

# IMF's economic forecast says Europe on slow boat to growth

Europe is once again at the back of the class with the dunce's cap on in the latest IMF World Economic report

It says the developed world is starting to look healthier and America's growth will bounce in 2014 as will Japan's before cooling off, but the Eurozone will crawl along. This year the Eurozone has been stuck in the red thanks to its austerity-first policies to pay off debt, while China has forged ahead, Japan has a super-stimulus beefing up its figures, and American growth has returned. Europe will shrink in 2013. But next year should see the Eurozone return to growth. By then America will have nearly doubled its annual growth rate, while China will struggle in 2014 to maintain growth at this year's levels.

The IMF's Chief Economist Olivier Blanchard said, "The recovery from the crisis continues. I think that's a fact and an important one. But too slowly. And advanced economies are not out of the woods. Public debt, and in some cases, private debt, remain very high. And fiscal sustainability is not a given. Unemployment remains very high and will



International Monetary Fund says global economy healthier, but still weak

remain high for a very long time. So these challenges remain and I think they will be the major challenges we face in the years to come."

Overall the IMF sees glo-

bal growth down in 2014, as it has done in the last 18 months, due to a slowdown in Asia, where cyclical peaks have been passed and structural barriers to growth remain un-

reformed.

America is once again in the global economic driving seat, but its politicians could derail that if the current budget standoff becomes prolonged.

Other slowing factors include an eventual ending of the 85 billion Dollar a month printing spree at the US mint, and Chinese growth staying in single rather than double figures.

## EU sharing asylum load across Europe

**A meeting of EU Justice and Home Affairs ministers in Luxembourg has added Lampedusa tragedy to the agenda**

Arguments remain over whether all EU member states are pulling their weight when it comes to accepting claims for asylum. Describing exactly what the ministers would be discussing, EU Commissioner for Home Affairs Cecilia Malmström said they were 'asking all member states to do their utmost to resettle and to share the responsibility because today there are six or seven countries who take all the responsibility and we are 28 in this union.'

Germany takes in the second highest number of asylum seekers in the world. Germany's Interior Minister Hans-Peter Friedrich wants to fight human trafficking by cooperating with African states. Asylum seekers and refugees who reach an EU country must make their application where they arrive. Southern European states want to see a redistribution of asylum applications.

## EU Rights Watchdog has warned Spain's austerity could adversely affect children

**The Council of Europe, the continent's main human rights watchdog, has warned Spain its austerity programme could have a devastating impact on children**

Child poverty reached 30 percent in 2011 and cuts in welfare, health and education have left some children homeless and malnourished, its report said. Disabled people also face poverty and increasing marginalisation as state help is withdrawn, the Council found. But Spain's Government said investment in education for all had risen. Defending its commitment to human rights, it said that subsidies for disabled people had also risen. In rare good

news, the International Monetary Fund said it expected Spain and other southern

ernment officials as well as non-governmental organisations to assess the impact of



Austerity will harm Spanish children

Eurozone states to exit recession and start growing economically from next year.

Mr. Muiznieks met gov-

ernment officials as well as non-governmental organisations to assess the impact of

erty rate... has a potentially devastating long-term impact on children and the country," he said in his report. "Children have been disproportionately affected by cuts in social, health and educational budgets and shrinking family benefits have led some children to experience destitution and nutrition problems." He singled out house evictions as an issue of concern for their impact on children.

Defending the educational system, the government noted that during the 2010-2011 academic year, 78 percent of students with disabilities were schooled in mainstream centres, and the rest in special schools.

## Japan's Panasonic to withdraw from loss-making plasma TV business next year

**Panasonic, the Japanese electronics company, is to stop production of plasma TV screens in 2014**

The company will close its plasma screen factory in Amagasaki and put it up for sale next year. Panasonic's plasma TV division made huge losses in recent years. Other elec-

tronics companies, such as Hitachi and Pioneer, have already pulled out of the sector.

In its last financial year, Panasonic's plasma screen division made a loss of 754bn yen (£4.85bn), following a 772bn Yen loss the previous year. This is despite the fact that its plasma TVs are critically acclaimed, with the

European Imaging Sound Association voting Panasonic's Viera TX-P60ZT65 European home cinema TV of the year 2013-2014. Plasma screens, which use electrically charged ionised gases, are praised for their brightness, deep blacks, and rich colour displays, but tend to use more electricity than other

screen technologies.

"In the last two or three years plasma TVs have lost most of the advantages they had to LCD [liquid crystal display] TVs," said Tom Morrod, Senior Director of Consumer Electronics at IHS Research Company. "We're forecasting that they will be gone completely by 2018."

## Samsung shows off its curves with Galaxy Round

**Samsung is hoping to throw a curve ball its competitor's way with the launch of its Galaxy Round, the world's first curved smartphone**

A variation of its popular Note 3 but lighter, Samsung says it affords a more comfortable grip. It also brings an era of flexible, wearable displays a little closer in a technology war that is hotting up. Next month LG Electronics launches its own curved design as the South Korean smartphone giants seek to recapture high-end growth that has been poached by low-end rivals.

## Algae-powered building

**There is a building in Hamburg, Germany, which is entirely powered by algae. Inside the glass panels is a green liquid in which you can see little bubbles rising to the surface.**

This is the result of having a bio-reactor built into the facade, which heats 15 flats in the building. The motor is micro algae, and the principle is photosynthesis.

The building therefore effectively heats itself. The balcony looks like an aquarium with all the algae growing there. Also, this is a 'passive building' meaning that it maintains a comfortable interior temperature without heating, which also means it saves money.

## Anti-tobacco legislation

**Graphic health warnings covering 65 percent of cigarette packets sold in the EU, instead of the 75 percent initially proposed by the European Commission**

This is part of the watered-down anti-smoking legislation voted in by the European Parliament recently, but some see the measures passed as progress. The vote on the world's toughest anti-tobacco laws sees MEPs scaling back almost all the Commission's plans. Many of those proposals were also supported by EU member states, but the Parliament rejected them as too harsh.