Scottish parliament. People in Scotland would almost certainly vote in favour of staying in the EU. But because we make up just over eight per cent of the UK population, a majority elsewhere in the UK could force Scotland to leave. This means that for Scotland, becoming an independent nation is the only way to secure our place in the EU.

An independent Scotland's contribution to the EU will include making a positive and constructive case for reform of key aspects of EU policy. We believe that the common agricultural policy should become more flexible – allowing for more local variation. And we want the EU to play an even greater role in environmental protection and combating climate change. But there is a key difference between our approach to reform and that of the UK government. We are considering what type of Europe we want to be part of; the UK government is considering whether it wants to be part of Europe at all.

Scotland's history has been entwined with Europe's for centuries. We now seek independence as part of a civic, consensual and entirely democratic and peaceful process. We have a positive vision of a country which pursues policies of enlightened self-interest at home and abroad; which knows that sovereignty involves choosing to pool sovereignty and which recognises that independence and interdependence go hand in hand.

Continued membership of Europe is central to our vision of an independent Scotland. And Scotland's membership will surely be central to any vision of the EU which is true to the Union's founding ideals. ★

Alex Salmond is first minister of Scotland

*"Scotland's history has been entwined with Europe's for centuries. We now seek independence as part of a civic, consensual and entirely democratic and peaceful process"*



### Timeline

- The declaration of Arbroath of 1320 sets out to confirm Scotland's status as an independent, sovereign state in the form of a letter submitted to pope John XXII.
- The union of the crowns. James VI, king of Scots, takes the thrones of England and Ireland in 1603.
- 1707 - Treaty of the union creates the United Kingdom of Great Britain encompassing England, the Principality of Wales and Scotland. The Scottish parliament is prorogued indefinitely.
- In the 1800s, Anglophone British colonies like Australia, Ireland, South Africa, Canada and New Zealand attempt political independence from London. Some of these campaigns involve violence.
- 1934 - Scottish National Party (SNP) is founded. In 1945, Robert McIntyre wins the SNP's first Westminster seat at the Motherwell by-election. In 1973, Margo MacDonald wins Govan, marking the emergence of the nationalists as a political force.
- The Kilbrandon commission of 1973 recommends devolved assemblies for Scotland and Wales. This leads to the 1979 referendum on the creation of a Scottish Assembly, which is defeated.
- Faced with a "democratic deficit" during the Conservative governments of the 1980s, devolution and the creation of a Scottish parliament becomes a major debate. A series of constitutional conventions are held to discuss what form such a parliament may take.
- 1997 - Tony Blair's Labour party wins the general election. A referendum is held showing overwhelming support for a separate Scottish parliament with tax-raising powers. In 1999, after centuries in abeyance, a Scottish parliament again sits in Edinburgh.
- After a period in which the Scottish Parliament proves itself an effective legislative organ, the Labour/Lib Dem coalition which had held power since the re-establishment of the parliament, loses the 2007 election to the SNP, which operates as a minority government.
- With an independence referendum as a key platform, the SNP win a majority in the 2010 election. In October 2012, the 'Edinburgh agreement' for a referendum on Scottish independence is signed by the Scottish and UK governments.
- On Sept 18, 2014, Scots will be asked: "Should Scotland be an independent country?"





## ‘Clear path’ for Scotland to assume its place as 29th EU member state

Scotland stands to become independent as the most prepared that any nation has ever been for the transition to statehood. We already have many of the key requirements of an independent state, including our own legal system and a national parliament in Edinburgh that is, even under the current constitutional set-up, responsible for running health, education and many other policy areas including climate change, where Scotland has pioneered world-leading legislation.

And last November, the Scottish government published ‘Scotland’s future’, a comprehensive, 670-page prospectus for an independent Scotland, which includes

our proposals for Scotland to play a constructive role as a full member of the European Union.

In that document, we outline a clear path for Scotland to assume its place as the 29th member state of the EU, negotiating the specific terms of our continued membership

from within. Following a ‘yes’ vote in this September’s referendum, those discussions will take place while Scotland is still part of the UK, in the 18-month transition period we have outlined in the run-up to our proposed independence day on 24 March 2016. That timetable has been described as “realistic” by James Crawford, the UK government’s own independent legal expert.

*“Scotland would take responsibility for its share of UK contributions and receipts – that means that Scotland would be a net contributor to the EU”*

With its own legal system and national parliament, Scotland is better prepared than most for the ‘transition to statehood’, says **Nicola Sturgeon**



Download a summary of the Scottish government's White Paper on Independence, entitled 'Scotland's Future', from the Parliament Magazine's homepage: [www.theparliamentmagazine.eu](http://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu)

We believe there is every reason why negotiations can be concluded quickly, as we will ask for continuity of effect – a 'no-detriment' settlement. Our continued membership will not cause any detriment to any other EU member. As such, there would be no reopening of the EU budget agreed last year to 2020. Scotland would take responsibility for its share of UK contributions and receipts – that means that Scotland would be a net contributor to the EU. All of this reflects our pro-European intent, and the EU's own best interests – our membership benefits us and all of the other countries of the EU.

The European institutions have already shown themselves to be very flexible at adapting to changed political circumstances. More than two decades ago, they managed to accommodate East Germany into the European club less than 12 months after the fall of the Berlin wall in November 1989. That is a point well worth bearing in mind, because East Germany was welcomed in from outside in less than a year after having been governed for around 40 years as part of the Warsaw pact.

How different the situation is for Scotland. We have already been inside the European club for more than 40 years, and as such meet all the key criteria for membership. And Scotland already plays an important role in the EU, contributing significantly to joint endeavours. But we could and will contribute far more as an independent country.

We have more than 60 per cent of the EU's oil reserves, a quarter of its offshore wind and tidal power potential, 10 per cent of its wave power potential. We have a key role to play in providing energy security for Europe, and in developing the low carbon technologies the world will need for the future. And there are around 160,000 EU workers and students who have come to live in Scotland. They make a huge contribution to Scotland's culture, society and economy.



*"Scotland is a European nation that contributes hugely to the EU and its overall prosperity - and we in turn benefit from being part of the European family"*

Scotland is a European nation that contributes hugely to the EU and its overall prosperity – and we in turn benefit from being part of the European family. Independence will give us the opportunity to take decisions in our own national interests, which are too often overlooked or relegated by Westminster. For example, if we were already an independent EU member, Scotland's farmers would be benefiting from an extra billion euros in common agricultural policy funding between 2014 and 2020. That's a real example of the cost of Westminster rule for Scotland – and of the reality of what independence will mean. ★

Nicola Sturgeon is deputy first minister of Scotland

# UK affords Scotland 'strong negotiating voice' in EU

**W**e face a huge and irreversible decision in Scotland this September: whether or not to stay in the UK. The prospect of such seismic constitutional change creates many uncertainties, not least on Scotland's place in Europe. Democracy will decide the outcome here at home; the reality of European politics will determine the terms of a separate Scotland's relationship with Europe.

Scotland gets a good deal from Europe by being part of the UK with our strong negotiating voice. We benefit from the rebate worth £3bn (€3.65bn); we benefit from the opt-out of the euro and Schengen; our farmers and fishermen do well, including higher fish quotas and protection for Scottish salmon. As a separate state, we stand to lose hard-won advantages. For example, estimates show an independent Scotland would contribute nearly €3bn more to the EU budget over 2014-20 – an additional direct cost of €1100 to each Scottish household.

The UK has the equal highest number of votes in the council at 29 and the third largest European parliament delegation with 73 MEPs. Changes to voting weights in 2014 will reduce the current over-weighting for smaller member states, diminishing our voice further. The UK government's independent legal advice clarified that if Scotland votes to become independent, the rest of the UK would be the continuing state and would continue membership of international institutions like the EU.

A separate Scotland would have to apply to join the EU. This is a view backed up by senior EU leaders, commission president José Manuel

Barroso, council president Herman Van Rompuy and Mariano Rajoy, the prime minister of Spain. The EU is a treaty-based organisation with explicit procedures for entry of new member states. The overwhelming weight of legal opinion concludes this would be the method for Scottish entry, negotiating from scratch as a new state.

Instead of accepting these realities, the Scottish government assert it would have a seamless transition via an article 48 route – never used for accession – and claim Scotland would retain the rebate and opt-outs secured by the UK. They claim this deal would be negotiated with 28 EU member states in a record-breaking 18 months. The crux of the Scottish government's problem is its simplistic, almost naive, stance on European negotiation. Consider its approach to the EU treaties.

All new member states are obliged to make the political and legal commitment to join the single currency and to join the Schengen travel area. Only the UK and Denmark have permanent opt-outs from the euro and the UK and Ireland have opt-outs from Schengen. The Scottish government has declared that it does not accept this, for example, citing Sweden which is outside the eurozone. They ignore the fact that Sweden has made the political and legal commitment to join the euro – is Scotland prepared to make that same commitment in good faith? All 28 other member states must determine a newly separate Scotland's membership application. It is questionable how a bad faith approach to negotiations would go down with them, the majority of whom have had to sign up to these principles.

We must be honest about the challenges which flow from a decision to leave the UK. The European question is one of many issues to be addressed, and the Scottish government must take a more serious view if it wishes to salvage any credibility. ★

An independent Scotland would not continue to be part of the EU, but would have to negotiate membership 'from scratch as a new state', argues **Alistair Carmichael**

*"The crux of the Scottish government's problem is its simplistic, almost naive, stance on European negotiation"*



**Alistair Carmichael** is the UK government's secretary of state for Scotland



## EU must deal with 'political and territorial conflicts' through democracy

A Catalanian referendum would 'show the world' that Europe handles conflicts through 'democracy', says **Ramon Tremosa i Balcells**

**Ramon Tremosa i Balcells** is a *Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya* member of the European parliament

On 8 April, the Spanish congress rejected a bill that would have transferred the authority to call a referendum on self-determination to the Catalan regional parliament. Contrary to the constructive attitude of UK prime minister David Cameron towards Scotland, the attitude of Spanish political forces continues to be a 'no' to everything.

Unfortunately, Madrid doesn't seem to understand the Catalan desire for freedom and to be able to choose our own path. It is not just a caprice; it is a deep rooted and growing sentiment across Catalan society.

The will of the Catalan people cannot be stopped by a vote in the Spanish congress or by a threat of expulsion from the EU. Catalan people will continue to act as they always did;

*"Contrary to the constructive attitude of UK prime minister David Cameron towards Scotland, the attitude of Spanish political forces continues to be a 'no' to everything"*

in a dignified, positive, constructive, enthusiastic, democratic and peaceful manner as they showed to the world in a massive nonviolent demonstration that took place on 11 September 2013 called "la via Catalana" where 1.6 million citizens held hands over 400 kilometres from the north to the south of Catalonia asking to vote.

On 9 November we will go to the polls to decide our future, Europe needs to grasp the Catalan will of self-determination as a measure of its success, as an opportunity to show its strength to the world and its commitment to the basic fundamental values of its treaties.

Permitting Catalans to vote would set a model of best practices and show to the world that the European way to deal with political and territorial conflicts is with full respect for democracy. ★

## Self-determination movements in Scotland, Catalonia, the Basque country & Flanders are 'natural processes'

European citizens cannot be stripped of EU citizenship for 'exercising right of self-determination', argues **Mark Demesmaeker**

**Mark Demesmaeker** is a Belgian *Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie* Party member of the European parliament

We live in exciting times. In several European countries, citizens, movements and political parties are acting for self-determination, be it autonomy or independence. In essence, the right for self-determination means that a nation can decide its own future.

The developments in Scotland, Catalonia, the Basque country, Flanders and other stateless nations are natural processes. The exercise of the right for self-determination can lead to different results; from reform within a state to the creation of new states. Europe can play a very valuable role here, but deliberately chooses not to do so. The attitude of European institutions and their leaders in particular, is highly disappointing. European commission president José Manuel Barroso, council president Herman Van Rompuy and others are doing everything to thwart the democratic

processes in Catalonia and Scotland. They propagate fear and anxiety to assert that there is no place for new states from within the EU. The simple question then is this: how can nations that have been part of the EU for decades suddenly fall outside the EU because their people opt for what they think is best for them? How can their citizens all of a sudden be stripped of their European citizenship? To these questions, Barroso and Van Rompuy have given me no legal answer at all, despite having asked them on several occasions to provide one. For the sake of stability, they propagate nonsense.

The European Union is based on the principles of democracy and freedom, and therefore can no longer ignore these peaceful developments.

To decide otherwise would undermine the credibility of the millions of citizens who choose self-determination, democracy and European commitment. ★

*"[Barroso and Van Rompuy] are thwarting democratic processes in Catalonia and Scotland"*

## Both Scotland and the UK are 'stronger together'

Being part of the UK, together with England, Wales and Northern Ireland but with our own Scottish parliament gives us the best of both worlds. This allows us a distinct Scottish voice on Scottish issues and to be backed up by being one of the EU's largest member states.

Like the generations that have come before us, we must confront the challenges we face and rise to them. Of course there can be improvements made to our relationships with the rest of the UK and the EU, but I feel we are best placed to do this by working together and not breaking apart. I don't believe Scotland's future is best served by independence. As part of the UK, we have worked together with our sister parties in all 28 member states on issues such as workers' rights, banking reform, equality and consumer rights. We also benefit from the rebate and have retained the pound.

When I wear my 'Better together' badge in the European parliament, many people think it is about keeping the UK in the EU rather than Scotland in the UK. Yet every reason the Scottish National Party give to

stay in the EU is a reason for us to stay in the UK. As part of the UK we support each other and share any risks. I do not believe the Scottish government's white paper on Scotland's future offers a coherent vision for how or why an independent Scotland would be better off. Scotland and the UK are stronger together. ★



*"As part of the UK we have worked together with our sister parties in all 28 member states"*

UK and Scotland benefit from 'shared risks', says **Catherine Stihler**

**Catherine Stihler** is a Scottish Labour member of the European parliament

## Independence provides 'unique and exciting opportunity' for Scottish fishing sector

A little over 10 years ago, I voted against the 2002 common fisheries policy (CFP) reform because it did not include steps towards zonal management of fisheries. After 12 years of over-centralised failure later, we have laid a foundation for the future upon which member states have an opportunity to push for more decentralised decision making.

The management of Scotland's fisheries over the past 40 years has been characterised by uncaring governments in London and an over-centralised approach in Brussels. The EU has acknowledged its past failings and is proposing a more decentralised CFP, shifting some responsibilities from Brussels back to individual member states.

Scotland's fishing industry was initially sold out by the UK Tories during

negotiations for European community membership, when the industry was described as 'expendable'. In 1983, UK prime minister Margaret Thatcher's government signed up to the first centralised CFP regulation. Subsequent 'reforms' in 1992 and 2002 retained the Brussels-centred approach. Throughout the recent reform process the commission has acknowledged the problems of this approach and have advocated some form of

regionalisation. The fact that the independence referendum coincides with CFP reform therefore affords Scotland's fishing communities a unique and exciting opportunity to help shape the new fisheries policy – with an independent Scotland at the heart of that process. And this is just one of many good reasons to opt for a 'yes' vote on 18 September. ★



*"Scotland's fishing industry was initially sold out by the UK Tories... when the industry was described as 'expendable'"*

Expendable fisheries sector 'sold out' by decentralisation, argues **Ian Hudghton**

**Ian Hudghton** is a Scottish National Party member of the European parliament

## EU and UK ‘critical to jobs’

Scotland should remain in the UK, and the UK should remain in Europe, says **George Lyon**

**George Lyon** is a Scottish Liberal Democrat member of the European parliament

Since 2010, the UK Liberal Democrats have made clearing up the economic mess inherited from Labour our top priority. We have had some success, with businesses across Scotland having helped more than 130,000 people back into work since we went into government. And we have worked in Europe to protect jobs too. We have led efforts at the European parliament to slash red tape and ensure that more money goes to projects that will create jobs.

Liberals want Scotland and the UK to remain in the EU because it is crucial to jobs and our economy. Our place in the EU allows us to tackle problems like cross-border crime and climate change that we simply cannot address on our own. With the indepen-

*“Our place in the EU allows us to tackle problems like cross-border crime and climate change that we simply cannot address on our own”*

dence referendum just around the corner it is also worth remembering what our place in the UK offers Scots in Europe. In Britain, we share crucial opt-outs on EU rules that let us keep the UK pound and a budget rebate that has returned billions to Scotland.

Just as the EU is vital to Scottish jobs, our place in the UK

also helps keep millions of Scots in work. England, Wales and Northern Ireland are our biggest market. We don’t need new barriers for businesses. In a world where things are changing all the time, we can achieve more when we work with those around us. That holds true for Scotland in the UK and the UK in Europe. This is why we are making the positive case for Scotland remaining in Britain, in Europe and in work at these elections. ★



## UK gives Scotland ‘global’ voice

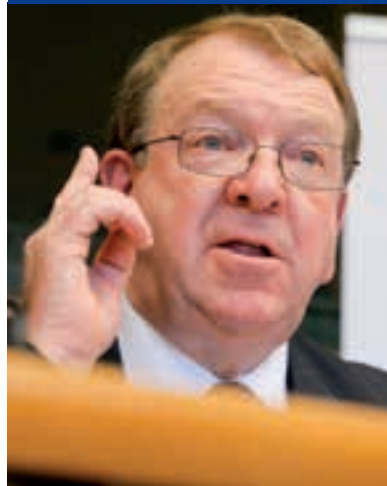
Scotland stands to lose its ‘international’ influence through independence, warns **Struan Stevenson**

**Struan Stevenson** is a Scottish Conservative member of the European parliament

The Scottish National Party constantly accuse the ‘better together’ campaign of being negative, so here are a few positive reasons why people should vote ‘yes’ for Scottish independence. If you want to join the eurozone, vote yes. New EU member states have no option but to join the eurozone whenever their economies converge.

If you want to join Schengen and erect border controls between Scotland and England – our biggest trading partner – vote yes. If you want to lose Scotland’s share of the annual EU budget rebate, vote yes for more costly membership of Europe. If you want to pay VAT on books, magazines, newspapers, children’s clothes and a host of other things, vote yes. The European commission says that

*“If you want Scotland to become the Saudi Arabia of renewables... vote yes”*



the zero rate of VAT, which the UK enjoys at the present time on 54 different items, including shipbuilding and aircraft construction and maintenance, cannot continue in an independent Scotland.

If you want Scotland to become the Saudi Arabia of renewables and to bristle with giant, useless wind turbines from end to end, vote yes. Alex Salmond’s obsession with wind has already driven over one million Scottish households into actual fuel poverty. If you want to lose our voice on the UN security council and in the G8 leading economic nations, vote yes. Scotland shares in the international influence enjoyed by the UK, in major global organisations. All that will end if we become independent. ★



## Scotland should continue with 'devolved government'

Since the agreement to hold a referendum over Scottish independence, we have had years of debate, uncertainty and soul-searching over Scotland's future. My views on this are simple: we should remain part of the United Kingdom and continue with devolved government.

Everyone knows Scotland – bagpipes, kilts, William Wallace, golf – and we are increasingly known for our fresh produce such as salmon, venison and black pudding. That our culture and identity are strong and world renowned, is something I am immensely proud of. The argument that Scottish identity cannot function within the constraints of the United Kingdom, or even English imperialism, is incredibly

weak and has so far failed to convince the Scottish people to vote 'Yes' in September.

We have, together with our English, Northern Irish and Welsh friends, built a strong UK. With devolved powers we

also have the best of both worlds, and can choose our own way for education, health and a whole host of areas. The financial crash was for me an acute reminder that the UK does not only let Scotland share in the rewards of working together, but also gives us protection from the volatile world outside.

Scotland's future is within the UK and continued membership of the EU. The Scottish parliament allows us to control key parts of Scottish society from a regional level, but I believe it is vital that we continue to send members of parliament to Westminster and play a prominent role in shaping the future of the UK ★

UK allows Scotland share in 'the rewards' of working together, argues **David Martin**



*"Scotland's future is within the UK and continued membership of the EU"*

**David Martin** is a Scottish Labour member of the European parliament

## Smith looking forward to Scotland contributing to EU as 'equal partner'

Scottish independence is about self-determination: the ability of people to work together collectively, using the full range of powers available to sovereign states, to develop their economy, society, and the life chances of every citizen to their full potential.

This is not an abstract concept for citizens in EU member states. EU countries cherish their independence, their right to represent themselves in international institutions, their ability to take decisions which reflect their needs and values.

Scotland has been on a different political path to England for several decades. With just eight per cent of the UK's population, the positions taken by the UK government, particularly on EU matters, on behalf of all four constitutive parts of the UK, consistently fail to reflect the Scottish position. Westminster's recent swing to the right has seen an even greater divide emerge between Scottish and English political feeling.

*"Scotland has been on a different political path to England for several decades"*



Independence allows us to choose our own destiny, not have that destiny determined for us by others. Political decisions impacting upon Scotland would be decided by Scots, with the values and needs of Scotland front and centre, not relegated behind complaints of London-based financial ser-

vices or south-east England's transport requirements.

Scotland has much to offer our European family: more top universities, per head, than any other country; 25 per cent of Europe's offshore wind and tidal potential; 60 per cent of the EU's oil reserves; a flourishing life science sector; world-class food and drink and much more. I look forward to the day when we can contribute as an equal partner to our European project. ★

Independence allows Scots to choose their own 'destiny', says **Alyn Smith**

**Alyn Smith** is a Scottish National Party member of the European parliament

# Scottish nationalists 'dismissing reality' of EU membership

Scotland benefits from the 'best of both worlds' in being part of UK and, in that, part of EU, argues **Blair McDougall**

**L**ike the majority of people in Scotland, I believe that our best future lies as members of the United Kingdom and the European Union. In a globally connected world, it makes sense to be breaking down barriers and ensuring that businesses and people have access to the opportunities that come from working across borders.

I do find it ironic that in the current debate on Scotland's future, the Scottish National Party (SNP) are all in favour of being part of the EU, but are absolutely committed to ending the UK. When you consider that our firms and businesses sell four times as much to the rest of the UK as they do to the eurozone, you have to wonder what lies at the heart of the nationalist case for breaking up Britain. It certainly doesn't seem to be economics.

We have benefited enormously from being part of the UK, just as it has from being part of the EU. We don't have to choose between the two. Staying in the UK and remaining part of the EU gives us the best of both worlds. Our continued membership of these two unions safeguards jobs and creates opportunities for our businesses and our people.

It is now abundantly clear that if we leave the UK we would be leaving the EU. Even the nationalists accept that. The

president of the European commission José Manuel Barroso suggested that it would be politically 'impossible' for Scotland to get back in. Even allowing for our application for membership eventually being accepted, there are big questions about the conditions that would be attached to that application.

To assert, as the nationalists do, that we would be waved in by every member state and be offered deal after deal that wasn't available to every other candidate country is utterly ridiculous. There would be tough negotiations involved. Negotiations that would be made all the tougher by the nationalists rather naïve decision to announce the date which Scotland would need to have everything concluded by. Getting a good deal with a ticking clock in the corner of the room would be tough.

On every issue, the SNP claim that we would be treated as a special case. We would not have to give a commitment to join the euro as every other country has had to do. We would not be required to sign up to the Schengen agreement as every other new member state has had to do. And we would be able to keep the UK's budget rebate, despite no longer being part of the UK.

Time and time again the nationalists dismiss reality and tell us that everything will be alright on the night if we leave the UK. We would be given a special deal – again, not available to any other country – on cross border

pension schemes. We would get enhanced deals for our farmers and fishermen. And we would somehow be able to flout EU law to discriminate against the rest of the UK by charging students from that country – and that country alone – fees to study at our world class universities.

As part of the UK, Scotland is one of the leading members of the EU. We have enormous influence and we have secured hard-won rebates and opt-outs from areas that we believe are not in our national interest. There is no reason to change that. We are stronger as part of the UK and that the UK is stronger as part of the EU. That is the best of both worlds. It is something worth preserving ★

*"It is now abundantly clear that if we leave the UK we would be leaving the EU"*



**Blair McDougall** is campaign director for 'Better Together'

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# Computational Horizons in Cancer (CHIC)

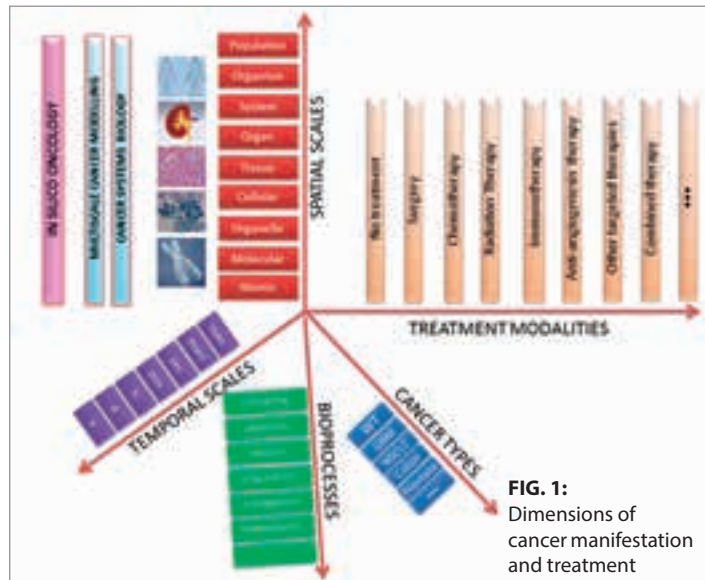
Developing Meta- and Hyper-Multiscale Models and Repositories for *In-Silico* Oncology (FP7-ICT-2011-9-600841)

**In silico** medicine, an emergent scientific and technological discipline based on clinically driven and oriented multiscale biomodeling, appears to be the latest trend regarding the translation of mathematical and computational biological science to clinical practice through massive exploitation of information technology. *In silico* (i.e. on the computer) experimentation for each individual patient, using their own multiscale biomedical data, including imaging, histological and molecular data, is expected to significantly improve the effectiveness of treatment in the future, since reliable computer predictions could suggest the optimal treatment scheme(s) and schedule(s) for each separate case.

In this context developing robust, reproducible, interoperable and collaborative hyper-models of diseases and normal physiology is a *sine qua non* necessity if rational, coherent and comprehensive exploitation of the invaluable information hidden within human multiscale biological data is envisaged. Responding to this imperative in the context of both the broad Virtual Physiological Human (VPH) initiative and the paradigmatic cancer domain, the transatlantic (EU-US) large scale integrating project CHIC has proposed the development of a suite of tools, services and secure infrastructure that will support accessibility and reusability of VPH multiscale mathematical and computational hypermodels.

These include a hypermodelling infrastructure consisting primarily of a hypermodelling editor and a hypermodelling execution environment, an infrastructure for semantic metadata management, a hypermodel repository, a hypermodel-driven clinical data repository, a distributed metadata repository and an *in silico* trial repository for the storage of executed simulation scenarios. Multiscale models and data are being semantically annotated using the ontological and annotating tools that are being developed. An image processing and visualization toolkit, and cloud and virtualization services are also being developed.

The CHIC tools, services, infrastructure and repositories will provide the community



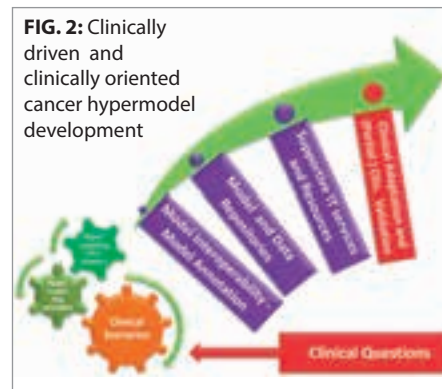
**FIG. 1:** Dimensions of cancer manifestation and treatment

Cancer hypermodels being collaboratively developed by the consortium cancer modellers provide the framework and the testbed for the development of the CHIC technologies. Clinical adaptation and partial clinical validation of hypermodels and hypermodel Oncosimulators will be undertaken.

Following a successful clinical adaptation and validation

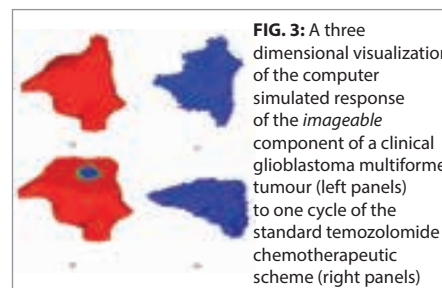
with a collaborative interface for exchanging knowledge and sharing work in an effective and standardized way. A number of open source features and tools will enhance usability and accessibility. In order to

of hypermodel Oncosimulators, experimentation *in silico* is expected to serve as both a patient individualized treatment optimizer by exploiting the patient's own multiscale data and a fundamental science based suggestion generator in designing inter alia the branches of new prospective clinical trials.



**FIG. 2:** Clinically driven and clinically oriented cancer hypermodel development

ensure clinical relevance and foster clinical acceptance of hypermodelling in the future, the whole endeavour is driven by the clinical partners of the consortium.



**FIG. 3:** A three dimensional visualization of the computer simulated response of the imageable component of a clinical glioblastoma multiforme tumour (left panels) to one cycle of the standard temozolomide chemotherapeutic scheme (right panels)

## Georgios S. Stamatakis

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More information is available on  
<http://www.chic-vph.eu/>

CHIC is funded by the European Commission with the amount of 10,582,000.00 € and co-ordinated by the Institute of Communication and Computer Systems – National Technical University of Athens. Seventeen partner organizations of world acclaim participate in the project. Start date: 1 April 2013. Duration: 4 years



## eHealth can provide ‘triple win’ situation

Over recent years, the European commission has been working hard to shape a new vision that puts people in control of their health and wellbeing. At the wheel are the patients, on the road towards efficient and effective healthcare. The benefits are a triple win: putting the patient in control, saving on costs and efficiency, and creating huge opportunities for innovative services and start-ups. This is the ethos behind our European innovation partnership for active and healthy ageing.

I will be attending the eHealth forum in Athens on 12-14 May, which will put this vision on the public stage at a time of substantial market opportunities. One of the key issues I will be discussing is the emergence of mobile health, or mHealth, defined as the use of mobile

phones, tablets and other wireless devices in healthcare. These are smart devices for disease self-management and remote monitoring, leading to prevention rather than cure, and more independent living; tools offering fitness and dietary tips as well as lifestyle and wellbeing apps. These new technologies can all help healthcare professionals treat patients more efficiently, get citizens more involved in managing their health and diseases and help member states deal with tight budgetary and human resources, while facing an ageing population.

*“The mHealth market is rapidly developing: around 100,000 health and wellbeing apps are already available across Apple’s AppStore, Google Play and on other global platforms”*

One example of an mHealth service is the EU-funded Reaction project which developed a mobile system that helps doctors and nurses within the hospital to treat patients with diabetes. Via sensors, the system monitors vital signals such as blood glucose levels

Patient empowerment, cost efficiency and boosts to innovative start-ups are benefits of embracing eHealth-friendly policies, writes Neelie Kroes





*"For all eHealth systems to work seamlessly across national borders, the many different systems used by hospitals and other healthcare providers need to be able to communicate with each other"*

for telemedicine alone is set to grow from €7.2bn in 2010 to €19.3bn by 2016. At the same time, the convergence between wireless communication technologies and health-care devices, and between health and social care is creating innovative new businesses. And as our population ages, the 'silver economy' is emerging as a

highly promising market.

On 9 April, the European commission published a consultation on mHealth to ask what should be done to increase user trust and patient safety in order to boost mHealth's contribution to high quality healthcare. We want to know whether this should be done regionally, nationally or at EU level. We want feedback on issues related to ensuring that health apps meet citizens' demands for quality and transparency. mHealth services must adhere to strict data protection rules, and we should be intelligent about how we use the data: we could prevent an epidemic in the future.

For all eHealth systems to work seamlessly across national borders, the many different systems used by hospitals and other healthcare providers need to be able to communicate with each other.

While projects such as epSOS have

taken great strides forward, this is not a widespread reality. On top of that, both patients and professionals need to learn to use these new systems. But perhaps the biggest challenge is the required change in mind-set: getting used to managing our health and care in a different way, from emailing your doctor to using devices to track your daily activities and levels of fitness.

In order to benefit from the great advantages which eHealth offers us, we of course need fast, reliable broadband networks, as well as a quality guarantee for high-quality connections end-to-end – the connections that new healthcare innovations may depend on. Our proposed safeguards for the open internet mean providers cannot just decide to block or throttle any content, application or services, including new health apps or services. And the successful vote of the connected continent regulation in the European parliament recently is a huge step forward in achieving this guarantee. ★

and administered drugs and gives therapy advice; the data stored on a server are shared via tablets used by the medical staff. This has significantly reduced the workload, increased the autonomy of nurses and improved the quality of care of diabetes patients.

The mHealth market is rapidly developing: around 100,000 health and wellbeing apps are already available across Apple's AppStore, Google Play and on other global platforms. So far, more than 200 million individuals have downloaded sports, fitness and health apps. The rise of mHealth is unstoppable and we want to ensure mHealth reaches its full economic and social potential and contributes to high-quality healthcare. This will create huge opportunities for innovative services, start-ups and the app economy.

Beyond mHealth, the market for digital health and wellbeing technologies is also growing rapidly. The global market

Neelie Kroes is  
European commission  
vice-president for the  
digital agenda



# Empowering Patients Through eHealth

## Cutting-edge pilots bringing the best from across Europe

In the context of an ageing population, and with an increasing number of chronic patients, patient empowerment is considered a key tool to improve quality and efficiency of the health delivery process and to reduce healthcare costs. Patient empowerment enables patients to stay easily informed and 'self-manage' their own health services.

The PALANTE ('PATIENTS Leading and mANaging their heaTHcare through EHealth') project focuses on the implementation, scaling up and optimisation of 7 demonstration pilots based on the concept of secure and user friendly online access by citizens to their medical and health data.

These pilots present innovations based on well-accepted international standards and have been designed following a modular architecture and therefore facilitating the integration of new modules. The wide experience of involved partners contributes to effective implementation.

The 7 pilots from across Europe and 2 additional on-going experiences in France and Denmark increase the empowerment of 70.000 patients during the pilot stage. Through these pilots the PALANTE project maximizes the potential of ICT technologies by validating at a large scale a significant number of pilots so all the mechanisms involved in patient empowerment are addressed.

In Andalusia, Spain, the aim is to demonstrate the benefits of the services that are focused on patients with diabetes by offering an electronic healthcare management and information system.

In Lombardy, Italy, the focus is on patients suffering from chronic heart failure. Ensuring patients' active involvement in the follow-up therapy will reduce second admissions.

Turkey offers a web-based shared patient-doctor decision support system, offering guidance based on the clinical guidelines published by European related disease societies.

The Norwegian pilot offers all patients at the hospitals of the South-East Region access to their health information. The pilot will also deliver tools for self-management to chronically ill patients.

The Styrian Hospital Holding (KAGes) in Austria develops a new module that provides summaries of the dosage of X-ray examinations in a personal eXray-Record.

The Czech pilot offers the opportunity to include scheduling appointments, vaccination calendar (alerts) and monitoring health indicators.

In Basque Country, Spain, The overall aim of the pilot is to introduce a tele-assistance service for chronic patients to provide them with treatment support, education and guidance so that they become active partners of their health management process.

♥ **Would you like to learn more about PALANTE?**

Visit our website at [www.palante-project.eu](http://www.palante-project.eu)

or contact coordinator Juan Lara:

[Juanl.Lara.exts@juntadeandalucia.es](mailto:Juanl.Lara.exts@juntadeandalucia.es)



*PALANTE has received funding from the European Union's ICT Policy Support Programme as part of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme under Grant Agreement No 297260*

# E-he@lth: Regions make it happen!

**E**uropean regions enjoy diverse competences: while many are directly in charge of health policies, others influence health and wellbeing in their territory through regional development policies.

"Regions are by nature flexible and have proven to be pioneers in many ways. Europe needs change and regions have a pivotal role in initiating effective change impulses. At the Assembly of European Regions (AER) there is a strong political engagement for e-health because we believe it can increase social and territorial cohesion", explains Karsten Uno Petersen, President of AER's Committee on Social Policy and Public Health.



The AER e-he@lth network, a platform for targeted interregional cooperation and lobbying, was created in 2007. The network is famous for its high-level ALEC conferences organised by

Norrbottn County Council (SE): 200 participants from across the globe gathered this year on the topic of the co-creating patient. "We need to pay attention to what patients and citizens want and to organize health services to support them. It is time to acknowledge the patient as a co-creative partner in health and social care," says Agneta Granström, Chair of AER's e-he@lth network and host of the conference.



Because e-health is not only about technology, but about delivering better, more accessible services, all regions have a crucial role to play. Close to citizens, they can mobilise a critical mass of stakeholders to effectively implement strategies.



#### Links:

[www.aer.eu](http://www.aer.eu)

AER e-he@lth network:

[www.aer.eu/en/knowledge-centre/thematic-expertise-thematic-issues/health/e-health.html](http://www.aer.eu/en/knowledge-centre/thematic-expertise-thematic-issues/health/e-health.html)

ALEC 2014 Arctic Light e-He@lth Conference:  
[www.nll.se/alec](http://www.nll.se/alec)

#### AER contact:

Johanna Pacevicius  
Coordinator  
[j.pacevicius@aer.eu](mailto:j.pacevicius@aer.eu)

## The HYDRIA\* study



HYDRIA is the national health and nutrition survey, implemented by the Hellenic Health Foundation (HHF) in collaboration with the Hellenic Center for Disease Control & Prevention (HCDCP) of the Ministry of Health. The survey focuses on the health and nutrition of a representative sample of the Greek population.

Data collection is accomplished with eight online applications, among which the HHF Nutrition Tool allows the collection of dietary data. It is a dynamic tool, developed and maintained in-house, compatible with all major browsers and features all the latest security enhancements.

The HHF Nutrition Tool provides standardized collection of dietary data from any location and time and resides at the HHF's own secure and private cloud hosted at HHF servers.

The software boasts features that include most of the electronic health management requirements allowing the end user to benefit from:

- lowering the cost of data acquisition and storage
- using the web to access and share data
- using the software to monitor and track health-related data of an unlimited number of study participants as it is fully scalable and flexible
- a low learning curve allowing health personnel to be trained towards a standardized data collection



[www.hhf-greece.gr](http://www.hhf-greece.gr) • [www.hydria-nhns.gr](http://www.hydria-nhns.gr)

\*Project Code MIS 346816, Thematic Priority "Consolidation of the reform in the Mental Health Sector. Development of Primary Health Care and promoting the Public Health of the population", Operational Programme "Human Resources Development", NSRF 2007-2013.

# EU's eHealth action plan gives 'added value'

The European Union is characterised by a wide range of high quality health systems. These systems are currently facing numerous challenges, in the form of increased demand for health services arising from the ageing of the population, the impact of chronic diseases, the mobility of patients and healthcare professionals, heightened public expectations as regards the quality of healthcare and increasingly tight healthcare budgets. We must find new ways to preserve the quality of our systems and continue doing the best to protect our fellow citizens' health, even in times of strong budgetary constraints. eHealth can go some way to meeting these challenges, as it provides a way of improving access to healthcare services for people living in remote and sparsely populated areas, of improving working conditions, reducing waiting times and, most importantly, of helping to ensure the provision of reliable, effective and high quality healthcare everywhere in the EU.

The treaty on the functioning of the EU stipulates that union action must complement national policies and be directed towards improving public health. The eHealth action plan 2012-2020 adopted by the commission in December 2012 is a remarkable example of 'European added value' in the area of health. Wholesale adoption of eHealth throughout the EU requires that healthcare service providers work together – beyond the areas for which they are responsible and linguistic boundaries – to provide high quality services focused on patient safety. Against this background, technical standardisation, interoperability

of European healthcare systems and the introduction of certification and authentication schemes applicable across the EU are paramount. For this to work, member states shall share their knowledge, experiences and good practices and cooperate with the commission to increase the effectiveness of eHealth systems across the EU. In particular, pioneer member states have to help by sharing their experiences with those which are less advanced, thus bringing Europe upward and eventually to the forefront of eHealth. Parliament's own initiative report underlined the importance of interoperability of eHealth systems and welcomes the commission's intention to propose an eHealth interoperability framework by 2015.

Besides technical challenges, moving towards eHealth is also a legal challenge for the European legislator. In order for the

The sharing of knowledge and best practice across borders, combined with technological improvements, can significantly improve Europe's health systems, writes **Pilar Ayuso**



*"We must find new ways to preserve the quality of our systems and continue doing the best to protect our fellow citizens' health, even in times of strong budgetary constraints"*





*"In order for the eHealth plan to be successfully implemented, it is also paramount that healthcare professionals are closely involved and adequately trained"*

general public and healthcare professionals to have faith and confidence in the benefits of eHealth applications, these must be given legal certainty. Data protection, confidentiality, privacy and responsibility are some of the key legal issues that need to be resolved in order for eHealth services to be successfully introduced. Against this background, the parliament's report welcomed the commission's intention to launch a study regarding the legal aspects of eHealth services.

It is essential that eHealth-related projects are developed with the best interests of patients in mind since, at the end of the day, the prime objective is to improve the quality of healthcare delivered to the public in the EU, without overlooking the cultural differences that exist between member states in the field of healthcare. Of course, in order for the eHealth plan to be successfully implemented, it is also paramount that healthcare professionals are closely involved and adequately trained. Against this background, the opinions of doctors, other healthcare professionals and of patients associations must be taken into account throughout the development of eHealth applications. They are the ones who will use these applica-

tions, which means that they must not only be convinced of their worth, but also know how to use them, and that all the requisite information must be made available and tailored in a clear manner for the field to which it relates.

The work undertaken is promising, and there is still much to do, for example, in the area of mobile health (mHealth). As such, the parliament also highlighted in its report the potential of "mHealth" and wellbeing applications for patients and the need to have a clear legal framework to ensure their development under medical scrutiny and safe adoption. We urged the commission to come forward with an 'mHealth action plan' and will therefore follow with interest the outcome of the broad stakeholders consultation on mHealth that the commission launched recently.

Last but not least, it is also worth noting that there is a solid potential market for eHealth – an important fact during times of economic downturn. The world market in telemedicine was worth €7.1bn in 2010, €8.4bn in 2011, and is forecast to continue expanding to €19.8bn in 2016, while the global mHealth market is set to grow to €17.5bn a year by 2017. ★

**Pilar Ayuso** is parliament's rapporteur on the eHealth action plan 2012-2020 – innovative healthcare for the 21st century



# Health Informatics: hopes and challenges for Geneva University Hospitals

**H**ealth and medicine are the preferred fields for new information technologies. Sometimes adopted with enthusiasm, sometimes with suspicion, experienced as a natural evolution that goes along with that of the media, they have become omnipresent.

## Electronic health record: a first in Switzerland

The core of these technologies is around the electronic health record. Just like the banking processes, this folder is computerised, with a huge benefit to the safety and quality of care. Rapid and ubiquitous access to the results of examinations or tests, documents that are no longer lost, a better communication between professionals, powerful decision support systems, many features whose benefits are proven by numerous studies.

Thanks to the Geneva University Hospitals (HUG), this computerised system exists for 10 years. With the establishment of a legal framework, and afterwards with a technical infrastructure ([www.mondossiermedical.ch](http://www.mondossiermedical.ch)), various stakeholders have access to all the necessary information at key moments. This scalable platform is a first in Switzerland. Several features are integrated into the online medical record, for example a warning on drug interactions and allergies; in the longer term, a link between the treatment plan and prescription applications. Another dynamic tool is provided: shared plan of care, whose objective is to build a synthetic schedule containing parameters entered by

different health professionals, and selected in collaboration with the patient, such as weight, blood pressure, diet, etc.

This movement goes beyond the frontiers of medicine in order to enter in our everyday life. Thusly, many fitness enthusiasts practice their sports equipped with heart rate monitors, pedometers; scales are connected and allow monitoring the evolution of weight. All this foreshadows the convergence of medical records and of personal health record which everyone else will have tomorrow, currently following the example of electronic vaccination record developed in Switzerland at HUG ([www.mesvaccins.ch](http://www.mesvaccins.ch)).

## Benefits and hopes

There is ample evidence that good communication and a quick and reliable access to medical data are key elements to improve the safety and quality of care. In complex diseases or involving several stakeholders, accessing information and relevant results previously obtained allows a significant improvement of the management, with gains of time and resources, and avoids particularly repeating tests.

In addition, these systems provide an important contribution in public health. Thus, unknown side effects of medicines can be reported more quickly, the beginning of epidemics can be detected earlier or specialised consultation can be easily found via an application such as SmartHUG.

## Risks and fears

The major risk, which raises great suspicion, is the intrusion in the private life and security of personal data belonging to the personal sphere. Taking into account these risks, the projects developed in Geneva are part of a highly secure approach that puts the patient at the heart of the management of access rights. In the file of shared care, the patient decides who has access to his/her file and what information can be seen, when and by whom. This approach has attracted since it was included in the draft federal law on the electronic patient record.



**More information**  
[www.hug-ge.ch](http://www.hug-ge.ch)

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# eHealth maximises 'efficiency' of patient care

The innovations of eHealth bring patients and doctors closer, making care available even in the most remote areas. This combination of traditional health and ICT tools make it possible to highly increase the chances of better prevention, treatment and control of diseases.

I consider that this specific sector of health represents a step forward in dealing with the struggles of modern health systems by increasing their efficiency in a way that we could only imagine a few years ago. Developed and implemented according to members' states individual needs, eHealth has far-reaching benefits for both patients and medical personnel.

We are dealing with an ageing population, with numerous chronic diseases, with poverty and diminished access to health services, treatments and medication, increased mobility of people, and not the least with the negative impact of the economic crisis on our health budgets.

eHealth makes it possible to bring care and treatment closer to the homes of patients. Among the many eHealth benefits, there are the real-time monitoring of a patient, more affordable medical services in the long run, as well as the gathering and communicating of patient data that leads to a better and faster diagnosis wherever the patient is. Not to mention the added value of the opportunity to have a multidisciplinary approach to a patient's condition by investigating the human body as a single complex system.

ICT and health tools create better prepared practitioners who have the possibility to constantly update and exchange data and best practices among themselves for the benefit of medicine and society. The growing market of

ICT not only has the potential to boost the European economy, but, correlated with health, brings us closer to our aim of universal access to healthcare.

At this moment, the eHealth market is very fragmented. We have lots of data gathered by individual organisations that need to be structured. For this to happen, it is necessary that we have standardised and interoperable healthcare systems in the EU. Once data protection rules are in place and healthcare providers and all stakeholders decide to cooperate, there will be a smooth operation of eHealth tools. The commission is the most appropriate actor to take a leading role in establishing standards and a much needed interoperability framework for eHealth in the EU.

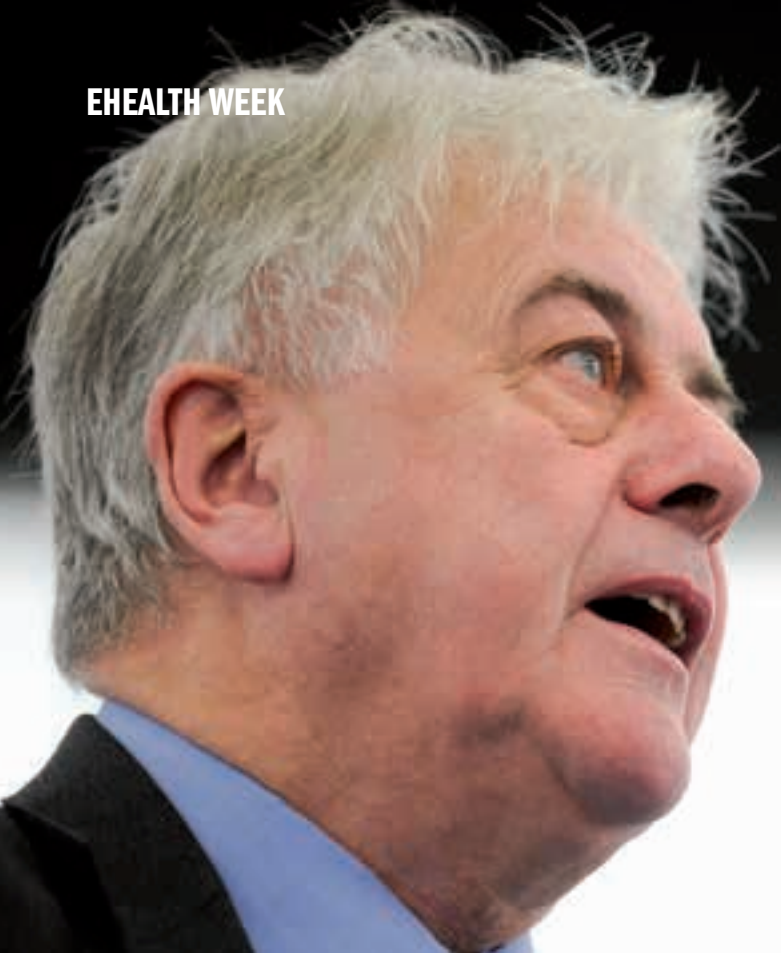
As S&D shadow for the eHealth action plan, I was pleasantly surprised to see that all the political groups in parliament had a similar, positive approach towards eHealth. The S&D amendments focused on the need for member states to facilitate tailored access to IT tools and training for all sectors of the population, including the elderly and the less able, in order to avoid exacerbating social inequalities. mHealth was a central element of the amendments due to its potential; it was required that applications for mobile devices for patients to be developed under the appropriate medical scrutiny. The commission was required to come forward with an 'mHealth action plan' that would provide for guidelines on market surveillance of such applications and would ensure data protection and the reliability of the health information provided. Other amendments required the use of EU structural funds and other

financial support to establish eHealth infrastructure, actions to help closing the digital gap between different regions and a sharing of good practices between stakeholders in eHealth. eHealth brings us one step closer to efficient healthcare systems in the EU. ★

*"eHealth makes it possible to bring care and treatment closer to the homes of patients"*

Innovative eHealth systems are a step towards increased access to treatment and care for EU patients, argues **Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu**





## Health sector ICT usage lagging '10 years behind'

An evolution in healthcare processes is long overdue, warns **Jim Nicholson**

In the UK we have cultivated a healthy respect for our remarkable but blundering national health service. Nevertheless, as the pressure of an ageing European population takes its toll on resources, our unwieldy and fragmented health services across the European Union no longer seem fit for purpose.

There is no doubt that healthcare lags 10 years behind almost every other sector in the introduction of innovative IT provisions. With one click of an app on our mobile phones we can access our bank balance, but not our medical records; we can book a hotel, but not a doctor's appointment; and we can order groceries, but not our prescription. A huge chasm exists between available technology and its application to ongoing healthcare provision.

A 'beacon' group of member states, including Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Spain and Sweden, have powered ahead in establishing dynamic national eHealth initiatives. ePrescribing, online access to patient records, remote monitoring of chronic illness and integrated information sharing are common place. Patients are informed and empowered to take responsibility for the management of their wellbeing, which many believe could deliver enormous savings for our overstretched health services.

For 10 years now the European commission has been publishing eHealth action plans, guidelines, communications, pilot projects and networks to relatively limited effect. For our healthcare systems to evolve we can no longer accept political apathy. The

eHealth action plan 2012-2020 on innovative healthcare for the 21st century is an instruction leaflet that should be read from cover to cover, not thrown to the back of the medicine cabinet.

The European parliament has written an overly prescriptive report. However, when we remove the unnecessary packaging we find three fundamentally useful recommendations. First, we must improve our national policies on eHealth. Efficient and cost effective healthcare provision must be the ultimate objective, but we can only achieve this if we implement national policies which are tailored to the strengths and weaknesses of each member state. Second, we must encourage collaboration between patients, healthcare professionals and ICT developers. Neither the problems nor the solutions will be identified if one link in this communication chain is missing. And finally, we must protect patient data. eHealth has enormous potential, but we cannot harness this potential without a coherent legal framework to manage its use. Patients must be confident that their data is not abused or mishandled.

An evolution in healthcare provision is long overdue. eHealth is part of the evolution but it will necessitate better training, further research and innovation, and more targeted funding in order to exploit its full potential within our established healthcare systems. This report is a useful supplement to national and EU action plans on eHealth. Let us hope these plans make greater advancements in the next 10 years than we have seen to date. ★

*"A huge chasm exists between available technology and its application to ongoing healthcare provision"*

**Jim Nicholson** is parliament's ECR group shadow rapporteur on the eHealth action plan 2012-2020 – innovative healthcare for the 21st century

# Europe can 'rise to challenge' of unleashing bioeconomic potential

Over the coming decades the EU will find itself having to address major social and energy challenges. It is against this backdrop that bioeconomy could be the answer to fossil fuel dependency and the route to take towards intelligent growth. Taking a longer-term view, it could also prove to be the answer in terms of food safety, reduced environmental impact, waste recycling, sustainable use of resources and increased employment. Bioeconomy could also make a significant contribution towards stemming and actually reversing the tide of deindustrialisation currently afflicting Europe. Indeed, investment in this sector would mean promoting the creation of new value chains and containing the number of abandoned industrial sites, while at the same time sustaining economic and social development with a return to very high levels of employment.

In order for this potential to be fully deployed, an all-encompassing approach made up of interconnected instruments and cohesive initiatives and policies is required. The bioeconomy model needs to be viewed as a synthesis involving a synergy between European policies on agriculture, industry, the environment, research and innovation and between the various decision-making levels – from the community to the regional and local – so as to create a coordinated environment in which it would be possible for there to be a constant exchange of knowledge, skills, information and knowhow.

It will likewise be important to back and develop cohesive, interconnected research programmes, make provision for instruments to support industrial investment and, above all, ensure that the results achieved have the maximum impact on society and are fully understood by the citizens of Europe.

Europe has the capacity to rise to such challenges and is in the process of putting in place the tools which will enable it to address the needs presented by the challenges in question. Indeed, a great many initiatives have been undertaken in this regard. In July 2013, the parliament approved its opinion in the



*"Bioeconomy could... be the answer to fossil fuel dependency and the route to take towards intelligent growth"*

matter of bioeconomy, underlining its potential and highlighting the benefits which its coherent development could bring to the European economy and growth, while at the same time calling upon the commission to set out an appropriate strategy.

It was on the back of these recommendations that the work needed to set up the bioeconomy observatory and the European bioeconomy panel was embarked upon, the respective aims of which being to provide the political decision makers and interested parties with data and analyses on a regular basis so as to monitor the development of bioeconomy, supporting the implementation of the relevant strategy, and contributing to the strengthening of the synergies and cohesion between policies, initiatives and

the economic sectors concerned.

Work has recently been concluded on the proposal for a council regulation on the bio-based industries joint undertaking, aimed at launching the joint bio-based industries technological initiative (bio-based industries JTI) which, initiated for a period expiring on 31 December 2024, will be a European Union organisation. The new forms of partnership fostered by the bio-based industries JTI will be able to combine the joint contribution of both the public and private sector, and will themselves make a significant contribution to economic recovery by making it possible to support new projects, promote the development of new products and, above all, ensure their actual transfer to market, reducing the risk of more favourable conditions prompting the migration of excellence and innovative projects away from Europe.

All this is the measure of the dynamic, all-encompassing, multi-disciplinary approach which Europe has adopted in the preparation of its bioeconomic strategy. Indeed, only an approach of this kind will be able to resolve critical economic issues and, in the longer term, create more sustainable and effective production, consumption, development and lifestyle models, capable of reviving the process of European growth ★

The EU's bioeconomic strategy could provide much-needed answers to many of the bloc's problems, explains **Paolo Bartolozzi**

**Paolo Bartolozzi** is parliament's rapporteur on innovation for sustainable growth: a bioeconomy for Europe



# EU must support desire for 'energy independence'

Political commitment is vital to ensuring the establishment of a greener, self-sufficient economy, argues **Judith Merkies**

All the recent buzz about the bio-based economy may lead us to think that it is a whole new discipline in politics. In fact it is not. The story of Henry Ford and bioethanol should remind us of how misguided political decisions can lock us into dependency on an energy source of lesser choice.

The bio-economy, now associated with high-end application of agricultural output, is not so bound to this era after all. Over the past few centuries, entrepreneurs have developed cellophane, rubber, paper and a broad range of other materials gleaned from biomass. Lately the bio-based economy and especially the potential of biomass gained renewed attention, perhaps because of the augmented diplomatic tensions that, especially for the European Union, have rekindled the desire to be energy independent.

However, the EU and its member states are not living up to this desire. Member states delay the implementation of an EU internal energy market and the European commission has failed to draft strong binding targets for energy efficiency, renewable energy and carbon emissions. Against this backdrop, it would seem almost naive to expect coherent and ambitious EU legislation on the use of bio-energy. Yet, failing to do so would resemble the ill-fated choices that have partly led to the fact that we are fossil fuel dependent in the first place.

To illustrate this point, we can think of Henry Ford, who set the standard for the modern automobile with his mass production of the Ford model-T. His preferred fuel was not gasoline, but ethanol – a type of alcohol made from corn or sugar. He thought this auto fuel could help to strengthen linkages between the farm and the city. "If we want the American farmer to be our customer, we must find a way to become his customer," he said.

Back then, as Daniel Yergin exposes in his book *The Quest*, the support for

alcohol was almost ubiquitous among stakeholders, and even General Motors hailed the fuel as a clean and inexhaustible alternative for gasoline. However, when the US prohibition was adopted, and all 'intoxicating drinks' were banned, in order to prevent gas pumps from becoming potential 'speakeasies' (covert pubs for alcohol consumption), it was ruled that the ban included ethanol. As a consequence, the green alternative for fossil-based fuel fell behind, and never managed catch up with gasoline.

As of 2014, we are at a crossroads again. Save from a very conservative (but powerful) part of the industry lobby, everyone agrees that we have to move away from import dependency for energy. A growing coalition, including US president Barack Obama, upholds that the future of Europe is on shale gas, and a recent editorial comment of the *Financial Times* championed a shale gas-friendly regulation for Europe.

However, the ethanol example shows how energy decisions can unintentionally lay down standards for decades. Rash decisions can have far-reaching consequences. Therefore, for each energy decision we make, we have to think on a coherent long-term framework in which the development of this energy source takes place.

As for biomass, it is important to note that this energy source can reduce our import dependency and help to green our economy. Today, biomass provides about seven per cent of the total EU energy need, but the patchwork of national rules that is now in place hampers sustainable entrepreneurs that want to invest. Therefore, we need a European framework that lays down encompassing rules and criteria for real sustainable use of biomass. If the European commission finally presented its long postponed criteria for sustainable biomass, this would be a good step. For history teaches us that without the commitment of leaders, a greener and more self-sufficient economy will not establish itself. ★



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**Judith Merkies** is a member of parliament's industry, research and energy committee



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# EU has 'failed' to support climate friendly bioenergy

The 2030 climate and energy framework must ensure 'real climate mitigation', says Sini Eräjää

Bioenergy is not new in the European energy mix. Long before the era of renewable energy policies, wood and other biomass were being used as energy sources. Although Europe has recently seen a major rise in solar and wind energy production, bioenergy still delivers the majority of what is classified as 'renewable energy' in the EU today. Yet bioenergy production and use has now taken a whole new direction.

Bioenergy production has until now principally relied on raw materials which are not directly used by other industries which create higher value products, or on what is locally available. However, more recently, policy mandates incentivising the use of bioenergy have turned the tables. Europe's hunger for energy is pushing us to use crops for energy rather than for food, exploit new areas of forests and to convert natural ecosystems into biomass plantations. The energy sector is no longer at the bottom of the pecking order when it comes to tapping biomass resources.

The international panel on climate change (IPCC) has warned in its recent report about the "emergent risks" related to the use of bioenergy as a mitigation strategy and about "policy shifts in developed countries favouring the expansion of large-scale bioenergy production". The IPCC even states that high levels of biomass production (as predicted in some of its own mitigation scenarios) would have "significant implications for land use, water and energy, as well as food production and pricing" if no change in the management and operation of bioenergy production takes place.

Keeping in mind that the driver of the increasing bioenergy use has been EU's climate mitigation efforts, it is quite ironic, and also worrying, that we are turning to sources of bioenergy that may not even deliver greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions, at least not in the next few decades. We already know that

due to the increased biomass demand, the carbon stocks of Europe's forests are at risk of diminishing. The carbon that is released when wood is burnt today will take decades to be reabsorbed. Currently no sector is held responsible for these emissions, let alone paying back the 'carbon debt' accumulated.

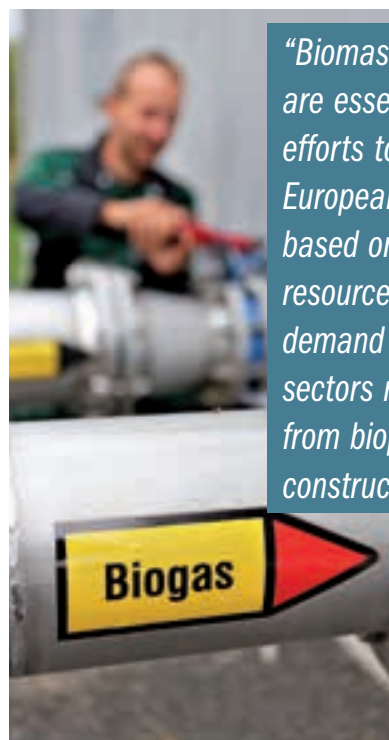
As the world is running out of fossil resources or no longer able to use them, a return to the bio-based economy is inevitable. Biomass resources are essential to our efforts to build a European economy based on renewable resources, with demand from sectors ranging from bioplastics to construction. Ensuring that use of biomass does not exceed the limits of what the world's ecosystems can sustainably supply should now be our highest priority. To support the burning of raw materials which would sustain the bioeconomy is a foolishness Europe can no longer afford.

As use for energy should only be a last resort for biomass use, different kinds of residues and waste from forest industries, households, food processing and agriculture are clearly the

most beneficial forms of bioenergy. These are also the forms of bioenergy delivering the highest GHG savings.

Until now, EU policies have failed to support the more climate-friendly types of bioenergy, to ensure that valuable resources won't be wasted and that the EU's emissions savings won't be faked through false carbon accounting. These challenges have been left to the new commissioners and the

new parliament. The 2030 climate and energy framework needs to take a new approach to bioenergy use that delivers real climate mitigation and ensures that there will also be biomass left to build a bioeconomy. ★



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Sini Eräjää is EU biomass policy officer at Birdlife Europe and the European environmental bureau (EEB)

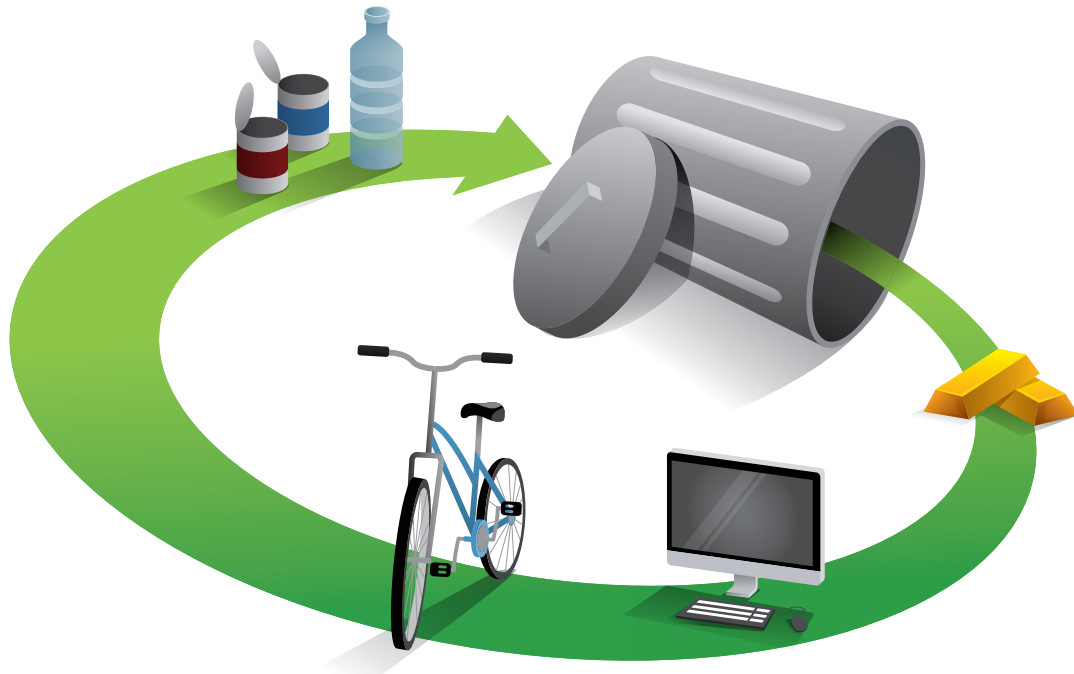


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