

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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Denmark**The Danish opt-outs**

Katrine Prytz Larsen*

As a result of the Treaty of Lisbon entering into force, the Danish opt-outs were brought up. The opt-out regarding justice and home affairs and the opt-out regarding common defence were especially debated. According to these two opt-outs, Denmark only participates in EU judicial cooperation at an intergovernmental level and does not participate in the elaboration and implementation of decisions and actions which have defence implications.¹ All four opt-outs were maintained in the Treaty of Lisbon and thus Denmark was precluded from Europol cooperation, including the combating of international crime and terrorism. Furthermore, the opt-out regarding common defence meant that Denmark was unable to participate in the combating of piracy off the coast of Somalia – an issue which has been of great concern to the Danish shipping industry.²

The EU debate in Denmark focused mainly on the four Danish opt-outs and the possibility of an upcoming referendum. It was especially discussed how such a referendum ought to go about. The government parties have on a number of occasions argued that all four opt-outs should be voted on together as a full package so as to make it a final decision whether to become a full member of the EU.

The government party's spokesperson on the EU, Michael Aastrup Jensen, said the next referendum on the Euro could be the last chance for Denmark to become a member of the Euro. Therefore, the Danish government should be careful while deciding on a referendum, since the Danish position might be drawn in a negative direction by the Greek economic crisis.³ MEP Morten Messerschmidt stressed that Denmark must have the freedom to choose whether it wants to be a member of the Euro or not.

The opposition, on the other hand, argued that the opt-outs should be voted on separately. According to them, a full package referendum would only protract the process of giving up the opt-outs. The Danish European Movement welcomed the idea of a Danish referendum, stating that the opt-out regarding common defence was regarded as detrimental to Danish interests economically, politically, and culturally.⁴ The referendum would be the way to find out whether Denmark is now finally willing to become a full member of the EU.⁵ They pointed out the Socialist People's Party as the single most important factor preventing a referendum from becoming a reality.⁶

¹ Folketingets EU-oplysning: The Danish Opt-Outs, available at: http://www.euo.dk/emner_en/forbehold/ (last access: 20 April 2010).

² Ibid; Jyllands-Posten: Hvad venter du på, Lars Løkke?, 19 April 2010.

³ Børsen: Græsk krise skubber dansk euro-afstemning, 8 February 2010.

⁴ Jyllands-Posten: Hvad venter du på, Lars Løkke?, 19 April 2010.

⁵ Kristeligt Dagblad: Afskaf EU-forbehold, 10 March 2010.

⁶ Information: Sig nu ja, SF, 21 April 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?