

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.

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Turkey

Implications for Turkey: a full-fledged accession strategy needed

Zerrin Torun*

In Turkey, the Lisbon Treaty was regarded as a necessary step for an EU that is less introspective and more open to challenges which may arise from enlargement.¹ It was argued that the treaty would bring the EU closer to a political unity, which would be in the interest of each and every candidate country, with the warning that Turkey now needs a full-fledged accession strategy, as the political identity of the Union is getting stronger.²

However, it is hard to say that the implications of the treaty for Turkey received significant attention in the press or in the public debate. Factors leading to this lack of attention were listed as the failure of the former Constitutional Treaty and the perception that the Lisbon Treaty is a watered-down version of it; changes in Turkish foreign policy, which shifted Turkey's attention elsewhere, mainly to the Middle East and Asia; the frustration and disappointment with the EU, as well as a general feeling of aloofness from the EU and Europe resulting from the problems in the Turkish accession process to the EU.³ Analyses of the results of the Lisbon Treaty and their implications for Turkey came from research institutes and think tanks, mostly focusing on future enlargement. In an exception by the Turkish parliament's external relations and protocol administration's briefing report, the treaty was seen as necessary for the Union to adjust its institutional structure for new enlargements, while attention was also drawn to the system of enhanced cooperation as a potential tool in the hands of those who argue in favour of a privileged partnership with Turkey instead of full Turkish membership to the EU.⁴ For instance, a report by the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) argued that the double majority voting system brought about by the treaty could alleviate some of the concerns regarding Turkey's "potential weight" in the Council. In addition, increasing involvement of national parliaments in the EU's decision-making received a positive note in the report, as this would work towards calming down a segment of Turkish society which associates EU membership with loss of sovereignty,⁵ but this was also seen as something that might obstruct Turkish accession to the EU in the aforementioned briefing report. Another commentary, however, drew attention to the potential impact of the double majority voting on Turkish accession to the EU, arguing that the system would prevent the votes against Turkish EU membership of any three of the four larger EU member states (France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy) from prevailing.⁶

As for the new faces of the Union, referring to the President of the European Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the decision in favour of Herman Van Rompuy was seen as a victory of those in the Union who argue for a privileged partnership with Turkey instead of its full membership to the EU. His past statements against Turkish EU membership, which also included the view that Turkish membership to the EU would undermine current universal values in Europe which are also fundamental Christian values, received major attention. His appointment led to comments that even regarded this as a confirmation of the idea that the EU is a civilisation project in which Turkey's belonging is questioned.⁷ In an interview, the deputy secretary-general of the Economic Development Foundation (IKV) has pointed out that Van Rompuy's personal ideas on Turkey may make a difference, especially at critical junctures when important decisions concerning Turkey are to be given, since even his neutrality or abstaining from influencing the European Council's decisions may be interpreted as a negative sign.⁸ The ideas of Van Rompuy were interpreted as "the textbook definition of anachronism", which will exacerbate the problems of Europe in the 21st Century.⁹ In addition, Van Rompuy's appointment as President of the European Council was seen as a choice for a low-profile, moderate voice that would prioritise the role of a moderator within the EU instead of being the leader the EU needs in order to have a greater say in global affairs.¹⁰

As for Catherine Ashton as the High Representative, her statement before the European Parliament before her appointment received attention, as she referred to Turkey as just one of the important countries with which the EU has to engage in an effective cooperation.¹¹ On the other hand, an earlier analysis of the implications of the treaty for the Common Security and Defence Policy of the EU drew attention to the possibility of conflict between the High Representative of the Union (due to the role

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within the European Commission) and the President of the European Council in terms of blurred lines of authority in representing the Union.¹²

The “Proposal for a Council Decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service”¹³ and the European Commission proposal defining the rules and procedures for the European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI)¹⁴ received limited attention in the form of informative news. It can be safely concluded that the aforementioned factors which led to the lack of attention towards the implications of the Lisbon Treaty also resulted in the lack of attention towards the subsequent new working style and structure of the EU in Turkey.

¹ The Journal of Turkish Weekly: The Failure of the Lisbon Treaty? Consequences for Turkey’s Accession Process, 28 June 2008, available at: <http://www.turkishweekly.net/print.asp?type=3&id=2381> (last access: 26 April 2010).

² Bahadır Kaleağası (Coordinator of the Turkish Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association (TUSIAD) quoted in Hürriyet Daily News, 19 November 2009.

³ IKV’s Nas: EU Future with Lisbon Treaty Should Concern Turkey, Interview with Çiğdem Nas by Yasemin Poyraz Doğan, Today’s Zaman, 21 December 2009, available at: <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/news-196138-8-ikvs-nas-eus-future-with-lisbon-treaty-should-concern-turkey.html> (last access: 17 May 2010).

⁴ Sumru Bilcen: AB’de Onemli Bir Adim: Lisbon Antlasmasi, TBMM Dış İlişkiler ve Protokol Müdürlüğü, 24 April 2010.

⁵ Nilgün Arısan Eralp: Lisbon Treaty and Turkey at a First Glance, TEPAV Evaluation Note, December 2009.

⁶ Cuneyt Yuksel: Lisbon’dan Sonraki Birlik ve Türkiye, 16 October 2009, available at:

<http://www.abhaber.com/ozelhaber.php?id=4457> (last access: 26 April 2010).

⁷ Hilmi Yavuz: Avrupa Birliği Bir Medeniyet Projesidir, Zaman Online, 22 November 2009,

<http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=918811> (last access: 26 April 2010).

⁸ IKV’s Nas: EU Future with Lisbon Treaty Should Concern Turkey, Interview with Çiğdem Nas by Yasemin Poyraz Doğan, Today’s Zaman, 21 December 2009, available at: <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/news-196138-8-ikvs-nas-eus-future-with-lisbon-treaty-should-concern-turkey.html> (last access: 17 May 2010).

⁹ Mustafa Kutlay: A New EU in the Making: Reflections from Turkey, The Journal of Turkish Weekly, 23 November 2009, available at: <http://www.turkishweekly.net/columnist/3230/a-new-eu-in-the-making-reflections-from-turkey.html.%20last%20access%2012%20July2010> (last access: 12 July 2010).

¹⁰ Hilmi Yavuz: Avrupa Birliği Bir Medeniyet Projesidir, Zaman Online, 22 November 2009, available at:

<http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=918811> (last access: 26 April 2010).

¹¹ AP’den Catherine Ashton’a Onay, 12 January 2010, available at:

http://www.euroacademic.org.tr/index.php?act=show&code=guncel&resume=0&id=506&id_page=0 (last access: 17 May 2010).

¹² Ömer Kurtbağ: ATAUM AB Analiz, 26 November 2009, available at: <http://www.ataum.tk> (last access: 26 April 2010).

¹³ Proposal for a Council Decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service, 25 March 2010, available at: http://eeas.europa.eu/docs/eeas_draft_decision_250310_en.pdf (last access: 30 March 2010).

¹⁴ European Commission: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the citizens’ initiative, COM (2010) 119, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/dqs/secretariat_general/citizens_initiative/docs/com_2010_119_en.pdf (last access: 6 April 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?