

JUNE 2014 VOL. 1 ISSUE 1

**COPENHAGEN
EDITION**

**Speaking
with one
language,
a European
debate
emerges**

**Drones,
they aren't
just for
killing**

**Brazilians
will be
rooting for
Argentina**



Sex, power and politics

Jytte Hilden wants more female leaders, but first some obstacles need clearing

THE MURMUR

YOU ARE reading the first issue of The Murmur. Thanks for picking it up. In doing so, you distinguish yourself as a consumer of printed publications in an age when any information you want is available on the nearest screen.

Given the format, you may have thought you were picking up a newspaper. But don't let our appearance fool you.

The Murmur looks like a newspaper, and it feels like a newspaper. But take a closer look at our content. Go ahead and have a peek. Do it right now, then come back and keep reading. We'll wait.

So, what did we tell you? Long-form articles, interviews, commentary and plenty of opinion. More like a magazine than a newspaper, eh?

That's because The Murmur, as a monthly, takes a longer view on issues, people, and cultural developments. We want to focus on Denmark's place in the world, and how this tiny Scandinavian country is affected by global trends. We want to look at issues that are often overlooked in the daily news, but are topics that we hear people around us discussing.

But there is also another way of interpreting our name. 'Murmur' can also refer to that sense many of our international readers experience, of overhearing a discussion around them, without actually knowing what is being said.

And that is the The Murmur's other, equally important, function. Thousands of foreigners move to Denmark for work, love, or simply because they like the country. Due to the lack of opportunities to dig beneath the surface of Danish society, many find it difficult to create a strong enough bond with Denmark to risk investing their time, skills, and energy. Denmark is a multicultural society, but if it is to benefit the most from the outsiders living within its borders, foreigners need first to be included, and develop a sense of belonging to the country. A critical and deep English-language media source will play a part in that function.

FAIR AND ALTERNATIVE JOURNALISM

Our inspiration is the American 'alternative weekly'. Unfortunately, this type of newspaper is not available in Denmark, but we believe that independent, alternative journalism, available for free, would be a welcome contribution to the Danish media market.

Alternative to what, we've been asked? In contrast to existing news outlets, The Murmur focuses on journalism rather than news. Our role models are publications like Mother Jones, Weekendavisen and others that take the time to dig a little deeper and who aren't shy about taking a stand about where they stand. Our articles are fair. Are they objective? Not always.

As could be imagined, we've met with plenty of scepticism about our project. "You do know there's this thing called the internet?" we were asked at one point.

Yes, we do. And when it comes to news updates, video, audio, and all the other stuff we use it for, the internet can't be beat. In recognition of that, all our articles will be available on-line, along with a digital version of this newspaper. More importantly, though, so too will all the supporting material that we gathered while working on our articles. These pictures, extended interviews, and audio will help paint a detailed picture of the issues we take up.

The decision to print a newspaper is every bit as deliberate as the decision to pick one up. Unlike the internet, The Murmur does not contain all the information you want. But we feel it contains some of the information and people our readers need to be exposed to, if they are to understand Danish society and its role in an increasingly globalised world.

We hope you get as much out of reading The Murmur as we do producing it. Thanks again for picking us up. **M**

The Murmur

I saw a woman shitting in a phone box. She told me that the city-run shelter had closed its toilets, and this was the only place she could do it in private.

MICHAEL LODBERG, SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

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BEHIND THE STORY

Jytte Hilden interview



Even though Denmark's a great place to be a woman, they remain underrepresented in top levels of management and leadership in the private sector and academia. Jytte Hilden isn't happy about this. I learnt about the former minister and her work for women's rights through a mutual friend, the knitwear designer Lærke Bagger, who Jytte had included in her new book about Danish women who have stuck out from the crowd.

I met Hilden in the café of the Black Diamond library, which she commissioned and named as culture minister in the early 1990s. She retired from politics 16 years ago, but still remains dedicated to the female struggle and wants to ignite a new debate about what society can do to ensure they too can achieve their full potential. We're fully behind her. **PETER STANNERS**

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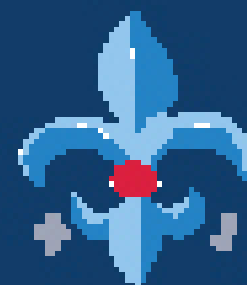
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MONTH IN REVIEW

MISSING OBSERVERS
A Dane is among four observers working for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) that have gone missing in eastern Ukraine. According to reports, the observers were on patrol east on Donetsk when contact was lost. The other observers are from Turkey, Switzerland and Estonia. The disappearance follows heavy fighting in the region.



MESSERSCHMIDT TRIUMPHS IN EU ELECTION
Morten Messerschmidt, MEP for the Danish People's Party, broke the Danish record for the most number of personal votes in May's European Parliament election: 465, 758.

NOWHERE TO PRAY
A Danish high school rejected calls from Muslim students who wanted a prayer room installed on site. Anne-Birgitte Rasmussen, principal of Københavns Åbne Gymnasium, argued that the school was a rational project founded on science. Muslim students said the move was discriminatory. In a poll, 170 of the 250 students supported introducing the prayer room. According to the association of high-school principals, no public schools have religious facilities for Muslims.

Lego most trusted?
Toy manufacturer Lego was selected as Denmark's leading brand by Berlingske Business Magasin, due tot its strong leadership and good working conditions.



High driving idiot
An 18-year-old lost his licence less than two hours after passing his driving test. The teen from Vinderup, Jutland, was stopped after driving erratically and tested positive for cannabis. He was banned for three years.

GROWTH!
The government's independent economic advisers, the so-called "wise men", have predicted private consumption will grow 1.6% this year, rising to 3.2% in 2016. During the same period, 65,000 new jobs will be created.



Photo: Hør, Henner, Nielsen, JOK

Afghanistan over
The last Danish troops returned from Afghanistan in May. Since Denmark first joined the ISAF forces in 2006, 39 Danish soldiers have died in the country, the majority from roadside bombs.

YES TO EU PATENTS
Denmark will join the EU's Unified Patent Court after 60.45% of Danes voted in favour in May's referendum. Supporters argue it will make it cheaper to secure EU-wide patents, while detractors fear so-called 'patent trolls'.



Former PM and leader of Venstre Lars Løkke Rasmussen has stumbled from scandal to scandal. Tabloid Ekstra Bladet revealed his party spent 152,000 kroner on his clothes, bought a holiday for his family and paid to let him smoke in smoke-free hotels. His future as leader remains uncertain, particularly after his party's poor performance in the European Parliament election.

Peter Stanners



GENDER BATTLES
A restaurant in Aarhus was dragged before the discrimination board, Ligestillingsnævnet, for offering 'lady' and 'gentleman' portions of steak. The case was dropped after six months because the menu options weren't restricted to either gender. But the Bella Sky hotel was less lucky. The board found its female-only floor to be illegal.

Foreign fighters
Around 100 Danes have travelled to conflict zones in the Middle East to fight, according to the domestic intelligence agency's (PET) Center for Terror Analysis (CTA). Around ten have so far died in conflict. While the UK has so far convicted one national who had travelled to Syria to receive weapons training, the Danish government has had less success. A number of political parties are calling for stronger sanctions against Danes who travel to participate in armed conflict. But legal spokesperson for Socialdemokraterne, Trine Bramsen, argues the government is doing enough. "PET and the police are working hard to document that illegal activities are taking place," Bramsen told Ritzau news bureau.



Copenhagen cannabis experiment rejected
Mayor Frank Jensen wants to trial legalised cannabis in Copenhagen, in part to undermine the criminal market that turns over at least one billion kroner a year. But it isn't to be, and the government recently rejected his third attempt to introduce the trial. According to Berlingske, the government argued that the trial would increase the availability of cannabis and lead to higher levels of abuse. At least the drug lords know how they'll vote come election time.

NEWSMAKER

#TRENDING

HENRIK THE MERCILESS

To call Henrik Qvortrup this month's newsmaker is correct on all levels. As a journalist, editor, political advisor, and until recently news analyst, the 50-year-old has been the terror of the Danish media scene for nearly a quarter century.



HENRIK QVORTRUP is used to being in the news. Mostly for reporting it. This month, however, he became news himself when allegations emerged that while serving as editor-in-chief of Se og Hør, a weekly celebrity tabloid, he encouraged journalists to use illegal methods to obtain information about celebrities.

The main source of the information was a computer systems administrator with Nets, which oversees credit and debit card systems. As more information has been revealed, allegations have emerged that the magazine's sources also included hospital and airport workers.

No police or other public officials have been alleged to have be involved, but, even so, Se og Hør's alleged information gathering is being compared with the wire tapping that led to the closing of the UK's News of the World in 2011.

Se og Hør's information gathering, and Qvortrup's role in the magazine's more aggressive style of coverage, came to light in a recent semi-autobiographical novel by journalist Kenn B Rasmussen. Rasmussen, who credits Qvortrup for taking him under his wing, says

he encouraged him to employ methods such as testing restrooms frequented by famous people for traces of cocaine.

One is tempted to say not that the allegation has made Qvortrup an object of media attention, but that it has done so again. For, whether it is for (literally) eating his own hat on live television or for being publically called a "pig" by a friend whom he had hung out in Se og Hør, Qvortrup has been equally at home making the news as he has reporting it.

Regonisable as much for his appearance and his demeanour as his talent as journalist, Qvortrup impresses viewers with his analysis, and irritates politicians with his hard-nosed style of questioning.

Noting that an MP had named him one of the country's best political journalists, he said the reason was because he was just as merciless, no matter who he was talking to.

"I have tons of enemies, but I see that as a journalistic mark of honour," he said. **M**

Kevin McGwin

#EP14DK

TRENDING this month is #ep14dk following the European Parliament elections in May.

@jonworth: So, how did that 'copy the DF rhetoric' idea work for you then, Venstre? #EP2014 #ep14dk

The outcome of the election was relatively predictable, with big gains for the Dansk Folkeparti (DF) who doubled their number of MEPs. Less predictable was the disastrous showing for Venstre, who had their number of seats halved to two. Despite being a pro-European party and a member of the liberal ALDE group in parliament, Venstre still campaigned on fears of welfare tourism. Their attempt to siphon DF voters backfired terribly, though dipping support may also have to do with their scandal-embroiled party leader.

@karmel80: @madsfred @alexforrest @peterstanners i am still confused and ANGRY that it is so hard to vote as EU citizen at #ep2014 #drvalg

The elections are supposed to be open to all EU citizens residing in Denmark. Sadly, that wasn't the case and The Murmur has found a number who were shut out for not registering to vote beforehand. Some councils, such as Aarhus, did remind EU residents in February to register. Others appear not to have. Strangely, we found EU residents who received ballots without having registered. And while some were turned away from the polls for not registering first, others were issued ballots after presenting their CPR cards. Bizarre and unfair. **M**

Peter Stanners



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Addicted to the cause

INTERVIEW Michael Lodberg’s singular focus is helping addicts to a more humane existence. Sometimes that means provoking people. Other times that means compromising on your principles



Mirre Gorga is from Bulgaria and has been selling *Illegal!* for three months. (Photo: Peter Stanners)

WHEN you sit down to talk with Michael Lodberg about one thing, it’s a good bet you’ll end up talking about something else along the way.

That’s because Lodberg, who goes by the title “social entrepreneur”, always has more than one thing going on.

He’s probably best known for establishing mobile injection rooms for drug addicts in 2011 as a way to get around a national ban, since overturned, on such facilities. But that was neither the first nor the last of his initiatives to help give addicts a better existence.

In 2005, before the mobile injection rooms, he started Café Dugnad, a drop-in centre in Vesterbro, as a place where addicts could come, get warm, and find some food. The impetus for doing so, he said, was straightforward.

“I saw a woman sitting in a phone box. She told me that the city-run shelter had closed its toi-

I’ve had people call me up and chew me out because ‘I give them hope.’ They might not help our image but with attitudes like that, we need to help them.

lets, and this was the only place she could do it in private.”

During the decades he’d lived in Vesterbro, he’d seen the same phone box on Halmtorvet used as a place where people did just about everything imaginable: sleep, urinate, have sex. But it was seeing a woman forced into the degrading situation of defecating there – despite the presence of a nearby public facility – that sparked him to act.

ALL ABOUT ADDICTS

Lodberg’s current project – and the one we met with him to speak about – is the magazine *Illegal!*. But before we can get down to business, we a chat about his next project: a programme that will distribute overdose antidote kits to addicts.

Addicts, as it turns out, are a common thread in the work that Lodberg does. Whether it is a drop-in centre, an injection room on wheels, or a magazine designed to

help addicts earn money, all of Lodberg’s projects seek to treat those with addictions not as problems but as people.

“It’s easy to make a difference if you speak with them about their problem and help them in a way they suggest. They know what they need. I can talk to politicians all day. We might agree about what to do, but nothing will happen because politics, not the problem, takes priority.”

For those that haven’t seen *Illegal!* or been asked to buy one on the street, it is a magazine modelled on other street papers in that sellers get to keep a portion of the sales price.

Where *Illegal!* differs is that it that doesn’t try to evoke people’s sympathy for the seller. Instead, it forces potential buyers to face an up-front moral dilemma: by buying the magazine, readers are funding someone’s drug habit (hence the title).

But it also paints this as the lesser of two evils, reasoning that if we give an addict money to buy drugs, he (or she) won’t need to break laws or degrade themselves in order to support their habit.

Lodberg also says the magazine encourages us to think about how degrading life as an addict on the streets is. (Issue 2 described itself on the front cover as “The best alternative to sucking cock on the street”.)

The content of the magazine is a collection of humorous and hardcore articles about drugs and drug culture, all packed in a “hipster cool” design inspired by the left-wing American magazine *Ad Busters* and ‘80s Danish gonzo porn mag *Rapport*.

FOR BETTER AND FOR WORSE

The cool packaging, though, is just a way of getting people to interest themselves in the issue of drugs and the impact that criminal laws against them have. “In reality, what we want to do is inform people. Tell people about what drugs are – for better and for worse.”

Given Lodberg’s singular focus on working with addicts, it came to some as something of a shock – and to many, a provocation – when, around about the time the second issue of *Illegal!* was coming out, the magazine began to let Romanians and other central European immigrants sell it.

The decision to do so, Lodberg admits, hasn’t sat so well with him.

“I’d rather that we didn’t have to do it, because it turns the magazine into a form of charity and not a self-help. But central Europeans are hard-working, and as a group they are every bit as maligned as addicts.”

People’s opinions about central Europeans don’t help the situation either. “Having them sell *Illegal!* has ruined our image. I’ve had people call me up and chew me out because ‘I give them hope.’ They might not help our image but with attitudes like that, we need to help them.” **M**

Kevin McGwin

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Illustration: Alexander Weis Kline

Learning to talk European

Hidden in the shadowy rise of Eurosceptic parties at the European Parliament elections, an increasingly constructive debate about Europe’s future is starting to take shape. Driven by the internet and by young people who take free movement and trade for granted, the EU is increasingly being seen as a *fait accompli*, though pressing questions regarding the limits of integration and stimulating growth in the South remain to be answered

EUROPEAN nation states as we once knew them are dead. Tourists and commuters speed past unmanned border crossings, products flow freely between regional markets, and war has become a distant memory.

But to many Europeans, these benefits aren’t enough to justify the institutions that make them possible. Eurosceptics made huge gains in the European Parliament (EP) election in May – parties whose primary purpose is to question the EU’s legitimacy. The Danish People’s Party polled 26.7 percent of the vote, while UKIP in the UK and Front National in France also secured similarly high levels of support.

And while the vast majority of Europeans support parties who want to maintain the status quo, national media and politicians only begrudgingly acknowledge the work of elected representatives sitting in the EU.

The EU is stuck between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, it has to continually defend its legitimacy to those who want to dramatically scale back European cooperation, while on the other it must struggle to communicate its successes to those who want to remain in the EU.

To break into our everyday lives, the EU may need to redefine its purpose for a 21st century audience accustomed both to life without the

fear of war and to the ability to work and live where they please. But because its 500 million residents still identify primarily with their nation states, starting a transnational conversation about Europe, its future and its politics, could be a utopian dream. Despite this, there are reasons to suggest this development is already well underway.

PLAYING THE VICTIM

Despite opting out of the Euro, Danes support the European project. According to a Eurobarometer poll from November, 71 percent of Danes feel like citizens of the EU, while 74 percent think that EU membership is necessary to face future challenges.

The EU is too intrusive and far too often makes bad decisions.

RINA RONJA KARI, THE PEOPLE’S MOVEMENT AGAINST THE EU

But not everyone is so keen, and one need look no further than the People’s Movement Against the EU to find its detractors. Campaigning under the slogan, “Should the EU decide everything?” and claiming that the European Commission (EC) directives are “attacking welfare and the labour market,” the party presents the EU as an outside force bent on undermining Denmark’s sovereignty.

“Of course there are some benefits to the EU, but at the end of the day the EU is too intrusive and far too often makes bad decisions. The victims are ordinary people who suffer from decisions made about the labour market, consumer protection and welfare. We need to col-

laborate only where it makes sense, for the sake of Denmark’s future,” the party’s MEP Rina Ronja Kari says.

This view has few followers among mainstream political parties. Connie Hedegaard, the EU climate commissioner and former climate minister for the Conservative party, argues that it is misguided to regard Denmark as a victim.

“We often act like the EU is something that is taking place outside of us and which is outside of our influence instead of acknowledging that we are a part of it and can work with it,” Hedegaard told Berlingske in a recent interview.

She still thinks there needs to be more effort to make the EU a topic of everyday discussion, not least because Europe lacks a common public sphere to debate decisions that affect us all. Danes still assume that political power lies in the Danish parliament, despite the fact that – by some estimates – as many as half of all Danish laws are in some way derived from European decisions.

“I have difficulty seeing how we can make a real democratic debate function without a common European public sphere. Otherwise, we need domestic and national politicians not to just leave the job of explaining the EU to EU politicians, but also ensure that it remains a part of the domestic political debate,” Hedegaard concludes.

COMMUNICATING A NEW EUROPEAN VISION

But while Danes are overwhelmingly in favour of the EU, many don’t understand the most basic facts of how it operates. For ex-



Peter Laugesen and Elena Asklof recently returned after 12 months traveling through 24 European countries to meet and interview young people. They called their journey ‘Our Europe’, and was a cultural and political exploration of the European youth generation they belonged to. In May, they won the prestigious Charlemagne Youth Prize, which is awarded annually to projects that foster a shared sense of European identity and integration. (Photo: Martin Zakora)

Our story is more than the fact that we have been at war with each other for the past 1500 years and we are now sick of it, which is the old story. EU gave us a common story for Europe. We need to look further back toward the Renaissance, the development of human rights and capitalism, which were all invented in Europe.

MORTEN LØKKEGAARD, FORMER MEP

ample, November’s Eurobarometer poll found that only 65 percent of Danes knew that MEPs were directly elected. This lack of understanding might be explained by the lack of EU coverage by Danish media, which have fewer than a dozen journalists permanently stationed in Brussels, compared to around 200 covering the Danish parliament.

Morten Løkkegaard, former MEP for Venstre, recognises this problem and argues that it reinforces the sense that the EU is an outside force, rather than something in which Denmark is embedded.

“Traditional media doesn’t do enough, and that’s partly due to a lack of resources, but also because the press has historically been nationally structured. This presents a challenge, because the media in each country end up talking to a national audience, with a national angle, and presenting Brussels as ‘the other’. Why doesn’t the press tell stories about Brussels as something we are a part of? We are being massively manipulated saying Brussels is always fighting against us,” Løkkegaard says.

When Løkkegaard was first voted in as an MEP in 2009, he discovered a considerable gap between European decision makers and their constituents, but that there was no common space to have the conversation and broach the gap. But before this common space develops, Løkkegaard argues that Europeans need to first be able to relate to each other as a people with shared values and history. The old European narrative, based on peace through trade, is becoming increas-

ingly obsolete as the distance from the wars of the 20th century increases. To address this issue, Løkkegaard launched the initiative ‘A New Narrative for Europe’ in April, which called upon artists and intellectuals to help define a European story centred on Europe’s culture.

“Our story is more than the fact that we have been at war with each other for the past 1500 years and now we are sick of it, which is the old story. The EU gave us a common story for Europe. We need to look further back, to the Renaissance, the development of human rights, and capitalism, which were all invented in Europe. We have 500 years of golden history with inventors, artists, creativity, and ideas in common. We share many more of our values with each other than with the rest of the world, especially compared to China and Africa,” says Løkkegaard, who failed to get reelected in May’s election.

SOLIDARITY THROUGH CRISIS

Løkkegaard’s ambition to use culture as a starting point for bringing Europeans together may have a serious competitor – the financial crisis. Peter Laugesen and Elena Asklof spent 12 months travelling around the EU to document the stories of other young people they came across. They found that young people in southern European countries such as Italy, Spain, and Greece, which have suffered from high youth unemployment following the financial crisis, are connecting through a shared experience.

“The European identity was particularly present in the south, where young people said they iden- ►

tified more with other young people across borders than they did with their parents. Greeks know that Spaniards don't have jobs either, and are having to tackle similar problems with corruption and being regarded as a lost generation. The crisis created a common starting point for a discussion about their experiences," says Askløf.

They attribute the phenomenon to the internet, which allows people to easily see and read about the situation in other countries. No single dominant platform has emerged to mediate this discussion, which has instead spread across blogs and websites that spontaneously pop up and disappear.

"There is no one platform for the conversation, it's a grassroots phenomenon," Laugesen said. "I think there is a desire to have a European conversation, because the crisis positioned Europe and European issues as a main refer-

ence point, just like after the war. Greeks and Spaniards both experienced how the Troika [the EC, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund] arrived and forced them to adopt new fiscal policies. So there is a potential for a creative and constructive debate about a future Europe and European identity, but it's better that these conversations take place because there is a civic desire for it, rather than being mediated by top-down initiatives."

LIMITS TO INTEGRATION?

While imperfect, complex, and difficult to understand - only 50 percent of Europeans say they know how the EU works - the EU is attempting to become more democratic. These are the first elections to follow the 2009 Lisbon Treaty that markedly increased the power of the EP. One major change is that the EP now has a say in who

should be the EC's president, a figure historically chosen by European leaders.

But neither an increase in the EU's democratic legitimacy nor vibrant transnational debate will appease every concern about the EU's legislative overreach. It is unlikely that nation states will cease to be the primary sources of our identities. According to Dr Mette Jolly, the lack of a single political identity will set limits on how integrated and centrally controlled Europeans will allow their national states to become.

"It is clear that, despite a strong desire for cooperation, Europeans do not see themselves a part of one democratic whole, but rather constituent units cooperating within an institutional framework called the EU, a framework which many do not consider indispensable. The consequence for integration is that the areas that demand a high de-

gree of solidarity should not be subjected to supranational government," Jolly wrote in her 2007 publication, "The European Union and the People".

One example is welfare. The EC has petitioned Denmark to lift restrictions on welfare that were put in place to make non-Danes earn the right to claim them, arguing that it violated EU to free movement. The ruling means that EU residents can now claim a number of benefits, such as student grants and unemployment insurance, after as little as a few weeks in the country.

This decision was condemned by several political parties who warned of the enormous expense Danish taxpayers would incur. But the real issue is that it violates the welfare state's social contract, in which Danes rest easy knowing that in exchange for relatively high income tax, there is a safety net wait-

ing for them. The system and the social contract are undermined, however, if people may simply arrive and benefit from them without having paid in over the years.

A EUROPEAN DISCUSSION EMERGES

The discussion about opening national welfare systems to all EU citizens is not unique to Denmark, however, according to professor Peter Nedergaard, from the University of Copenhagen.

"The UK, the Netherlands, and France have all debated issues related to welfare tourism, immigration, and the level of integration. For the first time ever, this election has shown common trends and themes being discussed across the borders of member states," Nedergaard says.

Nedergaard argued that the internet was allowing politicians and journalists to pay better attention

to the debates in other countries and introduce them into their own national setting.

"We don't necessarily have a common political arena, but we are seeing all the national political discussions becoming integrated, which shows that European people are increasingly working together. This cross-fertilisation of debates and ideas will accelerate in the coming years. We won't end up like the US, where there is a single political arena and a single debate. But we are seeing and witnessing an acceleration in political themes being transmitted from one country to another, and that's a positive sign. We are beginning to take the EU for granted and to recognise that it is not a state in itself, but rather the closest cooperation between states that we have ever witnessed." M

Peter Stanners

Society is politically estranged

INTERVIEW Bjarke Møller is director of Europa, an independent, pro-European think tank established last year by the Confederation of Danish Industry and CO Industri. Here he shares his thoughts on the rise of Eurosceptic sentiment and what the EU should focus on in the future.

HOW do we explain rising Euroscepticism across Europe?

There is rising scepticism, but it's debatable whether it's actually the result of a democratic deficit. A lot can be explained by the recent crisis and Europe's lack of a clear direction. People are confused as to what Europe is really about, and there is a clear feeling that a lot of the problems have not been solved yet. But the collapse of trust is not limited to the EU - we are facing a far deeper political crisis driven by people who are confused about what the future will bring. Scepticism about the EU may be justified when looking at some of the solutions that were implemented following the financial crisis, when some countries risked collapse and there was a need to act fast. These technocratic dictates - the direct intervention in financial systems and policy - were also interventions in the democratic process, and created a backlash, especially in southern Europe.

Danes are generally positive about the EU, but are not really clear what sort of democracy they want in Europe. They are confused because of its complexity. But most people don't even know what's happening inside city hall. People prefer to take positions on big discussions. They like the idea of democracy and the idea of being able to say yes or no. But we are experiencing an increased political estrangement in society, in which politics has become decoupled from everyday life, not just in the EU. It's a broader societal trend.

What should the European Parliament focus on over the next five years?

The EU should reinvent the idea of Europe as a region of growth and employment. It should implement new technological infrastructure such as fibre optic networks, more robust

smart grids, and other infrastructure and transport that can help improve our sustainable development and diminish the geographical distance between Europeans. I also think there is a lot of potential to get rid of regulations and clean up the financial sector, which has been constrained.

The banking union needs to make us more crisis-proof. There should be a restructuring of how funds are used, with less spending on agriculture and more on technology and innovation to modernise our societies. We also need a no-nonsense discussion about how to create a new European project and strengthen our societies through common actions. The EU needs to become less technocratic and more democratic, and engage more people in debates about the crises we are facing and how to solve them through common action.

Are national politicians and the media doing a good enough job communicating what is going in the EU?

We also need to educate our political elite to make them understand that it's not truthful to say that the EU is the source of all problems. We need a more honest conversation about how to help each other out. There is a negative coalition between national politicians and some segments of the media that reinforce each other with national state arguments. The fact is that we are dependent on each other and on international standards. We need to understand how the world is operating right now. This is a public education project that needs to be done. There are no quick fixes to scepticism, but it helps us to have a frank conversation about how to do things better - it's good that people can be confused and take a strong position against it. Without criticism the EU project will die. M

Peter Stanners

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Engineering student Søren Møller Dath waits to get the all clear from the airport tower. He and others in the field say it's just a matter of time before a whole new industry gets off the ground

Ready for takeoff

Drones still have a long way to go before they become a common sight in the skies above us. But their day is coming, and Danish firms are working to make sure they are at the forefront of a new industry

HANS Christian Andersen Airport is not a busy place. Situated 10 minutes by car from the centre of Odense, Denmark's third largest city, and surrounded by farmland, the single-runway facility has only a handful of scheduled flights each week during the summer.

During the winter, it has none.

"Actually, they were going to close it," says Michael Larsen, the head of UAS Danmark, an organisation that promotes the development of unmanned aircraft.

But instead of closing the airport, they - Odense Council and North Funen Council - didn't. They had an idea. Realising the secluded location and lack of traffic made the airport an ideal place

to test unmanned aircraft, in 2012 they set up Denmark's first test centre for drones (or 'unmanned areal systems' or 'unmanned areal vehicles', depending on how sensitive people are about the baggage the term 'drone' brings with it).

The drones that fly here - or anywhere in Denmark - aren't the killing machines of modern warfare. They are, in fact, mundane. Boring even, carrying out a wide range of practical tasks that can be done more easily or efficiently by calling in a little help from above.

Long overshadowed by their military big brothers, civilian drones have slowly come into their own. UAS Danmark, which manages the test centre, has identified

four applications - agriculture, first response, maritime services and "other research" purposes - in which Denmark has the chance to use its existing know-how to develop export technologies.

Doing so will require test flights, and UAS Danmark is counting on Hans Christian Andersen Airport becoming something of a Silicon Valley for the Danish drone industry. Interest, Larsen says, is growing, and one firm - Integra - has already set up shop at the airport.

Drones are still heavily restricted in Denmark, and test flights in Odense are not yet a daily occurrence. But on the day we visit, we meet Søren Møller Dath.

What you get them to do is limited only by your imagination.

STEPHAN MØVLIG



Dath wants to give his drone a few final test flights before completing his master's project in robotics at the University of Southern Denmark (SDU) in Odense.

His idea is that, when equipped with the correct sensors, a drone can be used by farmers to locate precisely where weeds are. Using GPS coordinates transmitted by the drone, the farmer can then spray pesticides in a far smaller area. Someday, he even envisions the data being transmitted to small robots on the ground that can spray individual weeds.

For the economically minded, that means saving money. For the environmentally minded, that means fewer chemicals being

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I flew illegally for a long time.

ANONYMOUS DRONE OPERATOR (NOW FULLY AUTHORISED)



Coming soon to an airport near you? (Photo: Søren Møller Dath)

sprayed near food or running off into the soil.

The practically minded, however, would point out that today’s test flights revealed how far drones still need to go before they can be considered as reliable as tractors or lorries or mobile phones or any other technology we’ve accepted as a natural part of modern life.

Today’s big problem: it’s windy. The control tower tells us over the walkie-talkie that gusts are up to 15 m/s (54 km/h). That’s enough to start making you feel dizzy after ten minutes on the tarmac, but otherwise it’s easily bearable on this warm spring day.

But the drone – an octo-copter model – “doesn’t like it,” Dath says. He doesn’t like it either. Doesn’t like the way the drone is struggling to maintain a constant position five metres off the ground. Doesn’t like the way its eight motors are straining. Doesn’t like what will happen if it crashes to the grass below.

“It’ll stay in place, but this is about as much wind as it can take,” he says. He’s got his hands on a handset similar to the kind you would use to operate a standard remote control airplane, but points out it’s just in case. The drone, he says, holds its height and location based on the GPS coordinates he programmed before take-off.

If he were to send it flying around the airport, it would be pro-

BL 9-4 Regulations for unmanned aircraft not weighing more than 25 kg

- The flight must be performed in a way that no other persons or property are endangered and so that the surroundings are inconvenienced as little as possible.

- The distance to the runway/runways of a public aerodrome must be at least 5km.

- The distance to the runway/runways of a military airbase must be at least 5km.

- The distance to built-up areas and major public roads shall be at least 150m.

(Trafikstyrelsen)

grammed to follow a set path, again based on GPS coordinates.

DANGER: ROBOTS FLYING OVERHEAD
The airport is deserted. So if the drone does crash or fly out of control, there’s little danger of any serious damage. Mostly, Dath is worried about the drone hitting the ground too hard and breaking.

That would set him (and his university) back about 20,000 kroner, along with the dozens of hours it took him to assemble the drone. (He says he could have saved the time and just bought an off-the-shelf model, but that would have cost more than twice as much. He would also have lost the experience of tinkering with it.)

But imagine if the airport were busier, or if it were flying over a town or a packed football stadium. Then, damage would be measured not in kroner, but perhaps in stitches or broken bones. Or, worse, human lives.

Even though Dath’s drone only weighs five kilos, if it fell from a height of five metres, the force of the impact alone would cause some serious bruising (at a minimum). Add the potential for lacerations caused by eight spinning blades, and, even the industry’s biggest boosters admit, it could be an ugly sight.

Another worry is that a drone could fly out of control and crash

into another aircraft, potentially bringing it down.

It is visions like these that have the industry doing more than admitting what would happen if such accidents did occur. They are working to make sure they don’t happen, not only because of the damage they could cause to life and property, but also because of the damage they could do to the industry as a whole.

This is why firms that have been approved to fly drones for commercial purposes are pretty protective about their right to do so.

Currently, only 18 companies and the Copenhagen Fire Brigade are permitted by Trafikstyrelsen, which regulates all national transport activity, to fly drones. However, the number that actually do so is far higher, authorised companies reckon.

Given their widespread availability, relatively low cost, and coolness factor, it’s become pretty easy for anyone to hang out a shingle offering services like aerial photography, video, or mapping. The problem is, it might be illegal.

LICENCED TO FLY

Trafikstyrelsen doesn’t have the resources to actively prevent unauthorised firms from offering drone services. However, if it catches wind of one (normally because someone has posted a video on

YouTube), it looks into whether the firm has abided by all the rules. If not, officials notify the police, who can issue a fine.

Even for licenced firms, there is no end to the rules they must observe. There are regulations regarding size and location, and a requirement that the person on the ground maintain eye contact with the drone.

Companies using drones say they are of two minds about the rules which limit their use. Everyone agrees they ensure people don’t get hurt, which could potentially mar drones’ reputation for a long time to come. But on the other hand, they feel fettered. Some even admit to bending the rules.

“I flew illegally for a long time,” said one now-authorised operator who asked not to be named. “Mostly because I didn’t know what the rules were. Now that I am established, though, I can see that an accident by an unauthorised operator would ruin it for everyone, not least the authorised businesses that have invested in this.”

Operators (as the guys on the ground are called) point out that drones are already a proven technology. The problem is that we haven’t figured out how to fly them safely and consistently in the same space as people, man-made objects, and other aircraft.

The technology to do that is on

its way. Sensors mounted on drones will be able to identify power lines, other aircraft, buildings, and anything else a human pilot would know to steer clear of.

Both the industry and regulators agree, though, that an immediate solution would be a better certification system for operators. Think of it as a driving licence, says Henrik Michelsen, Trafikstyrelsen’s leading expert on drones.

He confirms that such certification is in the works, but also says that the real challenge is making sure that Denmark’s regulations, generally regarded by those in the industry as sensible, are not tighter than in other countries.

The concern isn’t so much that tough rules could make Denmark’s skies off-limits to drones. The fear in the industry is that it might clip the wings of what proponents hope

It doesn’t like it.

SØREN MØLLER DATH, ROBOTICS STUDENT, ABOUT HIS DRONE’S FEELINGS ABOUT WIND

could become the country’s next big industry.

All that, however, takes testing. The rules governing such tests are in everyone’s interest; no-one wants a wild-west over our heads. Then again, says Kjeld Jensen, who works at SDU’s RoboLab and is Dath’s advisor, that kind of free-wheeling environment – confined to safe areas like Hans Christian Andersen Airport – is what attracts firms and universities looking to develop new applications.

ANYTHING YOU CAN DO, I CAN DO CHEAPER

As everyone points out, there is no shortage of drone models around. According to businesses and developers, it’s the applications that developers are really interested in working on.

Stephan Mølvig, an engineer

with COWI, a consultancy, puts it this way: when it comes right down to it, a drone is just a platform. It can be fixed wing. It can have rotating blades. But what really sets a drone apart is what equipment you put on it, and what you programme it to do.

His firm was the first in Denmark to be granted permission to fly drones commercially, and is now in the process of identifying how to integrate drones into the services they provide. Some, especially those involving aerial photography, are easy to spot.

Mølvig himself has been to Greenland, where he used drones to measure glacial ice and to determine how quickly plant life re-established itself in an Arctic climate.

The tasks, he says, could have been done using an aeroplane, but with a drone it took less time and

required fewer people. And it cost less, too.

“Anything a plane can do, a drone can do cheaper and faster. The quality of a photo might not be as good when you take it with a 5,000-kroner camera instead of a million-kroner camera mounted in an aeroplane. But a drone can be on the wing in seven minutes, and data can be transferred right away. And if it breaks, I can fix it myself.”

Other, less straightforward uses, are still waiting to be thought up. Beer, pizza, and book deliveries are probably not in the industry’s future, but you also get the impression they’d be too mundane. “The thing with drones,” Mølvig says, “is that what you do with them is limited only by your imagination.”

And, for now, by a set of rules. **M**

Kevin McGwin

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An entirely different kind of cold war

Competition to host your data is tough. Nordic countries that once assumed that a cold climate and green energy was advantage enough are now finding they must differentiate themselves from each other and find new selling points in order to keep up



Google's Finnish data centre is as green as they come (Photo: Google)

IN ORDER for your computer to be thinking well, it needs to be kept cool. The information it is thinking about, however, does not need to be kept near you. This can mean in another room, another building – or in the case of internet data, on an entirely different continent.

This is something that computing firms like Facebook and Google have long since discovered. As the price of energy goes up, the increasing speeds at which data can be transferred have made it possible for some of the world's largest number crunchers to open so-called data centres in places where keeping cool requires little energy.

“People don't really know or care where the data centre is,” said Tate Cantrell, of Verne Global, which operates a data centre in Keflavik, Iceland, during the recent Bloomberg Enterprise Technology Summit.

Once you remove location from the equation, cost and risk become the dominant factors, he said.

Data centres are essentially enormous warehouses filled with row upon row of computer servers. By moving data centres north, companies that run them can pump in outside air to keep the computers cool, with no need for power-

hungry cooling systems. This also eliminates the need to have backup power on hand, further driving down costs.

This can slash power consumption by as much as 80 percent, as was the case for BMW, the German carmaker, which recently moved its data storage to Iceland.

But building data centres in places like Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Iceland has proven attractive to computer firms for reasons beyond their cold locations.

MORE THAN JUST COLD AIR

In the most recent Cushman & Wakefield and hurleypalmerflatt Data Centre Risk Index, an annual ranking of 30 countries on everything from connectivity to labour costs, all four countries finished in the top 10. Sweden was the top finisher in the region, behind only the US and the UK overall. Iceland, Norway and Finland finished seventh, eighth, and ninth, respectively.

“This made the Nordics one of the most prominent locations on the index,” the report stated, underscoring that factors like business environment, strong connectivity, abundance of sustainable energy, and low risk of natural disasters

meant the region was well suited to hosting data centres.

Yet even with their high rankings, particularly when it comes to clean power, the four countries are aware they must differentiate themselves from other countries – not least each other – if they hope to woo the next big client. In a region where cold air and green power are de rigueur, location might wind up being a significant part of the equation again.

Iceland, for example, has an advantage over other Nordics by being midway between America and Europe. For computer users, that means less latency – the amount of time that passes between you pushing a button and the computer reacting – than if it were further away from one of the population centres.

Norway, though slightly closer to Europe, also likes to feature its location when marketing its showcase data centre, if for a slightly different reason. Perhaps the most dramatic Nordic data centre, the Green Mountain facility in Stavanger is built into a mountainside that once housed a NATO weapons-storage facility. Security – be it physical or in the form of data protection – is the least of its tenants' worries.

Sweden is already home to one Facebook data centre. As elsewhere in the Nordics, the facility in Luleå is cooled by eco-friendly power, in this case hydro. But the facility adds to its environmental charm by using the heat the computers generate to warm its offices during the winter.

A second Facebook centre is on the way in Luleå. Hosting two of the social-media titan's six data centres will go a long way to securing for the town – located on the Baltic coast – a reputation as a good place to plant your data centre.

YOU WANT A SAUNA WITH THAT?

Landing another centre from anyone, however, might require more than Swedish charm or clean energy. After being beaten out by Finland in 2011 to host a Google data centre – reportedly due to higher import taxes – Swedish officials realise they might need to offer a more traditional incentive: tax cuts.

The country announced recently that it had begun to review its energy tax rate for data centres, currently 15th on the index, and it is considering lowering its corporate tax rate, currently 11th.

Finland, the easternmost of the Nordics, may have also been selected by Google for another location-related reason: its pool of highly skilled computer experts. With Facebook already working on its second data centre in Hamina, near Helsinki, it would appear that the economy that was once tied to the fortunes of Nokia may have found a suitable, if more ephemeral, replacement in data.

But while the Nordics, with their clean, sub-Arctic climate, might be the hottest region for data centres right now, they would do well not to let success go to their heads. Coming in tenth on the index was Qatar, while Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and South Africa all finished in the top 20.

Which shows that sometimes being cool just isn't enough. **M**

Kevin McGwin

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Breaking the glass ceiling, one elephant at a time

INTERVIEW Jytte Hilden served as culture and research minister in the 1990s. She has long retired from politics, but remains committed to helping women achieve their professional potential

There will always be something to fight for. Society moves and the questions and answers move with it.



WOMEN seem to be doing well in Denmark. Those with children are only fractionally less likely to be employed than those without, and their labour market participation is one of the highest in Europe, according to Eurostat. Their success is at least in part the result of long, paid maternity leave, accessible childcare, and a culture that encourages women to enter higher education.

But while women have achieved positions of significant power in Danish politics, they are still failing to break the glass ceiling in the private sector.

Jytte Hilden made her mark in politics in the 1990s as an MP for Socialdemokraterne, serving first

as culture minister and then research minister. We are sitting in the café of one of Copenhagen's most iconic buildings, the extension to the Royal Library, which was commissioned during her time as culture minister.

"When I presented the winning design I said, 'It looks like a Black Diamond,' and the name stuck," Hilden says proudly, surveying the view through the dark glass façade that leans precipitously over the harbour.

Educated as a civil engineer in the 1960s, Hilden entered politics in her 30s and has always campaigned for women's rights. She was 30 in 1972, when Denmark recognised the right to abortion, which

she argues is one of the two central rights women can have to control their lives.

"I campaigned for abortion rights in the '60s because it is crucial that women can decide how many children to have and when to have them. It's also critical that women become educated, because only then can they take charge of their own finances. After all, the person in charge of the purse-strings makes the decisions. These two issues are very important to me," she stressed.

While Hilden has retired from politics and avoids questions about the current political landscape – for example the government's failure to earmark a portion of women's

maternity leave for men – she remains committed to gender equality. In April, she published her latest book, *99 Pink Elephants*, which profiles 99 noteworthy and exceptional women. Not coincidentally, it was the 90th anniversary of the appointment of Nina Bang as the world's first female government minister.

PINK ELEPHANTS

Hilden can thank Bodil Nyboe Andersen, former president of the Red Cross in Denmark, for the title. When Andersen was appointed managing director of the bank Andelsbanken in 1984, she said she felt she stood out "like a pink elephant" among the world's financial leaders. Hardly surprising, giv-

People want women in parliament and vote for them. But professors and industry leaders are appointed, and therein lies the problem. What we end up with is men appointing men. Men don't want to give up the power.

en that she was the first woman to occupy such a lofty post in a Danish financial institution.

The book is only the beginning of Hilden's campaign to provoke a debate about the role of women in society. Over the next year she will host a number of talks and debates, culminating with the naming of the 100th pink elephant on March 8 next year, which is International Women's Day. Next year also marks the 100th anniversary of the constitutional change that granted women the vote in Denmark.

"I want to get in touch with people and talk about our evolution and history and how have arrived at where we are today, in a country with a female monarch and



prime minister. But we also need to ask ourselves which direction we are going. We are in constant motion and should never be content. There will always be something to fight for. Society moves and the questions and answers move with it."

Women have an especially strong presence in Danish politics, and now account for 39 percent of members of parliament – the seventh-highest representation in the EU. All but two of the eight major political parties have been led by a woman in the past decade. But Hilden argues that the reason women succeed in politics illustrates why they aren't nearly as successful in filling top positions in the private sector and academia.

"People want women in parliament and vote for them. But professors and industry leaders are appointed, and therein lies the problem. What we end up with is men appointing men. Men don't want to give up the power and simply end up appointing each other," she argues.

She has supported implementing gender quotas for women in boardrooms in the past, something Norway implemented in 2003, but found the debate spun in circles without ever really addressing the issue. Instead, she now proposes that nominating committees be made up of both men and women, in order to encourage a broader range of candidates for consideration.

"Men and women feel differently. We are equal, but I think we see society differently, and because of that you need both genders in leading roles, both in the public and private sector."

Hilden's message is that while many structural barriers blocking women's success have been broken down, there is still much more that can be done. And if we can find these ways to support women and elevate more into positions of power, she believes society as a whole will be better off.

"The generation of women before me were born during the First World War and weren't that educated. They wanted power, but society wasn't ready. Then my generation, the baby boomers, arrived and simply demanded power in society. We may have succeeded, but we now need to tell our daughters to continue the work, because there are new questions waiting for them." **M**



Car sharing through ‘delebil’ arrangements have long been popular in Demark. Now they could be one of the sparks that light a new economic flame (Photo: Peter Stanners)

A borrower and a lender be

Danish cities have for the most part escaped the sometimes nasty fights between sharing-economy firms and the traditional companies they compete with. That’s unlikely to change in a country where consumers have long been accustomed to sharing

SHARING is nothing new. We’ve all been hearing we should do it ever since we were children.

But while altruism and courtesy have their own rewards, people – and businesses – are finding that there is money in sharing. Big money. In the US alone, sharing economy businesses are estimated to have generated \$26 billion in 2013 by helping people make money on their spare rooms, their cars, or even their free time.

Denmark is no stranger to the trend. Over 8,000 people in Copenhagen alone are registered on various home-letting platforms. MinbilDinbil, a service allowing people to hire out their car, and whose name translates to ‘my car, your car’, says that since starting last year, it has 4,500 members and 1,000 cars for hire. Earnings vary, but members can make up to 5,000 kroner per month by hiring their cars out “every once and a while”, says Milad Avaz, a company spokesperson.

But whereas other cities in Eu-

rope and America have seen heated debates over the legality of such services, the discussion – and even the existence of such services – in the city has been muted.

That the person2person trend has taken root in Denmark, observers say, is not surprising.

Back in 2012, when home letting platforms first began to establish themselves in Denmark, Søren Have, of PA Consulting Group, predicted that “the trend would spread quickly here”.

CONFIDENCE COMMERCE

At that time, there were 800 registered rental locations. Two years later, not only has the number of letters increased ten-fold, the sheer number of services has mushroomed. Need a ride? There’s a place for that. Looking for a companion at dinner? Got you covered. Musical instrument? Well, not yet, but it’s coming.

Have’s logic was that Denmark already had a history of similar ar-

rangements, be they allotment gardens, car-sharing programmes, or community-supported agriculture, and that those transactions were made possible because Danes have, by and large, a high level of confidence in each other.

Avaz agreed that confidence plays a significant role.

“Sharing suits Danish consumer behaviour very well. Compared with other nationalities, it’s harder to get Danes to change their habits, but once they do, they are much more likely to make use of sharing services.”

In trying to win customers, MinbilDinbil makes use of testimonials and other marketing tactics, and gets a boost from the city’s focus on sustainable initiatives. It also makes sure to point out that their business model has been approved by insurance firms, which gives it a seal of approval as both a viable venture and a safe operation.

Have, again back in 2012, rec-

As long as you aren’t doing it as a business, you are okay.

MILAD AVAZ,
MINBILDINBIL

ommended that the national government take steps to ensure that regulations could keep up with developments in the trend.

Since then, the government has reiterated that national regulations already allow you to lend your things, and even to make money on them, without having to register as a business, provided your earnings remain under certain levels.

HOUSE RULES

Avaz admits there is the “theoretical possibility” of a grey zone in which people renting out a car using person2person services risk getting dinged for operating as a firm.

“In practice, though, the line is pretty clear. The Justice Ministry has said that as long as you aren’t doing it as a business – for example by buying a car simply for the sake of hiring it out – you’re okay.”

The Housing Ministry has also made it clear that it is legal to rent out your home (or part of it),

as long as you abide by a few rules of thumb, mostly having to do with how frequently you do it.

As with cars, purchasing a flat or home specifically for the purpose of letting it out using person2person services is a no-no. If you already own (and live in) the residence, the Housing Ministry’s guideline for rentals is “fewer than seven times a year.”

Copenhagen officials declined to contribute to this article, but Aarhus residents are permitted to rent out a room in their home to guests for shorter periods of time. They may also rent out their entire residence while they are on holiday.

FOR THE GREATER GOOD

Things start getting problematic, however, when you have too many people paying to stay in your home one after another.

According to the city’s guidelines, if you rent out several periods in a row within a short amount of time, then you can be considered to be operating a hotel, which requires a permit.

The fear, of course, is that allowing people to let out their own property would undermine the formal hotel industry. Firms that help people let out their properties admit that some travellers might forego formal (and pricier) lodging options, but they also argue that they benefit the tourism industry as a whole, by giving travellers affordable options.

In connection with the recent Eurovision Song Contest, for example, the effect such services had on traditional hotels was minimal, according to Horesta, the lobby group for the hospitality industry.

In its comments about the rise of person2person letting, Horesta appears to be trying to strike a balance between seeming to welcome the new tourism trend, and protecting the interests of its members.

On balance, their line is that person2person letting is a net gain for the economy, as well as for hotels themselves.

“It attracts more travellers to the city, and they, in turn, spend money in restaurants,” Katja Østergaard, the head of Horesta, said in a statement. “Once they get back home they then spread the work about Copenhagen as a good place to visit, which can result in more hotel stays.” **M**

Kevin McGwin

What would happen if everyone just started playing taxi driver?

INTERVIEW Whether the sharing economy succeeds or not is all in the regulations, according to entrepreneur Fazli Koc. But it’s not a simple matter of too many or too few rules. Instead, he says, legislatures need to regulate smarter

TURN BACK the clock 100 years and imagine you earn your living driving a horse-drawn carriage. Now imagine that you begin to see more and more of a new invention: a horseless carriage. At first they are a fad. Then they are an annoyance. Before you know it, they are a competitor, and finally you’re out of business.

That’s pretty much the situation that a lot of businesses are facing right now, says Fazli Koc, a 22-year-old tech entrepreneur.

He’s convinced that today’s version of the horseless carriage is the sharing economy. On the one hand, it threatens to undermine existing businesses like taxis and hotels, but on the other, it offers consumers more personalised and ultimately more convenient service.

“Imagine what would happen if anyone could just pick someone up and take them for a ride for a fare?” he says. “You’d probably have an easier time getting a ride, but the formal operators would probably also disappear.”

IT’S THE REGULATIONS, STUPID

He recently returned from a stint in Silicon Valley, where he gained insight into how these new firms, which rely on apps or other computer technologies to connect borrower to lender, are being integrated into the American economy, and how their experiences could be applied here.

His assessment: the degree to which the sharing economy succeeds in the two countries depends a great deal upon regulations and the approach decision-makers take to it.

“In Denmark, you can’t run a sharing economy business in certain fields,” he says, bringing up the example of taxis again.

The regulations for taxi operators, he says, allow you to book a ride with someone in a car ahead of time, making services like GoMore legal. But you can’t have someone pick you up on the street, ruling out Lyft and Uber, which have seen rapid growth in the US.

“It’s fair that there are rules, otherwise you risk unfair competition, but it just means that we can’t develop busi-

In the US cities are having to adjust their laws to help one type of business or another.

nesses in quite the same way as in the US, where they generally don’t prevent people from developing new businesses.”

Beyond the question of fairness, he also says that it is reasonable, given how Danes approach the development of new businesses.

“Lawmakers here are quick to recognise whether it makes sense to capitalise on a development like this.”

In the case of cars, it didn’t, but when it came to lodgings, they could see that sharing platforms could help add extra capacity for visitors without the need to build new hotels.

“We saw this flexible capacity being used really well during the Eurovision Song Contest. Without it, there might not have been enough rooms, or enough rooms affordable to everyone who wanted to come here.”

THE QUICK AND THE WELL-REGULATED

Being quick to make a decision about whether to accept certain types of sharing-economy businesses has also had the benefit of addressing potential conflicts before they arise.

“That’s unlike a lot of places in the US,” he says. “There, cities are having to adjust their laws either to help one type of business or the other.”

One thing that remains undetermined – both in Denmark and in the US – is when tax authorities will start seeing sharing economy firms as mainstream – and ripe for taxation.

“Right now these businesses are still in their infancy, and taxing them as formal businesses might stunt their growth. When they get big enough, tax officials will step in. By not assessing them taxes or other fees we are giving them an advantage. There is a certain tolerance for that now, but later it won’t be fair.”

Besides, he says, with the potential size of the sharing economy, the Danish state would be losing out on a big source of income if it didn’t tax them as businesses.

“They just won’t be able to ignore the sharing economy.” **M**

Kevin McGwin



Every year, University of Aarhus faculties compete in the 'Kapsejlads', a drinking relay race featuring teams crossing the inner city pond on makeshift rafts. This year, 20,000 spectators braved the rain and left quite a mess.

CAPTURED

Photo: Lasse Kofod

COLUMN

One of those days

IT'S **ONE** of those days when I day-dream three seconds too long and need a mirror to look myself in the eye. One of those days when I start to wonder where my body ends and my surroundings begin. When I decide I've lived in the posh part of the city too long, and get outraged when a cyclist pedals past on the pavement – also one of those days.

One of those days when I analyse yesterday while waiting for tomorrow to become today. One of those days when a dead bird in the street rips the salt out of my eyes. When my Spotify Premium account feels more important than my right to vote (did I really write that? Yes, because it



Sigurd Hartkorn
Plæfner is an author who is working on his second novel. He is also deeply involved in many aspects of the Danish cultural scene

is one of those days when I call it like it is!).

And I wonder why these days even happen, since they don't make sense. Does this mean they are meaningful? On these hellish days I take stock. Not of what my life is, but of what it could have been but isn't. Days when I could be living in Cuba and be friends with a one-eyed man called Esteban who is known for his sumptuous mushroom risotto (maybe his grandmother taught him, who knows?). Days when I still haven't gotten a degree, and when the skin on my arms reminds me of rough parchment. Days when I become embarrassingly aware that I am not a wise old man that can play

a whole game of petanque without the ash crumbling from the cigarette that hangs from the corner of my mouth.

If I got a tattoo on my palm that said, 'I'm not really sure' I would never have to say anything on a day like today, I would just lift my hand. What should we eat tonight, and what do you really want out of life? My palm has the answer! Is this nice, which Kubrick is your favourite, and do you like the smell of burning pine? Read the palm! On these days I constantly wonder whether I should laugh or cry (though I normally laugh. I might as well, seeing as I have the option). If all the atoms in my body are swapped out every year, who

am I really? Laugh! Is my so-called soul my memory? Laugh, for fuck's sake, Sigurd. Laugh like you've never laughed before! On other days, I laugh because life is beautiful and full of meaning.

But on days like today, I laugh because I'm afraid I may realise that there is nothing more to my existence than producing offspring. My very own progeny! On days like today, laughter is the sunglasses I wear to a funeral (get to the point, Sigurd!). Okay, the problem is simply that there is no point. That's the way it is with these days. They are pointless (like this column). But maybe that's exactly what makes them so meaningful. **M**

RESEARCH

WELCOME to The Murmur's research column, where each month we will take you through some of the ideas and discoveries coming out of Danish universities.

ARGUING IS DEADLY

First up is the University of Copenhagen (KU) where researchers have found that people who argue regularly with their partners, children or friends are at much greater risk of dying prematurely. The study focussed on 10,000 people aged 36 to 52. Of those who said they regularly argued with their partners, eight percent died during the course of the study. Only three percent of those who said they rarely argued died during the study.

"One of the ways to address the increased mortality rate could be to help people better handle conflict, not only with their partners and family, but also with the rest of society," said associate professor Rikke Lund, from KU's Centre for Healthy Ageing.

STAY OFF THE FAT

Another way to extend your life may be to minimise your fat intake. Another KU study showed that people with elevated levels of ordinary blood fat, so-called triglycerides, die earlier than those with low levels. The study followed almost 14,000 Copenhageners for 24 years. Those with low levels were 41 percent less likely to die dur-

ing the course of the study, which combined epidemiological and genetic analyses.

"This is the first time that researchers have demonstrated a clear connection between low triglyceride levels in the blood and decreased mortality," said professor Børge Nordestgaard, a steering committee member of the Copenhagen City Heart Study.

STAY VISIBLE

Copenhagen is a cycling mecca, but sharing the roads with cars can still be a dangerous pleasure. However, a new study has found there is one sure-fire way to reduce your chances of colliding with a car – wear a high-visibility jacket.

Found some interesting research?
Email me!
peter@murmur.dk

University of Aalborg researchers randomly selected 6,800 cyclists from across the country and gave half a high-visibility jacket to wear.

Over the course of a year, the group wearing the vests were 48 percent less likely to suffer a collision.

"In 2012, 4,684 cyclists ended up in hospital after having collided with another road user. The results of the study show that 2,311 of them wouldn't have if they had worn a high visibility cycling jacket," said associate professor Harry Lahrmann, from the Department of Civil Engineering. **M**

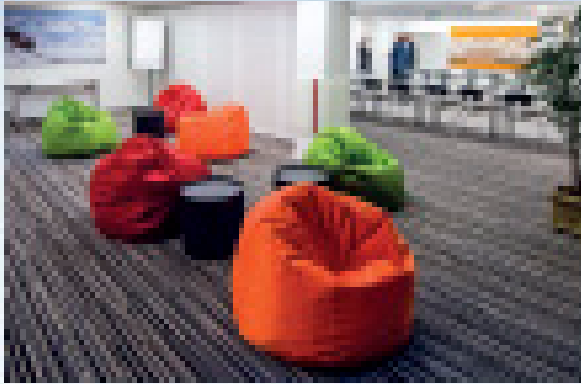
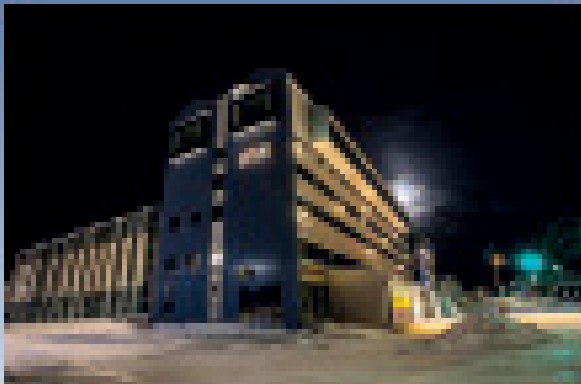
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FOREIGN

Brazilians want Argentina to win the World Cup

TAXI DRIVER José Carlos is mad about football. When his favourite team wins, he parks his taxi and calls it a day.

But when I drove with him the other day, he was angry. He told me he wanted to boycott the World Cup. While Brazil plays, his television will be turned off. Instead, he plans to go fishing with his wife.

José Carlos is far from the only Brazilian to develop a sudden hostility toward the sport ahead of the world's most prestigious footballing event this year in Brazil.

Every day in Rio de Janeiro, we watch Brazilians turn their back on the World Cup. The streets still aren't decorated with flags or colours. This is historic for a host nation. According to a recent poll, only 48 percent of the population support the event, while 55 percent think the tournament has done more harm than good for Brazil.

What is happening in football's Mecca?

It has become a symbol of everything the people despise about its leaders. To ordinary Brazilians, the tournament is unlikely to become the national celebration many had hoped it would be.

Take Jorgé Santos, who we visited in the suburbs of Rio de Janeiro. His house was levelled to make way for the tournament. He is just one of 250,000 Brazilians who were either moved or live in the threat of being moved ahead of both the World Cup and the Olympics.

As Santos sits on his concrete wall, he says he can't help but wonder. The roads that were supposed to ease traffic during the sporting events were never built. Santos could have actually stayed where he and 200 other families had lived before they were moved to make way for it.

Santos feels like the Brazilian government has discarded him like a piece of trash. He deeply wants Argentina to win the competition. Only then will his country learn a lesson.



Steffen Stubager is a Danish freelance correspondent currently residing in Brazil. His work has been published by a range of Danish media, including Jyllands-Posten, DR and Berlingske.

But the palette of problems ahead of the World Cup is much broader. The tournament will be the most expensive ever held, and many are criticising the host for wasting too much money building 12 stadiums, while the people desperately need education, security, and health.

Those residing in the lowest economic classes also risk becoming totally disenfranchised. The Olympics and the World Cup have caused rents to skyrocket. Thousands of Brazilians can no longer afford their homes, and many of these homeless residents have been forced to occupy abandoned areas and build new lives.

International media also report on possible corrupt activities taking place in connection with the building of the stadiums, which may have ended up costing far more than they should have.

And so on.

So what will Brazil's World Cup look like? This is my best guess.

The other day I met an organ-

iser of one of the larger demonstrations and protests that have become an everyday occurrence in Brazil.

She told me that a number of unions and organisations will declare war on the government during the World Cup. Ordinary people will buy gas masks and helmets in preparation for the World Cup they are boycotting. University students, teachers, and bus drivers are ready to take to the streets with their protest banners raised.

The goal of the demonstrations is to draw global attention. Every single day the World Cup is being held. And they will go to great lengths to achieve it. They want to break security lines. They want to enter the heart of the World Cup.

The elites have called the demonstrators vandals. But vandalism is borne out of desperation and frustration.

And the Brazilians say that the only route still available is to set bonfires. **M**

COLUMN

My EU: Different, equal and wealthy

MY PARENTS moved to Italy in 1980. My dad had got a job at a research laboratory in the foothills of the Alps and they lived in a little bungalow in the woods where they adopted stray cats. They had three children in quick succession and moved to a bigger house with a garden that stretched the entire perimeter. Standing in the doorway and looking to the right you could watch the sun set behind the distant peaks in a glorious fiery spectacle.

In 1989 we moved to Brussels. My Dad went to work with the European civil service and we moved into a tall, skinny town house in a Moroccan neighbourhood. It was a dangerous city and we children weren't allowed to leave the house alone. Our mother was our chauffeur and we spent countless hours on the back seat of the car watching the uninspiring grey urban landscape speed by.

In the mornings a 60-seater coach picked us up. The big boys played violent Manga videos on the TV while the bus driver looked the over way and sold us cola for 20 francs a pop. By time we arrived at school, dozens of other buses were already parked in the long, forested drive-way that opened into the central square where a Chateau stood. Over it flew the EU flag.

The European School educated the children of European civil servants. There were around 5,000 children at my school in Uccle, and a similar number at the two other European schools. Ten buildings were spread across the campus, and the walk to the swimming pools (yes, we had a swimming pool) took an eternity.

The school was divided into ten language sections. We started our first second language aged six, before moving onto our second second language four years later. By the time a student completed the European Baccalaureate, they were expected to be fully bilingual.

We learned our second language together with children from the other language groups. I learned German with Danish, French and Dutch children. We hardly understood each other, but still managed small talk.

Walking through the school, the language groups still bore symbols of their origins. Italian students all wore Invicta bags. The English students hurried to cricket practice carrying white shin pads. At the annual school party, the different groups flogged their respective traditional foods from stands.

We moved to Denmark when I was ten and were immediately blown away by the bicycles and safe public transport. Finally we three kids could come and go as we pleased, cycling in the forest near Charlottenlund, taking the train to Palads to watch movies, walking to the beach to swim with friends. We quickly forgot about Brussels.

But twenty years after leaving Brussels, I can still feel how my European School education shaped me and attitude towards our continent. My feature in this issue focussed on the EU and examined whether we will ever start to see ourselves as a whole, especially when nation states remain the primary source for forming our identities. All the while, Eurosceptic groups are growing – groups who regard the EU as an intrusive force bent on undermining national sovereignty and regional differences.

When most people imagine the EU, they summon images of bland institutions and impassive civil servants. But when we imagine Denmark or France or Italy, we see faces, food, and landmarks. So, on the national scale we imagine cultural products that are made possible – at least in part – by governments. But when imagining the EU, all many people can think of are institutions whose functions remain a mystery to them.

This is a real pity. The EU is an unprecedented cooperation between nation states that has given us peace, opportunity, and experiences. But our national politicians and media rarely communicate this to us. The decisions made in the EU that benefit us hardly ever make headlines. This needs to change.

But maybe the EU can be intrusive, and here the school serves as a metaphor for how the EU should move forward. It made sense for us to learn history and our shared language in our distinct groups, but come together to learn second languages. European states are better off making some decisions, and the EU others, and finding the balance should be a central and transparent question of the EU project.

I look forward to the day when mention of the EU elicits in Europeans an image of standing among their peers, embarking on a common mission. Different but equal, and all the wealthier for it. **M**



My sister, brother and I (left) on a trip in the nearby Alps (Photo: David Stanners)

Peter Stanners

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