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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

France
Delicate balance of power leads to institutional caution
 Beatrix Boonekamp*

The Lisbon Treaty came into force on 1 December 2009. Its institutional innovations have been largely debated in France, but more so the appointment of Catherine Ashton as the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy than the appointment of Herman Van Rompuy as the first President of the European Council. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, former French President and former President of the Convention on the Future of Europe, was among the first to announce his scepticism, arguing that the nominations to the new top jobs do not inspire much confidence, and do not help clarify a confused institutional situation. He argued that there is the impression that the role assigned to Van Rompuy is that of a mediator within the European Council, whereas nobody expects Ashton to provide the EU with charismatic leadership in the international arena.¹ The same criticism was voiced in the weekly news magazine *l'Express*, with an article entitled "Duet for a Discount European Union", underlining that the choice of the two new executives could undermine all collective ambition on the international scene, and breaks all hope for a communitarian dynamic.² Michel Rocard, former Socialist Prime Minister, also considered that "the political Europe was dead" – but that the responsibility is to be found in the nomination procedure: the lack of transparency and/or contradictory debate has allowed the "big states" to negotiate their arrangements.³ Nevertheless, other analysts underline the fact that the nomination of two unknown individuals to the leadership of the EU seems to be the inevitable consequence of the complexity of the new institutional architecture as set out in the Lisbon Treaty. It was inevitable that the 27 should opt for institutional caution at the nomination phase, given the delicacy of the balance of power that needs to be maintained in order for the new institutional mechanism to function smoothly. "And it is not necessarily a bad thing", concludes centre-left daily *Le Monde*.⁴

European Union: too many presidents?

The coexistence of the rotating presidency with the new President of the European Council has generated some incomprehension and criticism. The Green Member of European Parliament (MEP) Daniel Cohn-Bendit has argued that the continuation of the rotating presidency is the "great weakness of the treaty".⁵ *l'Express* also stresses the fact that there are now "too many presidents", adding ironically that "the Union's presidency is permanent, but it rotates at the same time." For others, the innovations of the Lisbon Treaty are considered relevant, but their concrete application will be complicated. In this regard, the attitude of the Spanish Head of Government José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero is considered crucial. His minimalist lecture of the Lisbon Treaty – announcing, for example, that he will accompany Van Rompuy in all the bilateral summits held between the EU and third party countries, as well as in the international summits, is seen as a risk of slowing the progress of the EU and making its new institutions even more indecipherable.⁶ This is why *Le Monde* underlined the fact that the new President of the European Council needed to control and "override" the rotating presidency, and improve cohesion among the 27 heads of state and government.⁷ So far, Van Rompuy seems to be succeeding, as stressed by economics daily *Les Echos*: "His skills in mediation and consensus-building among the 27 could strengthen his authority to the point of allowing him to compete with Barroso and Ashton, competition which could encourage activism. What if the Union, almost by accident, ended up with a 'real president'?"⁸

Catherine Ashton, "scapegoat for all the problems in and around Brussels"

The new High Representative, Catherine Ashton, has been quite harshly criticised for several "mistakes" she has made since the beginning of her mandate: for her bad management of the Haitian crisis or for choosing to take part in the investiture of the new Ukrainian president rather than attending a ministerial meeting on European defence. In France, it is the nomination of João Vale de Almeida to the post of EU ambassador in Washington without a consensus from the member states that generated the greatest disapproval. "European interests are becoming increasingly conflicting and Ashton appears to be unable to find the key to defuse tension between capitals", says left-wing daily *Libération*.⁹ Nevertheless, some observers stress the fact that she is nothing but a victim of the institutional confusion between the rotating council presidency, the President of the European Council,

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and the Commission President. The division of roles is very delicate, and she is paying the heaviest price for the confusion. “Her main role appears to be that of scapegoat for all the problems in and around Brussels”, concludes right-wing daily *Le Figaro*. “Aside from her own direct responsibilities, the storm which has erupted around Ashton probably offers the clearest confirmation of the fact that the Lisbon Treaty will not solve all of Europe’s problems”.¹⁰

The European External Action Service, generating covetousness and rivalries

As far as the European External Action Service (EEAS) is concerned, French authorities have underlined the fact that this new diplomatic tool is strongly needed to allow the Union to act in a more efficient, understandable, and coordinated way, and have therefore repeatedly underlined their willingness to act quickly in favour of its definitive adoption.¹¹ They have been strongly advocating for a powerful Secretary General, “façon Quai d’Orsay”, and it appears that a Frenchman is likely to be part of the EEAS triumvirate – with the name of Pierre Vimont, French ambassador to the USA, coming out repeatedly. This apparent consensus has not been easy to reach though, and the French media have repeatedly underlined the fact that this new diplomatic tool has generated covetousness, rivalries and fights for domination, mostly concerning the nominations of the top positions.¹² This new service has also been criticised, mostly because of the lack of certitudes, concerning both its exact competences and its composition. The euro-sceptic leftist leader Jean Pierre Chevenement considers that the multiplication of structures that it implies (EEAS, the Commission and the council services) will lead to very time-consuming consultations, and that so many different authorities can only generate paralysis. He therefore advocates for a minimalist service, both in its ambitions as in its format.¹³

The European Citizens’ Initiative: overcoming the EU’s democratic deficit

The European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI) has generated high expectations in France. Catholic daily *La Croix* welcomed this breach opened in the Commission’s legislative initiative, stressing the fact that the era of the “areopagus of technocrats, stateless and irresponsible”, once denounced by General de Gaulle, is now over.¹⁴ The Permanent Conference of Associative Coordination considers that the ECI will consolidate the participative aspect of the European democratic model, without any doubts.¹⁵ Nevertheless, a few associations and civil society organisations stress the fact that some rules and procedures could have been less constraining, so as to allow the citizen participation to be easier. The Human Rights League believes that the ECI should only require the participation of 0.1 percent of the EU population (instead of 0.2 percent in the actual project), coming from one quarter of the EU member states (instead of one third), and that the legal age to participate should be 16 years old (instead of 18).¹⁶

¹ Giscard d’Estaing, V.: *Traite de Lisbonne: un Jour dans l’Histoire Européenne*, *Le Figaro*, 01/12/2009.

² *L’Express: Duo pour une Union européenne au rabais*, 24/11/2009.

³ Rocard, M.: Interview to *France Inter*, 20/11/2009.

⁴ Mangelot, M.: *Les fausses illusions de la Présidence Française de L’union*, *Le Monde*, 03/12/2009.

⁵ *L’Express: Trop de présidents pour l’Union européenne?*, 03/01/2010.

⁶ Quetramer, J.: *Lisbonne: grincements de dents et tentative de sabotage*, *Libération*, 11/12/2009.

⁷ Ricard, P.: *Trois défis attendent le président du Conseil européen*, Herman Van Rompuy, *Le Monde*, 05/12/2010.

⁸ Moisi, D.: *Si l’Europe avait un vrai président*, *Les Echos*, 18/01/2010.

⁹ Quatremer, J.: *Halte au feu entre Catherine Ashton et les Etats Membres*, *Libération*, 05/03/2010.

¹⁰ Roussetin, P.: *Lady Ashton, Bouc émissaire de l’Europe*, *Le Figaro*, 03/03/2010.

¹¹ *Déclaration de B. Kouchner*, 26/04/2010.

¹² *La Croix: Le Service Européen d’Action Extérieure se constitue*, 22/03/2010.

¹³ Chevenement, J. P.: *Le mille-feuilles européen: l’exemple du Service européen d’action extérieure*, intervention lors du débat au Sénat sur le Conseil européen des 29 et 30 octobre 2009, 27/10/2009.

¹⁴ *La Croix: L’Europe définit les règles du droit d’initiative citoyenne*, 31/03/2010.

¹⁵ *Conférence permanente des coordinations associatives*, 23/03/2010, available at: www.cpa.asso.fr (last access: 04/06/2010).

¹⁶ *Ligue des Droits de l’Homme: Sur l’initiative citoyenne*, 24/02/2010, available at: www.ldh-france.org (last access: 04/06/2010).

France
Mixed opinions on enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy

 Beatrix Boonekamp*

Since the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, the countries applying for EU membership “can breathe again”, underlines Libération.¹ The further enlargement of the European Union had been closely linked to the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty: French President Nicolas Sarkozy, when serving as President of the European Council, had made it very clear that, in a Union that could not even agree on adopting more functional institutions, the accession of additional countries could only make the situation worse. The adoption of the treaty was therefore a sine qua non condition for further enlargement.

Iceland and Croatia, 28th and 29th EU member states?

Two countries are now expected to join the Union during the upcoming years, Croatia and Iceland. Some observers have been underlining Iceland’s opportunism, arguing that the country had been ignoring the European Union for decades until the financial crisis finally allowed it to see the benefits it could find in the EU.² The fast accession process was, for a number of analysts, closely linked to the Icesave dossier; the rejection of the latter by 93 percent of the Icelandic population, in March 2010, led the same analysts to believe that it could undermine the country’s chances of a fast accession to the EU, and isolate it on the international scene.³ As previously mentioned, Croatia is expected to conclude the negotiation process soon, and to be part of the EU by 2012, at the latest. Its accession is strongly supported by the French government, which underlines the fact that it is important for the stabilisation of this part of Europe.

France has always been very supportive of the accession of the Balkan countries to the EU. In *Le Monde*, co-signed with his Italian homologue Franco Frattini, Foreign Affairs Minister Bernard Kouchner underlined, once again, his support for the accession of the Balkan countries, which *have vocation* to join the EU, as soon as they meet all the requirements.⁴ But most analysts are now stressing the fact that all further accession processes are very likely to be delayed: the European leaders now have “more urgent matters to focus on”. The Greek crisis is also very likely to have a negative impact, by making the accession criteria more demanding.⁵

Why keep refusing Turkey’s accession?

The question of Turkey’s accession has always been very controversial in France. French President Nicolas Sarkozy stands firmly against it, and took advantage of the French Presidency of the European Union to clearly reaffirm his position. He now advocates a privileged partnership, linking the European Union, Turkey and Russia, which would represent an alternative to its accession.⁶ Meanwhile, former French President Jacques Chirac underlined the “shared destiny” between the two countries, and the necessity to develop the tightest links possible.⁷ “Why keep refusing this accession?” asks Bernard Guetta from left-wing daily Libération, arguing that the latter would represent a good opportunity to prove to Muslim neighbour countries that the EU and Islam are not incompatible, and actually have a shared destiny. According to the economics daily *Les Echos*, “If Europe lacks the courage to propose a long-term strategic vision, the *Oriental temptation* will prevail and the country which we do not want *with* us now will be *against* us in the future. At which point, Europe will have the Turkey it deserves”.⁸

European Neighbourhood Policy: the Union for the Mediterranean and the Eastern Partnership.

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) has enjoyed a lot of coverage in France, being one of Nicolas Sarkozy main projects during the French Presidency. The media have been underlining how difficult this project is, given the internal disagreements (a *string of mines* according to *Le Figaro*), and the lack of commitment of most heads of states;⁹ under this context, the activism and determination of two countries, France and Spain, is quite unanimously recognised, and contrasts with the clear lack of political will from the Southern countries. According to an analyst, the Arabic countries will not commit to the Union for the Mediterranean unless they see clear political and/or economical benefits, and this is far from being the case so far. The Socialist MEP in charge of the parliamentary report on the UfM,

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Vincent Peillon, has a more optimistic point of view though; he considers that the Union for the Mediterranean is actually managing to work effectively towards peace building in the region through concrete projects and realisations. He nevertheless argues that the European Union needs to demonstrate its strong commitment by putting money on the table during the Barcelona Summit that was to be held in June 2010.¹⁰ Finally, some observers criticise a certain lack of overall ambition. Economist Jean-Louis Guigou argues that, to be successful, the UfM cannot be the free trade zone proposed by José Manuel Barroso, but has to be a wider project including common social and environmental policies.¹¹

The Eastern Partnership has received a lot less coverage in France. It has been described as a mere copy of the Union for the Mediterranean.¹² Some analysts question the novelty of this partnership and the existence of real advantages for the beneficiary countries.¹³

¹ Quatremer, J.: 2020, L'Union des 27?, Libération, 30/12/2009.

² Reuters: Les pays bas lient l'adhésion de l'Iceland au plan Icesave, 06/03/2010.

³ Cafebabel: L'Islande rejette l'Icesave" et risque l'isolement, 08/03/2010, available at: www.cafebabel.fr (last access: 04/06/2010).

⁴ Kouchner, B.: Chaque Etat des Balkans a vocation a entrer dans l'UE, Le Monde, 13/03/2010.

⁵ Rupnik, J.: L'Union Européenne est un substitute d'Empire vis a vis des Balkans, Le Monde, 10/05/2010.

⁶ Libération: Nicolas Sarkozy n'ignore plus la Turquie, 21/04/2010.

⁷ Chirac, J.: UE – Turquie: un Destin partage, AFP, 11/05/2010.

⁸ Moisi, D.: La Turquie de nos mérites, Les Echos, 11/01/2010.

⁹ Le Figaro: L'Union pour la Méditerranée, en mal de soutiens, 10/02/2010.

¹⁰ Peillon, V.: L'union pour la méditerranée est sortie des limbes, 19/10/2010, available at: <http://www.vincent-peillon.fr> (last access: 04/06/2010).

¹¹ Guigou, J. L.: Pour un protectionnisme euro-méditerranéen, Les Echos, 20/04/2010.

¹² Holveck, F.: Vers un partenariat privilégié avec les six pays de l'ex-URSS, MCSinfo, Université Robert Schuman, Strasbourg, 12/03/2009.

¹³ Touteurope: UE-Partenariat oriental: quelle perspectives?, 15/12/2009, available at: www.touteurope.fr (last access: 04/06/2010).

France
European economic policy and the financial and economic crisis: mixed responses

 Aurélien Evrard*

The finance package for Greece: a façade agreement.

French official position regarding the finance package for Greece remained rather unclear. On the one hand, President Sarkozy supported since the beginning the idea of European initiatives in favour of Greece. He assumed that “we could not drop a member of the Eurozone, otherwise the Euro would be meaningless.”¹ On the other hand, and partly following the German position, the Minister for the Economy, Christine Lagarde, assumed that Europe should not be indulgent towards Greece.² This position was strongly criticised by the Socialist Party (PS), regretting the “disappearance of political Europe” and the return of “national egoisms, whereas we were expecting a deed of generosity from most of European governments.”³ The agreement that was finally reached at the European Council (25 and 26 March 2010) was considered a “façade agreement”. According to Jean-Pisani Ferry from economic think tank Bruegel: “what markets want, is a confirmation that the Eurozone members will not drop Greece, and this will only happen if they lend it money and if interest rates decrease, not before that.”⁴

Reacting to the nature of this agreement, Jacques Delors, former President of the European Commission, confesses that he is “wounded by the intervention of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) [...]. The European Union has the means to solve this crisis by herself and to demonstrate that the Euro foundations are strong.”⁵ Economists from the French progressive think tank Terra Nova share this admission of failure from the European Union. More pessimistic than Jacques Delors, they also assume that this crisis reveals the weakness of the EU. According to them, legal mechanisms to rescue Greece did not exist. Therefore, this agreement appears as an *arrangement ad hoc* that only avoided the worst scenario: a traditional/classical intervention from the IMF.⁶

The Stability and Growth Pact strongly criticised: the need for reform

Many critics have emerged against the Stability and Growth Pact. According to left-wing daily Libération, the Greek crisis has demonstrated that both the Maastricht Treaty and the Stability Pact have partially failed.⁷ French economist Michel Aglietta assumes that, although European member states must display solidarity, the Stability Pact represents a serious constraint for all members of the Eurozone. It is necessary, he says, not to try to decrease the public deficit too rapidly. It would be impossible to come back to the rules of the Stability Pact before 2013. The priority is to reach a growth rate higher than the real interest rate.⁸ As a matter of fact, the Minister for the Economy, Christine Lagarde, spoke out for reform of the Stability Pact, considering that all the criteria, notably the deficit and debt-to-GDP (Gross Domestic Product) ratios, are not in themselves sufficient to foster economic convergence within the Eurozone.⁹ Economists from the progressive think tank Terra Nova agree wholeheartedly with her, even considering both criteria as “paper tigers, that are temporarily forgotten when a big state (France, Germany) might be sanctioned for an excessive deficit.”¹⁰ As a consequence, there is a need to reinforce the Stability Pact, for example, by opening the possibility to audit national budgets or applying sanctions to excessive deficits. Such an option considers that the Stability Pact represents the best compromise between national autonomy and the discipline needed to prevent free-riders strategies. However, according to both French experts, this option, which is close to the 2005 reform of the Stability Pact, will not alone allow the European stalemate to break.

Consensus on a need for a strong coordination of economic policies in Europe

A crucial explanation for this crisis lies, according to Jacques Delors, in the imbalance in favour of the monetary pillar, on which the Economic and Monetary Union was founded. In the absence of real coordination of economic policies, little attention has been paid to the financial evolution of many countries.¹¹ Thus, according to Dominique Strauss Kahn, IMF Managing Director, the Eurozone needs to make structural reforms and give a political signal to the markets. Consequently, this crisis provides an opportunity for Europe to strengthen and deepen its internal integration and cooperation in the economic field. This implies that not only a stronger coordination of economic policies is necessary,

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but also an integrated framework for crisis prevention and management and a concerted effort to stimulate growth and create jobs.¹²

Former right-wing Prime Minister Edouard Balladur shares this point of view. Eurozone membership, he assumes, cannot be restricted to the management of the currency, but must also include the economic management of the member states. The economy of the Eurozone will maintain its dynamism only if the single currency is supported by coordinated economic and budgetary policies. The time has come for the Eurogroup to step in to approve governmental financial plans before the respective governments submit them to their national parliaments. It is not a matter of going into the details of every single measure: assessing the global volume of public spending will suffice. The Eurogroup should be called upon to assess the validity of the figures that are presented. The members of the Eurogroup should reach a decision through a qualified majority vote. It should be the “real” second step of the Economic and Monetary Union.¹³

Economists from the progressive think tank Terra Nova also consider the coordination of economic policies as a policy option, observing that the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) that was used until now did not permit significant progress. Many options are identified in order to reinforce this coordination:

- Integrating new competences that have been, until now, preserved by member states (e.g., giving a compulsory objective for budget balance) or submitted to OMC (e.g., structural reforms such as labor market or higher education). A consensus is, however, lacking on this issue.
- Getting the Commission involved into the surveillance of member states’ macroeconomic policies and not only of its public finance. Furthermore, the ECOFIN Council could be invited to discuss the cohesion of the Eurozone more often.
- Reinforcing the Eurogroup by organising steady meetings of heads of state and government, formalising its procedures, or even giving the president of the Eurogroup the competences to represent the group at the G8.

Europe 2020 Strategy: the story of an announced failure

The Europe 2020 Strategy did not occupy a crucial position in French public debate, and the Greek crisis is not the only explanation for this. According to Laurent Cohen-Tanguy, the main reason is that the Europe 2020 Strategy is nothing but the same as the Lisbon Strategy that it is supposed to replace.¹⁴ Considering the conditions of its formulation, economists from the think tank Terra Nova do not see how this failure could be avoided. Once more, it is to be expected that this strategy will remain a juxtaposition of national policies and rely on the member states’ good will. Concerning the contents, the main issue should be the budget of the EU (increase of the budget, implementation of EU resources, etc.), but the Europe 2020 Strategy skips over it.¹⁵ Pascal Canfin, a Green MEP, also criticises this strategy, which is “again only based on more growth.” Rather than competition, Europe should have quality of life as an objective and build its strategy on sustainable economy and social welfare.¹⁶ Thus, there seems to be a consensus on a global deception regarding this new project of the EU. Considering not only the contents but also the implementation procedure of Europe 2020 Strategy, its global assessment could be summarised by an expression given by Bruno Vever: “never change a losing strategy.”¹⁷

¹ AFP: Ne pas abandonner la Grèce, 06/03/2010.

² Lagarde, C.: Le Journal du Dimanche, 25/04/2010.

³ Le Figaro: Le PS déplore la fin de l’Europe politique, 26/04/2010

⁴ Libération: Le plan de sauvetage a fait pschiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii, 09/04/2010.

⁵ Delors, J.: Interview to Paris Match, 21/04/2010.

⁶ Chalumeau, T./Léris, J.: Les leçons de la crise financière ou l’impossible statu quo européen, Note de la fondation Terra Nova, 06/04/2010.

⁷ Libération: La Grèce pousse l’Europe à changer de régime, 26/02/2010.

⁸ Aglietta, M.: Interview to Les Echos, 08/02/2010.

⁹ Lagarde, C.: Interview to Le Monde, 03/05/2010.

¹⁰ Chalumeau, T. /Léris, J.: Les leçons de la crise financière ou l’impossible statu quo européen, Note de la fondation Terra Nova, 06/04/2010.

¹¹ Delors, J.: Interview to Paris Match, 21/04/2010.

¹² Euractiv: Summit paves the way for common EU economic policy, 29/03/2010.

¹³ Balladur, E.: Mieux gouverner l’Europe, Le Figaro, 17/02/2010.

¹⁴ Cohen-Tanguy, L.: La stratégie européenne de l’Europe manque toujours autant de crédibilité, Les Echos, 27/04/2010.

¹⁵ Sénès, B./Roselbi, A./Barthez, V.: UE 2020: L’Europe n’a pas les moyens de ses ambitions, Note de la fondation Terra Nova, 20/04/2010.

¹⁶ Communiqué de Presse Europe Ecologie, 03/03/2010.

¹⁷ Vever, B.: Fenêtre sur l'Europe, 01/04/2010.

France
Climate and energy policy: Europe must keep a leading role

 Aurélien Evrard*

Copenhagen not “infinitely better” than Kyoto

In France, the climate conference in Copenhagen was mostly considered a disappointment, even a failure. Environmental protection has become a particular consensual topic, not only for politicians, but also in the media. Thus, the flop of the conference contrasts with the intensity and the dramaturgy of its media coverage. Nicolas Sarkozy tried to minimise this failure, even assuming that this agreement was infinitely better than the Kyoto Protocol.¹ He was rapidly contradicted by Laurence Tubiana, climate expert and member of the French delegation in Copenhagen: “I would not say that it is better than Kyoto [...] Kyoto was exemplary and we still are not at its level, not at all.”² As a matter of fact, and according to Michel Colombier, energy expert from the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI), “one must be very optimistic in order to find in Copenhagen’s commitments any reason to be satisfied.”³ Pious intentions and general goodwill did not lead to a definite binding agreement, regrets French centre-left newspaper *Le Monde*.⁴ This is not only disappointing regarding its contents, but also uncertain on a procedural perspective.⁵ Pierre Radanne, energy expert and former president of the French Agency for the Environment and Energy Management (ADEME), invites more optimism: “As with any historical event”, he assumes, “the conference in Copenhagen cannot be assessed after the first episode. We must wait the rest of the saga.”⁶

Europe’s strategy regarding these negotiations has also been criticised. According to *Le Monde*, “Europe put forward some ambitious targets which it was unable to gain consensus on.”⁷ Even more critical, Hervé Kempf, a French journalist specialised in environmental issues, assumes that Europe abdicated its responsibilities in Copenhagen.⁸ “Although we have the most congruous environmental policy”, he says, “the EU quit the field of the battle, leaving it in the hands of China and the United States.” He also criticises the fact that EU member states systematically decried the work done by the United Nations. Jean Quatremer, his colleague from *Libération* and recognised for his competence on European matters, is more balanced regarding EU’s attitude. According to him, the EU could not have done more than it did for environmentalism: it is the only political entity that has set ambitious and binding targets to tackle climate issue. Emmanuel Guérin (IDDRI) adds the fact that only the EU (along with Japan and Norway) accepted to negotiate its emissions reduction target (between 20 and 30 percent).⁹ However, this display of virtue was not enough to ensure a satisfactory outcome to the meeting. The problem, concludes Quatremer, is that the EU lacked any means of imposing its agenda on three quarters of the planet: “We had no option but to step down”.¹⁰

Europe must remain a climate forerunner

Europe’s responsibility lies in its negotiation strategy. According to Michel Colombier, researcher at IDDRI, this strategy – gaining more ambitious targets from developing countries by proposing to increase its own target and extend the carbon market – had a major weakness: it implied an international scrutiny on the nature and implementation of developing countries’ policies, thus challenging the sovereignty they were trying to preserve. However, as repeated by many French observers, though lacking influence during these negotiations, Europe remains the forerunner regarding climate policies. According to the Green Member of Parliament (MP) and economist Pascal Canfin, in light of a disappointing agreement in Copenhagen, Europe must act quickly and strongly. Two-thirds of gas emissions (road transports, heating, electricity, etc.) are not concerned with globalisation, he assumes, thus, Europe must not fear the “global competition” regarding these activities.¹¹ Olivier Godard, director of research at the National Scientific Research Centre (CNRS) shares the idea that Europe must go further, hoping that other regional powers will increase their consciousness. However, he fears that European countries could be tempted to revise their ambitions due to the lack of international cooperation. Europe should then implement mechanisms that make some adjustments at its borders, such as an ecotax.¹²

 * Centre d’études européennes de Sciences Po.

Criticism towards international forms of cooperation

Copenhagen symbolises, according to Olivier Godard, the failure of the strong international cooperation that emerged in Rio in 1992 and was reinforced by the Kyoto Protocol.¹³ Europe tried to support this approach, but Copenhagen leaves an impression of weaker cooperation. Each participant has its own regional or national policy with minimum consultation. This is the US and Chinese approach, and the French scholar does not see anything that could change this situation. Facing this situation, President Sarkozy criticised the UN and its capacity to create international cooperation. "There must be some results", he said. "The UN is essential, but, at the same time, it does not work [...] if G199 does not want to be contested by other Gs [G20, G8, etc.] it must take some initiatives."¹⁴ Thus the French President proposes the creation of a small group of countries, representing all continents, in order to prepare future negotiations. Another solution remains at the local level, emphasised by Green MEP Pascal Canfin.¹⁵ According to him, more than 50 percent of targets that should have been decided in Copenhagen are competences for local actors (urbanism, transports, spatial planning, etc.). The failure of a global agreement makes ambitious local policies even more necessary.

Taxation on financial transactions in order to help developing countries fight climate change?

France's official position was to support the programme to finance efforts of developing countries. One month after the summit in Copenhagen, the Minister for Sustainable Development, Jean-Louis Borloo, asked for rapid implementation of this mechanism. "These new financing measures are a historical opportunity to realise investments necessary in order to tackle climate change issues", he said.¹⁶ Corinne Lepage, French MEP and recognised in environmental policy field, declares to be satisfied by this proposition to finance about 10 billions Euros each year until 2012. Financing the participation of developing countries to the global effort against climate change is one of three main issues regarding emissions reduction targets and the question of enforcement mechanisms.

A crucial issue in this debate remains the way to finance this mechanism. France proposed to implement a tax on financial transactions in order to challenge climate change, an idea that President Nicolas Sarkozy will propose to the G20 member states.¹⁷ Such a fiscal instrument is, however, even debated within the government. Whereas Jean-Louis Borloo considers this tax as an instrument to support climate change policies in developing countries, his colleague Bernard Kouchner, Minister for Foreign Affairs, assumes this tax could finance the fight against poverty, for example, education or health policy. Philippe Hugon, an economist specialised in development studies, sees this debate as a good signal, because climate change and development issues are indivisible. Formulating projects that tackle both problems could be a solution to these debates.¹⁸

¹ Libération: Comment Sarkozy enjolive le bilan du sommet de Copenhague, 11/01/2010.

² Tubiana, L.: Interview to French TV Program Canal +, 12/01/2010.

³ Colombier, M.: Pourquoi des résultats si mitigés à Copenhague, Interface. Confrontations Europe, Bulletin Mensuel n°53, 01/2010, p. 4.

⁴ Le Monde: Déception, 20/12/2009.

⁵ Guérin, E.: La coopération internationale sur le climat après Copenhague, Etudes, n° 4124, April 2010, pp. 473-484.

⁶ Radanne, P.: Les enseignements de la Conférence de Copenhague, Presentation to Natixis Asset Management, 21/01/2010.

⁷ Le Monde: Déception, 20/12/2009.

⁸ Le Monde: L'Europe a démissionné à la conférence de Copenhague, 24/12/2009.

⁹ Guérin, E.: La coopération internationale sur le climat après Copenhague, Etudes, n° 4124, 04/2010, p. 473-484.

¹⁰ Libération: Copenhague, un échec européen?, 20/12/2009.

¹¹ Canfin, P.: Alternatives Economiques, n° 83, December 2009.

¹² Godard, O.: Interview to Alternatives Economiques, n° 288, February 2010.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Euractiv: Sarkozy appelle à un changement de méthode sur le climat, 12/03/2010.

¹⁵ Canfin, P.: Alternatives Economiques, n° 83, 12/2009.

¹⁶ Borloo, J.L.: Communiqué de Presse, 18/01/2010.

¹⁷ Euractiv: Sarkozy appelle à un changement de méthode sur le climat, 12/03/2010.

¹⁸ Hugon, P.: Interview to Le Journal du Dimanche, 15/09/2009.

France**A Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) controversy: a “hot potato”**

Aurélien Evrard*

The decision made by the European Commission to authorise the cultivation of a genetically modified potato, and in fact to lift the moratorium on GMOs, caused a strong debate in France. If the French association for vegetal biotechnologies were to welcome this decision,¹ environmental associations asked the government to use its safeguard clause. The latter decided to refer to the High Council on Biotechnologies (HCB) before making a decision, said the Ministries for the Environment and for Agriculture in a joint declaration.² According to Hervé Kempf, from *Le Monde*, such a decision not only flies in the face of the Europe-wide debate of the past ten years, but it also raises a question, which discounts the European ideal: “In order to pave the way for GM products, the Commission plans to give each state the right to choose whether or not to authorise them, which clearly cuts the very principle of European integration and manifests the cacophony which currently reigns in the EU.”³

¹ Agrapress: L'autorisation de la pomme de terre Amflora critiquée, 15/03/2010.

² Communiqué de Presse, 03/03/2010, available at: <http://www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/Pomme-de-terre-OGM-AMFLORA-la.html> (last access: 04/06/2010).

³ *Le Monde*: Mal à l'Europe, 07/03/2010.

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?