

# **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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**United Kingdom****Energy and climate change**

Alison Sutherland\*

*Copenhagen and its aftermath*

The Copenhagen conference is widely regarded in the United Kingdom as a reverse for the European Union. The Union is seen as having played only a marginal role in the negotiations, and where European voices were raised, they were apparently those of the major member states rather than that of the Commission. The results of the conference itself are generally seen in this country as inconclusive, but this is an outcome of less concern to British electors than might have been the case twelve months ago. Opinion polls have shown a definite decline in the interest of British electors in questions relating to climate change over the past year.<sup>1</sup>

*Future negotiations on climate change*

The outgoing Labour government advocated from the beginning of this year a move by the European Union to more demanding targets for the reduction of carbon emissions. The incoming coalition government, in which the prominent Liberal Democrat Christopher Huhne is the Secretary of State for the Environment, has continued this advocacy, although British NGOs have called for a 40 percent reduction target rather than the 30 percent envisaged by the British government.<sup>2</sup> It seems to be common ground between all the British political parties that the setting of demanding reduction targets for the reduction of carbon emissions will contribute to reestablishing the Union's position as a leader of the global debate on these issues.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps because of declining interest in these questions in the United Kingdom, perhaps because of the fixation of British political attention upon the general election, the question of the British government's and the European Union's reactions to the relative failure of the Copenhagen meeting has not been as broadly discussed over the past six months as might have been expected. Governmental support for more demanding European targets for reducing carbon emissions has not led to any marked public reaction, whether positive or negative. Nor is there any noticeable public pressure for the British government or the European Union to take decisive new measures in response to the unsatisfactory outcome of the Copenhagen conference.

*The United Nations or other fora?*

No other forum enjoys more credibility in the United Kingdom than the United Nations as a vehicle for negotiations on climate change. The awareness of the limitations of even this traditional forum as a generator of international agreement on climate change accounts in large part for a sense of frustration and lassitude which underlies much current discussion of climate-related issues in the United Kingdom.

*Mitigation and adaptation*

The coalition agreement between the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Parties established after the recent general election commits both signatories to "explore the creation of new international sources of funding for the purpose of climate change mitigation and adaptation."<sup>4</sup> This represents a continuation of the policy of the previous Labour government and is known to be a policy to which the new Secretary of State for the Environment, Christopher Huhne, is personally greatly committed.

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<sup>1</sup> Jowitt, The Guardian, 25 March 2010.

<sup>2</sup> World Wildlife Fund, press release, 26 May 2010.

<sup>3</sup> B. Webster, The Times, 23 March 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Coalition agreement, 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?