

# **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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**Slovenia**
**Croatia and Iceland first, Turkey and Macedonia to follow**

 Andreja Slomšek and Jure Požgan
 

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*Slovenia expects two new members*

The EU enlargement, and especially the EU enlargement in the Western Balkans, remains a priority foreign policy action for Slovenia. As a consequence, Slovenia will continue to work towards the convergence and integration of, above all, Western Balkan countries (Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo), but also Turkey and Iceland into the EU.<sup>1</sup> According to the statements of the Slovenian PM Borut Pahor in the media, Slovenia expects that, in the next enlargement round, the new member states of the EU will be Croatia and Iceland. As stressed by Pahor in December 2009, the EU should, however, not postpone this process after this enlargement round. His estimation was that in 2011 the EU will probably have 29 members.<sup>2</sup>

According to the Slovenian national assembly, Croatia has started a crucial stage of accession negotiations. Despite the forecasts by the European Commission that Croatia should be able to finish the accession negotiations by the end of 2010, Slovenia stresses that the pace of negotiations and their potential conclusion entirely depend on the Croatian ability to fulfil the conditions for closing the remaining negotiating chapters. Based on the progress already made, Croatia needs to further strengthen its efforts in the areas of judicial reform, public administration, the fight against corruption and organised crime, the rights of minorities (including refugee return), and the trial for war crimes. Above all, the issue of granting the International Criminal Tribunal access to the documents of the former Yugoslavia remains vital. Croatia should also actively strive for good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation, including progress towards the elimination of bilateral issues, particularly open border issues with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Slovenia.

Slovenia also supports the accession of Iceland. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, Iceland fulfils the political criteria for EU membership. Its economy is already largely integrated into the EU internal market through its participation in the European Economic Area. However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia has stressed in its press release on the Commission's enlargement package that each membership application must be considered on an equal footing and that the principle of equal treatment also needs to be respected in the case of Iceland.<sup>3</sup>

*Membership of Turkey and Macedonia in the next enlargement round is being questioned*

Regarding the countries that are not expected to become full member states in the next enlargement round, the Slovenian National Assembly evaluates that the accession negotiations with Turkey have reached an advanced stage that calls for strengthening the efforts to meet the necessary enlargement conditions. Turkey has to improve in a number of areas in order to fully meet the Copenhagen criteria, including freedom of expression, freedom of speech and religious tolerance. The accession process with the EU gives Turkey a strong incentive to further strengthen democracy, respect for human rights and further modernise the country. Turkey plays a key role in facilitating regional security and enabling the EU's energy supply. In view of these facts, Slovenia will continue to support the commitment of this country for EU membership.<sup>4</sup>

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia,<sup>5</sup> Slovenia supports the European Commission's decision, based on Macedonia's achievements, to recommend that the Council of the EU begin accession negotiations. This decision is an important incentive and gives renewed impetus to the fulfilment of recommendations, which provides stability and progress for the country. Slovenia will strive for these negotiations to begin within a reasonable time.

*Need for strengthening and building relationships to the south and east*

Regarding the Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean, Slovenia is highly aware of its historic and geographic connections with the Mediterranean and the Eastern European EU

neighbourhood. Therefore, Slovenia is interested in further strengthening the relations between the EU and the group of countries included in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). According to the Secretariat-General of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, Slovenia will continue to support the principle of differentiation as a key principle within the ENP and to strengthen the relations with third countries bordering the EU.<sup>6</sup>

Regarding the Union for the Mediterranean, the Slovenian national assembly stressed that it is of a great importance for Slovenia to pave the way for the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI) as the original Mediterranean Union project, which contributes to the deepening of intercultural dialogue, mobility and the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean area of higher education and research.<sup>7</sup> Since the EMUNI, founded in June 2008, is based in Piran, Slovenia, more attention is paid to the Union for the Mediterranean. According to Ivo Vajgl, Slovenian Member of European Parliament and a member of the political party Zares, which is, since 2008, part of the ruling coalition, the Union for the Mediterranean could significantly contribute to maritime connections, the setting up of energy infrastructure, decreasing pollution of the Mediterranean Sea, and boosting the intercultural dialogue. Also, the level of mutual understanding and tolerance among different cultures could be raised through cooperation in higher education.<sup>8</sup>

As for the eastern dimension, it is important that the Eastern Partnership countries are offered mechanisms and instruments that have been identified during its creation, in order to continue their reform process and possible EU integration.<sup>9</sup> The President of Slovenia, Danilo Türk, assessed the Eastern Partnership as a positive process and underlined that Slovenia “would like to see the Eastern Partnership be strengthened.” In his opinion, it is important to take into consideration the possibilities and capabilities of each individual partner state. Furthermore, it would be inappropriate to reduce the relationship with the eastern neighbours only to the issue of energy: “We need to look at a variety of other areas, including the question of strengthening the democracy and the cooperation between different religions.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> National Assembly Republic of Slovenia: Declaration about policies for the operation of the Republic of Slovenia in the EU institutions during the period January 2010-June 2011, 3 March 2010, available at: <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=201019&stevilka=810> (last access: 16 March 2010).

<sup>2</sup> STA: Pahor na konferenci v Bruslju: EU naj ne pozabi na Balkan, predvsem ne na BiH (Pahor at the Conference in Brussels: EU should not forget the Balkans, especially not the BiH), 8 December 2009, available at: <http://www.sta.si/en/vest.php?s=a&id=1457333&pr=1> (last access: 18 March 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia: Press release by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia on the on the European Commission enlargement package, 14 October 2009, available at: <http://www.mzz.gov.si/nc/en/tools/cns/news/article/3247/26067/> (last access: 21 May 2010).

<sup>4</sup> National Assembly Republic of Slovenia: Declaration about policies for the operation of the Republic of Slovenia in the EU institutions during the period January 2010-June 2011, 3 March 2010, available at: <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=201019&stevilka=810> (last access: 16 March 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia: Press release by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia on the on the European Commission enlargement package, 14 October 2009, available at: <http://www.mzz.gov.si/nc/en/tools/cns/news/article/3247/26067/> (last access: 21 May 2010).

<sup>6</sup> The Secretariat-General of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia: Draft declaration on the guidelines for the functioning of the Republic of Slovenia in the EU institutions during the period January 2010 – June 2011, 10 December 2009, available at: [www2.gov.si/up/vladnagradaiva-08.../deklaracija%20cela09.doc](http://www2.gov.si/up/vladnagradaiva-08.../deklaracija%20cela09.doc) (last access: 21 May 2010).

<sup>7</sup> National Assembly Republic of Slovenia: Declaration about policies for the operation of the Republic of Slovenia in the EU institutions during the period January 2010-June 2011, 3 March 2010, available at: <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=201019&stevilka=810> (last access: 16 March 2010).

<sup>8</sup> Government Communication Office: MEP Stresses Importance of Euro-Mediterranean University, 28 April 2010, available at: [http://www.ukom.gov.si/en/news/newsletter\\_slovenia\\_news/news/article/391/1426/e46c709064/?tx\\_ttnews\[newsletter\]=56](http://www.ukom.gov.si/en/news/newsletter_slovenia_news/news/article/391/1426/e46c709064/?tx_ttnews[newsletter]=56) (last access: 16 March 2010).

<sup>9</sup> National Assembly Republic of Slovenia: Declaration about policies for the operation of the Republic of Slovenia in the EU institutions during the period January 2010-June 2011, 3 March 2010, available at: <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=201019&stevilka=810> (last access: 16 March 2010).

<sup>10</sup> Office of the President of the Republic: Slovenian and Azerbaijani presidents address business people from both countries, 10 November 2009, available at: <http://www.up-rs.si/up-rs/uprs-eng.nsf/dokumentiweb/9A6526A0CC5F34B6C125766B0056F7E8> (last access: 16 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?