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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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Cyprus**Western Balkans to join the European family, Turkey to open its ports and airports****Nicoleta Athanasiadou, Costas Melakopides and Christos Xenophontos***

Following the Slovenians' vote in favour of their government's agreement to accept the verdict of an international panel in mediating the dispute on the Bay of Piran, Cypriot diplomats expressed the belief that Croatia will be able to complete its membership talks with Brussels in the coming year, putting the country on track to become the EU's 28th member in 2012.¹

According to our Ministry of Foreign Affairs interlocutors, Cyprus supports the Western Balkans aspirations to join the European family, adding that the resolution of the maritime dispute between Croatia and Slovenia sends a significant message to other countries in the region that wish to become EU members: namely, to resolve any bilateral issues that might block their EU talks.² An obvious example is the name dispute between the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Greece: an agreed upon settlement will definitely speed up FYROM's accession prospects.

The same applies to the case of Turkey. As is well known, Cyprus – banking on Turkey's "Europeanisation" – has supported its bid to become a full EU member, provided that Ankara complies with its EU obligations and commitments and adopts in full the European norms and values. Turkey, however, keeps refusing to open its ports and airports to Cyprus unless the so-called "isolation" of the Turkish Cypriots is lifted.³ In this connection, it is noteworthy that EU Enlargement Commissioner, Štefan Füle, during his June 2010 meeting in Ankara with Turkish chief EU negotiator, Egemen Bağış, acknowledged that Turkey holds the key for the opening of the "frozen chapters", since it refuses to implement the Ankara Protocol.⁴ Füle observed that it is not yet time for Turkey's full EU accession, adding however that when that time comes, Turkey will be "a different country" from what it is today. On the same subject, Cypriot Member of the European Parliament Koullis Mauronikolas (Party of European Socialists – PES) emphasised that the issue of ratification of the Ankara Protocol does not constitute a Cyprus-Turkey dispute, but a clear issue of EU-Turkey relations. He added that, manifestly, the dispute between Cyprus and Turkey is the island's military occupation and the fair and functional settlement of the Cyprus problem.⁵

Following Egemen Bağış' quip, that if he were a Cypriot he would work more for Ankara's accession than the Turkish negotiator, Cypriot government spokesman Stefanos Stefanou replied that Turkey cannot possibly demand a *carte blanche* in its EU progress, while it insists on violating the UN resolutions and international and European law in Cyprus.⁶ Ankara, Stefanou added, is not working in practical terms towards a Cyprus settlement. If, he noted, Turkey fulfils its obligations to the EU and the Republic of Cyprus, then it will discover how supportive the Republic can be regarding its accession course.

Political analysts and press columnists have long been concurring that Turkey is far from being honest concerning its intentions about the Cyprus problem. This was reiterated forcefully after the April 2010 election of veteran nationalist politician, Derviş Eroğlu, as the new leader of the Turkish Cypriot Community. Eroğlu was essentially elected by the votes from illegal Turkish settlers who live in the occupied areas of Cyprus and whose number has rapidly increased after the Annan Plan referenda in April 2004.⁷ After stating as self-evident that Turkey must consent to a fair and viable solution of the Cyprus problem if it wishes to become a full EU member state, they added a truism: that it would be scandalous if Turkey joined the EU while occupying – with around 40,000 troops – 37 percent of another EU member state. According to our interlocutors, it is "quite odd" to hear from the lips of President Gul, Prime Minister Erdoğan, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Davutoğlu that they want a resolution of the conflict by the end of 2010, while Turkish Cypriot leader Eroğlu declares that the only solution of the Cyprus problem is the creation of either two different states or a confederation with two different economies. Needless to say, both alternatives contradict the UN Security Council resolutions and the current UN-supported negotiating framework.

Meanwhile, according to ANTENA TV's Brussels correspondent, the Cyprus government may consent to the opening of the food safety chapter for Turkey, either on 30 June 2010, at the end of the Spanish

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EU Presidency, or in July 2010, during the Belgian EU Presidency.⁸ Were Nicosia to take this stance, it would wish to signal anew its own good will and its unceasing aspiration to facilitate the ongoing, albeit quite bumpy, Cyprus talks.

Iceland seems to Cypriot diplomats to potentially compete with Croatia for the status of the EU's 28th member state.⁹ The Nordic country is well in line with European standards: it respects the rule of law and human rights and it has already adopted a significant proportion of EU legislation through its membership of the European Economic Area. Nevertheless, issues like fishing and whaling rights are expected to be a bit challenging in the country's EU accession trajectory.

The joint declaration at the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit between the EU member states and representatives of the Republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine is expected by Cypriot political observers to foster closer political and economic ties between the parties involved.¹⁰ According to them, this attempt aims at incorporating the EU's Foreign Policy towards Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus by developing a specific Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The Eastern Partnership offers deeper bilateral relations and launches a new multilateral framework for cooperation, according to each partner's needs and ambitions, and is trying to create conditions for a more stable development, far from internal conflicts and disputes. This effort aims at boosting EU-inspired reforms, which would ultimately lead to more economic integration and a visa-free regime. According to Cypriot political analysts, this effort will be empowered with the direct involvement of the Russian Federation, given its strong influence in most of these countries.

Concerning the Union for the Mediterranean, Cypriot political analysts acknowledge that, until now, it has not produced any substantial results.¹¹ The laudable ambition of the Union for the Mediterranean is to deal with energy, security, counter-terrorism, immigration and trade issues. But all projects require approval by consensus among its 48 members, around half of which are EU member states. In addition, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has blocked crucial policy issues in the entire region. Nevertheless, according to our interlocutors, the overall idea – i.e., EU member states coming together with Northern African and Middle Eastern states to discuss common problems – is praiseworthy and, therefore, it should be cultivated.

Since both initiatives – the Union for the Mediterranean and the Eastern Partnership – aim at enhancing the European Neighbourhood Policy by addressing internal problems and by promoting cooperation between third countries and the EU, they are perceived quite favourably from the Cypriot political and academic standpoint, as far as we were able to detect.

¹ Interviews conducted by Christos Xenophontos, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nicosia, June 2010.

² Ibid.

³ On the myth of the so-called „isolation“ of the Turkish Cypriots see: Erato Kazakou Markoulli, former Cypriot Minister of Foreign Affairs, in: Costas Melakopides/Achilles Emilianides/Giorgos Kentas (eds.): *The Cyprus Yearbook of International Relations 2007*, Nicosia 2008).

⁴ Štefan Füle, Eu Commissioner for Enlargement, Statements, Ankara, 23/06/2010 (as reported by all Cypriot Media).

⁵ Koullis Mauronikolas, MEP: Statement, Nicosia, 24/06/2010 (as reported by the Cyprus News Agency).

⁶ Stefanos Stefanou, Government Spokesman: Statements, Nicosia, 17/6/2010 (as reported by the Press and Information Office of the Republic of Cyprus).

⁷ Interviews conducted by Christos Xenophontos and Nicoleta Athanasiadou, Nicosia, June 2010. It is crucial in this context to recall that, according to Council of Europe figures, the (illegal) Turkish settlers arriving in the occupied territory of northern Cyprus have long exceeded the number of the indigenous Turkish Cypriots: “According to reliable estimates, their number currently amounts to 115,000. [...] The Turkish Cypriots’] number decreased from 118,000 in 1974 to an estimated 87,600 in 2001. In consequence, the settlers outnumber the indigenous Turkish Cypriot population in the northern part of the island.” See Council of Europe: *Colonization by Turkish settlers of the occupied part of Cyprus*, Doc. 9799, 2 May 2003, p. 2. These figures for 2001 have worsened dramatically since the April 2004 referendum on the notorious “Annan plan”.

⁸ 23/05/2010 (as reported by ANTENA TV main evening news).

⁹ Interviews conducted by Christos Xenophontos, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nicosia, early June 2010.

¹⁰ Interviews conducted by Christos Xenophontos and Nicoleta Athanasiadou, Nicosia, June 2010.

¹¹ Ibid.

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?