

# **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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## Cyprus

### Fighting climate change crucial for Cyprus

Nicoleta Athanasiadou, Costas Melakopides and Christos Xenophontos\*

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In the December 2009 European Council that preceded the climate conference in Copenhagen, President Christofias and the majority of Cypriot political classes welcomed the EU leaders' decision to assist developing countries financially to meet their emission targets.<sup>1</sup> Cyprus' contribution to the EU fund is about 600,000 Euros per year, a prospect that was overall welcomed by both political parties and civil society. However, they all insisted simultaneously on the issue's global aspects, underlining that, besides the EU, other developed countries, and primarily the USA and Japan, should also contribute to the global efforts for protecting the environment.<sup>2</sup>

That is why the Copenhagen Accord reached between the USA, China, India, Brazil and South Africa was received with great disappointment among Cypriot decision makers.<sup>3</sup> In Nicosia, political party representatives expressed their frustration at the lack of decisiveness by the larger actors involved to achieve a legally binding agreement. In various statements, members of the Cypriot parliament told reporters that the UN-led Copenhagen climate summit was "a disaster" and a "great failure": whereas the EU attended the summit in hopes of reaching an agreement for the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> levels within the next ten years, this and other targets were not included in the agreement that was merely "recognised" by the 193 nations attending the summit.<sup>4</sup> Cypriot political figures and ecologists also criticised the absence of any penalties from the deal for countries that fail to meet their promises.

Turning to the EU's energy and climate policy, high praise was being uttered, especially regarding the Union's targets and its initiatives towards assisting developing countries to meet their emission goals. Officials at the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and the Environment conveyed to us that Brussels' role as a leader in the fight against climate change should be reaffirmed with stronger representations towards other developed countries and additional pressure for legally binding agreements which should be implemented worldwide.<sup>5</sup>

Officials accentuated the need for a global agreement, ideally initiated by the EU, which could assume a leading role internationally in action against climate change.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, they commented, one country or region cannot deal with environmental destruction by itself. Manifestly, collective measures and global initiatives are essential. The current global financial crisis causes further damage to the environment due to the intensive exploitation of resources. On the other hand, it is evident that energy security and investment in renewable energy sources will lead to lower economic and environmental costs and to a developmental boost for all nations. According to our KIMEDE colleagues, here is a glorious opportunity for the EU to further strengthen its global "normative" status and role.

As President Christofias remarked, any initiatives that address climate change "will take humanity out of intensive care".<sup>7</sup> Cyprus, a country affected by climate change, is willing to contribute to the EU targets to the best of its abilities. Already, the Cypriot government looks into additional renewable energy sources, utilising wave, river and hydroelectric power from small water dams, as well as exploiting solar and wind energy. The director of energy services at the Ministry of Commerce, Solon Kassinis, proudly revealed that Cyprus will reach 8 percent of energy production from renewable energy sources in 2010, while the target set by the EU is 13 percent by 2020.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, as Cypriot Minister of Interior, Neoklis Silikiotis, pointed out, it is crucial that Cyprus invests in innovative, eco-friendly research that will lead to sustainable development.<sup>9</sup> A fine example is a sophisticated research method aimed at producing desalinated water and "co-generating" electricity using solar power, a project currently planned by the appropriate authorities. Scientists taking part in this EU co-funded project, which also involves the Cyprus Institute, the Cyprus Electricity Authority and American universities, will test the evidence of lab results with the goal of securing the 20-year viability of this new method. The experiment will take three years to complete and could prove salutary for the entire Mediterranean region. Described as one of the most innovative renewable energy projects in Europe, it will reportedly put Cyprus firmly on the international map of research and innovation.

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\* Cyprus Institute of Mediterranean, European and International Studies.

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<sup>1</sup> Press Reports, December 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Interviews conducted by Nicoleta Athanasiadou, Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and the Environment, Nicosia, early June 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Statements by President Demetris Christofias, Larnaca, 17/12/2009 (as reported by the Cyprus News Agency).

<sup>8</sup> Statements by Dr Solon Kassinis, Nicosia, as reported by CyBC TV main evening news, 7/03/2010.

<sup>9</sup> Statements by the Minister of Interior, Neoklis Silikiotis, Nicosia, 23/06/2010 (as reported by all Cypriot Media).

## 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?