International conference organized by the High Council of public finance and the Network of EU Independent Fiscal Institutions on the future of European economic governance

The High Council of public finance and the Network of EU Independent Fiscal Institutions organized an international conference on the future of European economic governance on May 10, in the context of the French Presidency of the Council. The event was followed on May 11 by a joint working session between members of the EU IFI network.


The aim of the conference was to allow for an in-depth conversation on current reform ideas by giving the floor to economists and all stakeholders of European economic governance, sharing lessons learned from experience on economic governance rules and providing insights for reform. Over 300 people attended the event, in person and online.

In his opening remarks, Pierre Moscovici, President of the High Council of public finance called for reforming European fiscal rules, emphasizing the need for a « realistic » approach, adapted to each country’s specific situation.

Paolo Gentiloni, European Commissioner for the Economy then took the floor and highlighted areas of consensus between Member States while suggesting a timeline for reform.

The first roundtable, moderated by High Council of public finance member Isabelle Job-Bazille, was an opportunity to assess current fiscal rules and to review several proposals for reform as well as the current state of negotiations. Emmanuel Moulin, General Director of the French Treasury, Niels Thygesen, President of the European Fiscal Board (EFB), and Richard van Zwol, Chairman of the EU Network of Independent Fiscal Institutions, had the chance to discuss the EFB’s proposals, the role of Independent Fiscal Institutions, the views of Member States and the current state of discussions.
Olivier Blanchard, Professor Emeritus of Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), shared his vision for reforming European economic governance based on estimating the default risk on each member state’s debt. He highlighted the importance of reaching a compromise between debt sustainability and the use of fiscal policy to maintain economic activity, particularly when monetary policy cannot be used.

The second roundtable, moderated by Lucie Robequain, Editor-in-Chief covering France at Les Echos, was an opportunity to discuss the views of stakeholders on reforming fiscal rules: Pascal Blanqué, President of the Amundi Institute, presented the views of bond investors, Sarah Carlson, Senior Vice President at Moody's Investor Service, those of rating agencies, while Eric Woerth, President of the Finance Committee of the French National Assembly elaborated on the role of national Parliaments. Nicola Giammarioli, Secretary General of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), presented the perspective of lenders to countries experiencing financial struggles in the Eurozone.

In his closing remarks for the conference, François Villeroy de Galhau, Governor of the Banque de France, warned against the illusion of debt "without limits and without costs" which has become "our greatest peril".