

Eurozone teetering on brink of recession

The eurozone economy is in danger of tipping into recession as the services sector shrank last month along with manufacturing

Surveys of company purchasing managers (PMI) showed unexpectedly weak activity in the region's most powerful economy, Germany, as well as in France, even as the gap between them and the struggling periphery nations widened. Manufacturing orders in the region fell for the ninth month running. That weakness was echoed in China, whose PMI showed export orders falling in their worst performance in eight months. Europe is China's biggest export market.

Several economists said the euro zone PMI reports suggested no growth in the current quarter, reigniting worries about a mild recession after a raft of more upbeat data in recent weeks. "The economy remains stuck in low gear," said Peter Dixon at Commerzbank. "It's indicative of a flatlining economy, maybe slightly contracting rather than a major slowdown. It doesn't bode well for the first quarter."



People enter a shop with sale stickers in the window at Moenckebergstrasse Street

The eurozone economy contracted 0.3 percent in the closing months of 2011 so a second quarter of contraction would meet

the technical definition of recession. The PMI data reinforces the chances that European Central Bank could cut rates to a record-

low of 0.75 percent next quarter. Private sector firms reduced their work force for the second month running in a bid to cut costs.



Carnival competition capers in Rio

It is competition time for 13 top-league samba schools who are all fighting for titles at this year's carnival in Rio de Janeiro

Every school has dozens of subgroups, each with its own brilliant costumes. More than 4,000 samba troupe members will dance and swivel their way down the city's Sambadrome parade avenue. Around 80 percent of those taking part are poor local people who receive their costumes free. Others, who are mostly Brazilian, pay up to 300 Euros to take part.

Watching them are around 80,000 spectators and of course a worldwide television audience. The five-day carnival in Rio, which started on Friday, is more than just official parades. Whole areas across the city host block parties which attract thousands. This year about 850,000 tourists are said to be in Rio.

Up to a million homes 'need filters'

Almost a million UK homes will need to have filters installed to prevent TV interference from 4G mobile signals — at a cost of £108m

A smaller number of homes — about 10,000 — will need to switch to satellite or cable TV services in order to avoid degraded picture quality. Homes that cannot receive these alternative platforms

will receive up to £10,000 each to 'find a solution.' Costs will be met by the winner of a spectrum auction later this year. Consultations are currently being held into how spectrum — which is used by analogue television — will be offered to mobile operators once airwaves are freed up by the switch to digital.

These airwaves are crucial to

mobile operators to create next-generation mobile services. The winning bidder, or bidders, will be required to pay for the costs of making sure viewers of digital terrestrial television (DTT) will not be affected by the changes. In a consultation document released in August last year, media regulator Ofcom estimated that about 760,000 homes could be affected.

Picasso and British art

Spanish artist Pablo Ruiz Picasso remains the 20th century's single most important artistic figure, a towering genius who changed the face of modern art



A piece of work entitled *Weeping Woman* by Pablo Picasso

Picasso lived most of his life in France, but a new exhibition at Tate Britain in London invites us to re-examine Picasso's relation-

ship with Britain, and how he affected its artists. "Actually, early on, Britain was supposed to be an influence on him in growing up.

His father was a great Anglophile and known as 'El Ingles' because of his passion for all things English. Picasso told his biographer in 1900 he was on his way to London when he stopped off in Paris and never carried on and finished the journey. And the reason was partly his admiration for British painting," said curator Chris Stephens. The exhibition, which brings together over 150 spectacular artworks, examines the impact of Picasso's later influence on British artists.

Graham Sutherland, Wyndham Lewis, Bacon, Hockney or Moore, the latter in sculpture; all drank from the master's well. Moore was inspired by Picasso's neo-classical early 1920s work.

Loose cable may have botched CERN results

Scientists at the CERN institute near Geneva may have egg on their faces after last year claiming to have proved one of Einstein's fundamental theories was wrong

Researchers reported that sub-atomic particles called neutrinos could travel fractions of a second faster than light. Now a science website says a loose cable may have botched results. "The 60 nanoseconds discrepancy appears to come from a bad connection between a fibre optic cable and a computer," reported Insider Science.

Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity, which underpins the current view of how the universe works, says nothing can travel faster than light. A spokesperson for CERN has admitted a flaw in a GPS system may have been responsible for the surprising readings, but any error has yet to be confirmed.

France PM Francois Fillon orders adieu to mademoiselle

The term 'mademoiselle' is about to disappear from French paperwork

Under pressure from campaigners, the government has decided that women will not have to choose how to describe themselves on official documents. Unlike men, women have been forced to choose between a married 'madame' or unmarried 'mademoiselle'. "Everywhere we are asked to declare our marital status. This is not imposed on men, it's not important whether they are married," said Julie Muret of the group, Osez le Feminisme. Her group also wants candidates for the presidential elections in April to support other pledges reducing the pay gap between men and women, supporting the right to abortion and birth control, and limiting sexist advertising.



Campaigners have been trying to get the term 'mademoiselle' removed from French life for years, saying it is a condescending term. A circular from Mr. Fillon's office says the state should no longer be interested in the marital status of women. It also says the choices of 'maiden name' and 'spouse's name' will be replaced with 'family name'.