

EU-27 WATCH



No. 9
July 2010

ISSN 1610-6458

www.EU-27Watch.org

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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.

The EU-27 Watch No. 9 receives significant funding from the **Otto Wolff-Foundation, Cologne**, in the framework of the *"Dialog Europa der Otto Wolff-Stiftung"*, and financial support from the **European Commission**. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.



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Macedonia**A need for a regional climate strategy in the Balkans**

Biljana Janeva*

Climate change politics in Macedonia are interlinked with the European integration process, as well as with the wider political horizon.

According to the Macedonian daily newspaper Dnevnik, the Copenhagen climate summit organised by the UN is hardly possible to be assessed as a new phase in human thought and organisation or as the corner stone of a new ecologically conscious civilisation. According to the daily, the climate summit was threatened by multiple fiascos: lack of a binding agreement, the discrediting of renowned scientists, and open dispute between the developing world and the wealthy world. Copenhagen will be noted for revealing profiteer's interests, politicians' dirty interests, the misuse of the civil sector and the manipulation of the world leading media, notes the daily.¹ After the summit, the media in Macedonia were filled with headlines, such as "Failure and downfall of the Copenhagen Summit". According to the Macedonian media and experts, although the Copenhagen summit was declared to be a fiasco, the adopted agreement has certain duties for the countries, especially small ones like Macedonia.²

The media in Macedonia was also focused on Macedonia's preparations for the Copenhagen summit. As stated in the media, according to the Minister for Environment and Physical Planning Nexhati Jakupi, the Republic of Macedonia does not have a big contribution or participation in global warming, but, since it is a developing country, it strongly feels the effects and the impact of climate change. The Ministry has held a coordinative meeting regarding the actions necessary on the state level as a response to the Copenhagen Accord.³

The President of the Republic of Macedonia George Ivanov held an address at the Copenhagen summit demonstrating Macedonia's support for conveying the global agreement.

"We are already witnessing the negative effects of climate change and we must act promptly in order to prevent the process from having an irreversible negative impact. This is why we need a legally binding global agreement creating the best possible conditions which will keep global warming below 2 degrees Celsius. In this regard, we strongly support the European Union in its efforts to cut its carbon dioxide emissions by 20 percent by 2020 and its advocacy for global emissions reduction by at least 50 percent by 2050 compared to 1990 levels, as well as an aggregate developed countries' emissions reduction of at least 80-95 percent."⁴

The conclusions were noted and discussed in the press: the mitigation and adoption measures are costly. The Republic of Macedonia cannot cover the expenses by itself, which is why its participation in this global action is exquisitely active. According to the media and the authorities in the Republic of Macedonia, the measures implemented by Macedonia are completely in accordance with those proposed by the Kyoto Protocol. The Republic of Macedonia is actively working on reducing the emissions of harmful gases.

However, the opinions of the NGOs working in the sector are different. Although the NGOs warn about the extremely serious consequences in all sectors, there are no real mitigation measures. Mitigation is not a goal in the Energy Strategy either; according to this document, low-quality domestic lignite will remain Macedonia's main energy source in the next two decades. Its solar potential is mentioned with symbolic value, but it is not even analysed as such. Macedonia is in a very specific position: it is a Non-Annex I country to Kyoto and an EU candidate. This means that it does not have obligations concerning its targets and it is eligible for both clean development mechanism (CDM) projects and EU pre-accession funds. However, this situation will not last forever. Once it becomes an EU member state, it will lose both opportunities for funding and have to become an Annex I country (define its targets). This situation is not reflected in the country's related strategic documents and Macedonia seems to be rather disinterested when it comes to opportunities for funding clean energy projects. According to BELLS, a Macedonian NGO in the Balkan Bridges Network, the Balkans are in urgent need of an action plan for climate change. The countries in the region already suffer from a serious adaptation deficit to its current climate, deriving from a combination of socio-economic factors and the

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legacy of chronic environmental mismanagement. Large investments are needed to guarantee an environmentally sound development pathway that reduces vulnerability and increases resilience. The Western Balkans need mitigation and adaptation efforts for climate change. There is a need for adoption of national plans in the parliaments by involving the civil sector as a partner in adaptation as well as mitigation of climate change, for the protection of citizens from unclean technologies and for all current and future investments to include analysis of their climate change impact.⁵ This NGO has sent letters to governments throughout the region demanding an increase in regional cooperation and regular meetings in which an action plan of the Western Balkans for adapting to and dealing with climate change could be adopted. According to the NGO sector in Macedonia, there is a growing need for more debate regarding the environment and climate change. It comprises only 0.2 percent of the total questions asked by Members of Parliament in the parliament, and 0.67 percent of the information published in the printed media.

There was little news and no discussion regarding the questions on the EU's energy and climate policy, the best strategy to fight climate change and alternatives to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

¹ Analyses of the daily Nova Makedonija, available at: <http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=12169102399&id=9&prilog=0&setlzdanie=21863> (last access: 21 May 2010).

² Available at: <http://www.time.mk/cluster/32c2564c19/samitot-vo-kopenhagen-neuspeh.html> (last access: 20 July 2010).

³ Information from the official website of the Ministry, available at: <http://www.moepp.gov.mk/default-MK.asp?ItemID=C5856FDF8C89A440BEED28D98E97E1AE> (last access: 19 April 2010).

⁴ The President of Republic of Macedonia H.E. Gjorgje Ivanov address at the UN Conference for Climate change in Copenhagen, Information from the news portal Time.mk, available at: <http://www.time.mk/read/10c69c2744/b4d3356022/index.html> (last access: 20 July 2010).

⁵ Information from the Macedonian Information Agency, available at: <http://www.mia.com.mk/default.aspx?vld=691462&lld=1&pmkd> (last access: 20 May 2010).

Questionnaire for EU-27 Watch, No. 9

Reporting period December 2009 until May 2010 – Deadline for country reports 21 May

All questions refer to the position/assessment of your country's government, opposition, political parties, civil society organisations, pressure groups, press/media, and public opinion. Please name sources wherever possible!

1. Implementation of the Lisbon Treaty

On the 1 December 2009 the EU-reform ended with the entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty. However, the new treaty provisions still have to be implemented. Some procedures and conditions have to be determined. In other cases, procedures, power relations, and decision-making mechanisms will change due to the new provisions.

- How is the work of the new President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, assessed in your country? Which changes to the role of the rotating council presidency are expected?
- How is the work of the new High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, assessed in your country? Please take into particular consideration both her role within the European Commission and her relationship to the Council of the European Union.
- On 25 March 2010 a "Proposal for a Council Decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service" was presented. How is this concept perceived in your country? Which alternatives are discussed?
- On 31 March 2010 the European Commission presented a proposal defining the rules and procedures for the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI). What are the expectations for the ECI in your country? What are the various positions concerning the rules and procedures?

2. Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy

The European Commission has given its opinion on Iceland's application for EU-membership and a decision from the Council is expected before the end of June. Croatia seems to have settled its border dispute with Slovenia. Against this background:

- Which countries does your country expect to become members of the European Union in the next enlargement round? What are the opinions in your country on the membership of these countries?
- How are the membership perspectives of those countries discussed, which are not expected to become a member in the next enlargement round?

The Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean were the last major projects dealing with the European neighbourhood:

- How are these projects assessed in your country?

3. European economic policy and the financial and economic crisis

The European Council agreed on 25/26 March on the key elements of the Europe 2020 strategy, the successor of the Lisbon strategy. While not being on the formal agenda the economic and financial situation in Greece was discussed. The European Council agreed on a finance package combining bilateral loans from the eurozone and financing through the International Monetary Fund.

- How is the finance package for Greece assessed in your country? Are there any opinions on the process, how the agreement on the package was reached?
- Which lessons should be drawn from the Greek case for a reform of the Stability and Growth Pact?
- How is the idea of "a strong coordination of economic policies in Europe" perceived in your country? What concepts of an European economic governance are discussed in your country and which role do they assign to the Euro group?
- How is the Europe 2020 strategy discussed in your country? What are the priorities for the Europe 2020 strategy from your country's perspective?

4. Climate and energy policy

The climate conference in Copenhagen took note of the Copenhagen Accord but did not reach a binding agreement. The next conference of the parties (COP 16 & CMP 6) will take place at the end of November 2010.

- How is the Copenhagen conference assessed in your country? Please take into consideration the negotiation strategy of European Union and the results of the conference.
- Does the European Union need to change its own energy and climate policy in order to give a new impulse to the international negotiations?
- Is a global agreement within the UNFCCC the best strategy to fight climate change? If not, which alternative strategy should the European Union follow?
- What is your country's position on financing mitigation and adaptation efforts in developing countries?

5. Current issues and discourses in your country

Which other topics and discourses are highly salient in your country but not covered by this questionnaire?