

# 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).

## 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?