



Press release

Brussels Think Tank Dialogue 2014

Ten leading think tanks address key challenges for the incoming EU leadership

Brussels, 30 January 2014 – For the fifth consecutive year, ten leading Brussels-based think tanks have joined forces to assess the state of the European Union and discuss ways on how to improve EU policies. As 2014 will be marked by a complete reshuffle of the top leadership positions of the EU, the Brussels Think Tank Dialogue has identified three key areas that should be amongst the political priorities of the incoming EU leaders:

- **The role of the European Parliament and the national parliaments**
- **The Banking Union and next steps towards a genuine Economic and Monetary Union**
- **A renewed Common Foreign and Security Policy**

On the role of the European Parliament and the national parliaments

The euro crisis has led to a renaissance of the intergovernmental method, and the new European Economic Governance has had a strong impact on the budgetary sovereignty of national parliaments. The Brussels Think Tank Dialogue has mapped three possible pathways to restore the parliaments' role in EU policy-making:

1. Improve already existing mechanisms, in particular the Early Warning Mechanism for national parliaments, e.g. by means of a clearer definition of the subsidiarity principle as well as longer deadlines and lower thresholds for national parliaments to react to legislative proposals from the Commission.
2. Introduce new mechanisms to increase the influence of national parliaments in EU affairs, e.g. by enhancing role of the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs (COSAC) or by setting up a new forum of national parliaments in Brussels for policy fields where the European Parliament plays no significant role.
3. Let national parliaments have a say in European policy-making by giving them the power to scrutinise and shape their governments' positions before any decisions at EU level are taken as it is already the case in Denmark and Finland, for example.

For more details see the [policy paper](#).

On the Banking Union and next steps towards a genuine Economic and Monetary Union

The Banking Union was identified as the second cornerstone for EU policy-making of the new leadership. The Brussels Think Tank Dialogue highlighted three key steps for the further development of the Banking Union:

1. The European Central Bank (ECB) needs to shed light on some of the elements of the balance-sheet assessment exercise. The exercise will be fundamental in establishing the

credibility of the ECB as supervisor and to dispel the doubts about the quality of bank balance sheets, which is essential to improve credit and access to finance, as well as the functioning of the internal market.

2. The Single Resolution Mechanism deal reached by the finance ministers of the EU failed to break the link between banks and sovereigns. Further discussions should clarify the involvement of creditors in the burden-sharing of failed banks and how to distribute remaining recapitalisation costs between national taxpayers and taxpayers of other EU countries.
3. Thinking of the European Stability Mechanism as one of the possible backstops for the Economic and Monetary Union, a Treaty change is necessary to include the Single Resolution Fund as a beneficiary of the European Stability Mechanism's financing.

For more details see the [policy paper](#).

On a renewed Common Foreign and Security Policy

The economic crisis has soaked up attention during the last few years. However, in a rapidly changing world, the EU must constantly renew its foreign policy credentials or face irrelevance. The Brussels Think Tank Dialogue has taken up three key challenges in the field of foreign policy:

1. The momentum generated by the December summit on a Common Security and Defence Policy must be sustained and translated into political action. This is especially important because these policies have made little progress in recent times. As such, a new impetus is very necessary.
2. EU relations with Asia, one of the world's most dynamic regions, must be reviewed and revised. Although 2013 saw a considerable improvement in EU-Asia relations, the European Union so far lacks a comprehensive strategy for dealing with its Asian partners.
3. EU leadership changes in 2014 will provide an opportunity to address some fundamental challenges facing the Union's foreign policy and overall external performance. The coherence and effectiveness of EU foreign policy could be substantially enhanced if there is better coordination between the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the external dimension of European Commission policies as well as improved collaboration between EU member states and the EEAS.

For more details see the [policy paper](#).

About the Brussels Think Tank Dialogue

The Brussels Think Tank Dialogue is an annual forum for critical reflection on the state of the European Union. It is designed to address pressing political concerns and to offer recommendations on how to improve EU policies.

Partners of the Brussels Think Tank Dialogue are: [Bertelsmann Stiftung](#), [Bruegel](#), [Centre for European Policy Studies \(CEPS\)](#), [Confrontations Europe](#), [Egmont Institute](#), [European Policy Centre \(EPC\)](#), [Friends of Europe – Les amis de l'Europe](#), [Institut français des relations internationales \(IFRI\)](#), [Madariaga – the College of Europe Foundation](#), [Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik \(SWP\)](#).

Jürgen Noack

Communications & Outreach Manager
Brussels Office

Bertelsmann Stiftung

Résidence Palace | Rue de la Loi 155 | 1040 Brussels | Belgium
Phone: +32 2 233 38 95 | Fax: +32 2 280 32 21 | Mobile: +32 470 870 366
E-Mail: juergen.noack@bertelsmann-stiftung.de | www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de | www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/bruessel