

Lisbon Treaty - Possible Failure of the Lisbon Treaty

On December 13, 2007 in Lisbon, Portugal, the head of state from each one of the 27 member states of the European Union signed the Lisbon Treaty. The European Parliament approved it on February 20, 2008 with majority of votes (525 parliamentarians in favor and 115 against). Lisbon Treaty is also referred as "Reform Treaty" of EU. This treaty was a replacement of the European Constitution, which was ratified in 18 member states, but did not pass on the referendum by the French and Dutch citizens in 2005. Up until today the Lisbon Treaty was ratified by 26 member states. Czech Republic is the last country which has not ratified it (yet). One of the major changes of the Lisbon Treaty will be the new president of the European Council with two and half years term, which will replace the current presidency rotating between member states every six months.

Possible Failure – Ireland and Czech Republic

The first major obstacle the Lisbon Treaty faced was the first referendum in Ireland. Ireland was the only country which decided to put the Lisbon Treaty on referendum. The Irish citizens expressed their feelings, and clearly said that they do not accept the Lisbon Treaty. According to the official figures from the referendum in Ireland, 53.4% of the voters had rejected the treaty, and 46.6% voted in favor. Czech Republic is the last state who has not ratified the Lisbon Treaty. On May 6, 2008 The

Czech Senate voted 54-20 in favor for the Lisbon Treaty, but the Treaty is not officially ratified until the Czech president Vaclav Klaus has signed it.

Vaclav Klaus proved his Euro-Skeptics attitudes in several occasion. The first one was the celebration on April 30, 2004 when the Czech Republic joined EU.

What EU should consider is that Vaclav Klaus is not the only one being skeptic about this Treaty. On October 2, when Ireland said "yes" to the Lisbon Treaty, according to BBC¹, 300 people came out on the streets and gathered in front of Prague Castle. They waved banners: "We Support Our President!", "Berlin - Moscow - Brussels!". And they shouted slogans: "EU - Fourth Reich!", "Long Live Klaus!"

Unfortunately, these are not the only supporters of President Klaus. According to EUobserver² "show of support for Czech President Vaclav Klaus's continued refusal to complete ratification of the EU's Lisbon Treaty, the leader of the British Conservative Party has sent Mr. Klaus a letter noting that the party intends to hold a referendum on the document if they are elected into government next year." This is clearly indicating that President Klaus has the support from the Conservative party in UK, which has the highest rating or 36%,

comparing to the political rating of the ruling Labor Party, which is only 24%.³

Macedonia and the Lisbon Treaty

One of the evidence that the Lisbon Treaty will not be an obstacle for the further enlargement of EU is the last EC progress report, in the case of Macedonia the report even recommended to open negotiations with Macedonia for joining the "big family". On the other side, Macedonia is fighting on a double front – it has the name issue with Greece on one side,⁴ and the entire EU and its integration process on the other. Furthermore it is clear that Macedonia itself can have a direct influence on the name dispute but can not be held at all responsible for the institutional crisis of the EU.

Nevertheless, the pace of EU integration depends on the candidate country and their individual reforms and preparedness, and the institutional crisis of the EU can not be held as a sole responsible for the Macedonian integration in EU.

By Igor Dobrosavljevic

³

<http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/287666,british-labour-party-drops-to-third-place-in-voters-ranking.html>

⁴

http://www.issgroup.eu/pdf/publications/Delo_26_6_08_ENG_Ana_Jese.pdf

¹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8289920.stm>

² <http://euobserver.com/9/28709>