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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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Netherlands**Ambitions not achieved in Copenhagen**

Louise van Schaik*

The Copenhagen conference was widely covered in the Dutch press. The outcome was portrayed as a failure, with the EU being sidelined and upcoming powers demonstrating their increased powers in the negotiations.¹ Considerable attention was given to the chaotic process of negotiations – the EU being unable to speak with one voice – and the take-over of the Danish chairmanship of the conference by the Prime Minister away from the Environment Minister halfway through the negotiations. According to Green Member of the European Parliament Bas Eickhout, the weak statements made by the Swedish EU Presidency, that illustrated persisting disunity among the EU member states, particularly illustrated the EU's inability to operate on the basis of a strong single voice.²

The Dutch government considers the Copenhagen Summit less successful than it had aimed for. Positions of important players in the negotiations were too far apart and the process of the negotiations was cumbersome.³ Nevertheless, the Dutch government still considers that the Copenhagen Accord provides sufficient content as a starting point for future negotiations on an international climate treaty.⁴ Its strengths include the reference to keeping the maximum temperature increase below 2 degrees Celsius, and the political direction it gives regarding measuring, reporting and verification of finance and mitigation commitments; mechanisms for technology transfer and avoidance of deforestation; and the set-up of a financial architecture and review in 2015. Shortcomings include that no reference is made to market-based mechanisms and that emissions from aviation, maritime, agriculture and industrial Hydrofluorocarbons were not addressed.⁵

The Netherlands is an advocate of an ambitious EU climate policy. The increase of the so called “20-20-20” reduction target to 30 percent from the current 20 percent should principally be used as a leverage to convince other countries to join the EU's efforts, but the Netherlands also seems open to consider such an increase unilaterally. For instance, in January, the Netherlands was among the EU member states that wanted to submit the 30 percent target to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for the annex of the Copenhagen Accord.⁶ Other member states only wanted to submit the 20 percent target and as a compromise the 30 percent was kept conditional upon other industrialised states undertaking a similar effort and emerging economies taking up a meaningful commitment, i.e., the original EU position. The Netherlands favours an international climate agreement which is similar to the Kyoto Protocol, although it realises it will not be easy to negotiate such a treaty, and discussions outside the UN process should also be pursued. The EU should clearly operate as a united bloc in international climate negotiations and the Dutch government is open to a larger role for the European Commission or the President of the European Council in external representation, although it underlines the right for representation by the member states.⁷

One of the priority areas of the Dutch government is climate financing. It has invested considerable efforts in stimulating debates and launching ideas on how to organise the international architecture of climate financing. It is pleased with the decision on the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund and hopes the Commission will soon present a Communication on how to operationalise it.⁸ It undertakes efforts to convince other EU member states to deliver on short-term financing. Contributions of the private sector and innovative financing need to be among the priority issues to be analysed and discussed within the context of the UN High Level Panel on Climate Financing. The Netherlands itself has promised to deliver 300 million Euros of fast track financing for the period 2010-2012. This money would be additional to funds committed earlier to development cooperation and environmental projects.⁹

¹ P. Luttkhuis: 'Kopenhagen' verdeelt wereld, NRC, 21 December 2009; M. Bezemer/G. Moes: Grote top, klein resultaat, Trouw, 21 December 2009; M. Peepkorn/M. Persson: EU heeft nakijken in Kopenhagen, De Volkskrant, 21 December 2009; M. Peepkorn: EU wil af van kater van Kopenhagen, De Volkskrant, 23 December 2009.

² B. Eickhout: Waarom Europa buitenspel stond in Kopenhagen, NRC, 22 December 2009.

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³ Brief van de Minister van Volkshuisvesting, ruimtelijke ordening en milieubeheer aan de voorzitter van de Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 9 February 2010.

⁴ Cf. Internationaal klimaatbeleid na Kopenhagen, letter sent by the Environment Minister to Parliament, 19 March 2010.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Bulletin Quotidien Europe 10061, 22 January 2010; Han Dirk Hekking: Spanje tracht scheuren in klimaatfront te repareren, Financieel Dagblad, 18 January 2010.

⁷ Cf. Internationaal klimaatbeleid na Kopenhagen, letter sent by the Environment Minister to Parliament, 19 March 2010.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Milieuraad: Verslag van een algemeen overleg, Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 25 March 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?