

Chapter 1 : European Governments on the WWW

At present, there are twelve monarchies in Europe, of which seven are members of the European Union: Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom, and five are not: Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway and the Vatican City. All seven monarchies in the European Union are constitutional monarchies.

This great transformation is founded on the idea that freedom and prosperity can best be advanced by adopting the institutions and practices that have proven successful in Western Europe since World War II. The people of the region want "to return to Europe. While this is a daunting task, the transformation is well under way. The Communist Inheritance What complicates the process of economic transformation is the burden posed by the inheritance of the communist economic system. One Russian pundit, commenting on the communist legacy, explained that anyone can turn an aquarium into fish stew, but it is much harder to turn fish stew into an aquarium. The communist inheritance has had two important dimensions for Eastern Europe. First, the laws, institutions, and ownership structure under communism are very different from what is needed for a modern, capitalist economy, so nearly all must be changed. Most important, the socialist ownership structure placed industry, services, and with the exception of Poland agriculture mainly in state hands. State ownership and central planning produced poor decisions about how to use resources and led to greatly distorted economies. Every Eastern European government skewed investment toward heavy industry and capital goods at the expense of light industry, services, and consumer goods. Moreover, attempts to subsidize certain economic activities left all the countries with heavily distorted pricing structures. Prices for energy and household necessities mainly food and rent were kept very low. Another factor that distorted prices was the overvalued domestic currency. It was kept so overvalued that it could not be converted into foreign currency. Instead, governments rationed the limited amount of foreign exchange available. Those not receiving official exchange usually had to pay much more to buy dollars in the black market. Therefore, most imported goods were severely rationed or available only at high blackmarket prices. Second, after forty years the communist economic system failed to sustain itself, leaving utter industrial collapse, financial distress and chaos, and very low living standards. Some countries in Eastern Europe sought to stave off collapse by replacing central planning with decentralized decision making. These communist-led reforms brought some improvement but did not lead to the emergence of normal competitive market relations. In the end each country in the region suffered an economic collapse and a cessation of sustained growth, and in some cases, acute shortages, balance of payments crises, and financial chaos. The genesis of the financial crises came from deep within the system. Subsidies ballooned as governments tried to keep the prices of many consumer products and services low for households and tried to keep profits high in state enterprises where managers were too willing to grant excessive wage increases. Credits to enterprises also ballooned in support of the huge appetite for investments on the part of state enterprises where managers craved investment projects that might add to their power and prestige. Subsidies and credits were paid by printing money, which led to a steady buildup of demand throughout these economies. The ballooning of demand created shortages wherever price controls were inflexible, inflation wherever prices were allowed to rise, and external debt and balance of payments crises in most countries. The buildup of demand in Poland, for example, can be seen clearly in the gap between the black market exchange rate and the official one, which rose from percent in early to percent in mid The collapse of living standards was broadly felt across Eastern Europe. Industrial production did not slow appreciably because strenuous efforts were made to channel the available resources to heavy industry. The result of this strategy was a decline in living standards for the population. While there were substantial differences among countries in the region, the people of Eastern Europe found goods increasingly unavailable at official prices, longer queues and bigger shortages, an absence of imported consumer goods, and in some cases, a deterioration in public services and basic utilities such as heat and hot water. The Strategies for Economic Transformation As the new governments of Eastern Europe surveyed the ruins of the communist system and prepared to transform their economies, they were initially preoccupied with the question of

whether to free prices from centralized control quickly in order to cope with the shortages, high inflation, and scarcity of dollars. Alternatively, they could first reform the laws, institutions, and ownership structure to allow private property. Freeing prices from centralized control in the absence of private property seemed risky to many, because state enterprises would be granted too much market power and would operate in an unruly and unregulated environment. But was it possible to privatize enterprises, eliminate monopolies, restructure the banking system, reform the tax system, and build a social safety net in the absence of realistic prices and in the midst of a financial crisis? Most governments concluded that reform was a seamless web, such that liberalization and structural reforms must be woven together simultaneously. The pattern of the web, however, has varied from country to country. In some the financial collapse was so acute that there was no room for maneuver. The Solidarity government in Poland, for example, inherited a hyperinflation so debilitating that immediate steps were necessary. But Czechoslovakia, where the financial situation was not as acute and the communist-led reform was limited, spent one year attempting to prepare the way for marketization. Despite some differences in approach, on the whole prices have been freed from centralized control quickly. Meanwhile, the longer, and in many respects harder, job of rewriting laws, building capitalist institutions, modernizing and restructuring industry, and privatizing capital and land is under way but will take years, if not decades, to complete. Most countries are finding that the introduction of market relations greatly facilitates this harder job, by providing a more stable, more responsive market environment in which structural adjustment can be done more effectively. After all, how could industry be modernized, privatized, and restructured without market signals to guide the process? The countries of Eastern Europe have three basic elements of economic transformation in common: Stabilization efforts in Eastern Europe have aimed at creating a stable financial environment that will foster the rapid growth of domestic business activity, international trade, and foreign direct investment. By reducing budget deficits, slowing the growth of the money supply, and establishing realistic exchange rates, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland have ended the chronic shortages that have plagued their economies and have achieved low rates of inflation and relatively stable exchange rates. Economic liberalization includes permitting households and enterprises to conduct business freely, buying and selling at prices set by supply and demand. This has meant, among other things, a sweeping elimination of government price controls. In most countries liberalization has also been backed by changes in the legal framework aimed at allowing private gain, and deregulation to limit government interference in economic activities. The new governments also understand that the success of liberalization requires the protection of private property and the freedom to start private businesses. These freedoms are needed to foster a new private sector that strengthens competitive forces and channels resources into productive capital investments. Because the countries of Eastern Europe are small and situated near the great market of the European Economic Community, another important component of liberalization has been the opening up of international trade. In the short run the opportunity to trade with the West has provided instant competition, greatly diminishing the domestic monopoly power of monolithic state enterprises. In the long run, international trade holds the key to the eventual integration of the economies of Eastern Europe with the economies of the West. While the combination of liberalization and stabilization has helped restore the health of public finances and create a stable financial environment, these radical changes have also thrust the people of Eastern Europe into unfamiliar circumstances. Consumers accustomed to long lines and empty stores now face an abundance of goods, but at much higher prices. When I first filled up hassle-free in January, I was euphoric. The elimination of price controls caused large initial jumps in consumer prices in Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Because wages increased by a smaller percent, the measured real wage in each country has declined. This apparent decline in real wages, however, is misleading because few consumer goods had been available at the controlled prices. When prices rose after being freed from controls, shortages were eliminated and more goods were available. As one Polish journalist wrote, "Up to now, we have not been buying television sets because they were not available, whereas now, we are not buying them because they are too expensive. The Eastern European economies are responding strongly to the opening up of international trade. Most countries in the region have increased exports, which will increase economic integration with the West. The growth in Eastern European exports is vital to the modernization of the region because it provides

the finance for needed imports of capital and technologies. Liberalization of economic activity has also sparked the growth of private sector activity. The emergence of a new private sector has perhaps been greatest in Poland, where hundreds of thousands of new small businesses were opened in , but Hungary and Czechoslovakia are not far behind. In Warsaw roughly 90 percent of retail shops are now in private hands. The service sector, long suppressed under the communist system, is mushrooming, and new private manufacturing activity is beginning, though still on a modest scale. At the same time, the state enterprise sectors are declining in all Eastern European countries. Industrial production has fallen by 15 to 40 percent in these countries, and in some countries the decline may not be over. In part, these sectors must give way because their activities had been planned to suit the "communist production circle" mentioned earlier. In part, the decline has resulted from the collapse of the Soviet Union, which abruptly stopped trading with Eastern Europe at the beginning of

Continued state ownership has retarded the adjustment and restructuring needed to adapt the activities of state enterprises to markets. State enterprise managers no longer report to central planners or branch ministries, and are now all too free to manage state property for their own gain. Where labor unions have power, enterprise managers may also prefer to use enterprise profits to boost wages and buy calm in the workplace, rather than to undertake restructuring investments. This only worsens the international competitiveness of the sector. In addition, managers of state enterprise often appropriate state property. Some managers intentionally bankrupt government firms in order to buy them out cheaply. Others establish private firms that then receive preferential contracts with the state-owned enterprises. Still others accept unfavorable joint-venture and takeover offers that provide personal benefits. Privatization is widely regarded by the new governments of Eastern Europe as a necessary step to making the best economic use of state property. It is well understood that much of the capital stock inherited from the past is dilapidated, based on outmoded technologies, and aimed at the now-collapsed Soviet market. The decisions of what to shut down, what to restructure, and what to modernize are best made by private owners with a true stake in the economic future of the firm. The privatization challenge is enormous. The countries of Eastern Europe must privatize a wide range of property, including trucks, housing, shops, foreign trading firms, commercial banks, small manufacturing operations, and huge industrial concerns. Most countries have quickly privatized physical property and small shops. Auctions, leases, and other techniques have put a large proportion of retail trade and small service establishments in private hands in several countries. Because large industrial enterprises are more difficult to privatize, they are being privatized slowly. Several countries initially flirted with the notion of adopting Western privatization techniques—such as public offerings of enterprise stock—for selling large industrial enterprises. These techniques have been too slow and too expensive. Efforts to prepare public offerings in Eastern Europe have come up against the facts that 1. As a result, Eastern European countries have developed and implemented novel approaches. In Czechoslovakia citizens have purchased privatization vouchers that can be used to bid for enterprise shares. This approach is intended to allow all citizens the chance to gain from the privatization process. In Hungary enterprises are encouraged to prepare privatization plans, seek out investor groups, and make privatization proposals to the State Property Agency. In Poland some shares will be given directly to workers and managers. In addition, shares in large industrial enterprises will be distributed to newly created investment funds, which, as part owners, will exercise active control over enterprise managers by taking a role on boards of directors.

Chapter 2 : Italy's next government is Europe's next crisis - CNN

With more than 50 countries in the continent, Europe does not have one form of government. However, the only dictatorship in Europe currently is Belarus. Russia and France have a semi-presidential form of government.

Claude Forthomme - Senior Editor on June 1, at 4: It had taken 88 days of hard negotiations to get there. And the unlikely alliance between an extreme right party The League with a centrist party M5S that has socialist roots in the Partito Democratico , or PD. Both are populists and anti-establishment, The League with its base in Northern Italy and support from business, M5S with support from young people and the South and a fluctuating political platform shaped by social-media. What made Mattarella change his mind? Much of it appears to be the result of unexpectedly nimble political work on the part of Di Maio, who, despite his youth and lack of experience, is apparently endowed with unusual political instincts. Improbably, after insulting Mattarella and calling for his impeachment, he withdrew the accusations and instead met the President eye-to-eye. What is remarkable is that the new list had only one notable modification: An apparently slight correction but a significant one: The new man in the Treasury post is Giovanni Tria , a well-known economist with a long career both nationally and internationally – in short, a more moderate figure. On the next day, the international press, even staid and serious journals like Bloomberg , reacted with emotional headlines: They will take Italy out of the Euro and Europe! In short, they have set aside the likelihood that Italy will exit the Euro. He agrees with Savona on Europe and that a reform of the Euro is essential. How come markets are reassured by Tria and scared by Savona? Savona arguably was clumsy in managing his image: Worse, he allowed certain bits of news floating on the Net to muddy his reputation, turning him into a dangerous looking Euro-skeptic. Two things in particular worked against him: Savona suddenly took on the semblance of a Trojan Horse, ready to assault Brussels from the inside and bring down the Euro and Europe. While a Brexit or a Grexit will shake the Union, and exit by Italy, being the third largest economy in the EU and a historic pillar of the Union, would kill it. But the fact is this: Plan B was never the work of Savona. He merely presented it a meeting of experts in Rome in October , as announced on this poster: Other economists, not Savona, presented Plan B and led the debate on it. It happens not just in Italy, but also elsewhere, in particular in Germany. The latest took place two days ago and was reported by Die Welt. The article is explicit: Does that make all these German economists euro-skeptics? There, the head of the right-wing populist Italian Lega, Matteo Salvini – after all one of the election winners – had announced that only death is immutable, a currency certainly not. He has ideas on all the issues of the day, including immigration, as shown in this video: Readers who understand Italian will appreciate his pragmatism and broadness of views. I am convinced that this is a man capable of thinking through issues and coming up with workable solutions. An article published on the pro-business Sole 24 Ore in March clarifies his vision. Again, on reading it, one can see that the analysis is spot on. Regarding Europe, nobody is right, he says. Those who call for exiting the Euro are wrong, but neither is Mario Draghi right when he says that the Euro is irreversible. To become a solid currency like the dollar, the Euro needs to be sustained by two indispensable pillars: So far, the Euro has only been given the monetary pillar, it now needs the fiscal one, starting with a strong banking union. As a result, the real problem is a deficit in public spending. The real problem, he points out, is that fiscal maneuvering is limited by the threat of a sovereign debt crisis, making it impossible to engage in deficit spending – a threat Italy is painfully aware of, with a debt of percent of GDP. But not all of it, and certainly not to the extent that EU regulations are flouted and the Euro is crashed. The plan would require a yearly amount equal to at least percent of the Eurozone GDP and should be carried out within EU structures – not outside. For the first time, Italy would make itself heard in Brussels with its own plans, instead of merely acquiescing as it has done so far. That could make for a watershed moment: For the first time, Italy might enter the big European game side-by-side with France, displacing the famous Franco-German alliance that has guided Europe so far. Macron and Merkel are friends, of course, but they will need to open up their duo to Conte and his finance minister, Tria. And for the first time, Germany could find itself in the minority: France and Italy together weigh much more. Will Italy catch this opportunity to make European History? The opinions expressed here

by Impakter. I confirm that would like to subscribe to Impakter Weekly Newsletter Yes! The midterms handed the House to the Democrats but not the Senate, despite receiving some 12 million votes more than Republicans in Senate races. China and South America: Oriented towards motivating deeper t Will they be a repl

Chapter 3 : Europe: Illegal to Criticize Islam

The Council of the European Union represents governments, the Parliament represents citizens and the Commission represents the European interest. Essentially, the Council of the European Union, Parliament or another party place a request for legislation to the Commission.

The Dream of Unity: The breeding ground of two world wars is trying to erase old boundaries. In France, voters on June 1 stunningly repudiated the ruling center-right government, sweeping a leftist coalition to control of the National Assembly and installing Socialist Party chief Lionel Jospin as the new prime minister. Wall Street ended a painful eight-day losing streak on Wednesday with a modest gain. The Dow Jones industrial average closed up All told, the Dow has fallen nearly points, or 6. Here are answers to some of the questions dazed investors may have about what has happened. Why did the market hit such a severe losing streak? A Parliament With Potential: You might call it the Walter Mitty of legislatures. Despite its name, it has scarcely any legislative powers. First Step to European Unity: Deciding What It Means: EC nations want to form a single political body. They are still sparring over its strength and structure. But that is easier said than done, for as a diplomat dryly commented, "The trouble with political union is that there are dozens of definitions of what it means. Germany is finding out that political unification does not translate automatically or even easily into economic and social unity. And in what used to be the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, decades of icy immobility have turned into a torrent of upheaval. It is rented from the Council of Europe. Gorbachev appealed Thursday for East-West cooperation to build "a commonwealth of sovereign democratic states" in Europe based on ethnic and political tolerance, religious freedom and pluralism. Europeans argue that on such vital issues as growing instability in the Soviet Empire, the flowering of democracy in Poland and Hungary, and pressure for closeness between the two Germanys, the U. The benchmark year Treasury note yield fell to 3. Exchanges that had hit record highs just a year ago plunged almost from the moment they opened. A Russian prostitution ring arranged the marriage through bribery to provide her with instant Turkish citizenship--a shield against deportation if she is ever caught. Prostitution has become more visible in Turkey since the collapse of the Soviet Union led to an influx of tens of thousands of women working for sex gangs. Some governments caved in while others refused, reflecting the political divisions on the continent. In The Hague, truck and taxi drivers circled government buildings blaring their horns to demand tax breaks--an unusually boisterous protest in the Netherlands, a nation where politics usually proceeds by consensus and quiet negotiation. France has now joined a turn-of-the-century electoral trend shifting the political center of gravity markedly to the left in both Western and Eastern Europe. Socialist parties now rule or share government in 13 of the 15 nations of the European Union. Is "European union" on the way to becoming a contradiction in terms like "military intelligence" or "civil war"? At their two-day European Union summit, the 15 member countries managed to agree sufficiently so that their trading bloc can proceed as scheduled with talks to admit new members, including some from Eastern Europe. But the conference often came close to being a fiasco.

Chapter 4 : Forms of Government | Scholastic

Some European governments, such as Germany, are federal republics. A federal republic is a union of states or similar entities. Governmental powers are divided between the federal government and the states.

These institutions have the authority to make decisions for the society on policies affecting the maintenance of order and the achievement of certain societal goals. Governments range in size and scope from clans, tribes, and the shires of early times to the superpowers and international governments of today. The present-day counterpart of the empire is the superpower that is able to lead or dominate other countries through its superior military and economic strength. Monarchy tended to become tyrannical because it vested authority in a single ruler. The polity, likewise, would deteriorate into ochlocracy, or mob rule, if the citizens pursued only their selfish interests. Monarchy passed through three basic stages, varying according to the nation and the political and economic climate. The first stage was that of the absolute monarch. In the Christian part of the world during the Middle Ages, a conflict developed between the pope and the kings who recognized his spiritual authority. Limited monarchy was the second stage. Kings depended on the support of the most powerful members of the nobility to retain their thrones. Threatened with the loss of political and financial support, even the strongest kings and emperors had to accept a system of laws that protected the rights and privileges of powerful social and economic classes. The third stage in the evolution of monarchy was the constitutional monarchy. Present-day monarchs are nearly all symbolic rather than actual rulers of their countries. A few exceptions can be found in Africa and Asia. Even one-party states, such as the traditional Communist countries and other nations in Africa, Asia, and South America, have found it necessary to establish formal constitutions. In democratic countries the constitution can be amended or replaced by popular vote, either directly or through a system of elected representatives. The constitution may thus be only a paper facade, and in order to understand how the country is governed one must examine the actual political process. Democratic governments vary in structure. Two common forms are the parliamentary and the presidential. The prime minister or premier and the officers of the cabinet are members of the parliament. They continue in office only as long as parliament supports "or has "confidence" in " their policies. There is no effective rule of law. The main function of a dictatorship is to maintain control of all governmental operations. It seeks to control all aspects of national life, including the beliefs and attitudes of its people. The leader is credited with almost infallible wisdom, because to admit that he or she may be wrong would deprive the regime of its authority. In some Communist countries the cult of personality appears to have given way to the dominance of a group of party leaders " a ruling oligarchy. The successor regime in China, for example, continues to claim infallibility for its policies and doctrines but not for the leaders. Federal Systems The United States and India with their state governments and Canada and China with their provincial governments are examples of workable federal systems in large nations with very diverse populations. The national governments of these countries are clearly more powerful than those of their subdivisions, even though the constitutions delegate many powers and responsibilities to the subnational units. In the United States, for example, state legislatures pass laws having to do with state affairs; state administrators carry them out; and state judiciaries interpret them. The citizens in each jurisdiction elect many of the public officials. In addition, certain special districts exist with a single function, such as education or sanitation, and have their own elected officials. Often the different levels compete for control of functions and programs. Subnational national units administer matters within their jurisdiction, but their powers are set and delegated by the national authority. Most nations are unitary states, but their institutions and processes may differ markedly. Great Britain, for example, is considered a unitary system, yet a certain degree of regional autonomy exists in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and local county governments perform certain fairly autonomous functions. In other unitary states there exists only token territorial decentralization. It also represents the confederation in dealings with outside governments, but its actions are subject to the review and approval of the confederated states. The executive branch usually predominates at such time. Proponents of the separation of powers bring an additional argument in its favor: Governments do not relinquish their authority unless compelled to do so. It may identify

itself with ancient traditions, with hope for the future, or with fear of a common enemy. Some governments employ repression, never relaxing their vigils against real or imagined opponents. Even democracies, when threatened, are likely to engage in a search for subversives and "enemies of the people. The French monarchy in the 18th century and the Russian monarchy in the 20th century were based on aristocracies that had lost much of their legitimacy in the eyes of the people. Governments tend, therefore, to foster widespread ideological commitment to the nation through patriotic ceremonies, propaganda, and civic education; they employ armed forces and intelligence-gathering organizations for national defense; they maintain police and prison systems to ensure domestic order; and they undertake the administration of supervisory and regulatory functions to carry out national goals by establishing various bureaucracies to handle each complex function.

Administration All governments recognize the principle that the public must be protected and served. Federal, state, and local governments in the United States also engage directly in economic activity. In other countries governments intrude even further into the workings of the economy. In Western Europe governments own and operate telephone, radio, and television services, railroads, coal mines, and aircraft companies. In some countries, such as Sweden and Great Britain, the entire health system is also run by the state. In countries with Communist governments, such as the former USSR, North Korea, China, and Cuba, the state has attempted to control the entire economic life of the nation.

Internal Conflicts The end of the cold war and the loss of control by the superpowers over international events have led to a different type of stress on many governments. The threats to their sovereignty are no longer external. The communication revolution, through radio and the satellite transmission of television, has truly created a "global village. They demand the rights and privileges enjoyed by others. These problems are not limited to Third World countries. NATO has revised its original purpose of preventing an invasion of western Europe to a strategy of maintaining smaller mobile forces to prevent the internal breakup of nations. But these internal conflicts continue to have the potential to produce anarchy and chaos, threatening entire regions. The League of Nations, established in , grew to include more than 90 members. It has, however, served as a forum for international debate and a convenient meeting ground for negotiations. The UN has also committed military forces of member nations in an attempt to limit the scope of conflicts that cannot be solved by national governments. UN forces have suffered casualties in some of these conflicts. Associated with the UN are a number of specialized organizations that perform important governmental functions. The specialized agencies have enabled national governments to cooperate in many practical matters such as setting standards, extending technical and financial assistance to developing countries, eliminating or controlling epidemic diseases, and establishing an international monetary system. Regional associations of nations have usually existed in a loose confederation for national security purposes or for vaguely defined geographical and political purposes. The European Union of 15 member nations has taken the concept of regional association to a much higher level. It has moved to create a political union among sovereign states, and its Common Market constitutes one of the major economies of the world. Reviewed by Thomas B. Hartmann

How to Cite This Article:

Chapter 5 : Articles about Europe Government - latimes

European Government All Western and Central European countries are democracies of various kinds. There are doubts about the democratic credentials of some East European and Balkan countries.

Spanish While Geert Wilders was being prosecuted in the Netherlands for talking about "fewer Moroccans" during an election campaign, a state-funded watchdog group says that threatening homosexuals with burning, decapitation and slaughter is just fine, so long as it is Muslims who are making those threats, as the Quran tells them that such behavior is mandated. There is no moderate or immoderate Islam. It is troubling that Western governments are so eager to crack down on anything that vaguely resembles what has erroneously been termed "Islamophobia," which literally means an irrational fear of Islam. Considering the violence we have been witnessing, for those Westerners who have studied Islam and listened to what the most influential Islamic scholars have to say, there are quite a few things in Islam of which one legitimately ought to be fearful. Several European governments have made it clear to their citizens that criticizing European migrant policies or migrants is criminally off-limits and may lead to arrest, prosecution and even convictions. Although these practices constitute police state behavior, European governments do not stop there. They go still farther, by ensuring that Islam in general is not criticized either. Finland is the European country most recently to adopt the way that European authorities sanction those who criticize Islam. In it, she claimed that all the terrorists in Europe are Muslims. The Court found that when Kiemunki wrote of a "repressive, intolerant and violent religion and culture," she meant the Islamic faith. During the trial, Kiemunki was asked why she did not make a distinction between Islam and radical Islam. She replied that she meant to refer to the spread of Islamic culture and religion, and that she "probably should have" spoken of radicalized elements of the religion instead of the faith as a whole. Kiemunki was fined euros. Her lawyer has appealed the verdict. Kiemunki issued a press release after the verdict, in which she said: In Finland, Terhi Kiemunki, a Finns Party politician, was found guilty by a court of "slandering and insulting adherents of the Islamic faith. It is a pity that Kiemunki did not present the court with quotes from the Quran, such as, "Fight and kill the disbelievers wherever you find them Perhaps, then, the court could have at least tried to explain to the public in more concrete detail the differences between "Islam" and "radical Islam. In the context of religious expression that exists in the Netherlands there is a large degree of freedom of expression. In addition, the expressions are used in the context of the public debate how to interpret the Koran , which also removes the offending character. This might be one of the most astounding examples of voluntary submission to sharia law in the West thus far. A spokesman for the MiND hotline later admitted that, after "further research" on the issue, it had concluded that the complaint had been "unjustly assessed" -- after Dutch MPs called for the hotline to be stripped of public funding. In February , a Danish district court found a man guilty of making statements on Facebook that the court found to be "insulting and demeaning towards adherents of Islam. The massive immigration of Islamists into Denmark is the most devastating thing to happen to Danish society in recent history. The court found that the man was in fact innocent of racism, as his statements were "directed at the ideology of Islam and Islamism. Considering the violence we have been witnessing, it would be irrational not to have fear of its threats. As Shabnam Assadollahi recently pointed out in an open letter to Canadian Members of Parliament, there are quite a few things in Islam of which one legitimately ought to be fearful. All these governments need to do is consult the speeches of one of the most influential living Islamic scholars of Sunni Islam, the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Yusuf al-Qaradawi. Not through the sword, but through dawa [outreach]. As explained by Qaradawi in a recording from , the aim of the conquest consists mainly the introduction of sharia law. According to Qaradawi, sharia law should be inserted gradually, over a five-year period in a new country, before implementing it in full. This sharia law includes chopping off hands for theft; killing apostates and homosexuals , denigrating and oppressing women, as in polygamy, beating them as a means of "disciplining" them, and so on. For those Westerners who have studied Islam and listened to what the most influential Islamic scholars have to say, there is quite a bit to be "phobic" about. It would be refreshing to hear the views of European leaders and courts on these aspects of sharia law instead of their almost ritual

condemnations of those who have actually studied Islamic sources and seek to raise awareness of the nature of sharia law. While prosecuting and sanctioning people who criticize Islam is becoming more common in Europe, this practice used to be reserved only for Muslim countries officially governed by sharia law, such as Saudi Arabia or Pakistan, where it is forbidden to insult Islam. It is a pity that European courts and other state bodies have begun taking their cues from Islamic law. Apparently, European judges and politicians are no longer capable of appreciating the immense freedoms that used to be the norm on the continent, and which they seem all too willing, of their own free will, to abolish. Judith Bergman is a writer, columnist, lawyer and political analyst. The articles printed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editors or of Gatestone Institute. No part of the Gatestone website or any of its contents may be reproduced, copied or modified, without the prior written consent of Gatestone Institute. Get Free Exclusive Gatestone Content:

Chapter 6 : Institutions of the European Union - Wikipedia

The politics of Europe deals with the continually evolving politics within the continent. It is a topic far more detailed than other continents due to a number of factors including the long history of nation states in the region as well as the modern day trend towards increased political unity amongst the European states.

Putting aside the merits of this view, the general description of the U. Based solely on government outlays, the U. However, this is not really an apples-to-apples comparison because it does not include the disparate accounting for health insurance premiums. In the euro zone, health insurance premiums are generally financed directly through taxation; in the U. The net effect is to leave after-tax income lower to pay for health insurance. Once accounting for the 5. Even leaving aside tax expenditures, two percent of GDP is not a terribly big gap. Total government spending in the U. It is important to note that this total excludes health insurance expenditures. Were employer-sponsored premiums included, total U. Perhaps even more surprising, government spending plus health insurance would put total U. Recent research finds that once adjusting for tax subsidies and tax progressivity, U. IMF data on combined U. However, the IMF does report that since , total U. But, that is not the case. Part of the motivation for transferring funds to the states was to avoid the fiscal contraction that arises due to state balanced budget mandates. As academic research has made clear , the stimulus really just had the federal government pay for a portion of state spending that would have otherwise been debt-financed. Beyond the size of government, the basic contours of U. The President proposed large tax increases on high income earners, a bank tax in this latest iteration to finance mortgage debt forgiveness , a minimum tax on corporations, and subsidies for favored industries manufacturing. Francois Hollande proposes tax increases on high income earners, a bank tax, an increase in the minimum corporate income tax, and subsidies for favored industries. Obama said he wants the secretary of a billionaire to not have to pay more than the billionaire [in taxes]. I want the same thing.

Chapter 7 : Developments in government and warfare in Medieval Europe

Total government spending in the U.S. is also roughly equivalent to supposedly socialist economies like Sweden (Sweden is a member of the European Union, but not the nation euro zone) and traditionally statist economies like Canada.

Debt crisis fells governments, legitimacy in question Paul Taylor 7 Min Read PARIS Reuters - As governments around the euro zone are felled by a widening sovereign debt crisis, a perceived loss of sovereignty to the IMF and the European Union is raising prickly questions of democratic legitimacy. Since the crisis began in late , Ireland and Portugal have voted out governments that requested humiliating international bailouts after their borrowing costs spiraled out of control. Now the Greek and Italian governments are both about to fall due to the strains of having to impose austerity measures and unpopular economic reforms to avert a debt meltdown. Many of these changes are the result of natural wear-and-tear on long-serving governments in times of severe economic stress, or of voters punishing perceived mismanagement. But there is now a growing feeling that political change is being imposed from abroad in the name of saving the euro. The International Monetary Fund and European authorities have applied strong pressure, particularly on Greece, for political consensus in support of bailout programs. Such administrations, they argue, would implement austerity measures and free-market structural reforms in the name of objective necessity in a national emergency without bowing to vested business, political and trade union interests. That may seem an unacceptable intrusion into the democratic right of peoples to elect their government and the right of the opposition to oppose it. But Sylvie Goulard, a French member of the European Parliament, said the crisis had merely revealed the extent to which European countries already shared sovereignty. The crisis has shown the impossibility of trying to run a nation European currency union in which each national parliament has to ratify decisions, Goulard said. They are part of a club. The European Central Bank is buying their bonds to support them. But for western Europe, this has been a new and sometimes disturbing experience. However, Dublin did manage to resist strong pressure from France and Germany to raise its low rate of corporation tax. Accused of a breach of faith for failing to consult European creditors in advance, Papandreou was subjected to fierce international and domestic pressure to drop the plan, which ended up costing him his job. It was equally unacceptable for the whole euro zone to be held hostage to a faction in the Slovakian parliament, or for Germany to hold up a European summit, as happened last month, in order to consult its national parliament before reaching an agreement. The only practical place to exercise democratic control in a currency union was in the European Parliament, Goulard said. That may be because they are keen to avoid the odium of having to impose pay and benefit cuts and tax rises and roll back welfare and labor rights themselves. Olaf Cramme, director of the Policy Network, a center-left think-tank, said national policy mistakes and a failure to explain the implications of economic globalization to European societies lay behind the growing legitimacy deficit. Center-right and center-left parties in Europe had been converging for the last decade to the point where their policies were often indistinguishable. Both supported globalization and the liberal market economy with only nuances of difference on the degree of social protection. That has narrowed the space for mainstream political debate and made room for anti-European, anti-globalization populists. With France and Germany pushing for closer integration of economic and fiscal policies in the euro zone, the issue of democratic sovereignty is likely to become more acute. New euro zone rules adopted last month already provide for more intrusive review of member states budget plans and surveillance of their implementation. Since parliamentary control over taxation and public spending is the traditionally the core of national sovereignty, along with the right to declare war and make treaties, the next steps toward fiscal union are bound to be highly sensitive. You can have any two, but not all three.

Chapter 8 : What kind of government does Europe have

European Union - Official website of the European Union. About the EU. The EU in brief, institutions and bodies, countries, symbols, history, facts and figures.

Further study Introduction By around , the political map of Christian Europe was much as it would be for the rest of the Middle Ages. Feudal fragmentation None of these empires and kingdoms was a unified state in the modern sense; they were in fact more like federations, with power fragmented amongst a multiplicity of feudal lords. Monarchs – kings and emperors – had little direct authority over most of their territories; local magnates dukes and counts or major towns owed him, their overlord, a duty of obedience, but within their own territories they could act as virtually independent rulers. When a king managed to get most of the magnates on his side, they would support him; if not especially when they felt he or his officials were encroaching too much on their independence they could and frequently did rebel. Complicating this situation was the existence of a hugely influential international organization which claimed to be independent of kings and emperors, and at times asserted its claim to superiority over them. This was the Church , under the leadership of the pope in Rome. The political history of medieval Europe is mostly bound up with the tussle between these competing centres of power: The interplay between these had very different outcomes in different places. In France , king and Church were largely in agreement, and the balance of power therefore shifted towards the king and away from the magnates. This would enable a highly centralised state to emerge in the early modern period. In the Holy Roman Empire , the Church was frequently allied with the magnates against the emperors. Power therefore slipped away from the emperor and towards the magnates. In England , the tussle led to the beginnings of a political system in which the different centres of power would resolve their differences in the context of parliament. A medieval realm At the top of any medieval kingdom sat the king. Even the Holy Roman emperor was also the King of Germany and King of Italy, and it was these offices which gave him authority over these lands rather than his imperial title. The medieval king was always on the move, accompanied by his large household. This enabled him to keep in touch with different parts of the kingdom – an important consideration in the days of slow communications. A king ruled through a council of his leading nobles and bishops. These were usually great figures in their own localities, possessing power and influence over large areas of land. A wise king brought these men on side by consulting them frequently and making sure that he had their loyalty. The councils expanded to become representative assemblies. Bishops played an important part in the high counsels of every medieval king. Their education and administrative experience made them invaluable royal ministers, and their key role on the Church was vital in keeping this powerful body loyal. However, bishops also had another superior besides the king. This was the pope, the leader of the Catholic Church in western Europe. From time to time the king and pope might be in conflict with one another, and bishops could then find themselves in a delicate situation – who should they support? It is testament to their political skills though not necessarily to their spiritual leadership that most seem to have navigated these treacherous waters with success, usually by giving more weight to the wishes of their temporal lord than of their religious one. From royal household to civil service All medieval kings were surrounded by a large household. This consisted of a retinue of domestic servants to take care of the personal needs of the king and his family. But it also consisted of his secretaries, treasurers, messengers and of course guards. The Roman Empire had been administered by a sophisticated imperial civil service, but this had collapsed in the chaos which followed the fall of the empire in the west. The barbarian kings did not pay their troops regular salaries out of tax receipts, as the Romans had done, so the primary function of a pre-modern bureaucracy – to collect taxes to pay for the army – was not required. Instead, the kings awarded their leading followers with land with which to maintain themselves and their followers on. When times became more stable and kings again began to need a secretariat and treasury, they staffed them with members of their private households. In the early Middle Ages these were usually clerics , as it was these who were the most educated men of the time. These small staffs were adequate until the increasing centralisation of power in royal hands necessitated a larger and more elaborate organisation. The treasury in particular found it had to

remain in one place while the king travelled around with his household so that it could collect, check and disburse funds efficiently. It was hived off into its own separate offices. Other departments followed, and rudimentary bureaucracies emerged in countries such as Spain and France. Royal officials supervised the collection of taxes, ensured that royal ordinances were carried out, executed the decision of royal courts, and kept an eye on the nobility by whom they were deeply loathed. The stage was set for the expansion of royal bureaucracies into the large organisations they became in the early modern period. Local government At the local level, public affairs were largely in the hands feudal lords. Village matters were under the authority of manorial courts. Above them the councils of greater lords saw to affairs of wider interest. Above the village, there were two competing hierarchies of authority. The tensions between kings and magnates was played out at a local level in rivalries between the newer royal institutions and the more traditional feudal authorities. The Church hierarchy There was also the Church hierarchy to be taken into consideration, with the parish priest serving one or two villages at its base. A bishop ruled over a diocese consisting of one or two hundred parishes, an archbishop presided over a clutch of dioceses, and the different archdioceses covering western Europe made up the Catholic Church as a whole, looking to the pope for leadership. Stephen II marks the historical delineation between the Byzantine Papacy and the Frankish Papacy The political situation in medieval kingdoms was further complicated by the position of the towns. We have also seen elsewhere that the feudal system opened the way for towns to gain a large measure of self-government. This also specified that the citizens of the town were free from feudal obligations. Many towns and cities throughout western Europe ran their own affairs, but some actually became independent states in their own right. This was nowhere more true than within the Holy Roman Empire, which covered Germany , much of northern and central Italy , and other lands. The sheer size of this realm made it very hard for Holy Roman emperors to impose their will upon all their subjects, given the very underdeveloped governing institutions at their disposal, and a series of civil wars – often fomented by the papacy , undermined what authority they were able to muster. North of the Alps, the free imperial cities of Germany were not officially independent, but were effectively self-governing. The actual structures by which towns – whether completely independent or merely self-governing – were governed varied from place to place, but there were common elements. Most towns and cities had a chief magistrate called by different names, such as mayor, doge or consul responsible for the day-to-day affairs in the community. There was also at least one council, often more. A common arrangement was for there to be a large council, composed of many citizens and meeting on infrequent occasions to endorse major decisions; and a much smaller council, which would meet more frequently, often on a daily basis, and would make routine decisions. It would put major decisions for the larger council to vote on. Although they were often elected to their positions by the citizens at large usually by lot , these elections were very commonly manipulated so that important offices tended to be filled by wealthier citizens. The chief magistrates were elected from amongst such councillors. This was more or less possible in peace time, but in time of war it was another matter. Although he was often but not always, as in 12th century France the greatest landowner in the kingdom, his private income did not extend to financing the waging major wars. He therefore had to rely on the financial contributions from the magnates – his leading nobles and churchmen. He could not, according to feudal custom, coerce them into contributing to the costs of the war – or, if he did, he risked rebellion as king John of England found. Instead, he had to gain their agreement that the war was a good idea in other words, that it would benefit them. Major decisions, including war and peace, were made in this forum, so that they had the support of all the chief men of the realm. Later, as towns and cities became wealthier, and the financial support they could contribute became critical, representatives from these joined the great councils when decisions had to be taken. The great councils thus evolved into assemblies representing the nobles, the church and the townspeople, or commoners. As the Middle Ages wore on, warfare became much more expensive, and this helped embed representative assemblies in the power structures of different states. Feudal levies of knights gave way to organised professional armies, armed with new weapons such as pikes, crossbows, cannons and guns. This long episode also shows how different circumstances led to different outcomes so far as representative assemblies were concerned. Kings solved this problem, as we have seen, by calling parliaments to gain their agreement before a campaign. Parliament voted on whether or not to

grant the king a tax to fund it, which they usually did if they felt that the war would be good for the country. In this process, parliament won a series of concessions from the kings, and became an important part in the government of the realm – the kings of England eventually found themselves unable to enact any major policy whether or not it was to do with war or finance without the consent of parliament. French kings therefore found it easier to justify taxation to raise and maintain armies; the Estates-General of the France were called regularly throughout most of the wars, but seldom refused the king the necessary aid. This pattern became customary, and the Estates-General lost the assertiveness of its English counterpart. Indeed certain taxes became regularly collected by tradition, year after year, without the necessity for a vote. The power of the Estates-General wilted. By the end of the Middle Ages both kingdoms were unified states with strong central governments. In England, this was centred on a often fractious partnership between king and parliament; in France, the king and his officials held centre stage. Indeed, the wars paved the way for the French kings erect a centralised, absolutist monarchy in the early modern period, which was the model for others throughout Europe. This trend away from the federalism of feudal governance towards centralised nation-states was not confined to England and France. Spain is the outstanding example of a strong centralised monarchy coming into being at the end of the Middle Ages. This was created when two of the leading Christian kingdoms, Castile and Aragon, which had driven the Muslims out of the Iberian peninsula, were united under one crown with the marriage of Ferdinand, King of Aragon with Isabella, Queen of Castile, in 1469. In the meantime, Germany and Italy remained fragmented amongst a multiplicity of states of varying size, some as big as whole countries, others no larger than villages.

Law in medieval Europe

The roots of Medieval law

With the fall of the Roman empire in the west, the old Roman provinces became home to two legally distinct groups – the Romans for by the end of the empire all free inhabitants were Roman citizens, and their new masters, the Germans. Both peoples lived under their own laws, administered by their own officials; however, from the 6th century the Germanic kings started issuing law codes for example the codes of the Visigoths and the Burgundians which sought to regulate relations between Romans and Germans, and later bring all subjects under one set of laws. In essence, these codes were orally-transmitted Germanic tribal customs as written down in Latin, systematised and interpreted by Roman lawyers. Like much customary law in less complex societies, the laws were based largely on the principle of compensation – the perpetrator compensated the victim for wrong done. This compensation called a wergeld was normally expressed in money terms, and differed according to the crime committed and the status in society of those involved. In this process, Roman law fell into disuse as an integrated system in western Europe except in those areas of Italy ruled by the Byzantine empire. However, it had a heavy influence on the Germanic codes, especially marked in civil matters such as family and property law, which were defined much more fully than in German custom. A third strand of law was also at work in early medieval Europe, and this was Church law also called canon law. This dated back to the early days of Christianity, though it was much refined over the centuries. Its purpose was to set out rules for ordering the Christian church and maintaining discipline amongst its servants. The servants of the church its priests and clerks were subject to church courts, where canon law prevailed. The two main sources of this were Roman law and the Christian Bible.

Most countries in Europe are parliamentary democracies, including the UK, Netherlands, Ireland, Germany and Austria. France and Russia have a semi-presidential system of government. Europe's only.

For more information, please see the full notice. Fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, On November 9, , thousands of jubilant Germans brought down the most visible symbol of division at the heart of Europe—the Berlin Wall. For two generations, the Wall was the physical representation of the Iron Curtain, and East German border guards had standing shoot-to-kill orders against those who tried to escape. But just as the Wall had come to represent the division of Europe, its fall came to represent the end of the Cold War. Bush and his National Security Advisor, Brent Scowcroft, watched the unfolding scene on a television in the study, aware of both the historical significance of the moment and of the challenges for U. Germans celebrating the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 10, By , the former communist leaders were out of power, free elections were held, and Germany was whole again. The peaceful collapse of the regimes was by no means pre-ordained. Soviet tanks crushed demonstrators in East Berlin in June , in Hungary in , and again in Czechoslovakia in Soviet military planners were intimately involved in the Polish planning for martial law in , and Soviet troops remained stationed throughout Eastern Europe, as much a guarantee for Soviet security as an ominous reminder to Eastern European peoples of Soviet dominance over their countries. Gorbachev also made clear—at first secretly to the Eastern European leaders, then increasingly more public—that the Soviet Union had abandoned the policy of military intervention in support of communist regimes the Brezhnev Doctrine. On February 6, , negotiations between the Polish Government and members of the underground labor union Solidarity opened officially in Warsaw. Solidarity was formed in August following a series of strikes that paralyzed the Polish economy. On June 4, as Chinese tanks crushed student-led protests in Beijing, Solidarity delivered a crushing electoral victory. In Hungary, drastic changes were also under way. In doing so, it provided an avenue to escape for an ever-increasing number of East Germans. The Hungarian Party removed its long-time leader, Janos Kadar, agreed to its own version of the Round Table talks with the opposition, and, on June 16, ceremoniously re-interred Imre Nagy, the reformist communist leader of the Hungarian Revolution. By October 23, ten months after political reforms began, Hungary adopted a new constitution allowing a multi-party system and competitive elections. The economic collapse of East Germany led increasing numbers of East Germans to seek to emigrate to the West. Thousands sought refuge in West German embassies in other communist countries, eventually forcing the government to allow them to emigrate via special trains. Visiting Berlin in early October, Gorbachev cautioned the East German leadership of the need to reform, and confided in his advisors that East German leader Erich Honecker had to be replaced. Two weeks later, Honecker was forced to resign, while hundreds of thousands marched in protest throughout major East German cities. On November 9, as the world watched on television, the East German Government announced the opening of all East German borders. In a fluid situation, the Berlin Wall came down when an obviously ill-prepared East German spokesman told reporters that the new travel regulations also applied to Berlin. Before the end of the month, West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl unveiled a plan for reunification of the two Germanies. As the Wall came down and the fears of a Soviet reaction receded, the dominoes started falling at a quickened pace. In October, riot police arrested hundreds in Prague after an unsanctioned demonstration; only weeks later, hundreds of thousands gathered in Prague to protest the government. Alexander Dubcek, the reformist communist who led the Prague Spring in , made his first public appearance in over two decades. In Bulgaria, protests lead to the removal of Todor Zhivkov, the long-time leader of the Bulgarian Communist Party, and his replacement with reformist communist, Petar Mladenov. The new government quickly announced that the government would hold free elections in Only in Romania did the events turn violent. Nicolae Ceausescu, an increasingly idiosyncratic relic of Stalinist times, refused any reforms. On December 17 in Timisoara, the army and police fired into crowds protesting government policies, killing dozens. Protests spread to other cities, with hundreds killed when Ceausescu ordered the violent repression of demonstrations on December By the next day, Ceausescu was forced to flee Bucharest and was

arrested by Army units in the countryside. The interim government, led by a reformist communist Ion Iliescu, held a quick mock trial and Ceausescu and his wife were executed on December 25, 1989. By the summer of 1990, all of the former communist regimes of Eastern Europe were replaced by democratically elected governments. In Bulgaria and Romania, reformed communists retained control of the governments, but new center-right parties entered Parliaments and became active on the political scene. The course was set for the reintegration of Eastern Europe into Western economic, political, and security frameworks. In his memoirs, Bush noted that the rapport he built with Gorbachev at that meeting would prove beneficial later on. And while Scowcroft did not yet feel the Cold War was over, he noted that U.S. policy should be based on the reality that the Cold War was over.