

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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Germany**The mission in Afghanistan and the recent federal and regional elections**

Christoph Kornes*

Since the German parliament has sent soldiers to Afghanistan, there has been a controversial debate in Germany about the meaning and purpose of the mission of the Bundeswehr (German armed forces). The Kunduz Province in northern Afghanistan, which was regarded as relatively safe, has developed into a dangerous area for German soldiers. Since 2002 a total of 43 soldiers of the Bundeswehr have died.¹ In April 2010 seven German soldiers were killed whereby the operation is becoming increasingly unpopular in the German population. A poll conducted by ARD television in April showed that 70 percent of the respondents demand a withdrawal from Afghanistan.² The Bundestag, however, agreed on a new Afghanistan mandate for one year in February 2010 and increased the staff ceiling of 850 soldiers to 5,350.³ In a government statement from Thursday, 22 April 2010, Chancellor Angela Merkel (Christian Democratic Union – CDU) defended the operation and called voices for an immediate withdrawal, as demanded by the Left Party (DIE LINKE), irresponsible. She also called for more support from society for the soldiers.⁴

The air strike in September 2009 on two tanker trucks in Afghanistan, ordered by Colonel Georg Klein, killed 142 people including many civilians and caused a preliminary proceedings from the Office of the Federal Prosecutor; moreover, it provoked international criticism of the Bundeswehr from the foreign ministers of Sweden and France, as well as from the Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero.⁵ The preliminary proceedings have been stopped now and the Union parties – CDU and the Christian Social Union (CSU) – call for a swift end of the Kunduz-Inquiry.⁶ The attack caused the resignation of Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Franz Josef Jung (CDU) in November 2009, who was Minister of Defence at the time of the incident. The reason behind this decision can be traced back to the wilful default of information by the Federal Ministry of Defence about civilian casualties, which had been kept secret despite Jung having knowledge of them.⁷ In this regard, the present Minister of Defence zu Guttenberg (CSU) has changed his former position and has now declared that the air strike was “militarily inappropriate” after reviewing all documents.⁸ To this day the question of guilt has not been fully answered.

With the elections to the Bundestag on 27 September 2009, the grand coalition ended and the new government of Christian Democrats and Free Democrats (FDP) began its work. The two parties formed a coalition government under Chancellor Angela Merkel, who regained power for the second time. The CDU won, together with its sister party CSU, 33.8 percent of votes, the Social Democrats (SPD), with 23 percent of votes, achieved their lowest result since the Second World War.⁹ Crucial to the next elections to the Bundestag and the majority in the Bundesrat, the upper house of the German parliament, was the regional election in North Rhine-Westphalia on 9 May 2010. Already in August 2009, the last two governments exclusively formed by CDU in Thuringia and Saarland were voted out of power in German regional elections, endangering the majority held by CDU/CSU and FDP in the Bundesrat. After the electoral defeat of the ruling CDU-FDP coalition in North-Rhine Westfalia in May 2010 the governing parties have lost their majority in the Bundesrat. This has a significant effect on the national political landscape in Germany, because the government will need the support of the opposition parties for major policy changes, such as tax cuts and reforms in the public health sector.

¹ Tagesschau.de: Taliban-Angriff in Afghanistan: Bestürzung über Tod deutscher Soldaten, available at: <http://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/afghanistan1740.html> (last access: 10 May 2010).

² Tagesschau.de: ARD-Umfrage. Rückhalt in der Bevölkerung für den Afghanistan-Einsatz schwindet, available at: <http://www.tagesschau.de/inland/afghanistanumfrage148.html> (last access: 10 May 2010).

³ Bundesregierung: Neues Afghansitanmandat : Mehr Ausbildung und Schutz, available at: <http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Artikel/2010/02/2010-02-09-neues-afghanistanmandat.html> (last access: 10 May 2010).

⁴ Faz.net: Merkels Regierungserklärung. Afghanistan-Mandat über jeden Zweifel erhaben, available at: <http://www.faz.net/s/RubDDBDABB9457A437BAA85A49C26FB23A0/Doc-E9199C98DA0A14E92BA83531604718C96-ATpl-E-common-Scontent.html> (last access: 10 May 2010).

⁵ Spiegel Online: The End of Innocence in Afghanistan. The German Air Strike Has Changed Everything, available at: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,648925,00.html> (last access: 10 May 2010).

⁶ Faz.net: Union will Kundus-Ausschuss beenden. Luftangriff erschöpft erörtert?, available at: <http://www.faz.net/s/Rub0CCA23BC3D3C4C78914F85BED3B53F3C/Doc~E023AFDF9452F40DB879D9D58847C662F~ATpl~Ecommon~Scontent.html> (last access: 10 May 2010).

⁷ Denkler, T.: Jung-Rücktritt. Zapfenstreich für den Problemminister, available at: <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/555/495877/text/> (last access: 10 May 2010).

⁸ Faz.net: Luftschlag bei Kundus. Guttenberg: „Militärisch nicht angemessen“, available at: <http://www.faz.net/s/Rub0CCA23BC3D3C4C78914F85BED3B53F3C/Doc~EE8E18848093F488F85966D5BEF6DC8B7~ATpl~Ecommon~Scontent.html> (last access: 10 May 2010).

⁹ Das Endergebnis der Bundestagswahl 2009, available at: http://www.bundestag.de/btq_wahl/wahlinfos/startseite/index.jsp (last access: 10 May 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?