

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**Turkey becomes an energy hub**

Çiğdem Üstün*

Climate

Although climate change does not hold an important place in the Turkish domestic debate, the environmentalist groups criticised the results of the Copenhagen meeting, which has been perceived as a disappointment regarding the EU's efforts in environmental issues. It has been argued that the failure of the Copenhagen Accord is mainly due to the developed western countries' aloof attitude towards climate change and the environmental problems that people are facing.¹ It has been argued by civil society organisations and the environmentalist groups that the deadlock has been created because of big market economy countries, such as the USA, China and India, refusing to sign a binding agreement which may affect their economic growth and interests in a global crisis situation. Also, it has been debated that the developing countries' requests regarding funding and technological assistance have not been welcomed by developed countries, including EU member states.²

Energy policy

Regarding energy policies, Turkey emphasised the insecurity that is created by over-dependency on a single source and, therefore, Turkey has been active in energy relations with its neighbours in recent years to diversify its energy resources as much as possible. This is not done only to secure its energy supplies, but it is also perceived that an increased Turkish role in the region regarding the energy pipelines and agreements would increase Turkey's role in European security. It is a fact that today the EU is producing less than its consumption and there is an urgent need to focus on an energy security and solidarity action plan for infrastructure needs, diversification of supplies, external energy relations, oil and gas stocks, crisis response mechanisms, best use of indigenous resources, and energy efficiency. In this framework, the geo-political situation of Turkey has been perceived not only as an important asset in securing energy supply for Europe, but also as a crucial tool for increasing Turkey's say in energy policies in the region even though it is not an energy producing country. There are different views on Turkey's policies in relation to the EU policies. One of the arguments is that Turkey's policy is not in line with the EU's expectations because Turkey realised that this can be a bargaining chip in its relations with the EU. On the other hand, it is argued that the pipeline projects such as Baku-Tiflis-Ceyhan (BTC), Nabucco, and Samsun-Ceyhan show that Turkey's supply sources are diversified geographically, ranging from west to east and north to south, and diversified in terms of the type of supply as well, i.e., liquefied natural gas (LNG), oil, gas and natural gas. Therefore, Turkey's main policy is the energy hub policy which is demonstrated through Turkey's efforts to link Turkish pipelines with European ones, i.e., Turkey-Greece-Italy. The main policy in this framework has been increasing the use of potential in Iran, Iraq, Turkmenistan and Shah Deniz, although political problems in the region are preventing faster cooperation.

Turkish priorities in energy policies have been identified as secure supply and sustainability, competitive market creation and being an energy corridor. It is difficult to see any divergences between the opposition and the government sides regarding these priorities. However, regarding nuclear energy, there are some opposing views from the environmentalist groups and civil society organisations due to the pollution that would be created by the nuclear energy terminals. However, the government has been active in intensifying its relations, especially with Russia, to increase the number of nuclear power plants in Turkey.

One of the main policies of Turkey, which had been widely discussed in May 2010, was the agreement between Iran, Turkey and Brazil to send 1,200 kilograms of low-enriched uranium to Turkey as part of an exchange for more refined nuclear material from other countries. According to the agreement Iran will ship its low enriched uranium to Turkey in exchange for 20-percent uranium under a nuclear fuel swap. This has been perceived as demonstration of Turkey's efforts to act as a bridge between east and west by using its geopolitical, identity related, cultural and religious assets.

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¹ Kopenhag'dan sonra umut 'yerel liderlerde', 21 December 2009, available at: <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalDetay&ArticleID=970395&Date=11.04.2010&CategoryID=85> (last access: 31 May 2010).

² Sertaç Aktan: Türkiye Kopenhag'da herhangi bir hedef açıklamayacak, available at: <http://www.iha.com.tr/haber/detay.aspx?nid=101163&cid=758> (last access: 31 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?