

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

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.¹ 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.² 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.”³

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 CO₂ emissions by 30 percent by 2020. However, he stressed, “other countries have to make equally ambitious obligations.”⁴

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 2020.⁵

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.⁶

¹ 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 (last access: 9 June 2010).

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

* Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University.

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).

³ Radvile Morkunaite: Saving the face in Copenhagen („Veido saugojimas“ Kopenhagoje), European colours, No. 3, December 2009, available at: http://www.europospalvos.lt/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/es_gruodis_siuntimui.pdf (last access: 9 June 2010).

⁴ 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).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ 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 (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?