


# **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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## Hungary

### Major questions to be answered

Krisztina Vida\*

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#### *Highly active President of the European Council coupled with weaker role of the rotating presidency*

As regards his new position, Herman Van Rompuy has pledged to fully implement the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty and to use his powers to the utmost possible. In the opinion of a high official at the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,<sup>1</sup> Van Rompuy is absolutely acting according to his words. He is very active in representing the Union towards third countries and under his Presidency of the European Council, the role of the rotating presidency at the European Council level has significantly decreased. Van Rompuy is acting rather autonomously vis-à-vis the Council. Although there is cooperation with the actual presidency at both the Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper) and Council levels, the President is preparing the conclusions of the European Council on his own, assisted, however, by the Secretary General of the Council. The conclusions themselves became shorter, more concise and more streamlined. Before finalising the text, the President takes up only those suggestions from the member states, which represent substantial change (no “stylistic” corrections are accepted).

As to the European Council meetings, the big change is that the foreign ministers do not take part in them, thus the circle is closer, restricted to the leaders of the member states. This meant an immediate weakening of the General Affairs Council, as the ministers cannot represent at the European Council level what they have discussed and adopted at the General Affairs Council level. This has resulted in a new phenomenon: the General Affairs Councils are often attended by the under secretaries for European or foreign affairs, instead of the ministers themselves. The ministers seem to be losing motivation, as they are aware that their direct influence on the final text of the conclusions is limited. As to the role of the actual presiding country at European Council level, it is also limited, due to the above-mentioned reasons.

#### *The functioning of the High Representative needs more lubrication*

As opposed to the President of the European Council, the position and functioning of the “double-hatted” High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy leaves more questions open. One of the main shortcomings is that, compared to her obligations, Catherine Ashton has too small of a cabinet. Another problem is that very often she has programmes in parallel, namely travelling abroad, as well as appearing at the Commission or before the European Parliament. In these cases, she would need a deputy High Representative, but this is not established by the Lisbon Treaty. Due to these organisational/institutional shortcomings, Ashton is not always able to fulfil all her obligations, despite her full commitment.

#### *The rules on geographical balance still to be settled*

The political agreement on the European External Action Service (EEAS) was welcomed by Hungary. The new office will be made up of officials from the Commission (one third), from the Council (one third) and from the member states (one third). Hungary supported this approach although an important aspect is still lacking, according to a high official of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>2</sup> This lacking aspect relates to the concrete details of the “geographical balance” and the way it should be implemented. Hungary is looking forward to the upcoming negotiations on this issue. Another open question is that of financing the EEAS and its diplomats. Furthermore, the status of European Commission delegations abroad should also be redefined upon full operation of the EEAS.

#### *The rules on the ECI to guarantee equal rights to EU citizens*

The European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI) is a new, absolutely positive element of the Lisbon Treaty, equipping EU citizens with a tool of direct democracy. However, according to a high official of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,<sup>3</sup> the detailed technical rules of such an initiative are still to be worked out and adopted. A major issue here is that the EU rules on the ECI should be fully compatible

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with the national rules on a plebiscite. When formulating the exact rules, the equal rights of EU citizens must be a guiding principle. From a political point of view, a fast decision on this would be welcome. Apparently, the first such initiative will be about “free Sundays”, an idea fully supported by the Christian churches in Hungary as well as by the ruling Christian Democratic People’s Party (KDNP).

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<sup>1</sup> Interview done at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 5 May 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Interview done at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 5 May 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Interview done at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 5 May 2010.

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## Hungary

### Hungary is looking to the east

Krisztina Vida, Zsuzsa Ludvig and Tamás Szigetvári\*

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#### *Croatian and Icelandic accession is expected and strongly supported*

In the official Hungarian view, any enlargement of the European Union must happen once a country complies with membership criteria and accession negotiations should advance according to the candidate's performance. It seems that, after the recent 10+2 enlargement, the EU will not have "enlargement rounds" with several new member states anymore, but would rather continue the widening process by taking up newcomers one by one. The next new member state of the EU will undoubtedly be Croatia, whose accession treaty could be signed under the Hungarian Presidency enabling the country's entry in 2012. Croatian membership will be very much welcomed by Hungary, being a direct neighbour. Actually, Hungary is highly interested in the European integration of the whole Western Balkan region in the foreseeable future. Hungary is convinced that the Croatian example of preparations can serve as a model for the other candidates and potential candidates in the Western Balkans.

The other country relatively close to membership is Iceland. According to Hungarian high officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,<sup>1</sup> Hungary expects a faster process given Iceland's preparedness and strong ties with the EU. Hungary would very much welcome an Icelandic accession, as this could become another success story of enlargement. Nevertheless, the outcome of this process will mainly depend on the commitment of the Nordic country to become a full member of the EU.

#### *Turkey on a slow track, the Macedonian deadlock is regrettable*

As was pointed out before, in Hungary the future widening of the EU is not really seen in "enlargement rounds". The perception is rather that new entrants will join one by one. In fact, negotiations go on with Turkey in a very slow and "cautious" way. According to the official Hungarian position, the negotiations should proceed according to Turkey's level of preparedness, and a clear perspective on the "finalité" of the accession talks should be formulated as soon as possible.

The next country queuing up for membership negotiations is (the Former Yugoslav Republic of) Macedonia (FYROM). In the opinion of a high official at the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,<sup>2</sup> the Macedonian story is a sad one, where – due to the unsettled name-dispute with Greece – there seems to be a deadlock. Even though the European Commission released its positive conclusions on the FYROM in October 2009,<sup>3</sup> negotiations could not be launched. This is very much regretted by Hungary who is in favour of opening negotiations as soon as possible. Sadly, however, at the moment there seems to be no solution for the highly sensitive Greek-Macedonian dispute, and it is expected that the present financial crisis in Greece might turn Athens' attention away from this issue. In any case, this situation (similarly to the Slovenian-Croatian border dispute) points to the fact that – prior to enlargement/accession – good neighbourly relations are as important as any other preconditions and criteria. In any case, Hungary is encouraging and helping Macedonia to continue with the preparations for membership.

Regardless of all these challenges, Hungary is very supportive concerning further enlargements of the EU (especially towards the Western Balkans), and this official position is maintained no matter which political parties are ruling the country. Furthermore, this attitude is strongly shared by the public, as can be detected in public opinion polls.

#### *Eastern Partnership: a high priority for Hungary*

From the beginning of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Hungary was more interested in the eastern dimension of it than in its southern dimension, due to geographical and historical reasons. Accordingly, Hungary has always been in favour of a separate treatment of the two dimensions, arguing that eastern neighbours include European countries with a potential membership perspective while the group of southern neighbours has neither this option nor this kind of ambition. Based on this

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approach, the launch of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) one year ago was welcomed in Hungary. In this framework the EU is assisting six countries to adapt to the EU *acquis* and to its fundamental values. Budapest is extremely interested in the development of EU-Ukrainian relations and is rather active in forming EU-Moldavian relations, too, representing two partner countries from among the six within the EaP initiative. Besides, Hungary is interested in the further strengthening of relations between the EU and the trans-Caucasian countries that are either potential energy sources (Azerbaijan) or future important energy transit countries (Georgia, Azerbaijan).

It is important to emphasise that the Hungarian assessment of the EaP is positive in general, so there is no dividing line on that issue between major parties or between the departing and incoming governments. Concrete proof of this attitude lies in the fact that the EaP was included in the priorities of the Hungarian 2011 presidency programme prepared by the outgoing socialist government (in power until the end of May 2010) and can equally be found among the major regional priorities of the conservative coalition parties (the Hungarian Civic Union and the Christian Democratic People's Party – FIDESZ-KDNP) entering office at the very end of May 2010. One important aim of Hungary, holding the Visegrad-4 presidency in 2010, has been to look for real content in the EaP framework.<sup>4</sup> Regarding the most important EaP partner country for Hungary, Ukraine, there is a broad consensus on the necessity of maintaining the option of a future EU membership. Also, visa-facilitation with the potential final aim of total liberalisation is a common goal within the Hungarian political elite,<sup>5</sup> implying that Hungary is among those EU member states that may find the recent promises and substance of the EaP insufficient.

However, there might be some smaller differences between the two governments' (and/or party) emphases and approaches regarding the EaP. The new government being formed by the centre-right FIDESZ-KDNP alliance will probably be more focused on developing ties with the energy-abundant Azerbaijan, and, even more importantly, may be less regardful towards Russia's reservations *vis-à-vis* the EaP initiative. The new government's policy might include more determined support for Georgia, which it sees rather as a victim than an irresponsible initiator of the 2008 Georgian-Russian conflict. Beyond the different evaluation of the Eastern Partnership, the general approach of the old and new governments to Russia is also rather different, although the Russia-policy of FIDESZ seems to have been "softened" during the past years moving from "value-orientation" towards pragmatism.<sup>6</sup> The third important political force in the new parliament, the radical right-wing Movement for a Better Hungary, commonly known as Jobbik, calls for developing stronger ties with Russia, seen as a major European power.

The EaP itself is not widely known within the Hungarian public and there is no important pressure group, neither in favour, nor against Hungarian participation in it. The public media is rather neutral on the subject; however, it sometimes highlights the Eastern Partnership initiative as an EU project "against" Russia or more explicitly as a concrete element of competition between the European Union and Russia over their "common post-Soviet neighbourhood". The brand new EaP is a popular theme in academic circles; several conferences, workshops and research projects have already been dedicated to it since its birth in 2008 and official launch in May 2009.

The ultimate aim of Hungary is to conclude a new generation of association agreements with all EaP members. Budapest is already preparing for the first EaP summit, which will take place in May 2011, under the Hungarian Council Presidency.

#### *Union for the Mediterranean: Hungary is rather a policy-taker*

The Mediterranean region has never been a priority in Hungarian foreign policy over the past decades, and was especially sidelined prior to Hungary's EU membership. Thus, the Hungarian national attitude towards the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the Mediterranean as a whole has evolved in the context of the country's EU integration process.

As far as the Spanish-Belgian-Hungarian trio presidency is concerned, it was logical that due to geographical reasons from among the three countries, Spain put Mediterranean issues highest on the agenda. This does not mean that Hungary could not formulate Mediterranean-related issues of its own interest, but Budapest is more likely to join the already ongoing Mediterranean projects than initiate such.

According to Hungarian interests and position, the EU should strike an even balance in representing and promoting the eastern and the southern dimensions of its Neighbourhood Policy.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore,

this should also be reflected in a rebalancing of the financial envelope leading to a 50-50 percent share instead of the current one third and two thirds division. Hungary participates actively in all the relevant structures and activities of the EMP, but its capabilities are rather limited not only because of its location but also for economic reasons. Public awareness of the EMP or the UfM is still very limited in Hungary, and outside the official circles it is debated only in a relatively restricted academic context.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview done at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 12 May 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Interview done at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 12 May 2010.

<sup>3</sup> European Commission: The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 2009 Progress Report. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Brussels, COM (2009) 533, available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2009/mk\\_rapport\\_2009\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/mk_rapport_2009_en.pdf) (last access: 10 June 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Based on a communication from the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 12 February 2010, available at: [http://www.kulugyminiszterium.hu/kum/hu/bal/Aktualis/Szovivoi\\_nyilatkozatok/FJ\\_Mlnszk\\_20100212.htm](http://www.kulugyminiszterium.hu/kum/hu/bal/Aktualis/Szovivoi_nyilatkozatok/FJ_Mlnszk_20100212.htm) (last access: 17 May 2010).

<sup>5</sup> See: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Hungary: Directions and tasks of the Europe-policy strategy of the government, 2007, available at: [http://www.kulugyminiszterium.hu/kum/hu/bal/eu/kormany\\_eupolitikai\\_strategiaja/](http://www.kulugyminiszterium.hu/kum/hu/bal/eu/kormany_eupolitikai_strategiaja/) (last access: 17 May 2010).

<sup>6</sup> See the interview in the Hungarian newspaper "Magyar Nemzet" with János Martonyi, appointed foreign minister of FIDESZ, 8 April 2010, available at: <http://www.mno.hu/portal/printable?contentID=705754&sourceType=MN> (last access: 17 May 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Erzsébet N. Rózsa: From Barcelona to the Union for Mediterranean. Northern and Southern Shore Dimensions of the Partnership, HIIA Papers, April 2010.

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**Hungary****Faster and harder reforms without new treaty negotiations necessary**

Krisztina Vida\*

*Rescue package welcome but too late*

In the general Hungarian assessment, the solution of the Greek crisis is welcome, but it came too late. According to a high official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,<sup>1</sup> the declarations released prior to the March 2010 European Council were insufficient. In fact, a strong positive message was needed not only towards the markets but also towards all members of the Eurozone as well as towards other countries inside and outside the EU. The process leading to the European Council decision was a rather painful one and entailed, on the one hand, fast deterioration of the Greek situation, while at the same time caused an obvious weakening of the German government on the other (the voters' "punishing" of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in the recent elections for regional parliament in North Rhine Westphalia). This means that the long hesitation and late decision brought about tangible economic and political costs. The staggering attitude of EU decision-makers also increased the risks of other Euro countries' potential "collapse" (i.e., Portugal, Ireland, Italy, and Spain).

*Stricter coordination and transparency are indispensable*

The main lesson of the Greek case is that the budgetary policies of member states (both their planning and implementation) should be coordinated in a more efficient and strict way, as the present mechanisms proved to be too weak. All member states must match competitiveness with sustainability of public finances and nobody should be able to hide the real figures of the national budget. The key words in the future should be stricter coordination, transparency and also real sanctions.

*Improved mechanisms and a European Monetary Fund are needed*

As regards coordination of economic policies, we have to rely on the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty and use them to their utmost possible, as in the foreseeable future no new treaty modification can be expected. According to experts,<sup>2</sup> the strong coordination of economic policies coupled with a new early warning mechanism would be the right solution to preventing similar crises in the Eurozone. Another "must" is the setting up of a European Monetary Fund providing for immediate assistance to countries in trouble; however, these loans should be made conditional on budgetary reforms in the beneficiary country. In their view, a third key element would be the automatism of sanctions without exemptions.

When discussing the issue of European level economic governance, it must be recognised that the member states have very different approaches as regards the goals and tools of economic policy; therefore, economic policy-making as such cannot be "harmonised" at the EU level. As long as the EU is neither imposing taxes nor providing public goods, it also lacks the legitimacy of carrying out economic governance. The solution is to keep the strong supranational monetary pillar of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) coupled with reinforced economic coordination, while continuing the completion of the internal market project coupled with gradual tax approximation. This would give a stronger background for the economic pillar of EMU, while the member states would still maintain their competences over the national budget.

Regarding the future role of the Eurogroup, Hungary would like to see the non-Eurozone countries take part as observers. This would be important, especially for those new member states that are preparing for the introduction of the single currency.

*Competitiveness and territorial cohesion could have been linked in the new Strategy*

The new Europe 2020 Strategy is, in general, welcomed by Hungary, although it has been criticised for its institutional weaknesses as well as for its general approach. As to the first issue, according to a high official at the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,<sup>3</sup> it is regretted that no single and transparent institutional unit will be dealing with the Strategy within the Commission (similarly to the management of the Lisbon Strategy). As to the second issue, it is also regrettable that the first proposal did not

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mention “cohesion” explicitly. Although this aspect appears in the text indirectly, Hungary would have preferred a more direct link between territorial cohesion and competitiveness.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview done at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 12 May 2010.

<sup>2</sup> See the interview in the Hungarian newspaper Világgazdaság with two experts: professor László Csaba, and research director Margit Rác, 4 May 2010, available at: <http://www.vg.hu/gazdasag/gazdasagpolitika/javitanak-a-fiskalis-fegyelmet-315790> (last access: 17 May 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Interview done at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 12 May 2010.

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## Hungary

Rigid mandate for the European Commission was a mistake

Krisztina Vida\*

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### *Weak outcome after ambitious preparations*

Hungary shares the EU wide general perception that the outcome of the Copenhagen conference was a disappointment for the Union, which wanted to reach a target-specific and legally binding agreement there. Having said that, Hungary of course supported the conclusions of the March 2010 European Council, in which the member states subscribed to a swift implementation of the Copenhagen Accord and also to the gradual formation of the EU's negotiating position during the next conference to be held in November 2010 in Cancun (COP16). In a stance similar to that of all member states, Hungary also agrees that the Cancun conference "should at least provide concrete decisions anchoring the Copenhagen Accord to the UN negotiating process and addressing remaining gaps, including as regards adaptation, forestry, technology and monitoring, reporting and verification."<sup>1</sup>

While the official Hungarian position is not revealed at this point, Csaba Tabajdi, leader of the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) within the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) in the European Parliament, emphasised in his speech<sup>2</sup> at the end of January 2010 that even though the Union's ambitious goals were good, they were not convincing enough, due to the EU's poor negotiating strategy. He pointed out that the EU "misunderstood" the commitment of China and other emerging countries, as well as the room for manoeuvre of the President of the USA. The EU was also unable to build a coalition with developing countries. In his view, giving a rigid mandate to the European Commission was a major mistake. A better result could probably have been achieved if the Commission would have obtained a more flexible mandate, namely, "elasticity" downwards from 20 percent emission cuts and not only upwards. According to Tabajdi, the EU's negotiation strategy needs to be revised while preparing for Cancun. János Áder, another Hungarian Member of the European Parliament (MEP) from the European People's Party (EPP), was even more critical, stating that the failure of Copenhagen was due to the lack of a single EU position.<sup>3</sup>

### *No change in basic policy targets but a more assertive attitude is needed*

According to a high official at the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,<sup>4</sup> the European Union does not have to change its own energy and climate policy. The EU has actually been taking the lead in the fight against global warming and has done unilaterally the most since 2008 for global climate protection. The ambitious goals of the EU should be maintained and they should become acceptable for other countries, too, as there is no alternative to them. Furthermore, the EU must keep on striving for a legally binding outcome of the COP16 and following conferences. The EU should be open to various alternative solutions as well, such as technological development or a ban on deforestation.<sup>5</sup>

### *A global binding agreement within the UNFCCC should remain a priority*

Hungary (together with all other EU member states, except for Malta and Cyprus) belongs to the so-called Annex I countries within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This means that Hungary is ready to reduce its green house gas emissions below 1990 levels. In full harmony with the EU position, Hungary is in favour of imposing binding agreements on all parties to the UNFCCC in the next conferences. According to a high official at the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,<sup>6</sup> in general, the UNFCCC framework is a good one, embracing in one way or another nearly all countries of the world. But this framework should be further tightened and in this respect the EU should assert its ambitious position more strongly, better reflecting its economic weight.

### *Political support and financial contribution*

Despite its limited financial resources Hungary fully agrees with such efforts. Hungary takes part in the Union's recent initiative to assist developing countries fighting climate change. In this framework, in

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December 2009, the 27 member governments committed 7.2 billion Euros for this purpose to be spent in the three years between 2010 and 2012. The Hungarian contribution to this envelope amounts to six million Euros in total.<sup>7</sup> During the European Council meeting at the end of March 2010, Hungary also subscribed to the Union's joint commitment with other developed countries to "mobilise \$100 billion per year by 2020 to help developing countries fight climate change."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> European Council: European Council 25/26 March 2010. Conclusions, EUCO 7/10, p. 8, available at: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/113591.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/113591.pdf) (last access: 17 May 2010).

<sup>2</sup> The speech of Csaba Tabajdi was delivered at a conference in Budapest, 26 January 2010.

<sup>3</sup> See the press communication of János Áder, 21 January 2010, available at: <http://ader.fidesz-eu.hu/hu/cikk/20/> (last access: 10 June 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Interview done at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 12 May 2010.

<sup>5</sup> See the article on the Hungarian site EnergiaOnline, 21 January 2010, available at: <http://www.energiaonline.hu/cikkek/84> (last access: 17 May 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Interview done at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 12 May 2010.

<sup>7</sup> See the report of the Hungarian electronic news magazine "Parameter", 11 December 2009, available at: <http://www.parameter.sk/rovat/kulfold/2009/12/11/eu-csucs-72-milliard-euro-fejlodo-oroszagoknak-klimavedelemre> (last access: 17 May 2010).

<sup>8</sup> European Council: European Council 25/26 March 2010. Conclusions, EUCO 7/10, p. 9, available at: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/113591.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/113591.pdf) (last access: 17 May 2010).

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## Hungary

### New Hungarian government upon landslide victory of FIDESZ-KDNP and the Hungarian Council Presidency in 2011

Krisztina Vida\*

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The most important topic currently discussed in Hungary is the incoming government and its programme. In April 2010, after two electoral rounds, the Hungarian Civic Union and the Christian Democratic People's Party (FIDESZ-KDNP) alliance won over two-thirds of the seats in the Hungarian (single chamber) parliament. These elections were almost revolutionary in the sense that no such landslide victory was achieved by any party or party alliance since 1990, the first democratic elections after the systemic change. This means that the incoming government has huge popular support, a very strong legitimacy and also the immense responsibility to lead the country out of the crisis. This support and legitimacy is of course accompanied by high expectations. Actually, during the eight years of socialist (and for a long time socialist-liberal) ruling, most of Hungary's macroeconomic indicators had a deteriorating trend, in spite of the favourable economic environment in Europe. Thus, Hungary seemed to be the only new member state that, prior to the global crisis, could not really benefit from EU accession in terms of catching up. At the same time, during the past couple of years, corruption reached unprecedented levels, involving the highest layers of politicians. Moreover, due to belated and harsh austerity measures, the level of key public services (such as schooling, health care, internal security) continued to decrease.

All these phenomena led to a paradigm shift in Hungarian internal politics. Beyond the already mentioned victory of FIDESZ-KDNP, there are now three smaller factions in parliament, two of which are brand new political forces, while the two biggest parties leading the country into parliamentary democracy in 1990, the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) and the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ), were both wiped out by the electorate. As for the two new parties, the Politics Can Be Different party (LMP) is a liberal-minded political group with a strong emphasis on environmental protection, while the extreme-right Jobbik is a radical and Euro-sceptic party (also represented in the European Parliament). The third and biggest party in opposition is the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), which lost the recent elections and shrunk in size significantly. Thus, in the 386 member Hungarian parliament, the distribution of seats is as follows: FIDESZ-KDNP: 263, MSZP: 59, Jobbik: 47, LMP: 16 and 1 independent.

Another topical issue is the nearing Hungarian Council Presidency to be held in the first half of 2011. Beyond the "inherited" topics on the agenda, there is one particular issue that Hungary will advocate. This is actually a new approach to regionalism: the European Danube Strategy. Although emphasis is put on better water management, this Strategy embraces various priorities such as environment protection, or regional development and cooperation. This Strategy is wholeheartedly promoted by the biggest umbrella organisation for "green values", namely, the National Council for Sustainable Development. As it pointed out in a recent position paper, it supports "the endeavour according to which Hungary feels great responsibility and commitment towards the successful preparation of the Strategy, with special regard to the circumstance that the adoption thereof in the European Council will expectedly take place in the first half of 2011, which may be an outstanding achievement of the Hungarian EU Presidency due at that time."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Euractiv: Hungary to push water policy overhaul at EU helm, 14 April 2010, available at: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/sustainability/Hungary-to-push-water-policy-overhaul-at-EU-helm-news-442324> (last access: 17 May 2010).

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\* Institute for World Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

## 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?