



Workers and trades union representatives take part in a protest to demand better job protection

# Trades unions shout down austerity policies

The EU's Brussels Summit has brought out crowds of trades unionists, mostly Belgian and Portuguese, but also with representatives from other member-states, to protest at the current austerity policies

They claim their members are being asked to make sacrifices for a crisis that is not of their making, and are angry at Franco-German plans for uniform wages and taxes they say will slash living standards. "Let's hope that what's happened in Portugal, which led to the Gov-

ernment resigning, will spread through Europe and help revise this austerity that is being imposed on the European people," said one Portuguese worker. "It's not normal that after having given so much money to the banks, which have done their utmost to give it away

in dividends and bonuses to the bosses, that ordinary working people and taxpayers should foot the bill. It's not acceptable in Portugal, in Greece, here, or anywhere," said a Belgian union member.

To prevent any escalation of the protests, Belgian police mobilised

a large force to keep the marchers away from official buildings. Water cannon, tear gas and pepper sprays were deployed and there were several clashes with the demonstrators, although police say these were isolated incidents involving only small groups.

## Stone tools 'demand new American story'

**The long-held theory of how humans first populated the Americas may have been well and truly broken**

Archaeologists have unearthed thousands of stone tools that pre-date the technology widely assumed to have been carried by the first settlers. The discoveries in Texas are seen as compelling evidence that the so-called Clovis culture does not represent America's original immigrants. Details of the 15,500 year old finds are reported in *Science* magazine.

A number of digs across the Americas in recent decades had already hinted that the 'Clovis first' model was in serious trouble. But the huge collection of well-dated tools excavated from a creek bed 60km northwest of Austin mean the theory is now dead, argue the *Science* authors.

"This is almost like a baseball bat to the side of the head of the archaeological community to wake up and say, 'hey, there are pre-Clovis people here, that we have to stop quibbling and we need to develop a new model for peopling of the Americas,'" Michael Waters, a Texas A&M University anthropologist, said. For 80 years, it has been argued that the Clovis culture was the first to sweep into the New World.

These people were defined by their highly efficient stone-tool technology. Their arrow heads and spear points were formidable hunting weapons and were used to bring down the massive beasts of the Ice Age, such as mammoth, mastodon and bison.

## Cyber attack against European Union ahead of summit

**The EU has reported a 'serious' cyber attack on the Commission and External Action Service on the eve of a summit in Brussels**

Crucial decisions on the future structure of the EU, economic strategy and the ongoing war in

Libya were discussed at the two-day talks. Details were not given but other sources compared the attack to a recent assault on France's Finance Ministry. "We're often hit by cyber attacks but this is a big one," one source said.

The European Commission

has been assessing the scale of the current threat and, in order to prevent the 'disclosure of unauthorised information', has shut down external access to e-mail and the institutions' intranet. Staff have been asked to change their passwords.

## Watch makers confront bare-wristed challenge



A woman takes pictures of a watch displayed at Hermes

**Even the world's biggest trade fair for watches can't seem to avoid subtly encouraging the use of an alternative timekeeping device heavily favoured by younger — and often bare-wristed — consumers: the smartphone**

Baselworld, which opened last week and runs through the end of the month, is offering a new app to help people navigate a labyrinth of

luxury watches, jewellery and other items shown by 1,892 exhibitors from 45 nations in 1.7m square feet of convention space. The app highlights what everyone, particularly texting teenagers and Web-savvy 20-somethings, knows. The time posted is everywhere: on radios, ovens, microwaves, banks, train stations, street corners, and especially on phones. All of which makes it harder to make the case for the tra-

ditional wristwatch.

"Now the tendency, the trend to go to these kind of devices is very high," said Michele Orfeo, Head of Marketing for Swiss watch maker Balmain, part of the Swatch Group, which targets women who would pay \$222 to \$2,220 for a watch. So to compete for young people, as with any potential segment of watch wearers, a watch maker must have a price, a style, even a mood in mind.

"We all have a certain segment and price range, and an image," the official said. "What we sell is not just a watch, but kind of an elegance. They're all having a certain territory of emotion. Everyone can find something where they feel good and at ease, when they're wearing these."

Many of the watches displayed in Basel are aimed at serious money. Hublot of Geneva is offering a \$3m diamond watch that truly is one of a kind — just one made. The company says it took 13,000 hours to fashion the diamonds, all taken from a Russian mine in Yakutsk, into a 141-carat tourbillion with 637 baguette diamonds and one rose-cut diamond on the crown.

## Counting the cost of Japan's disasters

**With the scale of Japan's destructive earthquake and tsunami becoming more apparent insurers have begun their calculations**

Although many of the worst hit areas are barely accessible, the US giant, AIG, which is very exposed in Asia, has set aside nearly \$1bn. Reinsurers, such as Swiss Re, have almost doubled that figure. Catastrophe modelling companies believe the tragic events will result losses of between 12bn and 35bn Euros. Meanwhile, Tepco, operators of the stricken Fukushima plant, say they will be paying farmers for losses caused by nuclear radiation leaking.

## Apple's iPad 2 hits overseas stores

**Hundreds of customers formed long lines outside Apple stores for the international launch of the iPad 2, which has flown off the shelves in the USA and left the company struggling to meet demand**



Analysts forecast some 1m devices may be sold in the coming days, but many warn that it's not clear how supply constraints will affect availability after an earthquake and tsunami damaged Japan's tech industry.

The iPad 2, a thinner and faster version that features two cameras for video chat, was introduced in the USA on March 11th. The international launch kicked off in New Zealand, then Australia, and will be rolled out in other countries including France, Britain, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Canada and Mexico. Apple Chief Executive Steve Jobs said the company was 'working hard to build enough iPads for everyone' as the company struggled to meet US demand.

The first iPad, which went on sale a year ago, sold 500,000 units in the first week and crossed the 1m unit mark in 28 days. Nearly 15m iPads were sold in nine months of 2010, two or three times as many as analysts had predicted. Analysts expect the company to sell 30m or more this year, generating close to \$20bn in sales, even as other companies launch their own devices.

**Materials prepared with aid of information agencies**