

## Greece should not go the way of Weimar Republic

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Greek society is currently squeezed by austerity policies imposed by international creditors, while people are thinking and acting under a feeling of anger and confusion. This has put in contradiction the political class and the civil society, thus minimizing the chances for cooperation in order to propose viable solutions, badly needed at this moment by the country. The whole picture is hauntingly reminiscent of the conditions that prevailed in Germany between the two world wars: increasing unemployment and poverty, forced cuts in wages

and social transfers, all of which within the context of international economic crisis, create a tendency to reinforce the extreme political parties.

Today, the Greek political landscape is shaped according to acceptance or rejection of the austerity programme arising from the international obligations of Greece. Political parties viewed as opposing the austerity programme certainly lead Greece out of the Euro; on the other side, those considered to be favoring the austerity measures and the restructuring policies imposed by international creditors are not sure to have the power to keep Greece inside the eurozone, and finally in the European Union. **Page 9**

## Kazakh hack attacked



A journalist in western Kazakhstan, who writes critically about the Central Asian nation's authoritarian government, has been stabbed and shot in an attack that his colleagues say may have been motivated by his reporting. Attackers opened fire on Lukpan Akhmedyarov, 36, a reporter with independent newspaper Uralskaya Nedelya, outside his home in the city of Uralsk. Raul Uporov, a photographer at Uralskaya Nedelya, said on 20 April that witnesses saw five people attacking Akhmedyarov outside his home late at night. **Page 29**



## FRANCE

Faced with a virtual no-win scenario in the second round of the presidential elections, the incumbent French president, Nicolas Sarkozy...

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## EDUCATION

"The world moves, and ideas that were once good are not always good." Fairly obvious, but in EU policy-making these words of Dwight Eisenhower are often...

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## LOBBYING

I have read with the utmost interest your critique of the European Citizens' Initiative and as insightful as it was, it did spur me to write a few lines on this subject...

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## UKRAINE

Recent reports that Yulia Tymoshenko was assaulted by guards have angered the European Union. Ukraine's former prime minister and opposition leader...

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## KASSANDRA



The tide is turning, the winds are changing

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## INTERVIEW PAGAN AMUM

# Sudan oil turned off

## South Sudan looks to build new pipelines

The newly independent state of South Sudan is planning an oil pipeline to Lamu in Kenya and a second to Djibouti to break an 'oil blockade' by Sudan, which has halted the oil exports that consist of 98% of South Sudan's income according to Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) Secretary General Pagan Amum, who gave an interview to New Europe, where he discussed oil, dealing with China, the international community's response to difficulties with Sudan and the verdict against Charles Taylor at the International Criminal Court.

Amum explained the current situation, "Unfortunately, the government of Sudan started a very hostile position by wanting to charge 36% for the transit of oil. International standard practice is to charge \$1 per barrel. Secondly, the government decided to practice state piracy, by stealing and diverting our oil in transit through their country, making it impossible for our oil to reach the market. Thirdly they also imposed an embargo, blocking buyers' ships from docking in Port Sudan to load the oil."

The end result is "we are unable to export our oil through Sudan. There is too much risk and uncertainty, not just for ourselves, but also for our buyers. For all these reasons, Port Sudan is a risky transit area for access to the international markets."

Claiming the Khartoum regime had "imposed an economic blockade"

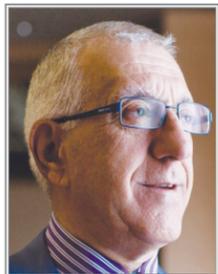


A Sudanese worker inspects the damage to a burnt oil processing facility in Sudan's main petroleum centre of Heglig bordering with South Sudan on April 24, 2012. South Sudan's leader accused Sudan of declaring war as Khartoum's warplanes bombed border regions in defiance of international calls for restraint. | AFP PHOTO/EBRAHIM HAMID

Amum, who is also the Chief Negotiator for the Juba administration said, "we have been forced to reroute our imports and trade through Uganda, Ethiopia and Kenya. Previously we were receiving 90% of our imports through Sudan, now almost 100% through these three countries." He added that he couldn't see any resumption of economic activity with Khartoum "until they change their policy, an economic war on our nation."

In response, the Juba based government is planning two new pipelines that will avoid Sudan. One will lead to Djibouti, which is seen as problematic because of some mountainous terrain which presents a technical challenge, and the preferred option will head to Lamu. "It will cost us about \$7 a barrel to transport our oil to the Kenyan coast and we will own the pipeline." **Continue on page 5**





POLITICS

## Greece should not go the way of Weimar Republic

By Nikitas Kaklamanis

Great changes in political history were accomplished by large majorities and not by fractured political systems, as was the case in Weimar Republic.

Greek society is currently squeezed by austerity policies imposed by international creditors, while people are thinking and acting under a feeling of anger and confusion. This has put in contradiction the political class and the civil society, thus minimizing the chances for cooperation in order to propose viable solutions, badly needed at this moment by the country. The whole picture is hauntingly reminiscent of the conditions that prevailed in Germany between the two world wars: increasing unemployment and poverty, forced cuts in wages and social transfers, all of which within the context of international economic crisis, create a tendency to reinforce the extreme political parties.

Today, the Greek political landscape is shaped according to acceptance or rejection of the austerity programme arising from the international obligations of Greece. Political parties viewed as opposing the austerity programme certainly lead Greece out of the Euro; on the other side, those considered to be favoring the austerity measures and the restructuring policies imposed by international creditors are not sure to have the power to keep Greece inside the eurozone, and finally in the European Union.

The key issue, asked by most Greeks, is whether political forces that will emerge from the elections scheduled for 6th of May (at least those advocating compliance with Greece's international obligations) will be in a position to renegotiate with European Union and the IMF a new mix of policies, based not only on austerity but also on growth. This comes down to convincing the "troika", (EU, the IMF, and Eu-

ropean Central Bank) to abandon their strict "accounting" view on Greek economy, and adopt a more flexible approach, one that would let some light appear at the end of the tunnel.

Personally, I am one of those who, as a member of the European Parliament, didn't vote in favor of the Euro; the reason was that what was presented as "Economic and Monetary Union" was only "Monetary" and not at all "Economic." My fears of that time about the impact of Euro's adoption on the Greek economy were unfortunately confirmed. However, if entering the eurozone was a mistake for Greece, exiting the eurozone, today, would certainly be a catastrophe.

This is a bitter truth that Greek voters must take into account when deciding next Sunday. If logic prevails over anger, then yes Greece have a chance.

Nikitas Kaklamanis  
Former Mayor of Athens



POLITICS

## The far right is on march

By Sajjad Karim MEP

The rallying cry is "La bataille de France ne fait que commencer," and to the supporters of Marine Le Pen she embodies the battle for France.

Le Pen may not have the votes to enter the Élysée Palace but her three million supporters are key to who becomes France's next President. And the mainstream knows it. Within hours of the first round being over both Sarkozy and his socialist challenger Francois Hollande lurched to the right. Le Pen's success mirrors nationalist advances in Holland, Austria, Finland and Greece as anger over austerity, unemployment, and bailout fatigue deepen.

In Greece, the Golden Dawn ultra-nationalist party is taking advantage of fears over illegal immigration and the dire economy. Its leader wants a "Clean Greece, only for Greeks and a safe Greece," and his message is striking a chord.

Golden Dawn may only get a handful of MPs but it is influencing the agenda; the two main parties in Greece have begun using Golden Dawn's rhetoric.

In the Netherlands, the refusal of the far-right Freedom Party to back austerity measures led the Dutch government to collapse.

Whoever wins the French election will be thwarted every step of way. Le Pen's support means she's likely to gain a large number of MPs in June's French Parliamentary Elections. This means she can influence the Presidential agenda. The next French President may not work with Le Pen but he will have to listen to her.

She's not quite a winner but she is a kingmaker. And that is worrying. The far right is on the march.

I don't believe the citizens of Europe are becoming more racist. I believe they are frustrated at the perceived

mismangement of the economic crisis, high unemployment, immigration, low growth and painful cuts. To win elections politicians raise expectations to a level they can't possibly deliver; this undermines the political system.

Ten European leaders and six governments have fallen since the start of the economic crisis.

The region's economic insecurity could translate into greater gains for the far right?

The far right is definitely gaining strength, thanks partly to efforts to revamp its previously racist and fascist image. Gone are the swastika tattooed skin heads and in their place are Saville Row suits and respectable hair cuts. Instead of open racial attacks, they play up a threat to national identity and criticize multiculturalism,

We need to change to meet the growing threat. We must understand their support is built on more than simple racism. Yes, we need to expose their vile true politics but we also need to address the issues they campaign on. We need to reconnect with people and give them a positive reason to cast their vote away from the far right.

If immigration is the concern, then we need to articulate the positive as well as strengthen our borders. In Britain the National Health Service or NHS is something of a national religion. It couldn't and wouldn't work without skilled and unskilled immigrant workers, yet nobody says that. We need to shout that from the roof tops.

There is change afoot, but unless we act now then we may find the change not to our liking. Many mainstream voters are staying at home and we can and must do something about that. We, in the centre, have to set the agenda, it has to be responsive and positive. If we don't then the alternative is far far worse.

Sajjad Karim MEP, (UK, ECR)



Constructive Ambiguity



## The right man

By Andy Carling

When they launched their new international channel, the head of al Jazeera explained the philosophy behind their approach, "It's always prime time somewhere." One of handicaps to the smooth running of the EU is that it's always election time, somewhere in the union. While we applaud the electoral process, elections are always a difficult time. The campaigns tend to be long, the parties would say it allows a thorough discussion of the important issues and platforms. However, given that there is no debate of any substance, a more likely explanation is that advertisers want a long campaign to line their pockets deeply enough to survive the economic ineptitude of those who hunger after high office.

The long suffering public, aware of a tsunami of tripe heading their way, dive for cover. The real problem, of course, is with the politicians, that small collection of the odd, the unusual and the frankly freaky who make up the European heads of state. It is possible to summon up some sympathy for them, after all politics is a brutal sport and the verdict of the voters is swift. How can we forget the sight of Tony Blair, after a decade of power, looking stranded on a railway station as the cars, the bodyguards and the trimmings of power were with Gordon Brown.

Don't feel too sad: Tony's done well for himself since then, mainly by treating global politics as some sort of supermarket sweep.

Sarkozy is another one who has been a little light headed, or to put it better, right headed since the electioneering began. The great European threatened to throw away all his previously declared deep beliefs in order to seduce Marine Le Pen's supporters. That led to a small but significant slide in the polls and now the first round is in, he is looking like a loser, and worse than that, a man who has trapped himself.

All he can do now is solicit the far right votes, and that's solicit in the same sense that scantily clad young ladies solicit passing MEPs by the Gare du Nord. It wouldn't surprise me to see him offer to ditch Strasbourg and set up the European Parliament's second home in a Vichy spa town.

I try to reassure my French friends by noting that only one far right extremist got through to the second round, it could have been worse. In the US, the far right have turned the GOP into a freak show, aided by a religious fundamentalism that even bin Laden would regard as being a tad narrow minded, and the winner, or to give Romney his official title, 'Holder of the Poisoned Chalice,' has now got to persuade people that when he started spouting enough nonsense to grab the nomination, he was somehow joking. His only succor is that the other candidates were talking far more nonsense, their reward will be a talk show. Romney's is a defeat. The real problem is that this lunge to the right is based on a belief that the public are fools, who want simple sloganeering because anything more nuanced is just beyond the poor dears. The strategy is I'll tell them what I think they want to hear, grab their votes and carry on as usual. Hardly a view that respects the citizen, or democracy.

Perhaps that is what the 'emergency populists' have in common with the dross of the far right, a contempt for democracy. People should note that and vote accordingly.

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