

# My right is your duty – Fiat Euro! 10/2013

*African holiday without potholes. European Official? "No, you must have mistaken me for somebody else!" Inspectors forgot to check on themselves. Guaranteed Spanish investment.*

It's great to have the right to housing, or health care. But one must realize that neither houses nor surgeries fall from the sky. Somebody has to be there to provide them. An increase in the rights of one must always be balanced by restricting rights of others.

Ignoring this relationship is quite common in politics and they have particular specialists for that in Brussels. For lack of space let us just mention a gimmick named the [right to a basic bank account for everyone](#) (in fact, such rule will maybe be essential, as more and more Member States are [prohibiting people from using cash](#) in order to have better oversight of their transactions).

A more interesting proposal is the one for the [right to employment for young people](#). Europe's response to the growing youth unemployment is not more flexible labour codes or minimum wages that would at least offset the disadvantages that some youngsters without work experience have compared to older people. Nor is their answer a reduction of the tax burden on the youth (actually, we've recently done the exact opposite in Slovakia, increasing the cost of students work in some cases by as much as 30%). The answer is, as always, only an increased money flow from European taxpayers to various European work schemes and programmes.

Although the EU budget is only a drop in the ocean when compared with ESM, nevertheless there are quite decent funds in it - for example for vote buying. By which we don't mean buying the members of the parliament this time, however, but the Member States directly. EU still cannot agree on a final budget, European Parliament therefore recently pledged [18.5 billion euros as a bonus](#) for Member States, if they finally vote. For example, Mayotte, a mini island somewhere near Madagascar which became a Department of France two years ago and will become EU territory as of 01.01.2014, will cash in two hundred million. The holidaymaking EU officials probably complained about the roads quality...

Bribing the Member States and their citizens will maybe have to be intensified. Not only the support for UKIP, an UK eurosceptic party, increases, the bad Continental euro-mood also translates into politics. A new Austrian eurosceptic party Team Stronach achieved [interesting results](#) in regional elections, and thanks to some deserting deputies, now even has some representatives in the current parliament. Similarly in Germany, a [new "anti-bailout"](#)

[party](#) was formed, accompanied with substantial media buzz, the answer from the voter was, however, rather lukewarm.

This euro mood is however kind a good one compared to that in Greece. A document was recently released to public, in which the Commission advises the European civil servants travelling to Greece to [conceal the true purpose](#) of their journey and to always have some invented backup story to tell at disposal. So much to the European integration and peace building by Brussels...

This is not the only interesting news from Greece this week. Only recently the truth came out that during the financial hurricane period in Greece two years ago, the run on the Greek banks was so heavy that the government had to [secretly deliver](#) the banknotes "Par Avion" from other Member States. Cash in circulation in the Greek economy has grown since the beginning of the debt crisis from 20 to 48 billion euros. People's anger doesn't remain completely unanswered. The former mayor of Thessaloniki was given life imprisonment previous week, the former defence minister was sentenced to [8 years in prison](#) and confiscation of property the last one. And he just committed only a relatively trivial crime (in Greek terms) - he did not declare income of about 100 000 euros.

Generally, it is difficult to enforce taxes in Greece. Those who want to survive the huge tax increases during the crisis can barely avoid doing some magic with their tax liabilities. There are even concerns that the [130 tax inspectors avoid paying taxes](#). Tax evasion is another good excuse to restrict personal freedoms of citizens. If you are concerned about loss of privacy when using various club cards from supermarkets, you better don't move to Greece (if such a thing ever came to your mind of course...). The State can [officially inspect](#) upon all bank accounts and thus have an overview of all your purchases. With the club card, you can at least throw it away whenever you want.

Nothing quiet on the Western Front. [Ireland and Portugal](#) (encouraged by a new round of mass demonstrations) are seeking postponement of debt payments. [Delay of conditions](#) for Spain is almost a sure thing. Can you already see our lent money slowly but gradually disappearing?

Spanish bank Bankia booked in 2012 the highest loss ever recorded by a Spanish company - 19.2 billion euros. Its shares traded at its inception two years ago at 3.5 euro, now it's less than 30 cents. EU is pushing Spain to transfer this loss to the shareholders by reducing the share price of the rescue bank [to 1 cent](#). We have always held the view that bank losses should be borne by the shareholders, but it's no redress in this case. Among its 350 thousands (almost entirely Spanish) shareholders are hundreds of thousands of ordinary people who don't even know how they were lured into this "bargain" investment consisting of toxic assets

repackaged by the government. When it comes to a successful implementation of government plans, consumer protection is suddenly irrelevant. Unfortunately, there is no better solution. The only alternative is that everybody will pay for it. Thus, not only those who allowed the government to deceive them.

Latvia submitted its application to the euro-club although about two thirds of its population disagree with that, according to surveys. Eastern Europeans are very much welcomed in this club, in some others - not so much. Germany made it very clear that they [would veto](#) any eventual accession efforts of Romania and Bulgaria to enter the Schengen area.

Let's take a look into the USA. Due to the endless disagreements about the budget there, automatic cuts of USD 80 billion were activated. The situation is being equated to the arrival of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. For comparison, the [expenses of the federal budget](#) for 2013 are USD 3803 billion...

To finish the circle, we got a funny ending from the EU again. The endless dispute about whether Microsoft can pre-install its Internet Explorer browser in Windows brought a [further fine of 561 million](#), which brought the amount of fines for Microsoft up to 2.24 billion euros. Pretty handsome sum, thanks lord we have the corporations. We also suggest taking closer look on the car factories. According to our information, they supply cars with pre-mounted steering wheels and do not give the consumer any possibility of choice.

We wish you enjoyable week without potholes.

**Martin Vlachynský**

Translated by Jakub Pivoluska