

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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Greece**Greek Initiative for an agenda 2014 for enlargement**

A.D. Papagiannidis and Nikos Frangakis*

Insofar as enlargement is concerned, the focus of attention in Greece lies in the efforts/expectations to bring around positive results for the Western Balkans by 2014 ("Agenda 2014"). This goal corresponds to intensive Greek efforts undertaken earlier on, which Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou (who is also Foreign Minister) publicly reiterated, i.e., in Athens in the course of a presentation at The Economist/Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) conference of 29 April 2010. Still, Serb Prime Minister Mirko Cvetkovic, in this very same context, was clearly quite hesitant to hope for such a time-frame (while he stressed the pre-eminent importance of making the Serb economy and political context EU-compliant, rather than fight for accession). In May 2010, the Greek initiative for an "Agenda 2014" for the Western Balkans was mirrored by regional EU member states Bulgaria and Romania, at a meeting on the level of foreign ministers.

Within the same context of the Western Balkans, Greece hopes that the promise of EU accession would serve as a major political attraction so as to render Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) positions more adapted to Greek expectations in the never-ending name-cum-nationalism dispute of the two sides. In this matter, no positive evolution is to be noted.

This Greek "globalising" approach to the Western Balkans does not exclude Croat accession, which certainly looks more mature; earlier thoughts (surely not officially voiced) to block Croatia's accession, in order to enhance the chances of Serb participation in the enlargement process, should be considered unfounded, since the relative political stature of Greece in the EU has visibly shrunk.

The perspectives of Turkish EU accession are still central to Greek foreign policy. In a three-day visit of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Athens (along with vice-Prime Minister Ali Babacan and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and several other ministers) in May 2010, the leitmotiv of Greece's continuing support of Turkish accession was vividly present with the barely concealed hope that "the way from Ankara to Brussels" goes through Athens. This supposedly entails a bridging of the disputes over the Aegean, the minorities issue in Thrace and the Cyprus issue to a mutually acceptable solution. Still, whatever "low politics" matters were positively discussed in Athens, matters of "high politics" remained stubbornly blocked. Moreover, in his more extensive presentation of future Turkish priorities, Babacan clearly, though not aggressively, explained Turkey's centre of gravity shift eastwards. Thus, using EU-Turkish relations as a lever for Greek-Turkish (or sub-regional) equilibria to be restored looks less and less like a valid proposition.¹

The main opposition party, centre-right New Democracy (ND), is currently shifting towards far more reluctant positions regarding the perspectives of Turkish accession. The far-right Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS) is virulently opposed to the idea of "Turkey in Europe", mainly based on purported cultural differences.²

At the same time Greece keeps a low profile concerning the Union for the Mediterranean, notwithstanding the fact that this initiative is of French origin (and Greece tries to keep close to French moves) and that Athens was quite enthusiastic two years ago when the project was ceremoniously launched.³

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¹ Kostas Zepos: The Questionable Outcome of Turkey's Road towards the European Union [in Greek], in: International and European Politics (Vol.17), p. 71.

² For an overview of the opinions towards the Turkey's EU accession, see K. Zepos: The doubtful end of Turkey's road to the EU [in Greek], in: Vyron Theodoropoulos: The diplomat and the teacher, Papazissis/MFA [in Greek], Athens 2010, p. 39.

³ See N. Frangakis: Turkey and the Union for the Mediterranean, in: N. Frangakis (ed.): Turkey, Europe, Mediterranean [in Greek], EKEME/Ant. N. Sakkoulas Publ. 2009, pp. 89-115; A.A. Fatouros: The Union for the Mediterranean: A new presence in our neighbourhood; P. Kasakos: The Mediterranean Union – vision, practical measures, limits; D.K. Xenakis/D.N. Chrysochoou: The Mediterranean in transition; A. Korakas: Agriculture and agricultural inlands in the Mediterranean [in Greek], in: N. Frangakis (ed.): Turkey, Europe, Mediterranean [in Greek], EKEME/Ant. N. Sakkoulas Publ. 2009, pp. 89-115.

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?