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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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Romania**Europe has to stay on track**Agnes Nicolescu

Europe needs to stand by its current reduction objective

With few exceptions, the result of the Copenhagen conference, more exactly the content of the agreement, is seen as moderate progress, given the limitations of the document, namely the “political character of the provisions, the minimal compromise tendency and the lack of any formally assumed obligations by the main carbon gas polluters.”¹ On a more positive note, Radu Dudău, the author of a policy brief dealing with this topic, remarks – in spite of the serious deficiencies of the format of the conference negotiations, which have highlighted structural gaps between actors from developed countries and those from emerging economies in terms of concrete arguments brought to the table – “in the near future, signatory states will have to go through with the political promises assumed.”²

The Romanian media has emphasised the necessity to maintain the fundamental goal of a 30 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions as well as the diplomatic struggle among the major international actors involved in negotiations. One of the central issues of the Copenhagen conference held in December 2009 was finding out whether a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol or the creation of a completely new treaty, of which the United States would be a part as well, was necessary.³ Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Karl-Heinz Florenz, vice-president of the parliamentary delegation to Copenhagen, considers the USA and China as the key negotiators at the moment: “A problem is the fact that [the] G77 does not speak with one voice.”⁴ Jo Leinen, the president of the parliamentary delegation to Copenhagen, considers that the EU needs to stand by its already assumed objectives to combat climate change in order to maintain its credibility as a major voice on the international scene: “Cutting down the objective of 30 percent will question the European Union’s leader status in the negotiations and encourage other countries to reduce their own objectives.”⁵

Greater independency from traditional energy sources

The EU’s integrated policy on energy and climate change, adopted in December 2008, is still very much a major subject of analysis in Romanian society, but the reform of European energy policy is generally tackled as separate from the framework of the international negotiations, except for the episode of the Copenhagen conference. The European energy policy is discussed from the perspective of the necessity to considerably reform energy production and consumption so as to stay in line with the assumed commitments of combating climate change. A reformed EU energy policy should therefore strive to achieve greater independency from traditional energy sources such as imported oil and gas, ensure access to more diverse forms of renewable energy and less exposure to unstable energy prices and energy deliveries.⁶

The European Union needs to concentrate on developing the current energy infrastructure (gas and oil pipelines as well as electricity lines), as well as continually adapting it in order to be compatible with renewable energies. The EU’s energy strategy requires additional efforts to enhance energy efficiency, diversify energy resources, correct the behaviour of European energy consumers and consolidate international cooperation on these issues.⁷

A global binding agreement is the key

The Romanian media mainly focuses on a global agreement with legally binding commitments as the best strategy within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in order to fight climate change, and, to a lesser extent, develop alternative strategies which the European Union might adopt. A binding agreement for all countries is the main objective of negotiations, which are to be held in 2010 in Mexico, once the United States adopts the necessary legislation to set a final target and a roadmap for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.⁸

The alternative strategies discussed in the media are strongly inspired by those proposed by the European Commission in order to reach the assumed reduction targets and include greater investment in developing low carbon emissions technologies, especially in developing countries; internationally-funded innovative sources; and the establishment of an international carbon market by 2015.

For Romania, a 20 percent reduction is a realistic objective

Despite previous statements made by Romanian President Basescu with regard to pursuing the ambitious 30 percent reduction target,⁹ recent documents issued by the Department for European Affairs point out that, for the moment, Romania may stand by an objective no greater than 20 percent.¹⁰ The Romanian head of state also considers that the financial burden needs to be shared mostly by highly developed countries and the greatest polluters. Referring to actual costs involved by the implementation of the reduction objectives, “the quota pertaining to Romania involves additional costs but I believe these costs will generate benefits for Romanians, as we subscribe this carbon emissions’ reduction policy to a modernization trend [of Romania].”¹¹

As far as financing mitigation is concerned, the focus is on exploring mechanisms which finance the reduction of gas emissions as well as clean technologies. The latter mechanism is aimed at accelerating the implementation of clean energies or low-carbon emissions in developing countries.¹²

¹ Radu Dudău: Acordul de la Copenhaga: ceva mai mult decât nimic“, Policy Brief, IDR, no. 19, December 2009, available at: <http://www.idr.ro/publicatii/policy%20brief%2019.pdf> (last access: 14 July 2010).

² Ibid.

³ Mediafax: Atmosferă tensionată la Conferința de la Copenhaga, unde chiar și sigla provoacă divergențe, 9 December 2009, available at: <http://www.mediafax.ro/externe/atmosfera-tensionata-la-conferinta-de-la-copenhaga-unde-chiar-si-sigla-provoaca-divergente-5167876> (last access: 18 May 2010).

⁴ European Parliament: One day to go at Copenhagen COP15: Can the world deliver?, 17 December 2009, available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+IM-PRESS+20091211STO66325+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN> (last access: 19 May 2010).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Revista 22: Inițiativele UE de combatere a schimbărilor climatice, 14 February 2010, available at: <http://www.revista22.ro/ini355iativele-ue-de-combatere-a-schimb259rilor-climatice-7778.html> (last access: 19 May 2010).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Livia Cimpoeru: Scenariu posibil pentru Copenhaga, 17 December 2009, available at: <http://www.green-report.ro/stiri/pscenariu-posibil-pentru-copenhaga> (last access: 19 May 2010).

⁹ Robert Mihăilescu: Traian Basescu despre conferința Copenhaga: susținem fără rezerve reducerea cu 30% a emisiilor de carbon, Revista 22, 16 February 2010, available at: <http://www.revista22.ro/traian-basescu-despre-conferinta-copenhaga-sustinem-fara-rezerve-reduc-7786.html> (last access: 17 May 2010).

¹⁰ Department for European Affairs: Document de fundamentare pentru stabilirea la nivel național a valorilor de referință ale obiectivelor Strategiei Europa 2020, 12 May 2010, available at: <http://www.dae.gov.ro/admin/files/Tinta%20reducere%20gaze%20cu%20efect%20de%20sera.pdf> (last access: 19 May 2010).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Comisia Europeană: Acțiuni internaționale, 18 December 2009, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/campaign/what/fightingcc_ro.htm (last access: 19 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?