


EU-27 WATCH



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On the project

Due to the new treaty provisions of the Lisbon Treaty and the economic crises the enlarged EU of 27 member states is on the search for a new modus operandi while also continuing membership talks with candidate countries. The EU-27 Watch project is mapping out discourses on these and more issues in European policies all over Europe. Research institutes from all 27 member states and the four candidate countries give overviews on the discourses in their respective countries.

The reports focus on a **reporting period from December 2009 until May 2010**. This survey was conducted on the basis of a questionnaire that has been elaborated in March and April 2010. Most of the 31 reports were delivered in May 2010. This issue and all previous issues are available on the EU-27 Watch website: www.EU-27Watch.org.

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Poland**6th anniversary of Poland's EU membership and approaching EU presidency**Anna Jedrzejewska

Since April 2010, the public debate and media coverage in Poland were to a great extent dominated by the issues related to the crash of the President's plane near Smolensk, the discussions over the Katyn mass-killings during World War II and mutual relations with Russia. Consequently, the pre-term presidential elections dominated in media coverage and political discourse after 20 April 2010. Additionally, May 2010 saw the problem of flooding and, therefore, media and political debates have been predominantly preoccupied with the domestic topics mentioned above.

Nevertheless, one of the EU-related topics present in media and political discourse was the 6th anniversary of Poland's membership in the EU. Most of the major public and private newspapers and TV stations published interviews with experts and politicians, commentaries and organised debates summing up the six years of Poland's membership in the EU. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs published on this occasion the document summarising the main conclusions from six years of membership.¹ The document summarises the impact of membership on Poland's economic growth, presents the balance of financial flows and utilisation of cohesion policies resources. Later on, the document analyses the impact on Polish agriculture, trade exchange, and foreign direct investment, as well as the effects of membership on the labour market and migration. Finally, the document summarises the opinions of the Polish public on membership and the generally positive impact of membership.

The 6th anniversary was commemorated by major political forces in Poland. The governing Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska – PO) published a summary of public opinion surveys suggesting a generally positive attitude towards Poland's membership. The representatives of the party in the European Parliament stressed as the main achievements the improvement of living conditions; investment in infrastructure improving the quality of life, not only in large agglomerations but also in "regional" Poland;² the change of attitudes towards Poland and Poles in Europe and the gradual shortening of distance towards the 2004 newcomers;³ and progress by Polish authorities in "socialising" in EU institutions, which translates into better understanding of mechanisms governing the EU and learning how to protect national interest in the EU so that "it would not divide but unite".⁴ The Civic Platform candidate in the presidential elections stressed the importance of support (also in the form of direct payments for farmers) from the EU as "opportunities used by rural areas and the whole country".⁵ Similar voices could be heard on the side of the main opposition party Law and Justice, whose Member of the European Parliament Pawel Kowal stressed that Poles have learned how to protect national interest in the EU system, while Poland has been seen more pragmatically as an important political partner in Europe. The most typical understanding of Poland's stance in the EU is – in his view – seeing Poland as a strong supporter of energy security and eastern policy.⁶

The major media name among Poland's achievements the current economic situation of Poland, the utilisation of structural funds and investments,⁷ the success of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) and its influence on EU-Russia relations.⁸ By joining the EU, the Poles enjoy travelling without border control and the Union's funding, while threats of buying out Polish land did not proved true.⁹ Gazeta Wyborcza daily quotes among the major success stories of Poland's membership: infrastructure investments from EU funds (roads, bridges, co-financing of investment for enterprises, direct payments for farmers), the opening of markets for Polish goods and services, the opening of the labour market that contributed to diminishing unemployment rates domestically and additional money transfers to Poland's economy.¹⁰

The Public Opinion Research Center published the results of the survey before the 6th anniversary of entry into the EU. In the first half of April 2010, the number of supporters for Poland's membership amounted to 86 percent of respondents, 9 percent of the respondents declare they are against membership, while 5 percent declare themselves as "undecided".¹¹

Poland's presidency priorities

During the Conference “The Polish Presidency of the European Union” organised by Warsaw University on 10 May 2010, Deputy Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak outlined the issues that will probably be among Poland's presidency priorities. According to the Minister, the development of the EaP will be the natural consequence of the role played by Poland in the region. The economic priorities should include – according to the Deputy Prime Minister – energy security, trade issues and competitiveness.¹² The experts in EU affairs interviewed on this occasion stressed that the country holding the presidency should mainly play the role of mediator between the member states and the Union's institutions without pressing too much for its own priorities, while being ready to offer “innovative thinking” in proposing alternative solutions when needed¹³ and that it would be good if Poland – during its presidency – initiated the debate over the European Union's future in order to avoid possible overstretching of the Union's procedures.¹⁴

¹ Ekonomiczno-społeczne efekty członkostwa Polski w Unii Europejskiej. Główne wnioski w związku z 6-tą rocznicą przystąpienia Polski do UE [Socio-economic effects of Poland's Membership in the EU. Major conclusions related to the 6th anniversary of membership], available at: www.polskawue.gov.pl (last access: 7 May 2010).

² Interview of 30 April 2010 with Danuta Huebner, MEP, service of Polish Press Agency on European Parliament, available at: www.europarlament.pap.pl (last access: 28 July 2010).

³ Ibid. See also interview of 4 May 2010 with Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, MEP, service of Polish Press Agency on European Parliament, available at: www.europarlament.pap.pl (last access: 28 July 2010).

⁴ Interview of 30 April 2010 with Danuta Huebner, MEP, service of Polish Press Agency on European Parliament, available at: www.europarlament.pap.pl (last access: 28 July 2010).

⁵ Bronisław Komorowski during the meeting with farmers during annual Pilgrimage of farmers to Lichen Sanctuary. Service of Polish Press Agency on European Parliament, available at: www.europarlament.pap.pl (last access: 28 July 2010).

⁶ Interview of 30 April 2010 with Paweł Kowal, MEP, service of Polish Press Agency on European Parliament, available at: www.europarlament.pap.pl (last access: 28 July 2010).

⁷ E.g. RMF24 radio station on 1 May 2010, available at: www.rmf24.pl (last access: 28 July 2010); TVP Info, available at: www.tvp.info (last access: 28 July 2010).

⁸ RMF24 radio station, 1 May 2010, available at: www.rmf24.pl (last access: 28 July 2010).

⁹ TVP Info available at: www.tvp.info (last access: 28 July 2010).

¹⁰ Gazeta Wybrzeże daily, 29 April 2010, available at: www.gazeta.pl (last access: 28 July 2010).

¹¹ Public Opinion Research Center survey, quoted after: www.europarlament.pap.pl (last access: 28 July 2010).

¹² Available at: www.europarlament.pap.pl (last access: 28 July 2010).

¹³ Rafał Trzaskowski, MEP, quoted by www.europarlament.pap.pl (last access: 28 July 2010).

¹⁴ Professor Dariusz Milczarek of Warsaw University quoted by www.europarlament.pap.pl (last access: 28 July 2010).

Questionnaire for EU-27 Watch, No. 9

Reporting period December 2009 until May 2010 – Deadline for country reports 21 May

All questions refer to the position/assessment of your country's government, opposition, political parties, civil society organisations, pressure groups, press/media, and public opinion. Please name sources wherever possible!

1. Implementation of the Lisbon Treaty

On the 1 December 2009 the EU-reform ended with the entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty. However, the new treaty provisions still have to be implemented. Some procedures and conditions have to be determined. In other cases, procedures, power relations, and decision-making mechanisms will change due to the new provisions.

- How is the work of the new President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, assessed in your country? Which changes to the role of the rotating council presidency are expected?
- How is the work of the new High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, assessed in your country? Please take into particular consideration both her role within the European Commission and her relationship to the Council of the European Union.
- On 25 March 2010 a "Proposal for a Council Decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service" was presented. How is this concept perceived in your country? Which alternatives are discussed?
- On 31 March 2010 the European Commission presented a proposal defining the rules and procedures for the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI). What are the expectations for the ECI in your country? What are the various positions concerning the rules and procedures?

2. Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy

The European Commission has given its opinion on Iceland's application for EU-membership and a decision from the Council is expected before the end of June. Croatia seems to have settled its border dispute with Slovenia. Against this background:

- Which countries does your country expect to become members of the European Union in the next enlargement round? What are the opinions in your country on the membership of these countries?
- How are the membership perspectives of those countries discussed, which are not expected to become a member in the next enlargement round?

The Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean were the last major projects dealing with the European neighbourhood:

- How are these projects assessed in your country?

3. European economic policy and the financial and economic crisis

The European Council agreed on 25/26 March on the key elements of the Europe 2020 strategy, the successor of the Lisbon strategy. While not being on the formal agenda the economic and financial situation in Greece was discussed. The European Council agreed on a finance package combining bilateral loans from the eurozone and financing through the International Monetary Fund.

- How is the finance package for Greece assessed in your country? Are there any opinions on the process, how the agreement on the package was reached?
- Which lessons should be drawn from the Greek case for a reform of the Stability and Growth Pact?
- How is the idea of "a strong coordination of economic policies in Europe" perceived in your country? What concepts of an European economic governance are discussed in your country and which role do they assign to the Euro group?
- How is the Europe 2020 strategy discussed in your country? What are the priorities for the Europe 2020 strategy from your country's perspective?

4. Climate and energy policy

The climate conference in Copenhagen took note of the Copenhagen Accord but did not reach a binding agreement. The next conference of the parties (COP 16 & CMP 6) will take place at the end of November 2010.

- How is the Copenhagen conference assessed in your country? Please take into consideration the negotiation strategy of European Union and the results of the conference.
- Does the European Union need to change its own energy and climate policy in order to give a new impulse to the international negotiations?
- Is a global agreement within the UNFCCC the best strategy to fight climate change? If not, which alternative strategy should the European Union follow?
- What is your country's position on financing mitigation and adaptation efforts in developing countries?

5. Current issues and discourses in your country

Which other topics and discourses are highly salient in your country but not covered by this questionnaire?