

# 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](http://www.EU-27Watch.org).

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**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.<sup>1</sup> 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.”<sup>2</sup> 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.”<sup>3</sup> Pious intentions and general goodwill did not lead to a definite binding agreement, regrets French centre-left newspaper *Le Monde*.<sup>4</sup> This is not only disappointing regarding its contents, but also uncertain on a procedural perspective.<sup>5</sup> 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.”<sup>6</sup>

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.”<sup>7</sup> Even more critical, Hervé Kempf, a French journalist specialised in environmental issues, assumes that Europe abdicated its responsibilities in Copenhagen.<sup>8</sup> “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).<sup>9</sup> 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”.<sup>10</sup>

*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.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup>

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### *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.<sup>13</sup> 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.”<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup>

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

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

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

<sup>4</sup> Le Monde: Déception, 20/12/2009.

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

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

<sup>7</sup> Le Monde: Déception, 20/12/2009.

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

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

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

<sup>11</sup> Canfin, P.: Alternatives Economiques, n° 83, December 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Godard, O.: Interview to Alternatives Economiques, n° 288, February 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

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

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

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

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

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

## 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?