

# **EU-27 WATCH**



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# 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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**Lithuania****Both small and big states are equally important to the EU***Jurga Valančiūtė\**

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*Lithuanians are happy that the new European Council President came to Lithuania for one of his first official visits*

Considering the activities the new the President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy, the event that called the most attention was that one of his first official visits as President of the European Council was made to Lithuania. Commenting on the event, Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė said it was very important that the new EU leader had chosen Lithuania for one of his first official visits. According to her, “this indicates that both small and big states are equally important to the EU.”<sup>1</sup> However, there is no wide discussion on the changes to the role of the rotating council presidency, but, as Lithuanian officials state, it is in the interest of Lithuania that the visibility of the country holding the rotating presidency would be preserved and that non-formal meetings of the European Council would be held in it.<sup>2</sup>

*Opinions on Ashton’s work split*

The activities of Catherine Ashton are not extensively discussed in Lithuania; there are only a few remarks on the subject. The event which attracted the most attention in this respect was a parliamentary hearing of Catherine Aston at the European Parliament. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) from Lithuania commenting on the hearing were not too optimistic. After the hearing, Laima Andrikiene admitted to having expected more from the new High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy: she claimed, “a month ago she [Catherine Ashton] explained that she has been occupying the new post only for a few days. However, exactly the same did I hear today. I did not hear from her any clear vision for EU foreign policy.”<sup>3</sup> One of the most famous Lithuanian politicians, MEP Vytautas Landsbergis, said that, from what he has heard about the parliamentary hearings, he came to the conclusion that the new EU diplomatic leader responded faintly and without preparation.<sup>4</sup> Another Lithuanian MEP and experienced diplomat, Justas Vincas Paleckis, said that he has the impression that Catherine Ashton is an open and much promising politician. Commenting on the hearing, he said, “she has selected a cautious tactic while responding to the parliamentary questions.” But he expressed his conviction that “after half a year, she will gain more experience and talk more concretely.”<sup>5</sup>

*Lithuania welcomes the establishment of the European External Action Service*

Lithuanian officials are very much in favour of the establishment of such an institution as the European External Action Service (EEAS). Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister Audronius Azubalis said, “we cannot miss an opportunity to establish a strong European service, a unique institution, an instrument aimed at creating a common EU foreign policy, based not only on geo-economic goals, but also on common European values.”<sup>6</sup> According to him, all the main Lithuanian concerns were reflected in the report by the Swedish Presidency on the establishment of the European External Action Service.<sup>7</sup>

Former Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister Vygaudas Usackas claimed that the Lithuanian goal is that this new EU diplomatic service would be strong and influential, guarantee the progression of policy with third countries and also provide the necessary support for EU citizens and enterprises. However, he noted that the establishment of the EEAS would not provide the EU foreign and security policy with the efficiency and unity it needs, if the mentality of some EU member states does not change and their practice to deal separately with third countries upon issues which are crucial for the whole EU on bilateral basis is continued.<sup>8</sup>

*Proportional representation of the EU member states must be secured*

One of the main principles on which the functioning of the European External Action Service should be based, according to Lithuanian officials, is securing an equal representation of member states in the service. Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister Audronius Azubalis claimed that one-third of the EEAS

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should be composed of staff from EU member states<sup>9</sup> and that EU member states be adequately represented in it by keeping a geographical balance. Such a principle, according to the minister, would stimulate member states to invest the best human resources into the newly established body and in this way contribute to the efficient functioning of the Service.<sup>10</sup> This would also enable the EU institutions to know and understand the member states' foreign policy priorities and expectations better.<sup>11</sup> The Lithuanian MEP Algirdas Saudargas, an experienced diplomat and former Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister, also called for securing proportional representation of EU member states in the new EU diplomatic service. He has often raised the concern that newer and smaller EU member states should not be ignored while creating the service.<sup>12</sup>

#### *The European External Action Service – an added value to Lithuanian diplomatic service*

Various Lithuanian diplomats regard the new EU diplomatic service as an added value to the Lithuanian national diplomatic service. Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister Audronius Azubalis emphasised that it is important that the newly created EEAS would supplement Lithuanian diplomacy – it would secure the rights of Lithuanian citizens in the states where Lithuania does not have its own representation. He noted that these principles are also essential for other small EU member states.<sup>13</sup> Audronius Azubalis also said that such diplomats would enrich the Lithuanian diplomatic service after returning to it with their new experience.<sup>14</sup>

Among the priorities related to the functioning of the European External Action Service, the most important are the securing of diplomats' mobility and the exchange of information among EU delegations.<sup>15</sup> After the meeting of the EU General Affairs Council, in which a political agreement on the establishment of the European External Action Service has been reached, the Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister expressed his joy that almost all Lithuanian proposals were taken into consideration.<sup>16</sup>

The Lithuanian MEP Zigmantas Balcytis, a member of the budget control committee, looks at the functioning of the new Service from another angle and raises the question of what powers the European Parliament should have to control this service. According to him, the new service should be accountable to the European Parliament both for the funds assigned to the administration and the funds foreseen to conduct its activities. He also finds a duplication of functions prescribed to the new service with those of the European Commission in the fields of humanitarian aid, enlargement and neighbourhood policy. Therefore he says, "rapid decisions are necessary to separate these functions."<sup>17</sup>

#### *European Citizens' Initiative – more opportunities for citizens*

The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) is welcomed in Lithuania. According to the Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister Audronius Azubalis, the ECI will create wide opportunities for EU citizens to actively participate in the EU decision making process and will stimulate them to show more interest in EU affairs and to seek the adoption of the decisions important to them.<sup>18</sup> For Lithuanians it is most important to secure that all EU citizens have equal opportunities while implementing their ECI and that the initiatives provided by the citizens would reflect the true general European interest.

Speaking about the procedural requirements, Lithuania proposes that the minimum number of citizens participating in the ECI from each member state should be proportional to the number of inhabitants in that state (equal to 0.2 percent of inhabitants of the state) and that the minimum number of member states whose citizens could provide the ECI would be nine (the same number as required to start the enhanced cooperation).<sup>19</sup> This issue has been deliberated in the meeting of the committee on European affairs of the Lithuanian parliament. According to the committee, the indicators provided above would allow the securing of representation in the ECI and would reflect global European interests. The committee also recommended relating the age of citizens able to participate in the ECI with the voting age for European Parliament elections.

According to the committee, while providing the ECI, there should also be a requirement to clearly state the essence of the problem, the goals to be reached by the provision of an ECI and the proposed measures for action. To make the initiative easily accessible there should also be a possibility to support the initiative through the Internet. The committee supposes that a period of one year during which signatures could be collected is reasonable, if we have in mind that citizens from different EU member states have to be involved.

Speaking about the role of the European Commission in this process, the committee also recommended that the European Commission should create a special website where all the initiatives would be registered. Additionally, the Commission should conduct an ex ante evaluation to decide if the specific ECI is suitable for registration. The Commission should also secure the translation of the initiative's text in all official EU languages. The Committee has also recommended that the Commission should be given no more than six months to evaluate an ECI.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>1</sup> President of Lithuania: Lithuania will further ask for EU support for energy projects (Lietuva toliau prašys ES paramos energetikos projektams), press release, 9 December 2010, available at: [http://www.president.lt/lt/spaudos\\_centras\\_392/pranesimai\\_spaudai/lietuva\\_toliau\\_prasys\\_es\\_paramos\\_energetikos\\_projektams.html](http://www.president.lt/lt/spaudos_centras_392/pranesimai_spaudai/lietuva_toliau_prasys_es_paramos_energetikos_projektams.html) (last access: 18 June 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Discussion of Seimas European Club and Seimas European Information Office: The priorities of the Spanish Presidency and the topicalities of the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty (Ispanijos pirmininkavimo prioritetai ir Lisabonos sutarties įgyvendinimo aktualijos), 24 February 2010, available at: [www.eib.lrs.lt](http://www.eib.lrs.lt) (last access: 18 June 2010).

<sup>3</sup> V. Saldziunas: The leader of the Community foreign policy is like a cat in the bag? (Bendrijos užsienio politikos vadovė – kaip katė maiše?), 13 January 2010, available at:

[http://www.laimaandrikiene.lt/index.php?id=12&tx\\_ttnews\[year\]=2010&tx\\_ttnews\[month\]=01&tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=845&tx\\_ttnews\[backPid\]=51&cHash=7e6c8ae41d](http://www.laimaandrikiene.lt/index.php?id=12&tx_ttnews[year]=2010&tx_ttnews[month]=01&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=845&tx_ttnews[backPid]=51&cHash=7e6c8ae41d) (last access: 18 June 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Delfi: Lithuania wants the new European External Action Service to defend the interests of our citizens (Lietuva nori, kad kuriama Europos išorinių veiksmų tarnyba gintų mūsų piliečių interesus), 6 March 2010, available at: <http://myep.delfi.lt/news/lietuva-nori-kad-kuriama-europos-isoriniu-veiksmu-tarnyba-gintu-musu-pilieciu-interesus.d?id=29734613> (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: Foreign Affairs Minister talked with the High Representative (Užsienio reikalų ministras kalbėjosi su ES atstove užsienio reikalams), press release, 12 February 2010, available at: <http://www.urm.lt/index.php?-1919252930> (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>8</sup> Former Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister Vygaudas Usackas: Lithuanian foreign policy: continuity and change, rhetoric and practice, speech at the Institute of International Relations and Political Science of Vilnius University, 9 December 2009, available at: <http://www.urm.lt/index.php?-1877806041> (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>9</sup> Discussion of Seimas European Club and Seimas European Information Office: The priorities of the Spanish Presidency and the topicalities of the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty (Ispanijos pirmininkavimo prioritetai ir Lisabonos sutarties įgyvendinimo aktualijos), 24 February 2010, available at: [www.eib.lrs.lt](http://www.eib.lrs.lt) (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>10</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: Foreign Affairs Minister talked with EU representative for foreign affairs (Užsienio reikalų ministras kalbėjosi su ES atstove užsienio reikalams), press release, 12 February 2010, available at: <http://www.urm.lt/index.php?-1919252930> (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>11</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: EU General Affairs Council has reached a political agreement on the establishment of the European External Action Service (ES bendrųjų reikalų taryba pasiekė politinį susitarimą dėl Europos išorinių veiksmų tarnybos steigimo), press release, 27 April 2010, available at: [www.urm.lt](http://www.urm.lt) (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>12</sup> A. Saudargas expects a proportional representation of the EU Member States in the EU diplomatic corps (A. Saudargas ES diplomatiniam korpuse tikisi proporcingo ES šalių atstovavimo), 9 February 2010, available at:

<http://www.algirdassaudargas.lt/lt/naujienos/naujienu-archyvas/2010-m/a-saudargas-es-diplomatiniame-korpuse-tikisi-proporcingo-es-saliu-atstovavimo> (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: EU Foreign Affairs Ministers have been deliberating in Cordoba on the activities of the future European External Action Service (Kordoboje ES užsienio reikalų ministrai svarstė būsimos Europos išorinių veiksmų tarnybos veiklą), press release, 6 March 2010, available at: <http://www.urm.lt/index.php?-13079459> (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: Foreign Affairs Minister talked with EU representative for foreign affairs (Užsienio reikalų ministras kalbėjosi su ES atstove užsienio reikalams), press release, 12 February 2010, available at: <http://www.urm.lt/index.php?-1919252930> (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>15</sup> Discussion of Seimas European Club and Seimas European Information Office: The priorities of the Spanish Presidency and the topicalities of the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty (Ispanijos pirmininkavimo prioritetai ir Lisabonos sutarties įgyvendinimo aktualijos), 24 February 2010, available at: [www.eib.lrs.lt](http://www.eib.lrs.lt) (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>16</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: EU General affairs council has reached a political agreement on the establishment of the European External Action Service (ES bendrųjų reikalų taryba pasiekė politinį susitarimą dėl Europos išorinių veiksmų tarnybos steigimo), press release, 27 April 2010, available at: [www.urm.lt](http://www.urm.lt) (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>17</sup> Zigmantas Balcytis: Will the EP have a power to control the European External Action Service? (Ar EP turės galią, kontroliuoti naująją Europos išorės veiksmų tarnybą?), 28 April 2010, available at: <http://www.balcytis.lt/?p=764> (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>18</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: EU General Affairs Council has reached a political agreement on the establishment of the European External Action Service (ES bendrųjų reikalų taryba pasiekė politinį susitarimą dėl Europos išorinių veiksmų tarnybos steigimo), press release, 27 April 2010, available at: [www.urm.lt](http://www.urm.lt) (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>19</sup> Discussion of Seimas European Club and Seimas European Information Office: The priorities of the Spanish Presidency and the topicalities of the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty (Ispanijos pirmininkavimo prioritetai ir Lisabonos sutarties įgyvendinimo aktualijos), 24 February 2010, available at: [www.eib.lrs.lt](http://www.eib.lrs.lt) (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>20</sup> Committee on European affairs of the Lithuanian parliament: The committee on European affairs has adopted an opinion on the Green Paper on the European Citizens' Initiative (Europos reikalų komitetas patvirtino nuomonę dėl Žaliosios knygos dėl Europos piliečių iniciatyvos), press release, 22 January 2010, available at: [http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/w5\\_show?p\\_r=6160&p\\_k=1](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/w5_show?p_r=6160&p_k=1) (last access: 9 June 2010).

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**Lithuania****Looking east, looking north****Jurga Valančiūtė\***

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*Iceland's accession is strongly supported and the Croatian accession negotiations should be finished as soon as possible*

Lithuanian officials favour further EU enlargement and are convinced that bilateral disagreements should not influence the accession negotiations of the candidate countries – former Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister Vygaudas Usackas expressed his support for the European Commission's estimation that Croatian accession negotiations can be finished in 2010.<sup>1</sup> Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Vice-Minister Asta Skaisgirytė Liauskiene recently said that the Croatian accession negotiations should be finished as soon as possible.<sup>2</sup>

Iceland was the first state to recognise Lithuania's independence 20 years ago. Today Lithuania favours the integration of this state into the EU and, as Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė said, "Lithuania strongly supports the aspiration of Iceland to become an EU member state and is willing to provide all the necessary support for Iceland's accession negotiations."<sup>3</sup>

Regarding other countries, Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister Vygaudas Usackas expressed Lithuanian support for the European Commission's proposal to start accession negotiations with Macedonia. He expressed his hope that the European Commission will positively evaluate the applications for EU membership by Albania and Montenegro. He hoped that in 2011, when Lithuania will hold the Presidency for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and later in 2013, when Lithuania will hold the council presidency, there would be a significant move towards the creation of a free and united Europe.<sup>4</sup>

Concerning Turkey, Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister Audronius Azubalis urged Turkey to continue implementing EU reforms and to seek progress in the accession negotiations. He reiterated that Lithuania is ready to help Turkey on its way into the EU.<sup>5</sup>

*Active participation in the Eastern Partnership – a Lithuanian foreign policy priority*

While the Union for Mediterranean is a low salience issue in Lithuania, the Eastern Partnership attracts a lot of attention and is one of the most important current EU initiatives to Lithuania, because, as a former Soviet Republic, Lithuania can share its experience on how to develop relations with the EU's eastern neighbours. Both former and current Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Ministers claim that, since its membership in the EU, Lithuania has consequently supported and initiated such partnerships between the EU and its eastern neighbours.<sup>6</sup>

Lithuanian officials recognise the high importance of the new EU initiative. According to the Foreign Affairs Minister Audronius Azubalis, "[the] Eastern Partnership embodies a new era of the relationship with eastern neighbours and it is an important measure fostering the reforms and economic integration in these states and helping to facilitate the movement of people."<sup>7</sup> Former Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister Vygaudas Usackas expressed his belief that the "independence, security and stability of Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia and other states participating in the Eastern Partnership is not only a premise for the security and stability of the three Baltic states, but also a premise for the stability and security of the whole Europe."<sup>8</sup> Audronius Azubalis says that the active participation of Lithuania in the Eastern Partnership programme has become one of the top priority fields of Lithuanian Foreign policy.<sup>9</sup>

*All necessary material support must be provided*

Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Audronius Azubalis emphasised that it is important to start implementing specific projects with the Eastern Partnership countries as soon as possible.<sup>10</sup> He urged EU member states to provide a perspective of visa free regimes for Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. He also emphasised that it is important to provide the necessary financial resources for the

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implementation of Eastern Partnership projects.<sup>11</sup> The Foreign Affairs Minister also urged eastern EU neighbours participating in this initiative to fully use all the Eastern Partnership instruments and measures – association agreements, free trade agreements and visa facilitation agreements – and to cooperate more intensively in the field of energy.

#### *Visas for Belarusian citizens should be cheaper*

The Former Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister Vygaudas Usackas said he was especially worried about the development of the EU's and Lithuania's relations with Belarus. According to the former Minister, Lithuania would like to see an independent and stable Belarus moving towards the establishment of an open democratic society and functioning market economy. He urged the stopping of discriminatory policy towards the citizens of Belarus, who have to pay twice as much for a visa to enter the EU compared with citizens of other Eastern Partnership states.<sup>12</sup>

#### *Lithuania actively provided proposals for the development of the Eastern Partnership*

Lithuania finds the Eastern Partnership an important field of action where it can provide different unilateral and multilateral proposals for the development of this initiative. At the end of 2009, Lithuania, together with Ukraine and Belarus, prepared a wide list of possible common projects and continues to provide concrete suggestions to the European Commission for the support of the eastern neighbours, implements common projects with these states and shares its EU integration experience with them.<sup>13</sup> The committee on foreign affairs of Lithuanian parliament also proposes to develop the parliamentary dimension of the Eastern Partnership.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: The preparation for the forthcoming European Council has been deliberated in Brussels (Briuselyje aptartas pasirengimas artėjančiai Europos vadovų tarybai), press release, 8 December 2009, available at: <http://www.alfa.lt/straipsnis/10303389> (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: Lithuania supports the Croatian aspiration to finish the accession negotiations soon (Lietuva remia Kroatijos siekį baigti derybas dėl narystės ES artimiausiu metu), press release, 10 May 2010, available at: [http://www.alfa.lt/straipsnis/10358663/?Lietuva.remia.Kroatijos.siekis.baigti.derybas.del.narystes.ES.artimiausiu.metu=2010-05-19\\_15-10](http://www.alfa.lt/straipsnis/10358663/?Lietuva.remia.Kroatijos.siekis.baigti.derybas.del.narystes.ES.artimiausiu.metu=2010-05-19_15-10) (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Baltic News Service: Grybauskaitė: Lithuania strongly supports the Iceland's aspiration to become an EU Member State (Grybauskaitė: Lietuva tvirtai remia Islandijos siekius tapti ES nare), 16 March 2010, available at: [http://www.alfa.lt/straipsnis/10321304/?Grybauskaitė..Lietuva.tvirtai.remia.Islandijos.siekis.tapti.ES.nare=2010-03-16\\_16-16](http://www.alfa.lt/straipsnis/10321304/?Grybauskaitė..Lietuva.tvirtai.remia.Islandijos.siekis.tapti.ES.nare=2010-03-16_16-16) (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: V. Usackas: The progress in the Western Balkans is evident, but to achieve the goal there is a need to concentrate the efforts (V. Ušackas: Vakarų Balkanuose pažanga akivaizdi, tačiau dėl tikslo dar reikia susitelkti), press release, 8 December 2009, available at: <http://www.urm.gov.lt/index.php?-154276899> (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: Lithuania supports the Turkish reforms implemented on its way to the EU (Lietuva remia Turkijos kelyje į ES vykdomas reformas), press release, 24 February 2010, available at: [http://elta.lt/zinute\\_pr.php?inf\\_id=1160140](http://elta.lt/zinute_pr.php?inf_id=1160140) (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: Eastern Partnership initiative stimulates the rapprochement of EU and its Eastern Partners, says Foreign Affairs Minister (Rytų partnerystės iniciatyva skatina ES ir Rytų kaimynių suartėjimą, teigia užsienio reikalų ministras), press release, 9 December 2009, available at: <http://www.urm.lt/index.php?237482786> (last access: 9 June 2010); former Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister Vygaudas Usackas: Lithuanian foreign policy: continuity and change, rhetoric and practice, speech at Institute of International Relations and Political Science of Vilnius University, 9 December 2009, available at: <http://www.urm.lt/index.php?-1877806041> (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: Eastern Partnership initiative stimulates the rapprochement of EU and its Eastern Partners, says Foreign Affairs Minister (Rytų partnerystės iniciatyva skatina ES ir Rytų kaimynių suartėjimą, teigia užsienio reikalų ministras), press release, 9 December 2009, available at: <http://www.urm.lt/index.php?237482786> (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>8</sup> Press release of the Foreign Affairs Ministry: Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian trilateral projects of the EU Eastern partnership have been presented in Brussels (Briuselyje pristatyti Lietuvos, Baltarusijos ir Ukrainos trišaliai projektai ES Rytų kaimynystei), 8 December 2009, available at: [http://www.esnaujienos.lt/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1665:briuselyje-pristatyti-lietuvos-baltarusijos-ir-ukrainos-trialiai-projektai-es-ryt-partnerystei-&catid=86:lietuvos-atstovavimas-es-institucijose&Itemid=95](http://www.esnaujienos.lt/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1665:briuselyje-pristatyti-lietuvos-baltarusijos-ir-ukrainos-trialiai-projektai-es-ryt-partnerystei-&catid=86:lietuvos-atstovavimas-es-institucijose&Itemid=95) (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>9</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: Eastern Partnership initiative stimulates the rapprochement of EU and its Eastern Partners, says Foreign Affairs Minister (Rytų partnerystės iniciatyva skatina ES ir Rytų kaimynių suartėjimą, teigia užsienio reikalų ministras), press release, 9 December 2009, available at: <http://www.urm.lt/index.php?237482786> (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>10</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: The Ukrainian election results, EU actions in Afghanistan and the forthcoming European Council have been discussed in Brussels (Briuselyje aptarti rinkimų Ukrainoje rezultatai, ES veikslai Afganistane ir būsimoji Europos vadovų taryba), press release, 22 February 2010, available at: <http://www.ue2013.lt/index.php?647304910> (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>11</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: EU members and Eastern neighbours have to use all the Eastern Partnership measures and instruments, claims the Foreign Affairs Minister (ES šalys ir Rytų kaimynės turi išnaudoti visas Rytų partnerystės priemones ir instrumentus, teigia užsienio reikalų ministras), press release, 2 March 2010, available at: [www.urm.lt](http://www.urm.lt) (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>12</sup> Press release of the Foreign Affairs Ministry: Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian trilateral projects of the EU Eastern Partnership have been presented in Brussels (Briuselyje pristatyti Lietuvos, Baltarusijos ir Ukrainos trišaliai projektai ES Rytų kaimynystei), 8 December 2009, available at:

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[http://www.esnaujienos.lt/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1665:bruselyje-pristatyti-lietuvos-baltarusijos-ir-ukrainos-trialiai-projektai-es-ryt-partnerystei-&catid=86:lietuvos-atstovavimas-es-institucijose&Itemid=95](http://www.esnaujienos.lt/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1665:bruselyje-pristatyti-lietuvos-baltarusijos-ir-ukrainos-trialiai-projektai-es-ryt-partnerystei-&catid=86:lietuvos-atstovavimas-es-institucijose&Itemid=95) (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: Eastern Partnership initiative stimulates the rapprochement of EU and its Eastern Partners, says Foreign Affairs Minister (Rytų partnerystės iniciatyva skatina ES ir Rytų kaimynių suartėjimą, teigia užsienio reikalų ministras), press release, 9 December 2009, available at: <http://www.urm.lt/index.php?237482786> (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian trilateral projects of the EU Eastern partnership have been presented in Brussels (Briuselyje pristatyti Lietuvos, Baltarusijos ir Ukrainos trišaliai projektai ES Rytų kaimynystei), press release, 8 December 2009, available at:

[http://www.esnaujienos.lt/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1665:bruselyje-pristatyti-lietuvos-baltarusijos-ir-ukrainos-trialiai-projektai-es-ryt-partnerystei-&catid=86:lietuvos-atstovavimas-es-institucijose&Itemid=95](http://www.esnaujienos.lt/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1665:bruselyje-pristatyti-lietuvos-baltarusijos-ir-ukrainos-trialiai-projektai-es-ryt-partnerystei-&catid=86:lietuvos-atstovavimas-es-institucijose&Itemid=95) (last access: 9 June 2010).

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**Lithuania****More financial discipline is necessary to avoid crisis in the future****Jurga Valančiūtė\***

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*Greece should first prepare a stricter plan for saving*

Lithuanian officials and society assert that Greece should expand its efforts against its economic troubles and that this should be a prerequisite for receiving aid from other EU member states.

Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė said, the “Greek situation and the decision of the EU member states to provide aid for Greece together with the International Monetary Fund is a good lesson to all states that they should treat their public finances with responsibility.”<sup>1</sup> According to the Lithuanian President, by “becoming a Eurozone member, Greece has adopted important obligations to conduct responsible fiscal and monetary policy. When in big economic trouble, a state has to make responsible but not populist financial decisions, look for the ways out and only then expect help from other member states.”<sup>2</sup>

According to the results of a non-representative survey conducted after the financial package for Greece was adopted by the most popular news portal in Lithuania Delfi.lt, 66.2 percent of 2,136 respondents, asked what help should be provided to Greece, said that, first of all Greece, should prepare a stricter plan for saving, 18.8 percent said that the EU does not have an obligation to take care of Greece’s problems and 10.6 percent answered that EU member states should express their solidarity and lend Greece the necessary 110 billion Euros.<sup>3</sup>

Lithuania has also suffered from the economic crisis, with Gross Domestic Product drastically falling and the level of unemployment critically growing. As Lithuanian Member of European Parliament (MEP) Zigmantas Balcytis says, “it is not only Greece that is in a bad situation – Lithuania also takes loans with high interest rates.” Therefore, according to this MEP, “there should be no distinction between EU member states belonging to the Eurozone and those not belonging to it, but the support should be provided to all member states depending on how much they have suffered from the crisis.”<sup>4</sup>

*Possible influence on the accession of new member states to the Eurozone*

The general opinion in Lithuania is that the Greek case will influence the reform of the Stability and Growth Pact, although the concrete influences are not extensively indicated. The director of the Institute of International Relations and Political Science of Vilnius University, economist Ramunas Vilpisauskas, says that the Greek case can force the EU member states to correct the rules regarding the functioning of the Eurozone, which might influence the accession of new states to the Eurozone as well. According to him, “it is highly expected that this will have long term consequences for the coordination of the policy among Eurozone member states, its supervision and sanctions for violations of the Stability and Growth Pact.”<sup>5</sup> Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė pins her hope on a special working group: she said she was convinced that the decision of the March 2010 European Council to gather a special working group, which would provide the Council with concrete recommendations on improving financial discipline in the member states, will prevent similar crises in the future.<sup>6</sup>

*More intensive conformation of budgetary indicators is desired but not the harmonisation of direct taxes*

Ramunas Vilpisauskas says that the European Commission’s proposals laid down in the communication on reinforcing economic policy coordination are quite radical and raise a number of questions. These questions, according to Ramunas Vilpisauskas, are not only associated with the possibility that these proposals might limit the member states’ sovereignty in budgetary policy. Another discussable issue is an EU support fund for countries experiencing difficulties and the conditions upon which the financial resources would be provided, as this remains unclear. Finally, he says, it is not obvious how much these proposals would be applied to non-Eurozone member states or what their relation with the Europe 2020 Strategy, with the national reform programmes and with the EU financial perspective will be. According to him, “these proposals have both positive and negative consequences

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for Lithuania. On the one hand, it would limit the recent practice of politicians to waste money before elections, but on the other hand this means recognition of an inability to conduct a reasonable, independent budgetary policy.” He questions whether a step towards the obligatory conformation procedures of national budgets would not lead to an obligatory conformation of taxes or budget expenditure in the future, as such a scenario would not be favourable to Lithuania, because it would limit our possibilities to conduct an independent policy. His conclusion is that “an area of a single currency should be related with a more intensive conformation of the budgetary indicators but should not be a basis for harmonisation of direct taxes.”<sup>7</sup>

### *Europe 2020 Strategy – a basis for the recovery of the European economy*

Lithuanian officials greatly welcome the Europe 2020 Strategy. Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė said the Lithuanian goal to have an economically strong and competitive EU could only be achieved through the successful implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy.<sup>8</sup> She also noted that the goals of the Strategy confirmed at the March European Council are of great importance to Lithuania.<sup>9</sup>

Europe 2020 Strategy is seen by most Lithuanian officials as a basis for the recovery of the European economy. Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister Audronius Azubalis said: “We have to use this Strategy as the instrument promoting quicker recovery of the EU and Lithuanian economies and fostering the most important structural reforms.”<sup>10</sup> Former Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister Vygaudas Usackas mentioned that this Strategy will not only help the EU recover from this crisis, but also prevent crises in the future.<sup>11</sup>

Lithuanian officials express their support for the main elements of the Strategy. Vygaudas Usackas positively evaluated the main direction of the Strategy – to create knowledge based united and sustainable economy.<sup>12</sup> Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė named the following Strategy goals as the most important to Lithuania – securing the growth of employment, limiting the level of poverty, decreasing social exclusion and securing investments in the economy which would be based on the achievements of modern science and highly qualified specialists.<sup>13</sup>

In the context of the new Strategy, special attention was paid to energy issues. Former Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister Vygaudas Usackas claimed, “it is extremely important to Lithuania that such priorities as diversification of energy resources, creation of an EU energy market and coordinated external EU energy policy would be included in the strategy.”<sup>14</sup> After the adoption of the European Commission’s communication, Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė stressed that it is important that an obligation to develop the necessary infrastructure for growth, which would enable Lithuania to implement the energy interconnections that will eliminate Lithuanian energy isolation, are foreseen in the Strategy.<sup>15</sup>

While most Lithuanian officials are enthusiastic about the new Europe 2020 Strategy, Ramunas Vilpisauskas claimed that the new Strategy should be evaluated according to its ability to deal with the shortcomings of the Lisbon Strategy. He listed the numerous, differently defined and sometimes contradictory goals in most fields of public policy: the gap between the national and EU reform processes and non-binding nature of the implementation of the Strategy are among the major shortcomings of the new Strategy.<sup>16</sup> chairman of the committee on European affairs of Lithuanian parliament Česlovas Vytautas Stankevičius said he wanted to see the social dimension strengthened in the Europe 2020 Strategy.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> President of Lithuania: The President: EU growth strategy – new possibilities for Lithuania (Prezidentė: ES augimo strategija – naujos galimybės Lietuvai), press release, 26 March 2010, available at: <http://www.balsas.lt/naujiena/381420/dalia-grybauskaitė-es-augimo-strategija-naujos-galimybės-lietuvai> (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>2</sup> President of Lithuania: Economic recovery plan until 2020 – a challenge for all EU Member States (Ekonomikos gaivinimo planas iki 2020 m. – iššūkis visoms ES šalims), press release, available at: [http://www.president.lt/lt/spaudos\\_centras\\_392/pranesimai\\_spaudai/ekonomikos\\_gaivinimo\\_planas\\_iki\\_2020\\_m.\\_-issukis\\_visoms\\_es\\_salims.html](http://www.president.lt/lt/spaudos_centras_392/pranesimai_spaudai/ekonomikos_gaivinimo_planas_iki_2020_m._-issukis_visoms_es_salims.html) (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Baltic news service: Greece has agreed on aid from EU and IMF (Graikija susitarė su ES ir TVF dėl pagalbos), 2 May 2010, available at: <http://myep.delfi.lt/news/graikija-susitare-su-es-ir-tvf-del-pagalbos.d?id=31754475> (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Zigmantas Balcytis: Yes, Greece is in a difficult situation, but... (Taip, Graikijai sunku, bet...), 25 March 2010, available at: <http://www.balcytis.lt/?p=671> (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Ramunas Vilpisauskas: Greece, euro and Lithuania (Graikija, euras ir Lietuva), 24 March 2010, available at: [HTTP://MYEP.DELFI.LT/OPINION/GRAIKIJA-EURAS-IR-LIETUVA.D?ID=30323695](http://myep.delfi.lt/opinion/graikija-uras-ir-lietuva.d?id=30323695) (last access: 9 June 2010).

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- <sup>6</sup> President of Lithuania: The President: EU growth strategy – new possibilities for Lithuania (Prezidentė: ES augimo strategija – naujos galimybės Lietuvai), press release, 26 March 2010, available at: <http://www.balsas.lt/naujiena/381420/dalia-grybauskaite-es-augimo-strategija-naujos-galimybes-lietuvai> (last access: 9 June 2010).
- <sup>7</sup> Ramunas Vilpisauskas: Let the European Union decide for us, because we are incapable to do that ourselves? (Tegu už mus sprendžia Europos Sąjunga, nes patys nesugebame), 19 May 2010, available at: <http://myep.delfi.lt/opinion/r-vilpisauskas-tegu-uz-mus-sprendzia-europos-sajunga-nes-patys-nesugebame.d?id=32478591> (last access: 9 June 2010).
- <sup>8</sup> President of Lithuania: President will deliberate on the EU strategy for the growth of economy in Brussels (Briuselyje Prezidentė svarstys ES ekonomikos augimo skatinimo strategiją), press release, 24 March 2010, available at: [http://www.president.lt/lt/spaudos\\_centras\\_392/pranesimai\\_spaudai/briuselyje\\_prezidente\\_svarstys\\_es\\_ekonomikos\\_augimo\\_s\\_katinimo\\_strategija.html](http://www.president.lt/lt/spaudos_centras_392/pranesimai_spaudai/briuselyje_prezidente_svarstys_es_ekonomikos_augimo_s_katinimo_strategija.html) (last access: 9 June 2010).
- <sup>9</sup> President of Lithuania: The President: EU growth strategy – new possibilities for Lithuania (Prezidentė: ES augimo strategija – naujos galimybės Lietuvai), press release, 26 March 2010, available at: <http://www.balsas.lt/naujiena/381420/dalia-grybauskaite-es-augimo-strategija-naujos-galimybes-lietuvai> (last access: 9 June 2010).
- <sup>10</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: Foreign Affairs Minister presented EU Member States ambassadors the priorities of Lithuanian European policy (Užsienio reikalų ministras Europos Sąjungos šalių ambasadoriams pristatė Lietuvos Europos politikos prioritetus), press release, 14 April 2010, available at: [www.urm.lt](http://www.urm.lt) (last access: 9 June 2010).
- <sup>11</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: The preparation of the forthcoming European Council has been deliberated in Brussels (Briuselyje aptartas pasirengimas artėjančiai Europos vadovų tarybai), press release, 8 December 2009, available at: <http://www.alfa.lt/straipsnis/10303389> (last access: 9 June 2010).
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> President of Lithuania: President will deliberate on the EU strategy for the growth of economy in Brussels (Briuselyje Prezidentė svarstys ES ekonomikos augimo skatinimo strategiją), press release, available at: [http://www.president.lt/lt/spaudos\\_centras\\_392/pranesimai\\_spaudai/briuselyje\\_prezidente\\_svarstys\\_es\\_ekonomikos\\_augimo\\_s\\_katinimo\\_strategija.html](http://www.president.lt/lt/spaudos_centras_392/pranesimai_spaudai/briuselyje_prezidente_svarstys_es_ekonomikos_augimo_s_katinimo_strategija.html) (last access: 9 June 2010).
- <sup>14</sup> Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the European Union: In Brussels EU Foreign Affairs Ministers paid much attention to Afghanistan (Briuselyje ES užsienio reikalų ministrai daug dėmesio skyrė Afganistanui), 25 January 2010, available at: <http://www.eurep.mfa.lt/index.php?-305056780> (last access: 9 June 2010).
- <sup>15</sup> Balsas.lt: The President: EU growth strategy – new possibilities for Lithuania (Prezidentė: ES augimo strategija – naujos galimybės Lietuvai), 26 March 2010, available at: <http://www.balsas.lt/naujiena/381420/dalia-grybauskaite-es-augimo-strategija-naujos-galimybes-lietuvai> (last access: 9 June 2010).
- <sup>16</sup> Ramunas Vilpisauskas: EU2020: déjà vu or the preparation for the progress? (Europa 2020: déjà vu ar pasirengimas proveržiui?), 16 March 2010, available at: <http://myep.delfi.lt/news/europa-2020-deja-vu-ar-pasirengimas-proverziui.d?id=30046325> (last access: 9 June 2010).
- <sup>17</sup> Committee on European affairs of the Lithuanian parliament: Chairman of the committee on European affairs Česlovas Vytautas Stankevičius says that the social dimension should be enforced in the future EU2020 Strategy (Europos reikalų komiteto pirmininkas Česlovas Vytautas Stankevičius pasisako, kad būsimojoje 2020 m. ES strategijoje turi būti sustiprintas socialinis matmuo), press release, available at: [www.lrs.lt](http://www.lrs.lt) (last access: 9 June 2010).

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**Lithuania****Opinions on Copenhagen Accord diverge****Jurga Valančiūtė\***

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There is no common evaluation on the Copenhagen Accord, while some Lithuanian politicians positively evaluate the agreement, others stay critical. Lithuanian Environment Minister Gediminas Kazlauskas said that, although the Copenhagen Accord was not a perfect document and not as ambitious as the EU had desired, it was still a big step forward. According to him, this Accord is better than no accord. He said that he was an optimist and that he expected that this document would be just another step towards a global agreement, which could be adopted in the future.<sup>1</sup> Lithuanian MEP Radvilė Morkunaite, a member of the environment, public health and food safety committee, was not as optimistic when speaking about the same subject. She claimed that the process of the conference had demonstrated that EU leaders were capable of formulating a general position and keeping to it. However, the results of the conference were not as satisfying as the process of the conference. Despite the unity of the EU position, the voices of the biggest polluters in the world were taken more into consideration than the voice of the EU. The positions of the USA, China and other developing countries determined that the Copenhagen Accord is declarative and not legally binding to take any actions.<sup>2</sup> She called the claims of various leaders, that the most crucial thing is that an agreement had been reached and that the first steps towards the greener future had been made, attempts to “save face” after the conference, which raised so many expectations but delivered none of the expected results. The only positive outcome of the conference, Radvilė Morkunaite said, was that “the states had recognised that climate change was one of the biggest challenges facing humanity and the decision to provide financial aid for the developing countries to fight climate change was made.”<sup>3</sup>

*Lithuania supported the EU goals at the Copenhagen conference*

Lithuania supported the EU position to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent by 2020 and to make a possible cut of greenhouse gas emissions of 30 percent if other developed states would also significantly cut their greenhouse gas emissions. This support has been declared by various Lithuanian officials at various levels, for example, former Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Vygaudas Usackas, while speaking at the meeting of the EU General Affairs Council, said that Lithuania congratulated EU efforts to cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 30 percent by 2020. However, he stressed, “other countries have to make equally ambitious obligations.”<sup>4</sup>

Alternatives to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) are not widely discussed in Lithuania.

*Lithuania welcomes an agreement to finance the developing countries' fight against climate change*

Lithuanian MEP Radvilė Morkunaite, while generally critical of the Copenhagen Accord, noted that one of the few positive elements of the Accord is an agreement to provide 30 billion US-Dollars in the forthcoming 3 years to support the developing countries' fight against climate change and to increase this financial aid to 100 billion US-Dollars by 2020.<sup>5</sup>

Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė talked about the practical details of the implementation of this agreement: she stated that she was happy that Lithuanian requirements, that each EU member state would pay according to its possibilities while implementing the EU obligation to contribute financially to the compensations for the reduction of emissions in third countries, have been taken into consideration. She said that it is a just agreement since Lithuania will only have to pay 1 million of the 2.5 billion Euros which the EU is obliged to provide.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Environment: Lithuania has outstood in the Copenhagen climate change conference (Lietuva pasižymėjo Kopenhagos klimato kaitos konferencijoje), press release, 22 December 2009, available at: [http://www.am.lt/Vl/article.php3?article\\_id=9511](http://www.am.lt/Vl/article.php3?article_id=9511) (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Radvilė Morkunaite: Copenhagen conference has proved that the leaders of EU states can formulate a common position (Radvilė MORKŪNAITĖ: Kopenhagos konferencija parodė, kad ES valstybių lyderiai sugeba suformuluoti bendrą poziciją), 22

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December 2009, available at: <http://www.nato.lt/radvile-morkunaite-kopenhagos-konferencija-parode-kad-es-valstybiu-lyderiai-sugeba-suformuluoti-bendra-pozicija/> (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Radvile Morkunaite: Saving the face in Copenhagen („Veido saugojimas“ Kopenhagoje), European colours, No. 3, December 2009, available at: [http://www.europosspalvos.lt/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/es\\_gruodis\\_siuntimui.pdf](http://www.europosspalvos.lt/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/es_gruodis_siuntimui.pdf) (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Foreign Affairs Ministry: The preparation of the forthcoming European Council has been deliberated in Brussels (Briuselyje aptartas pasirengimas artėjančiai Europos vadovų tarybai), press release, 8 December 2009, available at: <http://www.alfa.lt/straipsnis/10303389> (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> President of Lithuania: EU Member States will not forget a principle of justice while fighting with climate change (Kovojant su klimato kaita, ES šalys nepamirš ir teisingumo principo), press release, 11 December 2009, available at: [http://www.president.lt/lt/spaudos\\_centras\\_392/pranesimai\\_spaudai/kovojant\\_su\\_klimato\\_kaita\\_es\\_salys\\_nepamirs\\_ir\\_teisingumo\\_principo.html](http://www.president.lt/lt/spaudos_centras_392/pranesimai_spaudai/kovojant_su_klimato_kaita_es_salys_nepamirs_ir_teisingumo_principo.html) (last access: 9 June 2010).

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**Lithuania****Unemployment, nuclear energy, and the Baltic Sea Strategy****Jurga Valančiūtė\***

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*Unemployment has grown drastically*

Lithuania has been deeply influenced by the current financial crisis. One of the most problematic consequences of the crisis is a significant increase in the level of unemployment. Several years ago, Lithuania did not face the problem of unemployment, as its level was very low, but according to the latest data provided by the Lithuanian Office of Statistics, the level of unemployment was as high as 13.7 percent at the end of 2009.<sup>1</sup> This means that Lithuania has the third highest unemployment level in the EU after Spain and Latvia. In this context, it is becoming harder for inexperienced and young people to find jobs and, in 2009, the unemployment level among the youth had reached 29.3 percent.<sup>2</sup> The Bank of Lithuania estimates that the level of unemployment might reach up to 16.7 percent this year.<sup>3</sup>

*Closure of Ignalina nuclear power plant was not postponed*

Implementing the provisions of the EU accession treaty, Lithuania closed the second block of the Ignalina nuclear power plant at the end of 2009. Ignalina was the major source of electricity since 1997, producing more than 80 percent of all electricity used in Lithuania. Lithuanian obligations to close the power plant encouraged various fuelled fears among Lithuanian society and politicians who urged not to close the power plant and made attempts to prolong its functioning. This also gave ground for abundant political speculation. However, the EU had a strict position on the issue and the Ignalina nuclear power plant stopped producing electricity on 31 December 2009. In this context, EU energy policy on electricity and gas interconnections with the rest of EU are of vital importance to Lithuania.

*Lithuania congratulates the adoption of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region*

Lithuanian officials favoured the adoption of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, as very important projects for Lithuania are included in this Strategy. Former Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister Vygaudas Usackas said that the Baltic Sea Strategy has a significant importance.<sup>4</sup> Important projects, such as electricity and gas interconnections with other EU member states, are included in the Strategy, which will help reduce Lithuanian energy isolation, which is one of the most sensitive issues to Lithuania. Therefore, it is expected that the inclusion of these projects into the Strategy will foster their implementation.

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<sup>1</sup> Data of Lithuanian Office of Statistics, Lithuanian Labour Exchange and Eurostat provide quite similar data. The new report by the Lithuanian Statistics Office on the level of unemployment in the first quarter of 2010 will be published on 25 May 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Verslo žinios: Unemployment during the last year has grown by almost 2.5 times (Nedarbas pernai išaugo beveik pustrėčio karto), 23 February 2010, available at: [http://vz.lt/2/straipsnis/2010/02/23/Nedarbas\\_pernai\\_ishaugo\\_beveik\\_pustrrecio\\_karto2](http://vz.lt/2/straipsnis/2010/02/23/Nedarbas_pernai_ishaugo_beveik_pustrrecio_karto2) (last access: 9 June 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Foreign Affairs Minister Vygaudas Usackas: EU Baltic sea strategy: new possibilities and challenges (Taujėnų dvaras, Ukmergės raj), presentation, 13 November 2009, available at: <http://www.urm.lt/index.php?130737639> (last access: 9 June 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?