

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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Editorial Team

Publisher: Prof. Dr. Mathias Jopp
Executive Editor: Dr. Katrin Böttger
Managing Editor: Julian Plottka
Editorial Staff: Daniela Caterina, Gregory Kohler,
Christoph Kornes
Layout: Matthias Jäger

Contact: info@EU-27watch.org
www.EU-27watch.org

iep Institut für
Europäische Politik
Bundesallee 23
D-10717 Berlin
Tel.: +49/30/88.91.34-0
Fax: +49/30/88.91.34-99
E-mail: info@iep-berlin.de
Internet: www.iep-berlin.de

Denmark**A neighbour in the EU***Julie Herschend Christoffersen**

The prospect of Icelandic membership into the EU is widely welcomed in Denmark. This will shift the balance in the EU towards the north and hence Denmark. Denmark has even offered assistance to prepare for some of the negotiations Iceland will be having with the EU. The social democrat Member of European Parliament (MEP) Dan Jørgensen is welcoming Iceland into the EU, as only common solutions can bring a way out of the crisis about.¹

Public debates in the media are sympathetic to the present economic plight of Iceland, but there is a general consensus that Iceland will have to live up to its responsibility and pay for its mistakes. The Icelandic “No” to Icesave II² was seen as a way of “voting No to reality”.³ It is widely expected that Iceland will join the EU together with Croatia in spring 2012,⁴ when Denmark is holding the Presidency of the Council.

Turning away from Europe?

A number of observers in the media have taken notice of a change in the Turkish attitude towards the EU. The general feeling concerning Turkey in the Danish media is that Turkey is turning away from Europe as a result of EU’s indifferent attitude towards Turkey.⁵ Turkey’s new active foreign policy in the Middle East is largely perceived as a turning away from Europe. However, the Turkish embassy in Copenhagen has publicly contested this view and claimed that there is nothing in the new Turkish foreign policy that contradicts its possibilities for pursuing a European future.⁶

The second theme that has been present in the Turkish debate concerns the Armenian genocide. The Swedish declaration on the Armenian genocide sparked some debate concerning the need for recognition of the genocide in Turkey. However, the Danish Foreign Minister has stated that no similar vote will be held in the Danish parliament.⁷

A new Visa regime

The Western Balkans do not enjoy a lot of attention in the Danish debate. Apart from what is expected to be Croatia’s accession within the coming years, not a lot of enthusiasm is linked to the prospects of EU-membership for the Western Balkan countries. The issue of visa liberalisation sparked some evaluations on the positive effects this will have on the development of the region, as well as the issue that Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina are still stuck with visa demands.⁸

A forgotten policy

The European Neighbourhood Policy is something that is barely being mentioned in the Danish media and an assessment of these projects has not been very present in the debate. The Russian President Medvedev visited Denmark in May 2010 and therefore put more focus on the bilateral relationship with the big neighbour in the east rather than other relations between Denmark and Eastern Europe.

Denmark launched the “Arab Initiative” in 2003, which was created to strengthen dialogue concerning reform in the Middle East and Northern Africa.⁹ The EU-backed Union for the Mediterranean is a central part of the multilateral “leg” in the “Arab Initiative”, but the Initiative attracts far more attention than the EU’s activities in this respect.

¹ Folkebladet: Velkommen Island, 27 February 2010.

² Icesave II was a bill that should approve a state guarantee on the debts of the Depositors’ and Investors’ Guarantee Fund. For information on Icesave in general see Wikipedia: Icesave dispute, 20 June 2010, available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Icesave_dispute (last access: 6 July 2010).

³ Politiken: Torskedumt, 6 January 2010.

⁴ Information: Island i EU – en saga blot?, 28 February 2010.

⁵ Jyllandsposten: Tyrkiets kurs, 28 December 2009; Politiken: Tyrkerne vender blikket mod øst, 25 Oktober 2009.

* Danish Institute for International Studies.

⁶ Jyllands-Posten: Fejlagtig analyse, 13 January 2010.

⁷ DR2 Deadline: Diplomatsk krise mellem Tyrkiet og Sverige, 12 March 2010.

⁸ Politiken: Godt nyt for Vestbalkan, 1 December 2009.

⁹ Danish ministry of Foreign Affairs: Danish-Arab Partnership Programme, 11 May 2009, available at: <http://www.um.dk/en/menu/DevelopmentPolicy/WiderMiddleEastInitiative/> (last acces: 6 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?