



edited by Adam Balcer

# Poland and the Czech Republic: Advocates of the EU Enlargement?



Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych  
Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej  
[www.poland.gov.pl](http://www.poland.gov.pl)

The publication of this report was financed by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs within the framework of the Polish-Czech Forum.

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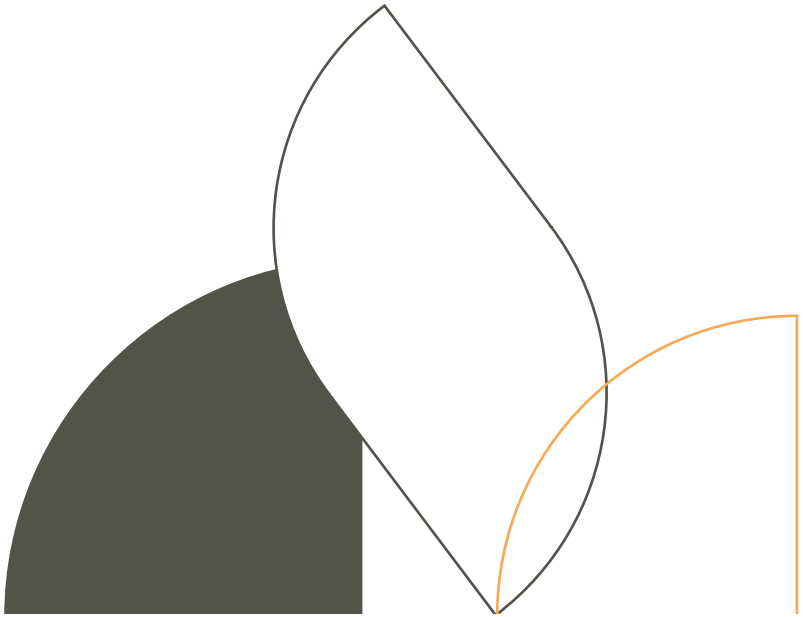
# Poland and the Czech Republic: Advocates of the EU Enlargement?

Warsaw 2010



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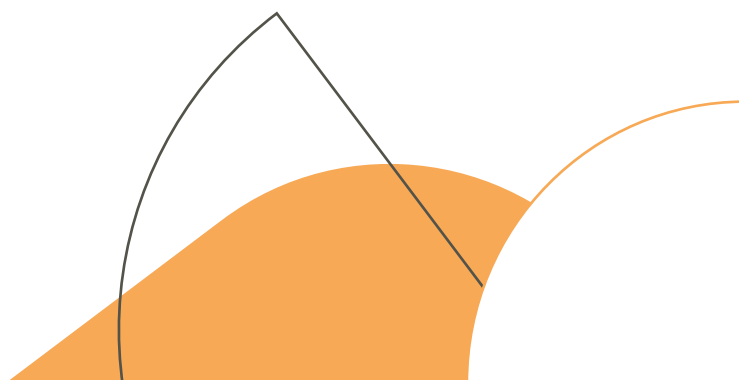
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# Introduction

Until recently the EU enlargement used to be the most effective instrument in the EU foreign policy. Thanks to this policy at the turn of the 20th and 21st century profound and positive changes took place in the Baltic countries, Central Europe, Balkans and Turkey. Nowadays, however, the enlargement is facing a serious crisis. Prolonging of this negative trend may threaten the stability in the countries aspiring to the EU (the Western Balkans, Turkey, Georgia, Moldavia and Ukraine) because a prospect of accession is or may be the major stability anchor for these states. On the other hand, stabilizing its “own backyard” remains a major challenge for the EU, given its ambition to play a role of a global power. For that reason, the reactivation of the enlargement policy ought to be a priority for the EU. The main aim of the report “Poland and the Czech Republic: Advocates of the EU Enlargement?” is to discuss the current challenges, pitfalls but also opportunities facing the enlargement process from the perspective of the Czech Republic, the EU, the Eastern Partnership countries (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine), Poland, Turkey the Western Balkans. As the report is developed in the framework of a joint project supported by the Polish – Czech forum, each contribution in its conclusion and recommendations part it tries to analyze the potential for the Polish – Czech co-operation in this respect and suggest some specific recommendations for the two countries to pursue both bilaterally and through the European Union. However, the contributions deliver also recommendations concerning the EU per se and the countries aspiring to the membership. The report is

composed of six contributions. In the first one „Just a Platonic Love? Poland and the EU Enlargement“ Adam Balcer focuses on the Polish assets and stakes- often insufficiently known- with regard to the enlargement and geopolitical importance of this process for the Polish national interests. Vladimír Bartovic and David Král in “The Czech Republic and the EU Enlargement: Supportive but not Enough?” try to assess the current attitudes and stakes of the Czech Republic in the enlargement process, at a general level, as well as vis-à-vis three above mentioned groups of countries. Barbara Lippert in her contribution „The EU Enlargement: In Search of A New Momentum” tackle the issue of the enlargement crisis from the EU perspective, providing the recommendations how the EU should copy with it. Tija Memišević and Ivan Vejvoda in their contribution „On the Road to Stability: The Western Balkans Future in the EU” deal with the most serious internal and external problems hindering the reform process in the Western Balkan countries. On the other hand, Stanislav Secrieru in his contribution “EU’s Eastward Enlargement: How to Make the Impossible Possible?” tries to deliver a response to a question does the enlargement process matter for the Eastern Partnership countries aspiring to the EU, namely Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. In the last special contribution “Turkey and Europe: Convergence and Divergence between the Political Paradigms” Professor Hakan Yilmaz analyzes the negative social perceptions of Europe in Turkey from historical, political, social and cultural perspectives.

### **Adam Balcer**





# Just A Platonic Love? – Poland and the EU Enlargement

**Adam Balcer<sup>1</sup>**  
demosEUROPA

Polish public opinion and political elites support the EU enlargement but this support is not grounded upon strong convictions. The issue is perceived as rather insignificant to the Polish national interests in the short and middle term perspective. In consequence, during debates on the enlargement within the EU Poland locates itself rather somewhere in the middle between the pro-enlargement camp and the enlargement-sceptics. This Polish stance results from many aspects, among which the key role is assigned to the fact that, besides the internal EU politics, the Eastern direction (former Soviet Union) is the most important area of Polish foreign policy's activity. For Poland, being a frontier country inside the EU, the Europeanisation of the Eastern Neighbourhood is of a strategic importance. Warsaw sees EU membership for Eastern European countries as the best guarantee of success of this process, being however aware of the fact that this is a very distant perspective. Nevertheless, it is in Poland's strategic interest to support assertively the enlargement process already at the present stage by joining the camp of its staunchest supporters. This change in Po-

land's approach to the enlargement should be a consequence of great significance – that is insufficiently recognized – for Poland of the regions currently covered by the enlargement process (Western Balkans and Turkey), links between them and the situation in Eastern Europe and the need to start already now a serious discussion inside the EU on extending this process to Eastern Europe. The Czech Republic would be a natural and a perfect partner for Poland in this new, more assertive approach to enlargement. Poland and the Czech Republic have very close political, economic and social relations. However, the strongest advantages of the Czech Republic are the facts that it treats the Western Balkans as a priority region, is quite seriously engaged economically in Turkey and at the same time has a stance to the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood which is very similar to that of Poland.

## Poland's assets in the enlargement

Poland believes that all European countries which meet the Copenhagen criteria and adopt the *acquis communautaire* should be allowed to join the EU. Poland is also opposed to drawing a clear borderline of who should and should not be considered European (finalite). However, Warsaw is not determined to push for the enlargement cause at the highest political level in the EU, being aware of a potential disagreement among its members on this issue. Indeed, enlargement is very unpopular in Germany and France, key partners of Poland in the EU. The best example of Poland's cautious approach to enlargement is the fact that it is mentioned in the draft Polish presidency agenda for 2011, however not among the priorities but rather *pro forma*.

Enlargement was a key issue on the agenda in Polish foreign policy only in 2005-2007, i.e. after the orange revolution in Ukraine, a major partner in the East. At that time, Warsaw was promoting in the EU the idea of granting Ukraine potential candidate status, like it was the case with the Western Balkans. The lack of structural reforms and bitter political conflicts in Ukraine

caused the removal of Ukraine's membership issue from the EU's agenda. In turn, Poland itself experienced "Ukraine's fatigue". In effect, considering the significant weakening of the European perspective for Ukraine and the heavy dependence of Poland's economic development on financial support from the EU, the Polish government finds it difficult to become an enthusiastic supporter of enlargement, which at present concerns the Western Balkans, Turkey and Iceland.

Nevertheless, Poland does possess some strong assets in the context of enlargement. Poland's most important asset is the highest level of public support for enlargement in the EU. According to the last Eurobarometer (no. 72. 2010), almost 70 percent of Poles support enlargement and only 17 percent are against. By comparison, the EU average is 40 percent for and 48 percent against. Only several EU member states can boast similarly high levels of support for enlargement. Furthermore, Poles' support for enlargement has not reduced significantly over the past few years, unlike in some European societies. Polish public offers strong support to each of the candidates as compared to public opinion in the European Union as a whole. This has been proven by results of one of the recent Eurobarometers (no. 69, spring 2008), in which a question regarding the attitude to each of the countries which want to join the EU was asked.<sup>2</sup> Support for the accession of each of individual country was significantly higher in Poland than the EU-27 average and reached one of the highest levels in the EU.

There is also a broad consensus across the party spectrum in Poland that the EU's enlargement has to proceed. None of the large political parties currently operating in Poland explicitly opposes EU enlargement. Political parties' support for enlargement covers each of the countries which aspire to join the EU, although it has to be admitted that one opposition party has a rather ambivalent approach to Turkey's accession. Poland is a member of the so-called "Tallinn Group", an informal grouping of like-minded eleven EU countries favouring further enlargement.<sup>3</sup>

Another Poland's asset is good relations with all countries which are seeking EU accession and a positive or at least neutral attitude

to Poland of the public in all those countries.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, none of those nations is perceived negatively in Poland. Poland also has a positive legacy of historical relations with Eastern Partnership countries, Turkey and the Western Balkans, a fact which a greater part of the public are unaware of. (Of course, some conflicts did take place in the past.) These unique historical links are the bedrock on which future enhanced cooperation between Poland and the above mentioned states can be built. People in Poland are strongly aware of such links with Ukraine, which is closest to Poland. However, this awareness is much weaker with regard to other countries which aspire to EU membership. Other especially important Poland's potential assets are the historical legacy of a peaceful coexistence of Poles and Muslim Turkic peoples for centuries and the substantial Polish contribution to those peoples' modernisation in the 19th century.<sup>5</sup> Although the experience of confrontation with the Ottoman enemy is an important feature of Poland's historiography, identity and collective memory, the Polish tradition of peaceful coexistence with Muslims – on a scale unseen in Western Europe after the sixteenth century – is just as important and should be renewed. Today, what with opponents of Turkish accession often rallying history and culture to their cause, and depicting Turkey as Europe's age-old enemy and "the Other," this tradition of coexistence is of particular significance.<sup>6</sup>

However, the current positive approach of Polish public and political elite towards the enlargement should not be taken for granted. Paradoxically, the main cause of this high level of approval for enlargement in Polish society and commonly shared support among the country's political elite is the ethnic homogeneity and a very small number of immigrants in Poland. Secondly, an important factor is good economic situation in Poland, which was the only country in the EU to have economic growth during the global economic crisis. Thirdly, Poland has no serious bilateral problems with any of the countries which aspire to join the EU. This positive public attitude to enlargement may change when immigration of Muslims into Poland increases due to Poland's negative demographic trends and brings problems with the integration of new citizens. Another factor which could make Poles less approving of the enlargement are potential serious economic crises. It also

should not be ruled out that as Poland's financial position in the EU improves, a further enlargement may start to be perceived by its public as a threat to its prosperity.

Poland capitalises very little on its assets in the context of EU enlargement because Poland's economic and political position in the countries currently covered by enlargement is rather weak. However, the main reason for that is the low awareness in Poland of those regions' significance for its *raison d'état*. Poland, given its economic and demographic potential, is aspiring to become one of the key players in the EU. In turn, the international position of Poland and its potential will strongly depend on the strength of the EU as a global player. For this reason it is extremely vital for Poland to consider the priorities of the EU as a whole. Owing to many factors, including security, economy, energy and – in particular – demography, the Southern direction (the Mediterranean basin) is very likely to be treated as a priority area by the European Union in the 21st century. Polish foreign policy will also have to acquire a Southern perspective. A continued orientation almost exclusively towards the East may lead to provincialism, no matter how significant the problems to be addressed in Eastern Europe are. For this reason, the Eastern direction in Polish foreign policy will only be relevant, attractive and important from the European point of view when it veers to the South, towards the Black Sea and to certain degree the Mediterranean, namely throughout the Balkans and Turkey. In turn, the international position of the European Union will heavily depend on these regions' integration because the EU's capability of being a global player will depend on its ability to stabilise its own neighbourhood.

## Turkey – a new emerging power in the East

Both public opinion and political elite in Poland support Turkish membership, although the issue has not been debated much inside the country, not least because it has been perceived as rather insignificant to Polish national interests so far.

In almost all the opinion polls carried out in Poland between 2000 and 2010, the majority of respondents have revealed a positive attitude towards Turkey's accession. According Eurobarometer no. 69 (Spring 2008), almost 60 percent of Poles declared that once Turkey complied with all the conditions set by the European Union, they would be in favour of the Turkish accession, meanwhile against was almost 30 percent. This was one of the highest levels of support for Turkey's membership among EU member states. However, Poles support Turkey's accession less than the accessions of all other candidate countries or potential candidates such as the Western Balkan countries and even Ukraine. Moreover, over the past few years, support for Turkey's membership has somewhat weakened<sup>7</sup> and is now half-hearted, with the lack of strong positive sentiments towards Turks due to religious differences.<sup>8</sup> A possible negative impact of the Turkish-Iranian rapprochement and the serious crisis in relations between Turkey and Israel on the perception of Turkey in Poland and support for its membership is an open-ended question. Knowledge about Turkey in Poland is rather limited, and sometimes based on misperceptions and negative stereotypes. Direct contacts between Polish and Turkish societies are gradually becoming more frequent, albeit are still rather limited.<sup>9</sup> Interest towards Turkey, especially among the educated people, is rising however.<sup>10</sup> The paradox underpinning Poland's positive approach to the Turkish accession process is its support for Turkey's membership alongside its emphasis on the role of Christianity in defining a common European identity. Indeed, in 2004 Poland was one of the most fervent supporters of a clause mentioning Europe's Christian roots in the preamble to the Constitutional Treaty. Poland's Catholic Church is rather influential as a participant of the debate about Turkey's accession. Moreover, the clergy tends to be more critical than the rest of society about Turkey's EU membership. On the other hand, the hierarchs of the Catholic Church in Poland have never officially opposed Turkey's accession.

Bilateral political Polish-Turkish relations are good with the singular exception of the crisis caused by the Polish parliament's resolution recognising the Armenian genocide in 2005.

Official visits between Poland and Turkey are rather limited, albeit regular. However, contacts have intensified over the past few years. The Turkish prime minister visited Poland for the first time in history in May 2009. A strategic partnership declaration envisaging Polish-Turkish cooperation in Eurasia in numerous areas, especially security and energy, was signed during the visit. Poland emphasised its support for Turkey's membership. The Polish foreign minister visited Turkey in October 2010, and the Polish prime minister in December 2010. This has been the second visit by a Polish prime minister to Turkey since the fall of communism. The previous one took place in 2003. Presidential visits are more frequent. Since 1989, every Polish and Turkish president has visited Turkey and Poland respectively at least once. In 1993 the Polish-Turkish presidential committee, consisting of officials from key ministries was established. The committee meets once a year. Apart from Turkey, Poland has established a committee of this kind only with several states. High level of professionalism manifested by Polish diplomats dealing with Turkey is an important asset of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Indeed, since the fall of the communist regime, each Polish ambassador to Turkey has been a fluent Turkish speaker, often having lived in Turkey for a long period of time. It is a unique situation among EU member states. Polish-Turkish relations were the most active during Stefan Meller's term as Polish minister of foreign affairs (2005-2006). Consultations between departments of Polish and Turkish foreign ministries were regular and frequent.<sup>11</sup>

The lack of frequent bilateral visits at the prime minister level can be explained by the limited economic cooperation between the two countries. Poland's share in Turkey's trade balance is less than 1.5 percent. Turkey's share in the Polish trade balance is similar. However, the value of trade exchange between Poland and Turkey in absolute numbers is several times higher than that of trade between Poland and the Western Balkans. Mutual foreign investments in Poland and Turkey are very limited, given the economic potentials of each of the countries.<sup>12</sup> Polish-Turkish economic relations have some significance in the building sector. Turkish construction firms

implemented contracts in Poland worth over USD800 million in 2009. This was the largest value on the annual scale among all EU member states.<sup>13</sup>

The awareness that Turkey has a major impact on the Eastern direction of Polish foreign policy (balance of powers in the post-Soviet area, energy sector and the future of enlargement) is still rather low in Poland. Even today Turkey is a regional emerging power and one of the stakeholders in the Black Sea, the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Moreover, its economic and political influence has clearly been on the substantial rise in the last few years. The Turkish leverage stems from its demographic and economic potential. Turkey is also an important energy stakeholder due to its strategic geopolitical location between the Middle East and Central Asia (oil and gas) and Europe. Indeed, Turkey is a natural intermediary for the transfer of gas supplies from regions such as Azerbaijan, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Qatar and Turkmenistan. It could become an important transit route outside Russian control for gas (e.g. the Nabucco project).

Turkey's GDP in purchasing power parity (PPP) amounted to almost one trillion in 2010 and its population to 75 million. In effect, Turkey is currently the world's 16<sup>th</sup> largest economy and the EU's second largest neighbour after Russia. However, Poland has to take into account the new alignment of forces in western Eurasia (declining importance of Germany and Russia and Turkey's growing one). According to PricewaterhouseCoopers and Goldman Sachs economic experts, Turkey will be growing much faster in the coming decades than either the Western countries or Russia, and around 2050 it will be the world's 10th or 12th largest economy, ahead of Spain or Italy.<sup>14</sup> It is quite possible that its economy will be only slightly smaller in GDP (PPP) terms than that of France, the United Kingdom or Russia. Turkey's geopolitical importance will also increase with the country's demographic growth. According to the UN projections, in 2050, the population of Turkey will be about 100 million. Whereas Russia's will drop to some 115 million and Germany's to 75 million. The proportion of Muslims in the Russian and German populations will also increase visibly. In effect,

thanks to Turkey's historical and cultural ties with Russian and German Muslims, Ankara will gain an important instrument of influence on the internal situation in both countries. Poland will have to take into account this new alignment of forces in western Eurasia (declining importance of Germany and Russia and Turkey's growing one).

In this context, Poland's national interests might face serious negative consequences should Turkey remain outside the EU. The stalemate in the Turkey's integration process with the EU and the possible worsening of Turkey's relations with the United States could push Turkey towards closer tactical cooperation with Russia, China and Iran. This scenario certainly will significantly undermine the EU leverage on the Eastern Neighbourhood and Central Asia. Outside the EU, Turkey will also be a less predictable partner in the Union's attempts to diversify its supplies of gas and oil from Central Asia and the Middle East. In case of positive scenario (Turkey's accession to the EU) Turkey could play an important role in the context of the Polish idea of EU enlargement towards the East. Poland's vision needs to be cohesive. It is difficult to imagine a European Union with Ukraine and Cyprus 'surrounding' Turkey, which remains outside the EU. The emergence of the EEC/EU and its successive waves of enlargement had a clear geopolitical dimension. A Black Sea enlargement (Turkey, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia) is likely in the 2020s and 2030s. Turkey's potential accession could help Ukraine. It would entail a shift of the EU's centre of gravity in a south-easterly direction and would reinforce the EU's Black Sea dimension. As an EU member, Turkey would be interested in stability in its vicinity, i.e. the integration of Moldova, Ukraine and the South Caucasus with the EU. Turkey's growing economic, geopolitical and demographic potential means that together the EU and Ankara could overcome, albeit not without problems, Russia's reluctance to accept mounting European influences in the region.

Poland should also see relations with Turkey in the context of the South's key significance for the EU. It is extremely vital for Poland that Turkey is a country which combines both directions,

Southern and Eastern, of the EU's policy. To remain relevant in the group of key players in the EU, Poland should become more active in the Muslim countries in the Mediterranean region. Turkey is the only Muslim country with which Poland has such advanced economic and political relations. The Southern direction in the EU's foreign policy is not limited to the Mediterranean region but covers more extensively very important relations with the Islamic world. Poland should find its niche in this area by combining the East and the South. An optimal solution for Poland would be accepting the role of an 'expert in Turkish and Caucasian Islam' (Turkey and the post-Soviet area), which would obviously require a definite intensification of relations with Turkey, an important stake holder in these regions.

Turkey's EU membership may also be significant for Poland in the domestic context. In the coming decades, due to the negative demographic trends in order to continue to grow economically, Poland will need immigrants. Among them, a large share, if not the majority, like in the other European states will most probably be Muslims. Taking into consideration the EU experience, the integration of the Turks, despite certain problems, seems to be easier than that of the Arabs. Certainly the Europeanised Turkey will offer the greatest chance for minimising the inevitable cultural shock in Poland.

The Turkish accession process is also of key significance for Poland because its potential accession will definitely change the nature of the EU. Poland as a country whose position is still being established must consider all pros and cons related to Turkey's membership. It will certainly pose an economic and political challenge to Poland. An EU enlarged by Turkey will become stronger provided that the enlargement process is accompanied by necessary internal reforms. The prospect of Turkey's accession, similarly as it was the case with the recent enlargements, may become a catalyst for reforms deepening economic and political integration inside the EU. Taking into account that a possible Turkish accession will take place more or less in 15 years, and Turkey (given its extremely fast economic development rate and shrinking agricultural sector) and Poland will be

much richer than today, Turkish membership will not come as a serious blow against Polish economic interests. Turkish membership would probably make the EU realize a budget reform that would reduce spending on the Common Agricultural Policy and cohesion policy and instead allocate more funds to research and development. From the point of view of Poland's long-term interests, this scenario can be beneficial, given the need to modernise the Polish economy (agricultural sector reform and innovativeness). Certainly, Turkey's accession would mean weakening of Poland's political position within the EU. On the other hand, Turkey could become a catalyst for the necessary institutional reforms, which will be beneficial for the EU and, as a consequence, for Poland. The prospect of Turkey's accession would certainly cause a change in the voting rules. The EU could use that opportunity to extend the scope of the relative majority-vote system to some issues regarding foreign and defence policy.

Turkey, being one of the key NATO member states, is also very significant in the context of Poland's aspirations to play a major role in the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). In turn, the development of this policy strongly depends on good relations between NATO and the EU. The greatest challenge to establishing closer cooperation between NATO and the EU is currently the political conflict between Turkey and Cyprus (the island's status) and France (the question of Turkish membership of the EU).

## The Western Balkans – future regional allies

Poland supports the Western Balkans' accession. However, its political and economic activity there, despite the relative geographical proximity of this region, is insufficient, given the key significance of the Western Balkans for the European Union and quite essential for Poland itself, the awareness of which is rather low. Moreover, even its engagement, which has been quite significant so far, is not fully used and realised in Poland.

Since the beginning of 1990s, Poland has been engaged in almost all international missions in the Western Balkans. Poland's contribution was substantial. Until recently Poland's military and police contingents have been among the largest in EU missions in Kosovo and Bosnia. Until the end of 2010, around 200 Polish soldiers (over 10 percent of the mission) will be active in EUFOR military mission in Bosnia. In the EULEX administrative and policing mission in Kosovo as part of the international contingent, Polish policemen, functionaries and legal advisors account for about 8 percent. Unfortunately, the Polish contingent in Bosnia will be reduced to 40 trainer soldiers from December 2010. It is also worth noting that Poles are holding important function in international structures operating in the Western Balkans.<sup>15</sup> The knowledge of the scale of Polish engagement in the Western Balkans is quite limited in Poland, even among the political elite. Poland has also failed to make an attempt to capitalise assertively on its significant contribution to the stabilisation of the Western Balkans to promote its interests in the Western Balkan region or the EU. The awareness of how important role the Western Balkans is playing in the Polish development aid is also low in Poland. This role results from Poland's contribution to the EU budget, to which around 75 percent of the Polish development aid (ODA) goes. When combined with Polish bilateral aid addressed to this region, it occurs that the Western Balkans is one of the key areas receiving support from the Polish state.<sup>16</sup>

A positive fact is the evolution of Poland's stance on Central Europe's (Visegrad Group) engagement in the stabilisation of the Western Balkans. For many years Poland had been treating this engagement as a threat to the Eastern direction. Gradually Poland accepted that this direction was important for its Central European partners. Poland took the initiative of establishing the Central European Free Trade Association (CEFTA), which Croatia joined in 2003 and other Western Balkan states in 2006-2007. Currently CEFTA is the most important regional economic organisation. The Central European states, including Poland, withdrew from this organisation upon their entry to the EU in 2004, but CEFTA remained an important Central Euro-

pean contribution to the development of regional cooperation in the Western Balkans. Being already an EU member state, Poland engaged in the Regional Partnership (RP), a new forum of support for the Balkan countries' accession process created by the Visegrad Group, Austria and Slovenia. Each of the countries was entrusted with the task of coordinating aid for Balkan countries in a certain area. Poland became a coordinator of the very important area of EU aid funds usage.

Poland has good relations with all Western Balkan countries in a situation where ethnic conflicts and bilateral disputes are still not fully resolved in the region. Bilateral relations between Poland and some Western Balkan countries (Croatia) are relatively more intense than with Turkey. However, given the geographical proximity of the region, the contacts are still insufficient (e.g. one visit at the prime minister level over three years). Poland's policy towards the Western Balkans is sometimes inconsistent. Poland was one of the first countries to recognise the independence of Kosovo but it has not established diplomatic relations with Kosovo although many European countries, including the Czech Republic, have done so (although this was a much more controversial issue in the Czech Republic than Poland) while maintaining good relations with Serbia.

Poland's weak economic position is its Achilles' heel in the Western Balkans. Polish investments in the Balkan countries are very low.<sup>17</sup> Albania and Moldova are the Western Balkan countries in whose trade balance Poland has the lowest share (ranging between 1.5 and 1.7 percent).<sup>18</sup> Macedonia is an example of Poland's capacity to increase its economic presence in the Western Balkans. Polish exports to Macedonia significantly grew in 2007-2008 in effect of which Poland's share in Macedonia's trade balance reached over 2.5 percent. Unfortunately, the global economic crisis caused a radical shrinkage of Poland's share in 2009. Croatia is the only country in this region to have relatively better-developed economic relations with Poland and to see them as significant.<sup>19</sup> A development of transport infrastructure in Central Europe may become an important contributor to strengthening economic bonds between Poland and the Western Balkans.

Increasing awareness of the Western Balkans' significance for Polish national interests is vital for Poland's stronger engagement in this region. A successful integration of the Western Balkans is of key significance for the EU's position as a global player and its relations with the USA and Russia. Stabilisation and integration of the Balkans is still one of the most important challenges the EU needs to face. The European Union's engagement in the Western Balkans (EU missions, protectorates, enlargement process and financial aid) is incomparably stronger than in any other part of the globe. The integration of the Western Balkan countries is currently happening at a slower rate, thus posing a threat to the region's stability. It needs to be remembered that the Western Balkan issue also has an impact on trans-Atlantic relations. Americans would very much like to see Europe finally capable of coping with the Balkans by itself. Russia is another major player in the Balkans, especially in the energy sector. It still has great political influences in Serbia. Russia is influencing the situation in Bosnia by offering support to one of its federal entities, Republika Srpska. In turn, Bosnia poses one of the greatest long-term challenges to the EU in the Balkans. Successes of Polish foreign policy in Eastern Europe depend to a great extent on the development of the situation in the Western Balkans. If no progress is made in the integration of the Western Balkans with the EU, the chances of convincing EU partners to embark upon integration with the Eastern Partnership countries will be very low. References to some actions taken by the EU with regard to the Western Balkans can be used to convince the EU to apply similar solution to Eastern Partnership countries, for example regarding the visa liberalisation. It is also worth keeping in mind the institutional links existing between Western Balkan countries and the Eastern Partnership area. For example, Moldova, an Eastern country most strongly engaged in cooperation with the EU, is a member of all regional Balkan organisations and uses this as an argument for its European aspirations. In 2011, some Western Balkan countries will become linked to Moldova, Ukraine and some EU member states, including Poland, as part of the Danube Strategy, a new regional initiative of the European Union. Some Western Balkan countries and all Eastern Partnership countries, except for Belarus, belong to the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Coop-

eration (BSEC), the main partner for the EU within the framework of the EU initiative: the Black Sea Synergy. In effect, developing links between Moldova, Ukraine and the Western Balkans may be used by Moldova and Ukraine as a tool for establishing closer relations with the EU. Energy security of the European Union, a top priority issue for Poland, depends heavily on the EU's energy cooperation with its neighbours, including the Balkan countries. Energy security is one of the priorities on the agenda of the Polish presidency. Without including the Western Balkans in the emerging energy market, it will be much more difficult to guarantee energy security to at least several EU member states. The LNG port in the Croatian island of Krk may become one of the major options of diversifying gas supplies to Central Europe. An example of Poland's regional approach to energy issues, also covering the Western Balkans, was the Visegrad Group's energy summit with Romania, Croatia, Bulgaria, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina held in February 2010. A declaration regarding the diversification of gas supplies to Central Europe, including through the building of a gas port in Krk, was adopted during the summit. It is worth reminding that Russia is planning to build the South Stream gas pipeline, which will run via the Western Balkans and be a competitor to Nabucco. The Russian project is of vast significance for the energy security of Central Europe and Ukraine. Another issue to be given high priority during the Polish presidency is the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), which is inseparably linked to the Western Balkans. Two in three EU soldiers, policemen, judges and officials currently engaged in CSDP missions are operating precisely there. For this reason it will be decided in the Western Balkans whether an efficient common security and defence policy is possible at all. Developing the CSDP will be very difficult without tightening EU-NATO cooperation, which is vital to us. The Western Balkans is still an important area for developing those relations, an example of which is the KFOR mission in Kosovo, a protectorate of the European Union. Poland's stronger engagement in the Western Balkans could reinforce our good relations with EU member states. The Visegrad Group, Romania, Greece, Austria and Bulgaria would certainly welcome that. It is also worth reminding that Sweden (a co-initiator of the Eastern Partnership) is also an ardent supporter of the Western Balkans'

accession. Poland could strike a 'package deal' with at least a few of the aforementioned countries: in exchange for our support for their ideas regarding the Balkans we could count on their support for our activities in the East to a greater extent than before. The first opportunity for such 'barter trade' will come with the Hungarian presidency of the EU, which will precede the Polish presidency. Last but not least, the Balkan countries are our potential future allies. If we support them already today, they will have a more favourable approach to us when we and they are members of the same union. Although the countries will be beneficiaries of EU funds, considering the size of the countries, they are unlikely to become serious competitors for Poland. Those countries are also likely to join the 'task' coalitions being created at present by new EU member states on the basis of their common interests. It is worth noting that these are seven countries, more than a quarter of the number of present EU member states. The vote of each country is still significant, regardless of its population, even after the Lisbon Treaty.

## The Eastern Partnership – a time for deeds, not words

The EU's enlargement is significant for Poland primarily in the context of the strategic role of the Eastern direction in Polish foreign policy. Poland's principal strategic goal is to have the West in the East, i.e. the stabilisation and Europeanisation of our Eastern neighbours. If this happens, Poland will no longer be a frontier country of the EU. Another reason why this area is significant is the fear of Russian dominations, which could pose a threat to Poland's security. However, it needs to be emphasised that the Europeanisation of Poland's neighbourhood per se (an approach identical to that taken by Germany towards Central Europe in the 1990s) and not containing Russia what is the key characteristic of the Polish approach towards the East.

From Poland's perspective, Ukraine is definitely the most important of the three Eastern Partnership countries (Georgia, Moldova

and Ukraine) interested in EU membership for geographical (direct border), historical (common state for a few centuries but also conflicts), political, social (national minorities and immigrants) and economic reasons. However, Poland is also one of the most advocates of Georgia's and Moldova's European bid in the EU.

As a consequence of the failure to bring about a definite rapprochement between the EU and Ukraine after the orange revolution, Poland has radically limited the discourse on the EU's enlargement to the East, seeing it as a very distant perspective and a topic of extremely low popularity in Western Europe. Opinions that it was necessary to revise radically the Polish Eastern policy and abandon the idea of Europeanisation of the East as naïve and unrealistic even appeared. Such a stance is rather a proof of mental helplessness resulting from applying a short-term perspective towards the development of the situation in the East. Poland is a driving force behind an informal grouping "New Group of Friends of Georgia"<sup>20</sup>, whose task is to facilitate Georgia's accession to both the EU and NATO. Poland is also a member of the informal EU Group of Friends of Moldova, which is composed of 14 EU member states. The Group has more modest agenda than "the New Group of Friends of Georgia", focusing on the approximation between the EU and Moldova and not the accession.

However, Poland should not postpone the issue of enlargement to the East ad calendae graecas. Firstly, if the pro-European coalition survives in Moldova, the issue of the country's EU accession will appear sooner or later. Moldova is already taking part in several pre-accession programmes, which are reserved for candidates, and has made the enlargement issue a leitmotif of its foreign policy. Secondly, the membership issue in the long-term perspective is inseparably linked to the stabilisation of Eastern Europe, a matter of key significance for Poland. In the case of several Eastern Partnership countries (Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova) we have to deal with defective democracy, which is the source of their instability but at the same time excludes their superficial stabilisation, which could be achieved through the establishment of authoritarian regimes reminiscent of those operating in Arab countries. This can be proven by the fact that

neither of the countries has become a fully fledged authoritarian regime or dictatorship over the two decades of their independence. In effect, their stabilisation is closely linked to a complete democratisation and building the rule of law, which have very little chance of success without support from the EU. Those countries are also already facing very serious demographic (a significant reduction in population in the coming decades) and modernisation challenges (building a competitive free-market economy), which they will find very difficult to handle without the EU being definitely engaged. On the other hand, the EU's engagement is very likely to contribute to a realisation of a positive scenario for everyone, including especially Poland, namely a civilisational leap of the Eastern neighbours. Moreover, their Europeanization could have very positive impact on Russia's genuine modernisation which is of vital importance for Poland. Ukraine's success in this area could have a strong positive impact on the economic development of Poland and the EU as a whole (cheap labour force, large market, transit and natural resources). The latter issue is given very little attention in public debate in both Poland and the EU.

The enlargement issue is also vital for Poland because Eastern Partnership countries and, to a smaller extent, Russia will be come less significant issues on the EU's agenda regarding EU neighbourhood, while higher priority will be given to the Southern direction. The only way of counterbalancing to a certain degree the marginalisation of Eastern Partnership countries on the EU's agenda is covering them with the enlargement process. If the status quo is preserved in the long term, the Partnership area will transform durably into a de facto buffer zone separating the EU from Russia. The issue of enlargement to the East also requires a revision of the Polish perception of the East and gives rise to essential geopolitical consequences. Poland should realise that the most promising and likely partners (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) are located by the Black Sea. Only Belarus remains outside the Black Sea area, but it will be significantly less engaged in cooperation with the EU than the aforementioned countries for political reasons. In effect, Poland should accept that the Black Sea will become the Eastern Partnership's centre of gravity and

it should cease to look at the region rather negatively due to the lack of direct border as a threat towards its position of an EU expert on the East. As Warsaw looks beyond Ukraine in geopolitical terms, it is particularly important that it sees not only Russia, but first and foremost the Black Sea as already mentioned<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the inclusion of Ukraine and the South Caucasus in the Black Sea perspective also does away with their definition in terms of geopolitical categories of the post-Soviet area.

Support for EU membership of Eastern Partnership countries, especially Ukraine, should be accompanied by an open discussion covering both positive and negative consequences its accession may have for Poland. Such a discussion is almost absent in Poland. Ukraine per se may be Poland's competitor, given its industry structure and agriculture. Ukraine also has many assets which Poland is missing, such as aviation industry, nuclear power plants, etc.<sup>22</sup> A Ukraine which will enter the EU will not necessarily show gratitude to Poland and may have more in common with Berlin for instance than Warsaw. However, considering the negative impact of Ukraine's instability or its being dominated by Russia as well as the economic benefits its membership could offer Poland, Warsaw should be a staunch supporter of Ukraine's accession to the European Union. The role of an advocate for the Europeanisation of the Eastern Partnership countries which Poland is eager to play in the EU will depend predominantly on the strength of its position in the region. Unfortunately, Poland's engagement in the East is clearly insufficient, given the significance of this region in Polish foreign policy. The number of young people from Eastern Europe who study in Poland is small.<sup>23</sup> The development aid Poland offers to the East is also limited.<sup>24</sup> Poland only has a relatively strong economic position in Ukraine. However, considering the strategic significance of Ukraine and its immediate neighbourhood, Poland's position is still unsatisfactory.<sup>25</sup> In turn, Poland's economic impact (trade, foreign investments and tourism) is limited in Moldova (an almost 3 percent share in the Moldovan trade balance) and minimal in Georgia. It is worth noting in this context that the Georgian

market offers favourable conditions for investing and has attracted significant capital from the Czech Republic.

In terms of bilateral political relations, Poland has kept frequent and regular contacts with Ukraine over a long period. It has also recently intensified relations with Georgia (six visits of the Polish president in the period 2007-2008) and Moldova (four visits by the Polish foreign affairs minister over the past two years). Increasing the Polish soft power (NGOs, media and education) and a further deepening of bilateral relations and economic presence are very important because building strong economic and social bonds and the reinforcement of the civil society are the conditions sine qua non for the process of the Eastern neighbours' Europeanisation to succeed, which must happen as a grassroots movement.

## **Poland and the Czech Republic – a backbone of a new geopolitical axis?**

The issue of cooperation between Poland and the Czech Republic for the benefit of enlargement is closely linked to the discussion emerging in Poland on its geopolitics (its place in Europe and the world) and optimal tools for the reinforcement of its position within the EU. Poland may gain a strong position in the EU by capitalising on its unique status of a country which can be a driving force for a coalition of small and medium-sized EU member states from Central Europe, the Balkans and the Baltic republics (the enlargements of 2004 and 2007) and at the same time has a potential of being a member of the 'Group of Six' consisting of the EU's largest members. A key to Poland's success is its ability to play two pianos simultaneously, i.e. in the big fishes' first league and as part of regional cooperation with smaller allies. What may help Poland at the position in the EU's first league is its status of a regional playmaker, an initiator of coalitions of new EU member states. In turn, the status of

a major player in the EU will facilitate the building of the above mentioned coalitions. However, it is very essential for Poland to be able to include countries from the so-called old Europe in this coalition of post-communist countries. Otherwise, it will be seen as a divide between the old and the new Europe and based on poverty and claims. In this context it is especially essential to revise in Poland the notion of Europe extending only along the East-West axis, which continues to dominate the Polish strategic and geopolitical thinking. Poland is slowly becoming aware that the historical breakthrough of 1989 makes it possible—and even mandatory—to think of many new dimensions of Europe undergoing unification. In addition to the East-West dimension there is a new, North-South dimension, comprising the regions of the Baltic Sea, Central Europe, the Balkans, the Black Sea and Turkey. The most important expression of this trend in Polish foreign policy is an increasing cooperation between Poland and other EU-10 states (the post-communist countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007) and Scandinavian countries (Sweden and Finland) located on the North-South axis. As the largest country on that axis, Poland should make use of these common elements in order to build a coalition within the EU with the aim of achieving specific political solutions—all the while avoiding regional power ambitions and a patronising approach. The past two years in particular have seen intensified cooperation among the post-communist countries. Owing in no small part to their shared experience under communism, the EU-10 members share a broad commonality of interests. There are, of course, differences on some foreign policy issues, as well as a handful of bilateral disputes. With the launch of a series of mini-summits and initiatives on areas of common concern – initiated by Poland, the largest member of the group – cooperation between the EU-10 has recently acquired a quasi-institutional dimension. Moreover, as Eurobarometer polls indicate, a majority of citizens in the EU-10 – unlike their counterparts in the old member states – still support the enlargement. In their support the EU-10 countries are similar to Sweden and Finland, with whom they share a number of other interests – and who, though not among the biggest member states, enjoy a strong position in the EU. The Eastern Partnership, initiated

by Poland and Sweden, is a case in point. Support for a further EU enlargement – including Turkey’s accession – is one of the important issues where the post-communist and Scandinavian countries’ interests and policies are aligned. On this issue, however, the EU-10 have not yet managed to articulate a common vocal stance vis-a-vis their European partners. For instance, the so-called “Tallinn Group” is barely known in the European public.

Relations with the Czech Republic are especially essential for Poland as part of this axis. The Czech Republic in terms of potential is the second most important new EU member state (the size of the economy, GDP per capita, the population, the administrative capacities and the economic stability). Political relations between the two countries are perfect, and political contacts are extremely frequent.<sup>26</sup> There is no other Central European country with which Poland would have so intensive economic relations (large trade exchange, significant mutual investments and very intensive small border traffic). The Czech Republic, unlike Slovakia, Hungary or Romania, does not have problems with any other EU-10 member state or countries which aspire to EU membership. In effect, the Polish-Czech tandem should become a backbone of the North-South axis. However, the most important asset of the Czech Republic – as seen from the Polish perspective – is the priorities of Czech foreign policy. The Czech Republic sees the Western Balkans as a strategic region of utmost importance, and at the same time emphasises the significance and is economically (and to some extent politically) engaged in Turkey as well as in the Eastern Partnership area, which is so important for Poland. In effect, the intensification of cooperation with the Czech Republic in the area of enlargement may encourage Poland to become more engaged in the Western Balkans and Turkey, at the same time combining the policy towards those regions with the Eastern Partnership. Last but not least, Stefan Füle, the commissioner for enlargement and neighbourhood, comes from the Czech Republic. The name of his position should be a source of inspiration for Poland – combining enlargement and eastern neighbourhood.

## Potential contribution by Poland and the Czech Republic to the enlargement

- ◆ First of all, Poland should recognize the EU enlargement as one of its priorities in the final agenda of its presidency.
- ◆ Poland and the Czech Republic joining forces with the likes of the EU-10, Italy, Sweden, Spain, the UK and the pro-enlargement politicians in Germany and France, should establish a visible and vocal “coalition of the willing” and put enlargement on the EU agenda again. The Tallinn Group has become insufficient due to its low-profile.
- ◆ The key task for Poland and the Czech Republic should be to deliver a non-paper on a new EU agenda on the enlargement. The motto of this EU’s new strategy should be “we are more demanding, but also more generous”. In practice, this would mean setting stricter criteria for the candidates, at the same time rewarding them with bigger ‘carrots’ (e.g. acceleration of the accession process; larger financial support) for good results – that is to say if they implement the reforms. On the other hand, the EU should be able to use a soft power ‘stick’ towards the elites of the countries aspiring to the EU which are not eager to obey the rules of the European game or are not showing enough determination in the implementation of reforms (sanctions and dismissals in the protectorates, freezing the enlargement process and financial funds).
- ◆ This new strategy would also mean a domination of the individual and strictly content-related approach towards candidates, and withdrawal from the idea of a great regional enlargement (like in 2004 and 2007). This strategy should include a proposal of providing Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine with the status of possible candidates once they have met some precise criteria.
- ◆ Certainly, an amelioration of the enlargement image in the eyes of European public opinion is of key importance for the success of this

new strategy. The EU toughness and some positive developments in the aspiring countries can certainly increase the European support for enlargement. However, Poland and the Czech Republic should encourage the EU institutions to launch a comprehensive advertisement campaign focusing on the benefits of a last and further enlargements and necessity to accelerate its pace.

- ◆ Poland and the Czech Republic should also prepare a “White Book of the enlargement”, which should provide a detailed evaluation of the costs and benefits resulting from possible accessions of all countries aspiring to the EU.
- ◆ In practical terms, Poland and the Czech Republic should strengthen bilateral cooperation between state institutions and NGO’s aiming at increasing their leverage in the economic, social and cultural spheres in the Western Balkans, Turkey and the Eastern Partnership area.
- ◆ Both countries ought also to establish a comprehensive mechanism for bilateral cooperation in sharing the expertise in the area of accession and association negotiations with the countries aspiring to the EU.

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<sup>1)</sup> Adam Balcer is a director of the program „EU enlargement and neighborhood” at demosEUROPA Centre for European Strategy.

<sup>2)</sup> On the other hand, those surveys indicate that the enlargement fatigue also affects Poles, albeit to a limited extent. One may notice decrease in Poles’ support for most countries aspiring to the EU as compared to the preceding Eurobarometers.

<sup>3)</sup> The group meets regularly twice a year at the level of directors of departments concerned with the enlargement agenda in the foreign ministries of participating countries.

<sup>4)</sup> Another Poland’s asset is the linguistic proximity to the Western Balkan (except for Albanian language) and Eastern Partnership nations (Russian as lingua franca in this part of the world, Ukrainian).

<sup>5)</sup> Although the Commonwealth (*Rzeczpospolita*: the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) and the Ottoman Empire indirectly or directly bordered

for almost 400 years, wars between them lasted only 25 years. This situation stands in striking contrast to the Ottoman relations with the other neighbours. Poland was the first European country to sign an unprecedented friendship treaty with the Ottoman Empire in 1533. Muslim merchants travelled regularly to and across Poland; these being two phenomena which could not be found elsewhere in the area of Western Christendom. Poland borrowed a host of material culture, military tradition and language from the Ottomans. Poland was among the Western countries characterised by the greatest level of knowledge about the Ottoman Empire. A significant group of Polish insurgents, fighting against Russia in the 19th century, found shelter in the Ottoman Empire. Many served in the Ottoman army and state administration contributing to the country's modernisation, and in some cases converted to Islam. A key personality was Konstanty Borzęcki (Mustafa Celaleddin Pasha), who became one of the founding fathers of modern Turkish nationalism. The legend, according to which the Ottomans were the only power that refused to recognise the partition of Poland, originated at that time. Adam Balcer, Polish Stakeholders in the EU-Turkey Debate, in: *Talking Turkey in Europe: Towards a Differentiated Communication Strategy*, Talking Turkey II, (ed.) Nathalie. Tocci, Rome 2008. pp. 42-44.

<sup>61</sup>The most striking example of the Polish-Muslim peaceful coexistence is the Muslim Tatar community of Poland, which has survived since the Middle Ages; a situation without precedent in Europe. A number of Polish Tatars became great patriots and national heroes. Ismail Gasprinsky, the foremost ideologue of pan-Turkism, used the Polish Tatars' integration into Western society as a model for all Turkic peoples. Members of the Polish Tatar minority have played an important role in the modernisation of Turkic nations. Adam Balcer, Piotr Zalewski, Turkey and the "New Europe": A Bridge Waiting to be Built, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 12, No.1, 2010, p. 39.

<sup>71</sup>For instance, the Transatlantic Trends survey includes a question whether Turkey's membership in the EU would be a good or a bad thing. In 2004, 60 percent of Poles answered that it would be 'neither good nor bad', or had no opinion on this subject. 27 percent believed it would be good, and 13 percent thought it would be bad. In comparison, in 2010 the figures were 66 percent 'neither good nor bad', or had no opinion on this subject, 23 percent believed it would be good and 21 percent said bad. ([www.transatlantictrends.org](http://www.transatlantictrends.org))

<sup>81</sup>In Transatlantic Trends 2010 more than half of Poles declared that Turkey had such different values and that it was not really part of the West. Almost 30 percent believed the opposite. According to the opinion poll conducted by the Polish public opinion research institution CBOS in 2010, over 30 percent of Poles disliked Turks, while almost 30 percent liked them. Although negative perception of Turks has significantly weakened over the few years, almost all other European nations still enjoy a more favourable perception among Poles than Turks. Anti-Muslim and anti-Arab feelings are relatively strong within Polish society, and these are reflected somewhat in attitudes towards Turks. In Transatlantic Trends 2010 almost 40 percent of Poles declared a favourable opinion about Turkey and almost 30 percent unfavourable. According to the opinion polls, in the EU Romanians have substantially more positive attitude to Turkey and its European bid and character than Poles.

- <sup>9)</sup> In 2010 (January – October) Turkey was visited by 415,000 Poles, approximately twice the number three years before. However, proportionally, much more residents of other Central European countries (Czech Republic, Slovenia) and Baltic States (Lithuania) visit Turkey.
- <sup>10)</sup> Especially after the Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk received the Nobel Prize for literature in 2006 almost all Pamuk's novels have been published in Poland, receiving enthusiastic public and media responses. At present, one could even notice signs of 'Pamukomania' among the Polish middle class.
- <sup>11)</sup> In 2006, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Stefan Meller proposed to mediate an agreement aimed at establishing diplomatic relations between Turkey and Armenia. However, such initiatives have met with explicit scepticism from Armenia and with more muted yet equal reluctance from Turkey, not least in view of the 2005 Polish parliament's recognition of the Armenian genocide. The proposal was then dropped by Stefan Meller's successor.
- <sup>12)</sup> According to Polish data, total mutual investments are worth approximately 100 million euros (including almost 30 million euros of Turkish investments in Poland). According to Turkish data, the value of Turkish investments in Poland is several times higher (100-150 million euros). These figures may increase significantly if Turkish Airlines purchase the Polish airlines LOT in 2011.
- <sup>13)</sup> At present, a Turkish firm is a member of the consortium building the second metro line in Warsaw. This is the largest urban construction investment in Poland, worth over a billion euros.
- <sup>14)</sup> According to the OECD, Turkey will register the fastest growth of all OECD members in 2011–2017 (by a yearly average of 6.7 percent).
- <sup>15)</sup> For instance, Tadeusz Mazowiecki in the 1990s was the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Former Yugoslavia and Marek Nowicki an ombudsman in Kosovo.
- <sup>16)</sup> Polish bilateral development aid for the Balkans accounted for around 5 percent of this total aid in 2007-2009. This share will increase significantly owing to the agreement signed in July 2010 with Republika Srpska in Bosnia, which will be worth significantly more than the total value of aid provided so far. A vast majority of Polish bilateral aid went to Montenegro and Republika Srpska in Bosnia and came from the Polish Ministry of Finance.
- <sup>17)</sup> Total trade exchange between Poland and the Western Balkans in 2009 was worth less than 740 million euros. Its level before the crisis in 2008 was one billion euros. For the sake of comparison, Poland's trade exchange with the tiny Estonia in 2009 reached almost 520 million euros, and with Latvia almost 700 million euros. It is worth reflecting upon the fact that it takes the same time to go by car from Warsaw to Tallinn as to Belgrade. Moreover, Poland's south (Silesia) is after Warsaw the best-developed part of the country and is located much closer to the Balkans.

<sup>18)</sup> Again, for comparison, Poland's share in the trade balance of Estonia is almost 4 percent.

<sup>19)</sup> The share of Poland in Croatia's trade balance is approximately 1.5 percent. Poland's trade exchange with Croatia is definitely the largest as compared to other Western Balkan countries. The value of Polish investments in the Western Balkans is also the highest in Croatia. According to the National Bank of Poland, they are worth over 40 million euros. The investments were almost twice the present value several years ago. However, the largest Polish investor withdrew from Croatia. In turn, according to Croatian data, total Croatian investments in Poland on 1 June 2010 reached a level close to 120 million euros, i.e. almost 6 percent of Croatian investments abroad. Between 1997 and 2001, Poland was the first investment market for Croatia (over ¾ of investments). Poles are also one of the most numerous group of foreign tourists (accounting for around 5 percent of all foreign tourists). Their number is growing at the fastest rate from among the citizens of countries who spend their holidays by the Adriatic Sea most frequently. Meanwhile tourism generates around 20 percent of Croatia's GDP.

<sup>20)</sup> This group includes also Poland, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Romania.

<sup>21)</sup> Ukraine's centre of gravity is located in the south-eastern part of the country, near the Black Sea or in its immediate vicinity (Donbas, Dnipropetrovsk-Zaporizhia). This region produces the greatest share of Ukraine's GDP; it has the highest population density and is the most urbanised.

<sup>22)</sup> A. Górska, *Dokąd zmierzasz Ukraino?*, Warsaw 2005.

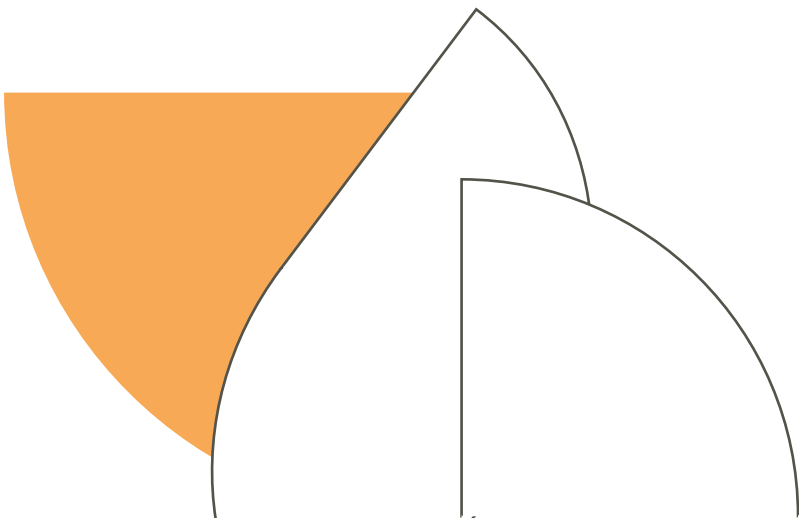
<sup>23)</sup> Generally, Poland has proportionally the least number of foreign students among EU member states (around 0.5 percent of all students). Around 2,700 Ukrainians were studying at Polish universities in 2008. Very few Ukrainians are studying abroad (0.9 percent of all students). Only around 10 percent of Ukrainians studying abroad are studying in Poland. There are very few students from Moldova and Georgia in Poland. UNESCO, Global Education Digest 2010, [http://www.uis.unesco.org/template/pdf/ged/2009/GED\\_2010\\_EN.pdf](http://www.uis.unesco.org/template/pdf/ged/2009/GED_2010_EN.pdf)

<sup>24)</sup> Poland occupies one of the lowest positions among donors of development aid. According to the OECD's data, this aid accounted for as little as 0.08 percent of Poland's GDP in 2009. For comparison, Portugal, which is only slightly wealthier than Poland, offered 0.24 percent of its GDP in development aid. In 2007-2009, Poland offered only USD55 million as part of bilateral development aid to Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova. This amount accounted for a little over 15 percent of such aid in total.

<sup>25)</sup> According to the Ukrainian statistical office's data, Polish investments in Ukraine as of 1 October 2010 reached approximately USD 940 million (over 2 percent of foreign investments in Ukraine). In fact this share is higher, since a significant part of investments from Cyprus and the British Virgin Islands – a total of approximately ¼ of foreign investments – come in reality mostly from

Ukraine. Obviously, conditions of doing business in Ukraine are very difficult (high corruption and bureaucracy), but other EU member states (e.g. Austria) do not give up and invest. Poland's share in the trade exchange of Ukraine in 2010 (first half of the year) reached almost 4 percent and shrank significantly in comparison to 2008 (5 percent). According to Polish sources, Ukrainian investments in Poland are at a level of 290 million euros. It can be estimated that they account for approximately 5 percent of Ukraine's foreign investments. Over 2.9 million Poles visited Ukraine in 2009, accounting for over 12 percent of tourists visiting Ukraine.

<sup>261</sup>In 2007-2010, the Polish prime minister has visited the Czech Republic eight times (over 10 percent of all foreign visits, including participation in EU summits). The only country the prime minister has visited more frequently at the bilateral level is Germany (nine times).



# 2

## The Czech Republic and the EU Enlargement: Supportive but not Enough?

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The Czech Republic has so far belonged to the camp of countries supportive of the further EU enlargement, judging by both political and popular support, although the political commitment seems to be firmer compared to rather volatile public opinion. This support is explicable by several factors – historical, political, economic and cultural. First of all, the countries that the enlargement policy concerns – with the exception of Turkey – are all in the traditional focus point of the Czech foreign policy. Nevertheless, Turkey's market has gained recently an importance for the Czech companies. The Czech Republic and Poland are countries that can be the real engine for the enlargement process in the years to come. Both countries are successful example of how well the enlargement policy can work. Both are strongly pro-enlargement. Last but not least, the bilateral relations between Poland and the Czech Republic are excellent what makes them a potentially strong alliance on this particular issue.

## Background: brief overview of Czech attitudes towards the Balkans, Turkey and Eastern Europe

Some of the countries of Western Balkans, namely Croatia and for a short period Bosnia, shared common history as parts of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Prague was since the Czech revival in 19<sup>th</sup> century the intellectual centre and pole of attraction for Balkan Slavonic nations within the monarchy and beyond, as the first Pan-Slavonic congress in 1848 confirmed. The relations between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia (Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) in the inter-war period were very close, inter alia due to their engagement in the so-called "Little Entente", aimed at preventing Hungarian revisionist and revanchist tendencies. Although after Tito's rupture with Stalin the relations between the countries cooled down, his condemnation of 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia was always highly appreciated by the Czech dissidents. Also, during the wars in Yugoslavia in the first half of 1990's, the Czech diplomacy played an active role in the region, with Jiří Dienstbier, the former federal minister of foreign affairs, being appointed a special UN envoy for human rights in former Yugoslavia. During the conflict the Czech Republic has witnessed an influx of asylum seekers from the region, although not as dramatic as to other countries such as Austria or Sweden. Prior to the Kosovo air campaign, the then minister of foreign affairs Jan Kavan came up with a proposal aiming at averting the NATO strike against Serbia, the so-called Czech-Greek initiative. Until recently, the Kosovo contingent as part of KFOR mission was the biggest-ever Czech military deployment abroad. All of these points are to underline that the Western Balkans is politically a very important region for the Czech Republic, which translates into an unequivocal support for the inclusion of all the countries in the European integration project.

As for Eastern European countries that currently fall under the Eastern Partnership project, the situation was somewhat different in 1990's. The focus of the Czech diplomacy on the NATO

and EU accession, as well as on the good neighbourly relations, the Balkans and fostering of the Transatlantic relations (the latter ultimately linked to the desire to join the NATO) resulted in a retrenchment of the Czech diplomacy in Eastern Europe, further enhanced by the image of weak, inward-looking Russia under Yeltsin's leadership. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, also the economic relations were very much re-oriented to Western Europe, especially Germany, which became the main market for Czech exporters. A clear illustration of the priority of the EU accession to relations with the Eastern European countries was a de facto overnight termination of visa free regimes in 2000 and subsequent introduction of visas for the citizens of all the ex-Soviet countries. The renaissance of the Czech Eastern policy thus comes only at the time of the EU accession and is partially explicable by several factors. One of them is the resurgence of Russia under Putin and its increasingly assertive style vis-à-vis its neighbours, which seems to contest the presumption of the Czech diplomacy in 1990's that the countries such as Ukraine or Moldova will be naturally gravitating towards the EU. The other factor links to the Czech Republic seeing itself as a promotor of human rights and democracy agenda, which seems to be evolving into one of the patterns of its foreign policy and a niche that the country pursues through different channels, including the EU. Eastern Europe is a natural arena where such policy is being pursued perhaps most vigorously. Finally, rising activism of the Czech foreign policy in Eastern Europe has to do with many pragmatic considerations and economic diplomacy, including the rediscovery of Eastern European markets as potentially interesting for the Czech businesses, as well as energy, where Eastern Europe (and Ukraine in particular) remains the key for the Czech energy security. The ultimate expression of the "comeback" of the Czech Eastern policy was the launch of Eastern partnership as a new dimension of European Neighbourhood Policy, under the Czech EU Presidency, in May 2009. The launch of this initiative was preceded by several years of intensive negotiations with the Visegrad partners, some other like minded EU member states (such as Germany or the Baltic countries) and finally also with some more sceptical EU members (especially those preferring the Mediterra-

nean dimension of the neighbourhood policy or those who were fearing that the Eastern Partnership could alienate Russia). By trying to elevate this issue to the EU level, the Czech Republic moreover proved another factor: Eastern partnership is a sign of the Czech ambition to identify its added value also for the European foreign policy, where the Eastern policy fits most, due to specific knowledge of the region. The Russian – Georgian crisis of August 2008 and the strong condemnation of what was seen as the Russian attempt to undermine pro-Western inclination of Georgia as well as its territorial integrity was then instrumental into parachuting the Eastern partnership as the top external relations priority of the Czech EU presidency in the first half of 2009.

As far as Turkey is concerned, there are no strong historical, political, societal or cultural links with the Czech Republic. As a result, Turkey is not a priority for the Czech foreign policy, unlike the other two regions mentioned. On the contrary, this could be an advantage as well – as the mutual relations are short of mutual grievances or prejudices, which the EU accession process is sometimes hostage to.

## Political and public attitudes: stability vs. change?

The Czech political system was considered relatively stable in terms of parties represented in the Parliament, until the general election in 2010 which witnessed a huge slap for two most established political parties – Civic Democratic Party (ODS) as a major right wing party and Social Democratic Party (CSSD) as the main force of the Czech left, both of whom scored record low gains. The election brought two new parties to the Parliament: TOP09 (Tradition, Responsibility, Prosperity), a pro-European centre-right party led by Karel Schwarzenberg, current Minister of Foreign Affairs, and centrist, rather populist Public Affairs Party led by former journalist and current Minister of Interior Radek John. On the contrary, two parties were ousted

from the Parliament: neither traditional centre-right Christian Democratic Party (KDU-CSL), nor a relatively new Green Party (SZ) passed the 5% threshold.

Despite what was described as the Czech political earthquake, not much gives grounds to believe that the overall attitude of political elites towards the enlargement would have changed. Albeit some foreign policy issues can be extremely divisive in the Czech context (such as the missile defence project, participation in foreign missions, relations with Russia etc.), the EU enlargement has thus far been a very consensual issue. It enjoys strong support by all the parliamentary political parties (including the Communist party), although attitudes vis-à-vis particular candidates (especially Turkey) might vary. The only possible unknown is the attitude of the Public Affairs Party (VV) which is considered to be rather populist and ready to swing with the public opinion on some issues; the party as the only one in the government for example articulates its opposition to the Turkish membership in the EU. On many of foreign policy issues its position is not very pronounced, so it is something to be watched for.

The support for the enlargement is a bit more difficult when it comes down to the Czech public opinion. Generally it remains supportive, but extremely volatile and less enthusiastic than in other countries of the region, particularly when compared to the neighbours that joined the EU along with the Czech Republic – Poland, Slovakia and Hungary, whose citizens are consistently among the top supporters of further expansion of the Union. Some figures to illustrate this: in the autumn of 2009, according to Eurobarometer 72, 63% of Czechs favoured further enlargement while 31% opposed it<sup>28</sup>, which made the Czech public opinion the fourth most enthusiastic about further enlargement across the EU (after Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia and along with Spain). This was an increase compared to only 54% of Czechs supporting enlargement in the spring of 2009 (Eurobarometer 71) and 39% opposing it<sup>29</sup>. However, the most recent poll, released in November 2010 shows that only 46% of Czechs support the enlargement while 45% oppose it, which accounts

for an incredible 17% drop in support over less than a year and putting the proponents and opponents almost at a pair.

Although no specific poll on the support for individual candidate countries has been carried since 2008<sup>30</sup>, one can assume that, as well as in case of political representation, the support will vary significantly for different countries at stake. The quoted last poll not surprisingly suggests that the prosperous countries of Western Europe enjoy the biggest support of the Czechs: Switzerland 89%, Norway 86% and Iceland 76%. The same goes for Croatia (73%), the most popular destination of the Czech holidaymakers. The support for other countries of Western Balkans and Turkey is radically lower: Montenegro 50%, Macedonia 43%, Bosnia and Herzegovina 38%, Serbia 36%, Turkey 34%, Kosovo 27% and Albania 25%. An interesting observation is that the Czech support for Ukraine in this poll (41%) is higher than for many countries in Western Balkans, despite the fact that Ukraine is not even a candidate country and the Czech government has never made a strong endorsement in favour of explicitly granting Ukraine official EU candidacy.

The Czech Republic's support for enlargement might be significantly enhanced by two additional factors. One of them was the appointment of Stefan Füle, former Minister for European Affairs and senior career diplomat, as the enlargement and neighbourhood policy commissioner. Unlike his predecessor Vladimir Spidla, it seems that Füle will be keener on keeping strong working relations with the Czech political representation and administration, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which might give the Czech diplomacy a higher outreach at least to the Commissioner's cabinet and more informal influence over the enlargement and ENP portfolios. But Füle seems to be open to a dialogue with the capitals as well, as he is aware that the enlargement agenda cannot be decoupled from the domestic situation and debates in the member states. The second particular Czech factor was the fact that the Czech Republic was the engine behind the so-called "Friends of the Enlargement" group or the so-called "Tallinn" group, an informal grouping of like-minded countries favouring further EU enlargement. The group involves most of the new

EU member states, the UK, Italy, Spain and Portugal and meets regularly twice a year at the level of directors of departments concerned with the enlargement agenda in the foreign ministries of participating countries. The main focus is on the Balkan countries and Turkey, and topical issues pertinent to enlargement are being discussed such as for instance visa liberalisation or opening of the accession negotiations with Macedonia. The Czech foreign ministry recognizes this as a very useful platform for co-ordination of positions and exchange of opinions for the EU-27 format negotiations. Whether the group of like-minded countries will make difference at the EU-level yet remains to be seen but it seems that the Czech diplomacy remains committed to it.

The possible stalemate in the enlargement process is viewed negatively by the Czech political representation. In relation to the Balkans, the Czechs are afraid of possible backlash to the nationalism of 1990's and renewed ethnic tensions, resulting in further instability, particularly in Bosnia and in Kosovo. Bringing the region as the whole to the EU is seen as the only feasible way of eliminating the regional hostilities. In relation to Turkey, the Czechs are afraid of losing a potentially strong ally in the strategically important region and bridge to the Muslim world, and further more as an increasingly important and assertive player in regions of a traditional importance for the Czech foreign policy, such as the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Black Sea. In relation to Eastern Europe, the Czechs are afraid of decreasing importance of the EU and rising influence of Russia. Generally, the arguments pertinent to further enlargement are broader and more strategic in nature.

Regarding the attitudes that can be perceived as the main challenges for the enlargement process, neither "enlargement fatigue" nor "integration capacity" is considered to be a problem by the Czech politicians and diplomacy. The issue of integration capacity at the institutional and decision-making level was from this perspective sorted out by the Lisbon Treaty. Even part of the Czech political representation on the right, particularly the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), prefers enlargement to deepening, or at least does not see an inherent incompatibility between the two processes (TOP09, but even the Social Democrats – CSSD). Sig-

nificant part of ODS considered its agreement to the Lisbon Treaty *inter alia* as a trade-off to unblocking obstacles to further widening (although it was not the most important argument). Large part of ODS is also inclined to supporting the idea of flexible integration with a group of countries integrating more closely in certain policy areas and enabling others to stay out, which can make further enlargement more acceptable by countries fearing that the newcomers will be slowing down the integration pace.

Also, the prevailing attitude among the Czech political elite is that enlargement fatigue is wrongly linked to the public opinion – while the reluctance of EU citizens is often quoted as the obstacle for backing further EU expansion politically, the European public opinion on a longer run is moderately in favour of enlargement, despite the recent poll (Eurobarometer 73) which for the first time twisted the percentage of opponents to be higher than that of the supporters. Yet even the Czech leadership cannot neglect the recent negative developments in the Eurozone (issue of Greek and Irish bail outs and further amendments of the Treaties allowing for permanent crisis mechanism currently, in a sense that the EU will yet again be more inward looking in search of finding a solution to its internal problems. This might, however, create an opportunity for countries outside of Eurozone (such as Poland and the Czech Republic) to be the drivers of the enlargement process (along with the European Commission), as they will be less consumed by the discussions on the future of economic governance.

A recognition by the Czech diplomacy of the current problems of the enlargement is certainly a positive development. But probably, a more creative thinking in terms of overcoming the crisis of the enlargement process is needed on part of the Czech political establishment.

## The Western Balkans

The Western Balkans played an important role in the Czech foreign policy since independence of the country in 1993. Due to historical reasons, geographical proximity and cultural close-

ness, the Czech Republic has always been engaged in the developments in the region. During the course of 1990's, it was actively involved in search for solutions to the conflicts and also participated in peacekeeping and stabilisation missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo. Following the stabilisation of the situation, it has been providing development aid and supported political, economic and social transition of the Western Balkans countries. Priority countries for Czech development cooperation in the region are Serbia (2008 -7.8 million USD, 2007 - 9.4 million USD) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (2008 - 3.3 million USD, 2007 - 2.6 million USD). Other countries of the region receive only around 0.5 million USD per year on small local projects.

From economic point of view, currently Western Balkans do not represent important region for economic cooperation. According to the Czech foreign trade statistics from 2009, the mutual trade turnover with Croatia accounted for €394 million<sup>31</sup>, thus ranking as the 38th trading partner (27th in export) and representing less than 2 percent of the total volume of Czech foreign trade. Given the fact that Croatia is bilaterally the most important trade partner of the Czech Republic in the region, this illustrates low intensity of economic relations. Although the current exchange of goods and service is not very high, the region is considered being potentially very important for the Czech business interests. It is however rather a long-term wish than reality based on figures. The biggest Czech company, CEZ (Czech Energy Company) planned to invest hugely to the region. Unfortunately, 1.5 billion EUR worth investment in Bosnia and Herzegovina was withdrawn due to unwillingness of Republika Srpska government to stick to its commitments, 3.5 billion EUR potential investment (in consortium) in Kosovo is not considered anymore due to the change of conditions by Kosovo government and also other potential investments in Serbia and Montenegro were re-considered. The only one completed investment in Albania worth 102 million EUR is according to the company officials problematic. Other investments are not worth mentioning (as of beginning of 2009 - cumulative investments - Serbia 7.5 million EUR, Croatia 3.6 million EUR, Bosnia and Herzegovina 3.2 million EUR, Macedonia 1.8 million EUR).

As for the public attitudes to the region, on a long run they were rather positive, although varying from country to country. However, in 2010 we can witness quite a sharp decline in the support for further enlargement among Czech citizens, including the Western Balkans. Only in case of Croatia the support remains high – around 73 percent of Czechs supports its integration into the EU (together with Slovakia and Hungary, the highest support in the EU) which is actually higher number than in Croatia itself. On the other hand only 25 percent of Czechs are in favour of Albanian accession, while 64 percent are against<sup>32</sup>. Without further analysis, we can only speculate what is behind this fall of Czech support towards continuing enlargement. What we observe in this point is the “Europeanization” of the Czech public opinion – a tendency of opinions on enlargement converging with that of the citizens in the old EU. The consequences of economic crises (e.g. help to Greece) probably affected it as well. The discrepancy between countries is given by the very positive image of Croatia that is traditionally the most popular destination for Czech holidaymakers (around 600.000 yearly) and very negative image of Albanians living in the Czech Republic (although substantial part of them coming from Kosovo) who are associated with the organized crime and trafficking in humans and drugs (although this perception can be based on stereotypes and some publicly known cases from nineties rather than on reality).

Although the new official strategy of the Czech foreign policy has not been adopted, according to the Policy Statement of the new Czech government (July 2010), the Western Balkans and especially its integration into the EU belong to the top four priorities of the new government in the area of CFSP. Already during the Presidency, enlargement was one of the three main sub-priorities in the area of foreign relations (Europe in the world). Due to other reasons (financial and economic crisis, Slovenia blockage of the accession negotiations with Croatia and resistance of other states), the Czech presidency was not so successful, however the major steps toward visa liberalisation with Western Balkans countries were undertaken. The Czech Republic also received Albanian membership application (April 2009) and facilitated the Montenegrin application process (Montenegro applied already during the French Presidency in December 2008).

The Czech Republic is absolutely convinced that the future of Western Balkans lies in the EU and stably supports the Thessaloniki process aiming at the integration of the Western Balkan countries to the EU. The Czech government strongly backed the visa liberalisation process and opening of the accession negotiations with as many countries of the region as possible. The historical experience of the Czech Republic with its own accession process shows that a huge part of work is done only in the phase of the accession negotiations when the pressure to implement necessary reforms is much higher than in previous phases. However, the Policy Statement of the Czech government stresses that every candidate state shall comply with all the current accession criteria. This formulation also shows that the Government is refusing the imposition of any new criteria in the accession of Western Balkans countries.

During the EU Presidency, the Czech Republic tried to facilitate negotiations between Slovenia and Croatia to unblock stalemate in negotiations with Croatia. Thus it has very warmly welcomed the solution agreed among them earlier this year to settle the bilateral dispute. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is pushing for the quick conclusion of the accession negotiations with Croatia as it would like to have the accession treaty signed in course of 2011. The Ministry would like to observe similar progress between Greece and Macedonia as this would enable opening of the accession negotiations with Macedonia, which is highly supported. Similarly, the Czech Republic would probably support quick opening of the accession negotiations with Montenegro and in case of implementing "practical approach towards Kosovo" also with Serbia. In case of Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the approach of the Government is more cautious and signalise only the readiness to assist the countries in the preparations for EU membership.

Although the question of the EU enlargement to the Western Balkans is not being discussed at a political level, it has no opponents among the political and social elite (difference from Turkey). We can observe diverging opinions on the question of Kosovo independence recognition. While the President Václav

Klaus, biggest opposition party Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD) and even the then coalition party Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL) were against recognizing Kosovo, the Czech government decided to do so, although two to three month later than most of the other EU member states that did so. However, this is not affecting the official Czech policy towards Kosovo, and the Czech Republic for example officially supports launch of the visa dialogue that should lead to lifting the visas for this last remaining country from the region.

## The Eastern Partnership countries

For both the Czech political representation and diplomacy, the relationship with the EU Eastern neighbours is decoupled from the enlargement agenda, which reflects the current consensus in the EU that there is no will to give a membership perspective to the Eastern partnership countries. However, the long-term goal of the Czech foreign policy is to offer the Eastern neighbours full-fledged membership – in fact it is considered to be one of the strategic priorities, particularly with respect to Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. These countries are particularly important for the Czech foreign policy from different perspectives. Ukraine has the largest migrant diaspora not only among the Eastern partnership countries, but the biggest foreign community altogether, according to estimates exceeding 200,000 people (including those residing illegally). Georgia has become the flagship of Czech democracy policy as well as development assistance, especially after the August 2008 war with Russia. For instance in 2010, Georgia parachuted to be the second largest recipient of the Czech official development assistance (ODA) after Afghanistan. The Czech company Energo-Prois one of the largest foreign investors in Georgia. The cumulative Czech direct investment in this country has reached 340 million USD this year. Politically, the Czech Republic participates in an informal grouping “New Group of Friends of Georgia”<sup>33</sup>, whose task is to facilitate Georgia’s accession to both the EU and NATO and support it in its efforts of reintegration of the breakaway provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which became particularly one

of the Czech objectives in the framework of the EU presidency. Moldova also ranks among the priority countries of the Czech development co-operation as one of the so-called programme countries, i.e. the highest category of partner countries with its own development programme. The Czech Republic is a member of the informal EU Group of Friends of Moldova. Besides, the Czech Republic, the Group is composed of 14 EU member states (Austria, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Sweden, Hungary, Poland, Romania, France, Germany, Britain, Slovakia, Slovenia and Italy). The Group has more modest agenda than “the New Group of Friends of Georgia”, focusing on the approximation between the EU and Moldova and not the accession.

The Czech Republic was one of the initiators of the Eastern Partnership (EaP), and this is still considered to be one of the cornerstones of renewed Czech Eastern policy. Very close co-operation with Poland (despite previous competition) in the initial stage of launching the initiative and during the Czech EU presidency pre-determines active involvement of both partners and most probably will be a driving force even in the future, particularly under the Polish EU presidency. The thematic priorities of the Eastern partnership already reflect long-term priorities of the Czech foreign policy for the region. Democracy and good governance already is object of the Czech MFA Transition programme: four out of the six EaP countries (Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Georgia) are eligible for funding under this programme<sup>34</sup>. Energy security is something that will be mentioned latter in relation to Turkey, and as the current transit gas route across Ukraine is still key for the Czech energy security, it will still play a pivotal role for some time to come. The Czech import through the Druzba gas pipeline accounts still for over 70% of the Czech consumption, although steps to build pipelines that would join the Czech pipeline system to both Nord Stream and Nabucco have been undertaken. The economic integration through free trade agreements and regulatory convergence (ideally following the European Economic Area model) is believed to be the best way of anchoring the Eastern neighbours functionally with the EU and can provide the necessary interim step before the full membership can be put on the ta-

ble. But the Czech Republic remains somewhat sceptical that the EU will be able to make a very generous offer to Eastern neighbours in sensitive areas, such as labour market access or agriculture. Finally, the visa liberalisation could probably be the easiest of such short-term interim steps that would provide clear benefits to Eastern neighbours. Although the Czech Republic rhetorically fully endorses such process, the truth is that the Czech consular practice in many of the countries at stake is judged to be among the worst<sup>35</sup>, at least among the Central and Eastern European EU members. This report shows, inter alia, that the application for the Schengen visas at the Czech consulates in the four countries examined (Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Russia) takes the longest to process out of nine EU member states under examination, and has even prolonged by five days compared to 2005, despite the visa facilitation agreements with Ukraine, Russia and Moldova. The key to the success of EU's policy in Eastern neighbourhood is from the Czech perspective thus not a swift recognition of the countries' right to EU membership, but rather small but tangible steps towards EU integration. The Czech Republic should strive to have tangible outcomes in 2011 in this respect, under the Hungarian and Polish presidencies, such as for instance progress in negotiations in free trade agreements or towards visa liberalisation.

## Turkey

Unlike the Western Balkans or to a lesser extent Eastern Europe, Turkey is not a high priority for the Czech foreign policy either bilaterally or in terms of the enlargement agenda. This is explicable by several factors: absence of a Turkish minority in the Czech Republic (unlike in neighbouring Germany and Austria), absence of historical memories of Ottoman dominance (unlike the Balkans or Hungary) or absence of historically strong economic ties. Despite the latter, the trade relations exhibit quite a strong dynamics: Turkey is a priority country for the Czech export, the trade turnover reaching 1.7 billion USD in 2008. In terms of the Czech exports, Turkey occupied the 21<sup>st</sup> place as the export destination, while the Czech Republic ranked in the 30<sup>th</sup> place in Turkish for-

ign trade, accounting for 0.7% of Turkish exports. The balance of mutual trade exchange is negative for the Czech Republic with the saldo of almost 200 million USD in 2008, compared to 2004 when the balance was positive for the Czech Republic, and having tripled compared to 2007. The trade turnover has by grown more than 80% between 2004 and 2008. Some Czech companies, namely CEZ, have also shown growing interest in the Turkish energy market. In February 2009, CEZ acquired one of the electricity distribution networks in Turkey (formerly state-owned SEDAS), worth 600 million USD . Other activities include plans to build a steamgas power station near the Syrian border (Hatay province), or construction of three hydroelectricity plants in South-Eastern Turkey (Himmerli, Gokkaya and Bulam) worth 120 million €. On the contrary, CEZ was not successful in three other tenders for acquisition of power distribution companies. The CEZ investments in Turkish energy sector are supposed to account to at least 3 billion USD between 2008 and 2013. However, the most recent remarks in the Czech press show that CEZ might actually be limiting its investments abroad, which might concern Turkey, although it has not been confirmed by the company management. Another important Czech investment in Turkey was the \$610 million sale of Eczacibasi Generic Pharmaceuticals to the Czech drug maker Zentiva in 2007.

Despite these encouraging economic figures, Turkey does not feature prominently as a topic either in the political or public debates, apart from few exposed moments such as the opening of the accession negotiations or recent remarks of growing activism of Turkish foreign policy (clash with Israel over the Gaza Strip blockade, proposal of the nuclear swap with Iran etc.). One interesting observation in the Czech case is that there is a striking discrepancy between the attitude of the political representation and diplomacy on one hand, and the public opinion on the other.

The Czech political parties generally support the accession of Turkey. The actively opposed political parties involve the Public Affairs party (Věci veřejné), currently one of the coalition partners, but its position not being very nuanced as it is a newcomer to the Czech politics. Another opponent is the Christian Democratic Party (KDU-CSL) which

prefers – probably following the model of its German sister party CDU – privileged partnership, but the party failed in 2010 general election and is not represented in the Parliament (with the exception of four senators in the upper house, but in terms of political leverage insignificant). However, the motives underpinning the political support for Turkish membership diverge. For ODS it is viewed as an opportunity to enhance inter-governmental approach to the EU, avert attempt of quick deepening of integration and revise some of the more costly EU policies (especially Common Agricultural Policy). For the Left (represented mainly by the Social Democrats), the Turkish membership is viewed as the endorsement of the idea of open, inclusive Europe, bridge to the Middle East and the Muslim world in general and as an example of compatibility of Islam and democracy. With a bit of simplification, it seems that the dominant forces to the Left and of the Right seem to support Turkish membership for opposing reasons which makes the consensus a fragile one. It is thus possible that the eventual Czech government's position will be very much determined by pragmatic considerations (such as what will be the implications for the EU budget, or what possible benefits could the Turkish membership bring to the Czech businesses, as well as possible risks stemming from the opening of labour markets etc.).

Interestingly enough, the public attitudes correlate rather with Western Europe than with the other Central and Eastern European countries. The majority of population rejects the idea of Turkish membership, although the very recent opinion polls are not available. In the latest special poll on the EU enlargement – Eurobarometer 69 in the spring 2008 – only 34% of the Czechs were backing the Turkish membership, although the support went higher to 43% when asked what the position would be if Turkey fulfilled all the criteria. Still even under this condition a majority – 49% – of the Czechs were opposing it. There was no major development that would give ground for any substantial shift since then. The public debate on Turkey is virtually non-existent – there are only very few non-state actors that take up the issue of Turkish accession, and not on a systematic basis. The most visible platform – Association for European Values – has shifted from being founded on the opposition to Turkish membership to broader issues of the future of the European Union<sup>36</sup>.

Nevertheless, there are areas in which Turkey and the Czech Republic can be very important for each other in the near future, besides dynamically growing trade links and Czech interests in the Turkish energy sector. The most important one is the energy security, which is quickly becoming one of the top priorities of the Czech diplomacy and where Turkey naturally plays a key role. The Czech government has been strongly backing Nabucco and is aware of the instrumental role Turkey plays in both East-West and North-South new energy corridors aimed at diversifying the transit routes. Secondly, there is a strong role of Turkey in NATO. This second element is more likely to be more important for right-wing governments because of presumably strengthening the Atlanticist element in the European security architecture, but even this might not be taken for granted. Turkey is also an increasingly important actor in the Balkans and in the Black Sea region, both being highly important areas for the Czech foreign policy, so closer co-operation in the first case and the inclusion of Turkey in Eastern Partnership are in the interest of the Czech Republic as well. On the contrary, the Czech Republic can be an asset for Turkish accession process because of several reasons. One is the strong adherence to “Pacta sunt servanda” principle, articulated at the highest level by former Prime Minister Topolánek’s visit in Ankara in October 2008, ruling out any alternatives to full-fledged membership. Similarly, the Czech politicians and diplomacy strictly adhere to the principle of not creating any additional membership criteria, and oppose to holding the progress in negotiations hostage to bilateral dispute with some member states (namely Cyprus).

## The Czech Republic and Poland – the real engine of the enlargement?

The Czech Republic and Poland are countries that can be the real engine for the enlargement process in the years to come. Firstly, both are successful example of how well the enlargement policy can work: after initial problems, they managed to

mainstream themselves in the EU decision making perhaps most assertively from the EU newcomers. The Czech Republic has already learnt its lesson from the EU presidency and Poland is awaiting this role in the second half of 2011. Poland under the government of Civil Platform (PO) is acting as a big EU member state, by building coalitions with both the old, new, big and small member states and influencing the EU decision making in a variety of policy areas, including foreign policy. Secondly, both countries are strongly pro-enlargement. They have a potential of leading the pro-enlargement camp, which would include the Visegrad group, the Baltic countries, the Balkan new EU members (Bulgaria and Romania) as well as some others (UK, Spain, Italy, Sweden) and which would increase their leverage inside the EU. Also the fact that the relations between Poland and the Czech Republic are excellent – in fact encounter zero problems – makes them a potentially strong alliance even on this particular issue. Both countries are also likely to be less consumed by the internal issues that occupy the decision-makers in the Eurozone, for which reason they will be potentially less inward looking and more engaged with both the candidate countries and Eastern neighbours. Based on this assessment of the potential of Polish – Czech co-operation in the area of enlargement vis-à-vis the Balkans and the Eastern Partnership countries, we can make the following recommendations:

- ◆ Poland and the Czech Republic should use their political leverage not only to keep the enlargement on the agenda, but to exert pressure on more reluctant member states. Especially they should strongly refuse any attempts to introduce “new conditionality” in the enlargement process and require the commitment to “pacta sunt servanda” principle.
- ◆ Enlargement is one of the few areas of external relations where there is a strong role of the rotating presidency. For this reason both the enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy/Eastern Partnership should be the priorities of the Polish presidency in the second half of 2011. This should be also for reasons of continuity as the enlargement is going to be among top priorities of the Hungarian presidency,

and the momentum should be kept. The synergy with enlargement/ENP commissioner Füle, who seems to be accessible for voices from particularly Central European capitals, should be used to the maximum possible extent.

- ◆ Poland and the Czech Republic should make efforts to avoid the accession negotiations being hostage of the bilateral disputes and the candidate countries for the future, especially in Western Balkans after Croatia joins. They should push for the new negotiation framework once the talks with other candidates are launched, so that they cannot be blocked in chapters which are not directly linked to the dispute at stake. For this reason, a special negotiating chapter should be introduced, which will tackle possible issues of the candidate country and its neighbours separately.
- ◆ Poland and the Czech Republic should make efforts to include in future accession treaties a special clause which would prevent the acceding countries to block future negotiations with future negotiating countries as a whole on basis of unsettled bilateral disputes. Such clause should be fully subject to scrutiny of the Court of Justice of the European Union and should give the Commission the power to bring an infringement procedure against the member state at stake.
- ◆ Both Poland and the Czech Republic have excellent experience with regional co-operation, especially in the Visegrad group. They should offer the experience with Visegrad co-operation to Balkan countries gathered in the Regional Co-operation Council (RCC). A permanent interaction between the RCC and Visegrad could be introduced, for instance by inviting the Visegrad participants to the RCC meetings as observers. Also, the support for the regional co-operation could become one of the priorities of the International Visegrad Fund for Western Balkan countries.
- ◆ Poland and the Czech Republic's support for Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine should not be limited only to development assistance, but also to the support of civil society, which has the potential of remaining the main driving force behind the

reforms necessary to move those countries closer to the EU and generating the bottom up pressure on their governments to meet EU conditionality.

- ◆ Poland and the Czech Republic should make maximum possible effort to help Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine to achieve tangible benefits from the EU before the offer of membership can be put on the table. They should push for an introduction of visa free regimes with them and a quick negotiation and implementation of association agreements and deep and comprehensive free trade agreements.
- ◆ In relation to Turkey, the Polish presidency should equilibrate what is likely to be a harsh stance of Cyprus during the presidency trio. Poland could offer good services to mediate between Turkey and Cyprus on the issue of the customs union and direct trade with Northern Cyprus.

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<sup>281</sup> For full report please refer to: [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb72/eb72\\_vol1\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb72/eb72_vol1_en.pdf) (data on the enlargement pg. 232 – 235)

<sup>291</sup> For full report please refer to: [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb71/eb71\\_std\\_part1.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb71/eb71_std_part1.pdf) (data on the enlargement pg. 159 – 161)

<sup>301</sup> The latest data on support for individual candidate countries is contained in Eurobarometer 69: [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb69/eb69\\_cz\\_nat.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb69/eb69_cz_nat.pdf). The most comprehensive poll dedicated specifically to enlargement was Eurobarometer 255 from 2006: [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_255\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_255_en.pdf)

<sup>311</sup> Source: Czech Statistical Office

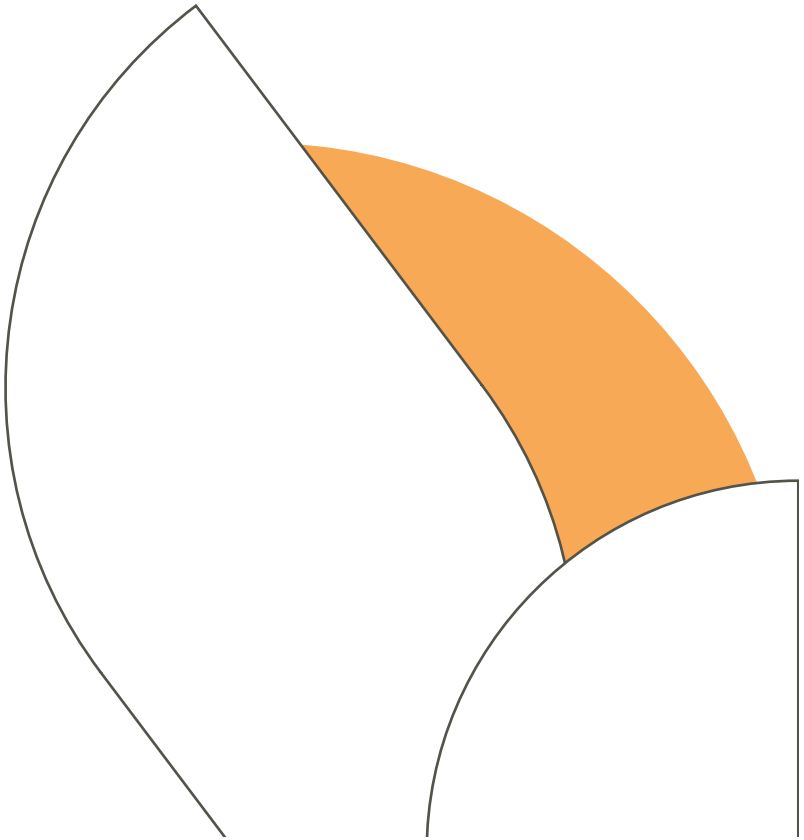
<sup>321</sup> For full report please refer to: [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb69/eb69\\_annexes.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb69/eb69_annexes.pdf) (data on the enlargement pg. 1563– 166)

<sup>331</sup> This group includes also Poland, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Romania, and regularly US representatives and EU Special Representative for South Caucasus Peter Semneby participate in its meetings.

<sup>34)</sup> For more information on this programme, please refer to [http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/foreign\\_relations/human\\_rights/transition\\_promotion\\_program/index.html](http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/foreign_relations/human_rights/transition_promotion_program/index.html)

<sup>35)</sup> For details, see for instance the report of the Batory Foundation: Changes in the Visa Policies in EU Member States, a new monitoring report of 2009.

<sup>36)</sup> For a more detailed and nuanced analysis of the Czech debate on Turkey, please refer to Král, Kazmierkiewicz: Turkey and Ukraine: Wanted or Not? Central European Reflections of Their EU Membership Perspectives, EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy (2006)



# 3

## The EU Enlargement: In Search of A New Momentum

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EU enlargement is running out of steam. The EU deals with a residual enlargement agenda, consisting mainly of Turkey, the countries of the Western Balkans and Iceland. Over the coming years all or most of these nine countries might eventually join the EU. For the EU this does not translate into a grand political project comparable to the big bang eastern enlargement in 2004, which was a fine and successful example of order building in the immediate neighbourhood and a lasting achievement of the Union. Currently, the EU's agenda is dominated by issues of economic governance and economic competitiveness on a global scale and inside the EU as well as by challenges of internal cohesion and strengthening of its capacities as an international actor. The capacity and willingness to absorb new members is reduced compared to the previous round of enlargement. Also most of the current and potential candidates are in a state of transition, economically and politically, and often conflict ridden because of ethnic or other internal and inter-state tensions. Moreover the can-

didates in difference to previous enlargements cannot rely on Germany, the largest EU member state that would act as a genuine driving force of their accession. Therefore, political momentum for enlargement is waning and the EU looks for ways and means to achieve stability and security in its Eastern neighbourhood without the political commitment to take in new members. However, the EU does not shut the door but adopts an enlargement neutral language in communicating its European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) as the lowest common denominator of 27 member states. On this background, Poland and the Czech Republic will have to manage in the next years ongoing negotiations and candidacies and give direction to the EU policy towards neighbours further in the East, like Moldova and Ukraine based on the Europeanization agenda but without the membership perspective.

## 1. Current state of affairs

### **Significance of the Enlargement for the EU**

In 2009 the EU hailed the political success (anchor of stability and driver of liberty and democracy in Europe) and economic benefits (EU now largest integrated market in the world, boost of new member states' economies, new export and investment opportunities for the old member states, increased competitiveness of the EU) of five years of enlargement.<sup>38</sup> However, the positive effects have increasingly become overshadowed by other developments. This includes the negative example of the premature joining of Bulgaria and Romania from which the Member States took the lesson to be on the guard and judge upon the preparedness of candidates for membership in a rigorous way. Moreover, after the enlargement of 2004 the EU was still struggling with treaty revisions (the European Constitution, the Lisbon Treaty) and for the last two years with a deep economic and financial crisis, its repercussions on core policies of the EU such as the internal market and the common currency, as well as with turbulences in the international environment. Given these priority issues, the strategic importance of enlargement ranked

lower than throughout the 1990ies. However, enlargement is not yet slipping off the EU's agenda. This is largely due to the fact that Turkey – the most contested applicant for membership ever – is among the candidate countries.

Against this background in 2006 the EU reached a renewed consensus on enlargement by establishing the “three C” in 2006: consolidation of political commitments, strict conditionality and communication with the citizens in the EU and the candidate countries on the objectives and benefits of widening and acceding to the EU respectively.<sup>39</sup> Based on this agreed position the EU's internal procedures worked smoothly, with the European Commission in the driver's seat. This owes much to the EU's bureaucratic approach. Once, the procedures according to article 49 TEU get started, it helps reduce and work on existing divisions and conflicts of interest between member states and also EU institutions. While the European Parliament is only a commentator on the sidelines, the European Council and Council are central decision-makers. Member states' role as masters of the game is however bound to and limited by the rules for the conduct of accession negotiations. A look at the framework for negotiations with Turkey and Croatia proves the strongly formalised approach in which the Commission is the key and pivot between both, the applicant and the Union.<sup>40</sup> The room for veto players is large, only think of the need to agree unanimously among member states on the definition of benchmarks and thereafter on the opening of one of the 35 negotiation chapters in light of the fulfilment of concrete benchmarks. Probable other veto players, namely in the ratification process, are citizens via referenda in member states. Also the Lisbon treaty strengthens the role of national parliaments as watchdogs with a view to the negotiation process. These provisions and the overall scepticism or negative mood towards enlargement give governments the opportunity to play two level games at home and in the Brussels' arena. Compared to these mainly defensive instruments that can underpin postponement strategies of governments, it is difficult to find actors and means that can really shape and drive the process. However, under the Lisbon treaty the rotating presidency kept its role as chair of the accession conferences on

the part of the member states, so that also the incoming Polish presidency will have the possibility to take initiatives and influence the pace of the negotiations. Working in tandem with the Commissioner for enlargement can be particularly effective. From the first enlargement package under the responsibility of Commissioner Füle one can conclude that the overall realistic tone of the reports (no target dates, no promises, no political linkages) and recommendations and the aim to increase credibility of the enlargement process will strengthen the Commissioner's profile as an actor who takes member states positions as well as those from the EP properly into account.<sup>41</sup> Still the Commission is often suspected of being too soft on the candidates as allegedly in the case of the premature accession of Romania and Bulgaria.

EU institutions now operate within a different context: Since 2007 we observe a politicisation of negotiation processes. It concerns bilateral disputes between a member state and an applicant, as in the cases of Cyprus/Greece and Turkey, Slovenia and Croatia and Greece and Macedonia/the FYROM. They spill over into the negotiations and thus hold up the accession process. For the first time the Commission addressed these disputes explicitly in its strategy paper on enlargement 2009-2010. It reminded all parties concerned of their responsibility to resolve bilateral issues between themselves.<sup>42</sup> This is a concern and warning not to instrumentalise accession negotiations. On this background a new safeguard clause on conflict settlement and mediation procedures in case of future bilateral disputes could be inserted in the next accession treaties, starting with Croatia and Iceland. This would of course also have an effect on incumbent members that will subscribe to the rules via signing the accession treaties. As there is some opposition to that (see France, Slovenia, Cyprus, Greece) the EU-27 will probably expect a unilateral political (legally non-binding) declaration on the part of the new member. However, the issue will be given further consideration by the Commission and member states.

Also, some member states, like Germany and the Netherlands, insist on having a free-range exchange in the Council on the

substance of an application before asking the Commission to prepare its opinion and start the machinery according to article 49 TEU. In the past this was regularly handled in a technical way without further considerations. Meanwhile the Council has proceeded to link its invitation to the Commission to draft its opinion with political statements or repeating its core tenets concerning EU enlargement as in the cases of Montenegro, Iceland and Albania respectively (all 2009): The Council reiterated the European perspective of the Western Balkans while recalling the principle that each applicant country is assessed on its own merits; in the cases of Montenegro and Albania it recalled the need of fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria and the conditions of the Stabilisation and Association process.<sup>43</sup>

The time horizon for further enlargement is vague. After the expected membership of Croatia (and probably Iceland) around 2012/13, it is highly unlikely that the further entries will take place within the next six to eight years, i.e. before 2020 or so. For politicians and policy makers this is a very long period of time. The time horizon plays into the hands of the low profile approach already adopted by the Commission and other principal supporters of further enlargement. Following the rules of consolidation of commitments the list of candidates is made up of the six left over Western Balkan countries (candidates Croatia and Macedonia/FYROM, potential candidates Albania, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo), Turkey plus the EFTA-countries. It is now widely believed that Turkey's membership is still a question of ten to twenty years ahead. Irrespective of the EU's preference for consolidation of commitments there is persistent pressure from neighbouring countries, mainly Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia, to speed up their getting closer to the Union beyond association, i.e. through a membership perspective. The EU is unwilling to go further than the current ambivalent position which means it will neither shut the door nor explicitly invite neighbours from the post-Soviet sphere to join some day and would start preparing a roadmap for their accession. Among the Eastern Partnership countries Moldova is in a special position, first because of its strong links with Romania. Second, compared to Ukraine or Georgia it is geopolitically insignificant, thus easier to extract

from what Moscow perceives as its near abroad. Third, because of its small size Moldova will not challenge the EU's absorption capacity in economic and fiscal terms. Following a German proposal in the framework of bilateral consultations with Russia and then followed by the Deauville summit between Sarkozy, Merkel and Medvedev the Transnistria conflict should be set on a joint EU-Russia agenda.<sup>44</sup> It is now up to the EU in the context of its relations with Russia to work towards a resolution of the conflict and prioritise it as a test case for Russian cooperation. At the same time diplomacy has to be developed that involves the common neighbours Moldova and Ukraine in an appropriate way. Talking with Russia about the common neighbourhood makes inclusive formats and transparent communication indispensable for the EU.

Compared to the Eastern enlargement of 2004/2007 enlargement politics vis-à-vis the Western Balkans is already significantly broadened through the inclusion of a strong post-crisis management and state-building component. The Lisbon treaty and the establishment of the European External Action Service could be used to strengthen synergies between CFSP and Community tools. Much depends on how the Ashton/Füle tandem cooperates and whether they give priority to external action over inter-institutional competition. It can be expected that vis-à-vis Turkey the traditional paradigm of accession negotiations already seems too narrow to take account of Turkey as a foreign policy actor in its own right. Since the accession of the UK in 1973 the EC/EU has not been confronted with a country like Turkey that claims a symmetric relationship at eye level. Ankara's membership would significantly impact on the EU in polity, politics and policy terms. However, the remoteness of Turkey's membership makes the EU institutions refrain from any impact assessments, because these could only be based on very weak and highly disputable premises about both the future EU and the state of Turkish economy, society and state. This is also why the reference to the so-called absorption criterion as part of the renewed consensus on enlargement, which says "the pace of enlargement must take into account the capacity of the Union to absorb new members",<sup>45</sup> is not regarded imminent by most member states. As part of the enlargement

package of November 2010 the Commission announced however to undertake analysis of the EU's absorption capacities in key sectors, so to ensure that the EU is 100 per cent ready before it enlarges to include new countries.<sup>46</sup> These might be reviewed under the Polish presidency.

### **Consequences of a possible stop of the enlargement process**

The EU will never officially declare the end of enlargement. However, a stalemate and practical stop of enlargement is getting close: One principle reason is that negotiations offer ample opportunities for veto players on the EU side. Other reasons are linked to the demanding criteria for membership and the structural weaknesses in political and economic terms of most of the potential candidates. Membership criteria shall ensure 100 per cent preparedness on the part of new members, which the Commission now deems important to gain support of citizens in the EU and applicant countries.<sup>47</sup> With regard to the Western Balkan countries this constellation might lead to a slow down of the (pre) accession process. As long as the process inches forward and the overall framework of (pre-) accession remains intact, there is little risk that Western Balkan countries revise their Western reform course or fall back into war and extreme nationalism. The roadmaps and the competition between the 6 in getting closer to the EU work as factors of stability.

As far as Turkey is concerned a stalemate and halt is already near. In its November 2010 progress report the Commission emphasised that it is urgent for Turkey to fully implement the protocol to the Ankara agreement and to open its ports to Cyprus. It is however very unlikely that Ankara will change course soon. As a consequence the freezing of chapters will be maintained and probably the entire negotiations will come to a halt or suspension. This might even happen in 2011 when Poland holds the Presidency of the Council.<sup>48</sup> A formal suspension is less likely because of the formal procedures and ensuing political drama. For a formal suspension the Council would have to decide by qualified majority – on the initiative of the Commission or one third of member states – on their recommendations to the Inter-

governmental Conference (IGC) to suspend negotiations. The final decision will then be taken by the IGC “in accordance with the Council decision”,<sup>49</sup> which acknowledges that the member states and not Union institutions are masters of the game. However, supporters of suspension would have to make the case, that the discrimination of Cyprus amounts to a “persistent breach in Turkey of the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law on which the Union is founded”.<sup>50</sup> Once accession negotiations with Turkey will get stuck – because the opening of chapters is either frozen due to the Cyprus issue, blocked for political reasons or meets with difficulties due to Turkey’s unpreparedness to open some chapters –, this might have serious implications beyond the specific question of Turkish membership.

Today it is difficult to assess how severe the consequences of a standstill of negotiations with Turkey and stop of enlargement policy itself would be. One can speculate that the impact will either amount to a crisis of European integration or “just” to a crisis of enlargement policy. Certainly external players, like the US or strategic partners like Russia, India, China or Brazil, would perceive such situation and even more so a derailing of negotiations with Ankara as a profound weakness and loss of prestige of the EU as a soft power. It will however be decisive what the EU will make of a probable critical situation. Several dimensions have to be considered: Most likely the political identity of the EU as an open community that is by definition unfinished will be called into question from inside and outside the EU. It will also affect the dynamics of European integration. Indeed, processes of deepening and widening have for long been considered as mutually reinforcing towards ever closer Union. This established pattern of the development of European integration would have to give way to a new one.

More specifically a probable halt of enlargement policy will ring the bells for a post-open-door-period of the EU. Debate on alternatives to enlargement will get a push and more political attention. This concerns the development of ENP and Eastern Partnership in particular, the establishment of strategic partnerships

(e.g. with Turkey, Ukraine and Russia) and also tailored solutions modelled on examples like Norway, Switzerland or the European Economic Area (EEA), as well as the fostering of regional cooperation and integration in the neighbourhood. This would entail a re-direction of ENP from possible paving the way towards full membership in the Eastern Europe towards these or other new types of alignment and association between the EU and the third countries. Up to now these are all variations of a selective opt-in into policies and of obligations without decision-making rights. An early and forceful strategic approach could limit negative perceptions and reactions from third countries, for example the US, with an eye on both the Balkans and Turkey. Risks that the EU will lose these countries are often exaggerated, because neither have real alternatives. Even Ankara's economic and political clout as a soft power in the region is considerably dependent on a working relationship with the EU and its trade and economic integration with the internal market. Thus, the EU has to be innovative and at the same time determined in developing a post enlargement policy for internal and external reasons.

## 2. Main challenges and opportunities standing in front of enlargement

### Reasons for uncertainty

Motives for joining the EU have always been plausible and straight forward. The EU offers applicants attractive governance solutions across policy fields from monetary and economic policy up to environmental and climate policy. Membership multiplies the political clout of all countries – big or small – wishing to join. The EU's broad *acquis* even increases its attractiveness, in particular for countries, that need a comprehensive programme of transformation and reform for which adaptation to the *acquis* and the EU's accompanying pre-accession activities offer the script plus practical assistance in

one package. Also with a view to current candidates the EU functions as a back up and safe haven for countries and societies that undergo processes of identity-, state- and nation-building. In the words of the historian Tony Judt, for the recent new members joining the EU was an “escape route out of their past and an insurance policy for the future”<sup>51</sup>.

In the past, motives on the part of the EU to take in new members have been less explicit and clear cut. Among them were rarely foreign policy concerns – in any realist meaning of the word –, but motives were pre-dominantly bound to the political identity of the EU as a non-exclusive community open to European democracies. Also, offering full membership was preferred to establishing special arrangements with an ever-rising number of third countries and thus increasing the legal complexity. In making the case for enlargement, EC/EU governments also invoked the promotion of democracy and economic development. Support for the Eastern enlargement was particularly strong as far as political elites were concerned as it could be understood as the ‘reunification of Europe’. Since the first round of enlargement, Germany has always been the one member state favouring enlargement in principle and almost irrespective of the candidate while France – with the exception of the Greek candidacy – has mostly adopted a reluctant attitude.

While the treaty based open door policy of the EU as an unfinished community is steadily becoming shallower it is still taboo to talk about limits and borders of EU.<sup>52</sup> One can however argue that the post 1989 enlargement programme is almost fulfilled. The initial vision of the EC/EU for the “new Europe” coincided with the outreach of the PHARE programme as launched in the early 1990ies. In its lifetime PHARE covered all countries that have by now become EU members or are earmarked as future members. Thus from an EU point of view and in geographic terms – of course not in practical – enlargement is basically done. A new strategic vision and grand strategy for the East does not exist. Even today, the EU lacks powerful narratives to communicate and explain why Turkey and Western Balkan countries shall be taken in.

For decades enlargement policy was an object of projection for the most varied ideas on the development of the EU, with both intergovernmentalists and those in favour of extending the Union's supranationality using it to further their respective interests. This explains why the proponents of enlargement could ultimately always achieve agreement with the sceptics as well as with the opponents. Until recently the EU member states came up with package deals to take account of their respective preferences and interests, but now they are entering a phase in which enlargement is no longer seen as a window of opportunity to advance an agenda for integration policy at the same time. Moreover, periods of economic downswing and structural problems nurture the debate on overstretch in economic, financial, political and institutional terms. So far no empirical evidence exists that the recent enlargements led to breakdown and paralysis of the EU-decision-making system as had been set out in worst case scenarios before. However, the EU-27 approaches a new debate on the winners and losers of integration and finds itself in an uneasy state of intensive heterogeneity. As the EU still adopts a conservative approach to more internal differentiation it does not open new avenues for junior or second class membership tailored for the inclusion of substandard countries. So there is no way around full membership for applicants.

### **Enlargement fatigue**

Much talk is about enlargement fatigue and it is somehow implied that the attitudes towards enlargement inside the EU have undergone significant changes. The picture is more complex: As far as the citizens in the EU are concerned, there has rarely ever been enthusiastic support for enlargement. Shortly before the big bang enlargement of 1 May 2004 a majority of the EU-15 was opposed to it (43 per cent) and only 37 were in favour. The picture changed thereafter in the EU-25 brought about mainly by the new members. Thus, in autumn 2004 support was at an all time high (54 per cent) and the number of opponents at an all time low (35 per cent). Generally speaking support in the old member states (EU-15) is significantly lower (maximum 49 per cent in autumn 2004; lowest in spring 2009 38%) than in new

member states where between 64 and 72 per cent are supporters. In spring 2010 opposition in the EU-27 rose to 48 per cent while support fell to 40 per cent.<sup>53</sup>

Eurobarometer lacks recent surveys on the attitude towards specific candidate countries. Wealthy and consolidated countries like EFTA countries that are already highly integrated and interconnected with the EU enjoy high support, whereas the Western Balkan countries apart from Croatia rank low. In 2008, Turkey enjoyed the lowest support among all actual and potential candidates, lower than for example Ukraine.<sup>54</sup> According to Transatlantic Trends 2010, in the 11 EU countries surveyed only an average 23 per cent says Turkey's membership would be a good thing. Opposition is highest in France and Germany where 49 per cent and 44 per cent respectively believe Turkey joining the EU would be a bad thing. Romania is the only country in the survey where a relative majority (43 per cent) declared that Turkey's accession would be a good thing.<sup>55</sup>

Most influential as far as enlargement fatigue is concerned is the attitude of governments and political parties in member states. While intensity of support for Western Balkan countries varies across member state governments, principal support for their eventual accession is maintained. This is not true for the case of Turkey which splits the EU-governments in two camps: Most positive is the UK government that urges to speed up negotiations at almost any price. Interestingly, public opinion in the UK is against further enlargement. In general, support for eastern enlargement in the UK had been very low in the past. In spring 2009 support declined to 32 per cent, giving an absolute majority to opponents (56 per cent).<sup>56</sup> Positive are – for a variety of reasons – also governments of Poland, the Czech Republic, Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria, Ireland, Portugal and Spain. Most negative are France, Austria and Germany as far as both governments and public opinion are concerned. Reluctant states are the three Benelux countries and also Denmark. Greece and Cyprus have special foes and relations with Turkey which determine their often tactical positions and behaviour.

On this background the interplay between attitudes of political elites and public opinion remains important. Political leadership is confronted with veto players and vocal stakeholders for one or the other position on Turkey's membership. In the last decade, Europe has seen a growing number of parties from the far right with an overall populist, EU-sceptical, anti-migration and often anti-Muslim agenda entering parliaments or even forming coalition governments.<sup>57</sup> Thus, politicians in EU member states speaking out in favour of enlargement face a growing opposition. One must expect that the bureaucratic approach towards enlargement will not go well when it comes to highly politicised decisions.

### **The importance of Germany**

Germany is crucial for the future of EU enlargement and impacts on the very course of negotiations. This is due to Germany's political and economic weight, which almost automatically assigns a leadership role to Berlin. While, in the past, as a "tamed power" Germany looked for partners in leadership (preferably France) and for cooperation with like-minded countries (often with pro-integrationist Benelux and Italy and Spain) and pragmatically with others on concrete issues (like the UK) Germany is becoming a more "normalized" EU member: bargaining hard, calculating costs and benefits of European integration, and sometimes reluctant to pay the bill and take responsibility (i.e. lead).<sup>58</sup> With regard to enlargement Germany is not pushing forward anymore. This might be a challenge for countries like Poland and the Czech Republic to take over and be consistently in the vanguard of such policy.

While in South Eastern Europe Berlin is often perceived as a brake for enlargement, like other member states, it stands by its commitment without any reservations to take in the Western Balkan countries over the next 10-20 years. Turkey's accession is a much more controversial issue due to the strong opposition to its membership in the German society and political elite. However, compared to France and Austria the German position on Turkey is much more nuanced.<sup>59</sup>

The German government composed of the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and the Free Democrats (FDP, Liberals) pursues a “pacta sunt servanda policy” vis-à-vis Turkey. This is a very low key approach. It allows Chancellor Merkel to lobby for a special relationship with Turkey below membership in her capacity as leader of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU). The sister party in Bavaria “the CSU”, is even more fervently opposed to membership and often undermines the consensus formula “pacta sunt servanda”. The Liberals under Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle are more positive and insist that the negotiation process has an open outcome with EU membership remaining an option. So negotiations shall be conducted in good faith.<sup>60</sup> The different positions are also mirrored in an institutional split between the Chancellery which adopts a very restrictive approach and the Foreign Office which is more open-minded and generally keeps with the course of the Commission. Like the Liberals, Social Democrats (SPD) avoid essentialist-culturalist discourses with regard to the Turkish membership question. However, due to its constituency the SPD is more sensitive towards the possible social and labour market implications of Turkish EU membership. The Left party holds a low profile on these issues and cannot count as a genuine stakeholder of Turkish EU membership. The Greens are by now the most pro party in Germany. They consistently argue that Turkey, provided that it fulfils the membership criteria, will be an overall asset for the EU. Looking at this differentiated political landscape one can say that compared to France and Austria views on support for Turkish accession are more differentiated and pluralistic in the German political elite.

Among key stakeholders in Germany who influence the debate in a pro-Turkish membership direction three stand out: the foreign and security policy community across parties, the business community and Turks living in Germany or German citizens of Turkish origin. Others, notably public opinion, hold more sceptical, ambivalent or negative opinions. It is difficult to identify a clear leadership among opinion-makers in either direction. Even in times when Turkish membership is not a salient issue, it constantly bears a high potential for politicization and emotional confrontation. For any German government it will be difficult to

address the topic. This issue is inextricably linked to the difficulties of integrating Turks into German society, to the latent enlargement fatigue and the growing fear of Islam and xenophobia. If this context does not change, for example as a result of new external threats and new enemies that redefine Turkey as part of the “West”, there is little chance for real change in attitudes towards Turkey’s membership.

The current approach of Germany – to balance foreign policy and security motives in favour of Turkish membership with domestic opposition and EU integration motives (fears of the EU absorption capacity) that merely work against membership – will reach its limits over the course of further negotiations. The “intellectual wait and see” approach within the political class must over time give way to a better and more realistic understanding of the options and room for manoeuvre at national and EU levels. On the basis of such a revised strategy, political leadership could be built. On Turkey’s membership any German government would have to show leadership and determination to say yes against the majority of public opinion. The government of Chancellor Kohl was in a similar position when it pushed through the Euro currency within a divided elite and public opinion. There are no indications that Chancellor Merkel will follow on Kohl. However, this does not exclude that a future chairperson of the CDU and chancellor accommodates Turkish membership with his or her vision for the EU and exercises this kind of leadership.

### 3. Conclusions and recommendations

#### **Enlargement agenda – consolidation and forward thinking**

In the coming years the EU agenda will be dominated by the threat of a continuous crisis of the euro zone and negotiations on the next financial framework (2014-2020). Also the work of the Van Rompuy Task Force on the reform of the Monetary Union will continue with proposals that will most likely imply treaty

changes and thus make an IGC and subsequent ratification in all 27 member states necessary. In consequence, enlargement, will gain less attention and might even be perceived as a luxury topic. Moreover, with new players in place, like the President of the European Council, and considering a certain state of emergency that the EU goes through, ad hoc procedures and a dominant role of big member states can easily overrule the presidency in steering political processes.

Nevertheless, the state of emergency can provide a window of opportunity to rearrange and enhance the enlargement process. The accession negotiations could be shortened considerably if a clear distinction were made between the pre-accession phase, which lasts for years, and a shorter negotiation phase, which would set the seal on the country's accession rather than preparing it, as is the case now. In consequence, as far as the next "official" candidates for accession are concerned there is no need for a rush. The EU can still reward progress along the way in the pre-accession period but before starting negotiations. This would strengthen the gate keeper role of the EU and raise the price for opening negotiations. It is however very unlikely that the EU will change its established procedures.

In a forward looking way there is room for initiatives of the Polish-Czech duet to address problems of the EU's absorption capacity. First concerns budget negotiations for a seven year period. These should already reflect the need for policy and budget reforms in view of the next accessions. It is a question of credibility to tackle the probable impact of Turkey's membership at an early stage. Second the accession of small or very small countries, starting soon with Iceland (300.000 inhabitants) on one side, and of populous Turkey (now 74 million) on the other, makes it inevitable that the EU considers questions related to the decision-making rules, representation of member states in EU institutions and fundamental questions of legitimacy and capacity to act. Current uneasiness over how decision making works in the EU 27 will increase, also in light of next accessions. Therefore, the EU has to find a new power balance. Taking up the Commission's plea for credibility, Poland as a country as-

piring to play a role of the playmaker together with the largest member states (e.g. the informal "Group of Six" composed of Germany, France, Italy, Poland, the UK, the Weimar Triangle including Poland, Germany, France) simultaneously developing relations with smaller countries ( e.g. the Visegrad Group, the Polish-Swedish alliance) should in cooperation with the Czech Republic start a reflection on these issues.

Moreover, the EU can no longer afford to reduce its foreign policy towards neighbours to enlargement policy which has a focus on external governance (extending norms and rules and standards to these countries). The EU must re-invigorate the foreign and security policy components in its bilateral relations and do away with the mantra that enlargement is a substitute for foreign and security policy. A case in point here is Turkey. Bilateral relations concentrate almost exclusively on the accession agenda but do not deal with Turkey as a foreign policy actor in the region and in the world. The EU should not repeat this limited approach in relations with Ukraine and other neighbours which are too important to be left to the Commission alone. Under any hypothesis on the future of Turkey's membership a closer foreign and security cooperation with Turkey under the aegis of the HR Ashton is needed. It will of course be difficult to take Greece and Cyprus on board but it is not impossible that they will abstain from blocking such arrangements. There is room for an initiative of the Weimar triangle or of Poland, the UK, Germany, Finland and Sweden who could work together to give Turkey a stake in European Foreign and Security policy. Taking into consideration, the Turkish firm stickiness to the accession agenda, some progress in the negotiations would be extremely helpful to convince Turkey to establish new forms of the foreign and security cooperation.

Given the present loss of momentum in enlargement policy it is important that supporters can make a convincing case. Poland, the Czech Republic and other countries are often taken as natural advocates of further enlargement. However government and policy makers need to explain more explicitly the benefits and motives that drive their pro-stance. This will also be increasingly relevant for addressing public opinion at home. Priority issues in the EU agenda deal with

social and economic challenges and are connected with improving competitiveness of the EU on a global scale. Thus, Poland and the Czech Republic should support decisively the European Commission arguing that enlargement makes the EU a more prosperous and also safer place through promoting democracy and fundamental freedom beyond its borders. For Poland and to some extent for the Czech Republic the strategic importance of the enlargement in the long term perspective, despite serious disappointment with the post-Orange Ukraine is still an idea of the Europeanisation of the Eastern Neighbourhood. It would however be counterproductive if the Polish and Czech government would re-start a debate on revising the “three C”, in particular as far as the consolidation of commitments is concerned. For reasons established above a political gesture towards Ukraine or Moldova that grants explicitly a “European perspective” is still untimely. The overriding interest of the EU lies in strengthening the pragmatic and thematic focus in relations with the neighbours like with the Eastern Partnership. Negotiations on the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Zone (DCFTA) with Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova probably need a rethink on its scope as well as on practically improving visa policy Poland and the Czech Republic should look for ways to encourage elite building processes alongside comprehensive institution building in the Eastern ENP countries. To address these tasks and challenges the EU needs to supplement the incremental and technical approach of its enlargement policy through enhanced pre-accession strategy (in case of the Western Balkans) contingency planning (with a view to Turkey) and innovative hybrid strategies (enlargement light plus foreign and security policy) towards the Eastern neighbours.

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<sup>381</sup> Cf. European Commission, Five years of an enlarged EU. Economic achievements and challenges, doc. COM(2009) 79 final, Brussels, 20.2.2009, and the analytical report „Five years of an enlarged EU. Economic achievements and challenges“, in: European Economy, 1/2009, Brussels.

<sup>391</sup> Cf. Brussels European Council, Presidency Conclusions of 14/15 December 2006, doc. 16879/1/06, Brussels, 12.2.2007.

- <sup>40)</sup> Cf. the Negotiating Frameworks with Croatia and Turkey, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/croatia/st20004\\_05\\_hr\\_framedoc\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/croatia/st20004_05_hr_framedoc_en.pdf); [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/st20002\\_05\\_tr\\_framedoc\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/st20002_05_tr_framedoc_en.pdf) (last accessed on 24.11.2010), both Luxembourg, 3.10.2005.
- <sup>41)</sup> Cf. European Commission, Enlargement Strategy 2010-2011 and Progress Reports 2010, doc. COM(2010) 660 and SEC(2010) 1326-1335, all Brussels, 9.11.2010.
- <sup>42)</sup> Cf. European Commission, Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2009-2010, doc. COM(2009) 533, Brussels, 14.10.2009, p. 6.
- <sup>43)</sup> Cf. Council of the European Union, 2937th Council meeting (Agriculture and Fisheries), doc. 8713/09, Luxembourg, 23./24.4.2009; 2957th Council meeting (General Affairs), doc. 12353/09, Brussels, 27.07.2009; 2973rd Council meeting (General Affairs), doc. 15913/09, Brussels, 16.11.2009.
- <sup>44)</sup> Cf. memorandum accompanying the meeting of Chancellor Merkel and President Medvedev on June 4/5, 2010 in Meseberg, [http://www.bundesregierung.de/nsc\\_true/Content/DE/\\_\\_\\_Anlagen/2010/2010-06-07-meseberg-memorandum-deutsch,property=publicationFile.pdf/2010-06-07-meseberg-memorandum-deutsch](http://www.bundesregierung.de/nsc_true/Content/DE/___Anlagen/2010/2010-06-07-meseberg-memorandum-deutsch,property=publicationFile.pdf/2010-06-07-meseberg-memorandum-deutsch) (last accessed 26.11.2010).
- <sup>45)</sup> Cf. European Council, Presidency Conclusions of 14/15 December 2006 [see footnote 39], p. 3.
- <sup>46)</sup> Cf. European Commissioner Stefan Füle, Press points on Enlargement Package, SPEECH/10/639, Brussels, 9.11.2010.
- <sup>47)</sup> Cf. European Commission, Enlargement Strategy 2010-2011 [see footnote 41], p. 3.
- <sup>48)</sup> The current state of play is as follows: eight chapters are frozen based on a Council decision on 11.12.2006, ten more have been blocked in the Council by France and/or will be blocked by Cyprus, according to its announcements.
- <sup>49)</sup> Negotiation Framework with Turkey [see footnote 40], point 5.
- <sup>50)</sup> Negotiating Framework with Turkey [see footnote 40], point 5.
- <sup>51)</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar – A History of Europe since 1945*, New York 2005, p. 734.
- <sup>52)</sup> Cf. the report to the European Council by the Reflection Group on the Future of Europe 2030, *Project Europe 2030. Challenges and Opportunities*, May 2010, [http://www.reflectiongroup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/reflection\\_en\\_web.pdf](http://www.reflectiongroup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/reflection_en_web.pdf) (last accessed 24.11.2010).
- <sup>53)</sup> Cf. respectively European Commission, Standard Eurobarometer 61-73, July 2004-November 2010.
- <sup>54)</sup> Cf. European Commission, Standard Eurobarometer 69, November 2008.

<sup>55)</sup> Cf. German Marshall Fund et al., *Transatlantic Trends 2010*, [http://www.gmfus.org/trends/doc/2010\\_English\\_Key.pdf](http://www.gmfus.org/trends/doc/2010_English_Key.pdf) (last accessed 24.11.2010), p. 25.

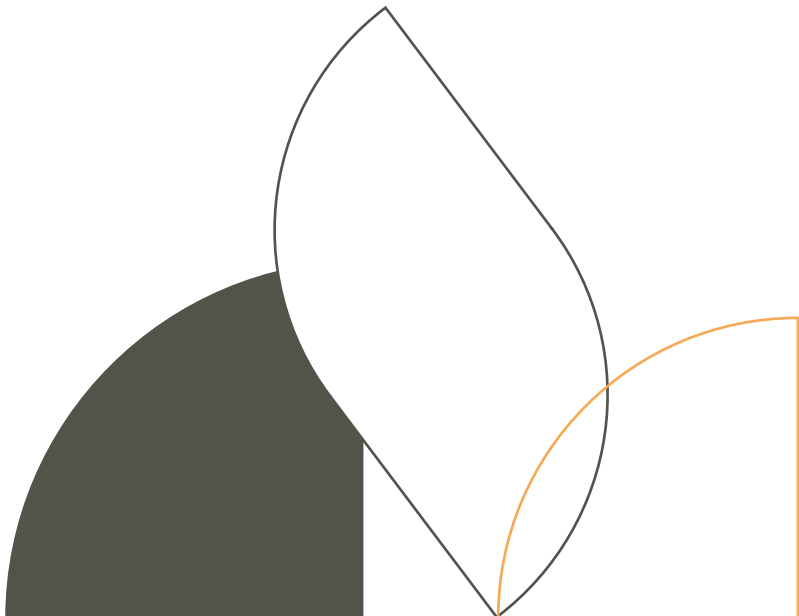
<sup>56)</sup> Cf. European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 71*, September 2009.

<sup>57)</sup> Cf. Werner T. Bauer, *Rechtspopulismus in Europa. Vergänglichches Phänomen oder auf dem Weg zum politischen Mainstream?*, Berlin: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (Internationale Politikanalyse), June 2010.

<sup>58)</sup> Cf. Simon Bulmer/William E. Paterson, "Germany and the European union: from 'tamed power' to normalized power?", in: *International Affairs*, 86 (2010) 5 (2010), pp. 1051-1073.

<sup>59)</sup> Cf. Barbara Lippert, "Wait-and-See Attitudes of German Stakeholders Towards EU-Turkey Relations", in: Nathalie Tocci (ed.), *Talking Turkey: Towards a Differentiated Communication Strategy*, Rom 2008, pp. 135-160.

<sup>60)</sup> Cf. Marcus Walker/Matthew Karnitschnig, "Berlin Pushes Turkey's EU Bid", in: *The Wall Street Journal*, 23.9.2010.





## On the Road to Stability: the Western Balkans and the EU Enlargement

**Tija Memišević, Ivan Vejvoda<sup>61</sup>**

The enlargement of the European Union to the Western Balkans is a policy priority of the EU Council and Commission because it is the best instrument of the region's stabilization and democratic consolidation.

The region has already become the most important area of the EU's external engagement (missions, enlargement, financial support, protectorates, and special envoys).<sup>62</sup> Moreover, the Western Balkans plays a central role for the development of its Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). There is a clear consensus among the key ruling and oppositional political actors in the member states of the EU regarding the future accession of the Western Balkan countries. What is the subject of debate at times is the pace of the accession dynamic.

Yet the global economic crisis and the current constraints of domestic politics imposed by the crisis have led to voices of discontent and demands for stopping further enlargement processes in the EU

countries. Public opinions in the 27 member states are struggling and are not content to see new members join (excluding Croatia).

The European perspective has produced tangible results albeit more slowly than earlier expected. The burden of the legacies of the communist past as well as that of the conflicts of 1990s have proven to be harder to overcome than initially predicted. The consolidation of democratic institutions runs up against electoral cycles in which political energies turn to striving to retain or gain power and the overall process of change lags. Nevertheless, every country has made varying degrees of progress but the remaining issues of judicial reform, combating corruption and organized crime, democratic institutional consolidation are in some cases formidable. Nevertheless, the magnet of Europe is still strong and creates both with its political and economic actions an element of irreversibility of the process of consolidation of democracy and integration. In consequence, the enlargement represents simultaneously a chance and a challenge to Brussels and the aspiring states respectively. Commitment and determination both of Brussels and the Western Balkan states are fundamental for the future success of the enlargement process.

The case of the Western Balkans confirms that the post World War II European project of lasting peace through institutional design remains pertinent and relevant to this day. Even though present generations of Europeans may not be aware of it any more, in the post-conflict former Yugoslavia and Albania the magnetic attraction of the EU is fully at work. The EU is “the only game in town” along with NATO integration.. The EU enlargement towards the Western Balkans should be perceived from the wider perspective of democratic transition in the post communist countries conducted through Europeanisation.

In consequence, the upcoming presidencies of the EU by two countries that have recently gone through a democratic transition and enlargement process after the fall of communism: Hungary and Poland, are an exceptional opportunity to actively engage in the next EU enlargement steps for the Western Balkans.

## General state of affairs concerning the enlargement

The 1989 *annus mirabilis* circumvented the Western Balkans. The violent breakdown of former Yugoslavia made the former frontrunner a laggard. Seven countries have appeared on the ruins of the former country. These countries are today where the others were more than ten years ago. All at differing stages of integration with the EU. Croatia is closest to finishing its accession negotiations and will soon become a member. At the other end of this group of countries Bosnia- Herzegovina (BiH) has not yet applied for candidacy due to its challenges of governance, while Kosovo (not recognized by Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina) is the most challenged of all and at the very beginning of its nation building and democratic transition process.

For all these countries the EU enlargement is the most significant mobilizing and motivating force for reform. EU soft power is crucial for democratic, rule of law and market reforms. It is essential that the EU enlargement process continues at a sustained progressive pace for further consolidation of democracy, state institutions and for strengthening peace and stability. Those who are engaged in these countries in the democratic reform and modernization depend on the support of Brussels and the member-states. It is a shared process in which lasting stability and peace are achieved through the dynamic of implementing democratic rules (*acquis communautaire*) and values. The cost of non-Europe in the Western Balkans is prohibitively higher than the cost (for the EU) of having these countries join as full member states.

Ways must be found to make the existing mechanisms of accession even more efficient and effective helping thus the hard work of changing these societies that have a difficult legacy of authoritarian rule under communism, but also the devastating legacy of the conflict of the 1990s. These legacies are being overcome more successfully in some countries than others. The instilling of a political culture of democracy

is a long term process and needs to be nurtured and supported. Citizens, civil society have a key role to play in seeing that elected officials are made responsible and accountable in dispensing their duties.

In all the Western Balkan countries there is a broad consensus between society and elites about the direction toward EU and Euroatlantic integration (Serbs are a temporary exception on NATO). Political elites are leading this process notwithstanding the somewhat diminished degree of support at times in public opinion polls. The public opinion polls show though that a common sense attitude prevails that it is better to be within the EU than remain outside for reasons of predictability, certainty, security and prosperity: there is simply somewhat more of all of these within the EU. There are no illusions about the state of affairs in the EU given the current crisis of the eurozone and the travails of Greece and now Ireland.

The recent Gallup opinion poll shows somewhat of a decline in support for the EU in some countries of the Western Balkans, yet when asked whether they would vote for entry into the EU the results are more positive. Opinion poll<sup>63</sup> results must be taken with a grain of salt given that they are a picture in time highly dependent on current affairs. Nonetheless this underscores the need for both the EU and the governments in the countries to carefully consider the best ways in which to portray the concrete and practical benefits to citizens of the accession process and of membership.

There are two clearly outlined positions of all governments in the region that indicate that they are determined to move forward on the European path: the first is the adamant commitment to EU integration; the second is the willingness and determination to resolve all remaining outstanding issues in bilateral and regional relations in a peaceful negotiated manner and in a spirit of European partnership – this needs to be heralded and supported by European CFSP policies.

The key challenges for the accession process in the domestic arena are the continuation of the reform processes in a situation of economic downturn and rising unemployment. Maintaining

and reinforcing the very positive dynamic of regional cooperation and solving of outstanding mutual unresolved issues is of great importance for the advance toward EU membership.

The EU for its part faces a crisis of its commitment to enlargement which is described as the “enlargement fatigue syndrome”. There are politicians in the EU who for populist reasons will call for the suspension of the enlargement process.<sup>64</sup> The EU institutions and member governments are not sufficiently engaged in an activity targeting European public opinion to explain the reasons why enlargement is not a danger for domestic politics in EU member-states but to the contrary a chance. The most striking indicator of the enlargement crisis is its radical slowdown in comparison with the pace of it in case of the countries which received EU’s membership between 2004-2007. In 2009 Albania and Montenegro had to wait seven and nearly four and a half months respectively for the European Council to convey their application to the European Commission for conferring a candidate status. In comparison, Macedonia in 2004 was much less prepared for the start of negotiations than Montenegro is today and a little bit less than Albania, but it waited for the Council’s decision only about two months.

This autumn the EC recommended Montenegro for the status of EU candidate. However, the EC refused to set a date for the beginning of negotiations, and presented a whole list of conditions Montenegro has to meet before negotiations can begin. This list is composed of criteria that are not precisely measurable, such as the general fight against corruption. This provides the EU with unlimited time and maneuvering space to prolong the opening of negotiations with Montenegro, depending on the political decisions within the EU. The negotiation process, on the other hand, is based on a methodically structured and detailed set of conditions that one country has to meet in order to join the EU. Their measurability gives a clear idea of the progress of the country in question, and their comprehensiveness leads to profound and far-reaching reforms of the society. Delays in the opening of negotiations will put EU integration momentum in Montenegro at jeopardy, and may cause a stalemate that will represent not only

a loss of time, but may reverse positive processes. This decision by the EC also sends negative signals to the whole region regarding EU membership prospects, and compromises the principle of conditionality as well as the rules of game.

The latest European Commission (EC) progress reports for the countries of Western Balkans show varying degrees of progress but also many common problems these countries are facing in the EU integration process. The progress reports identify problems common to all states of the region. A democratic deficit, high levels of corruption, deficiencies in the functioning of the free market, incomplete judicial reforms – are just some of the key problems these countries share and suffer from on similar levels. On the other hand, the EU's more rigorous application of its accession procedures especially in the domain of the rule of law (the Romanian and Bulgarian experiences obligent) is making countries address these difficult reforms up front. This has been brought to bear forcefully on all the countries of the region as they have gone or are going through the visa liberalization process following a strictly defined road-map of tasks to be fulfilled: there will be no leniency in this enlargement of the EU. This is all the more important because the tasks that lie ahead of achieving the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, of creating a transparent and enabling environment for investments, fundamental for economic recovery and activity, that is a competitive economy are all predicated upon a process in which domestic actors are the principal bearers of responsibility but supported by EU mechanisms and resources.

The two most problematic countries remain Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Kosovo, while Montenegro was recommended by EC to get the status of candidate country in October 2010. Serbia was given in June 2010 a green light for its candidacy status application to proceed to the next step which is fulfilling the questionnaire, while Macedonia is still in a stalemate situation due to the name dispute with Greece and has been waiting for negotiations to start for five years now after becoming EU candidate in 2005. At the end of 2010 BiH and Albania were granted a visa liberalization regime with Schengen states after meeting

all the conditions laid down in the EU road map. Kosovo is lagging at the end of the queue, since it has not even initiated the process of visa liberalization.

The EU is rightly taking the greater burden of responsibility as well as the lead in the process of Western Balkans stabilization. Yet the presence of the United States, as manifested by the recent strongly supportive message of the Obama administration through the visit of Vice-President Joseph Biden in May 2009 and the visit of Secretary of State Hilary Clinton in October 2010 to the Western Balkans remains most significant to all actors.

NATO has been a parallel pole of stabilization for the region in the sphere of security. When considering the EU CFSP it must be recognized that the accession to NATO membership of Albania and Croatia in April 2009 has significantly contributed to the enhancement of stability. It is unfortunate that Macedonia has not been able to do same given the fact that it has fulfilled all the requirements, but is impeded by the Greek veto.

Montenegro has a Membership Action Plan (MAP), as has Bosnia-Herzegovina on condition of fulfillment of certain criteria. Serbia for the moment remains within the Partnership for Peace program, has professionalized its armed forces recently and is fulfilling NATO standards in military reform, and is not announcing a political move toward NATO membership, but this remains as yet an open question that could possibly open after the next parliamentary elections.

## Individual challenges to the accession process

A country that might serve as the example against the idea of delaying the opening of negotiations is Macedonia. Ever since Macedonia was granted the status of candidate along with Croatia in 2005, negotiations with Macedonia have not been opened while it is expected that Croatia will join the EU in 2012. Macedonia has

been blocked by Greece regarding the opening of the negotiations with the EU and joining NATO over the constitutional name of Macedonia. Greece is claiming that Macedonia, if it keeps the name, might territorially claim the northern Greece province also called Macedonia. These claims have been unsubstantiated, as the territorial claims towards Greece have never been the part of political and public discourse in Macedonia. On the other hand, Greece's political leadership has been utilizing this artificially created issue to fuel populist and nationalistic rhetoric back at home. Both Brussels and the U.S. have been requiring that a compromise be reached, and it seems that the longer the deadlock lasts, the deeper both sides entrench themselves. The name dispute and the significant slowdown in EU integration processes have caused, among other things, a deterioration of interethnic relations between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians in Macedonia. As Albania is progressing now at the faster pace towards the EU, ethnic Albanians of Macedonia, less interested in the actual name of the country, are pressuring ethnic Macedonian political leadership to accept a compromise which will enable Macedonia to progress towards EU. The issue of the name and the resulting situation in turn fuels the nationalism among ethnic Macedonians. The present ruling ethnic Macedonian leadership has the tendency to exploit it and leans towards populist politics. The situation, including interethnic relations and already achieved results in the EU integration process, will almost certainly deteriorate further if it is not soon resolved. In addition, both the stalemate regarding the EU integration process and the possible deterioration of interethnic relations in Macedonia have been and will reflect badly on the region as a whole. Blocking Macedonia to join NATO has certainly not contributed to security and stability in the region, including Greece.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has received the worst yet EC progress report this year. During the past four years BiH has been experiencing political deadlock, obstruction of the state level by political representatives from Republika Srpska and an escalating nationalist rhetoric. Bosnia and Herzegovina has not been meeting conditions and obligations from the Stabilization and Association Agreement, and almost all EU-required laws were

blocked in the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Republika Srpska members. This is also why BiH was lagging behind the countries of the Western Balkans regarding the visa liberalization with the Schengen states. It was only after pressure from the EU, fear of punishment by the voters in the coming general elections, and after Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia were granted visa liberalization, that BiH met the conditions.

The failure of the April 2006 constitutional reform package in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and more generally the inability of the political leaderships in these more than four years to come to terms with each other and to overcome their contentions for the public good and the common interest of citizens has been stifling. International efforts have been unsuccessful until now. It is possible that this post-electoral period opens the way forward. For Bosnia-Herzegovina the movement of the whole region and its individual countries will have a very significant bearing and positive "pulling" effect.

Experience from the past four years indicates that the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina is dysfunctional due to its ethno-territorial division embedded in the Constitution, robust public administration with overlapping or unclear competencies and the state being weak against lesser administrative units. Power-sharing mechanisms, initially designed to ensure parity of three so called constituent peoples or ethnic groups, have been continuously abused to block political processes and provide protection to irresponsible nationalist political establishments. Such internal ethno-territorial division, coupled with power-sharing mechanisms as they are designed, regenerates nationalist politics and ethnic tensions, and creates substantial democratic deficit.

The European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) supersedes the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Due to the absolute dominance of collective over individual rights and the mixture of ethnic and territorial principles in the constitutional arrangement and Election Law, the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina violates numerous articles of ECHR. Moreover, the

Venice Commission reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina detect numerous discriminatory elements and violations of the ECHR in the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as non-compliance with EU standards and norms. The European Parliament adopted several resolutions supporting the findings of the Venice Commission and called for constitutional reform.

In addition, although the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina made a ruling in 2000 that all constituent peoples are equally constituent on the whole territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, this is not reflected, except for certain changes in the constitutions of entities, in the constitutional arrangement of the State. As a result, not only citizens (people who do not wish to or cannot declare as members of one of the constituent peoples) are entirely stripped of their political rights, but also minorities and constituent peoples living on the territory where they do not represent a majority have limited or no active and/or passive political rights. A recent ruling by the European Court of Human Rights in the case *Sejdic/Finci vs. Bosnia and Herzegovina* states that Bosnia and Herzegovina violates the ECHR when it comes to minorities, whose representatives cannot run for the Presidency and House of Peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The ruling requires the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina to be changed accordingly.

Kosovo is coping with the most contested political status, the sharpest ethnic divisions, the highest levels of poverty, the highest rates of unemployment and the bleakest prospects for Euro-Atlantic integration. The most important problem is non recognition of its independence by five EU member states (Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Spain). In the Western Balkans Kosovo is the most serious challenge in terms of the fight against organized crime. Strong ties between politicians and mafia and a very high level of corruption, have resulted in Kosovo's belated stabilization, which took place later than in other Western Balkan countries.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, Pristina lacks control over the northern part of the country, inhabited by Serbs who get support from Belgrade. Moreover, due to the political dispute concerning the

final status of Kosovo, cooperation between Belgrade and Pristina in fighting organized crime remains rather limited. These facts make Kosovo a particularly safe haven for smugglers. The EULEX (rule of law) mission comprising close to 2000 members has recently begun to unravel a number of cases of organized crime and corruption.

Kosovo, due to the lack of consensus among EU member states regarding its independence, has not been offered an institutionalized EU integration framework, which makes the perspective of EU membership of Kosovo vague. Kosovo has not even started official talks on the liberalization of the visa system, not to mention negotiations on the association agreement. It is often forgotten that the visa liberalization process involves numerous reforms and the adoption of laws related to security in general and security of documents, policing, border control, and data processing and exchange of data compatible with the EU systems. It requires the regulation of seeking asylum in the EU member states by the citizens of country in question (or rather preventing it), through the adoption of laws against discrimination and laws related to repatriation. In consequence, It is in the interest of region, Kosovo and the EU for the process of visa liberalization to be initiated institutionally by the EU, as it serves as a catalyst of reforms, provides for improved security and contributes to the establishment of the rule of law and democratic stability in Kosovo.

## **Regional cooperation and reconciliation in the Western Balkans- failures and successes**

As mentioned, the EC's 2010 progress reports for the countries of Western Balkans identify also problems common to all states of the region. Many of the common problems are regionally generated, such as organized crime and corruption, and therefore require region-wide institutional capacity and a high level of regional cooperation to fight them.

The region of the Western Balkans is struggling with the problem of image which has important bearings on the enlargement process. Since the end of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia media attention for the region has waned, and much of the positive developments is not reaching public opinions and policy makers in the 27 member states. Over the past ten years important steps towards reconciliation and regional cooperation have likewise been accomplished. Regional cooperation has intensified and multiplied over the past ten years: CEFTA, as the key regional free trade organization, the regional energy community, the recently reinforced EU Danube cooperation in which the region has a crucial role, but also the Regional Cooperation Council based in Sarajevo that has replaced the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe in 2008, as well as the SEECP (Southeast European Cooperation Process). It should be stressed that the Visegrad Four countries and their cooperation have been used both as a funder to Western Balkans cooperation projects but also as a model to be looked upon and implemented.

The meeting of the four presidents (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia) in Sarajevo in May 2010 under the auspices of the nongovernmental organization Igman Initiative, and their joint substantive declaration was proof that the region was clearly moving forward in a spirit of European partnership, in a way other European countries had followed previously. The declaration<sup>66</sup> underscores the mutual support that the countries will engage in on their respective paths to EU membership and the need to even further strengthen regional cooperation. Also during the EU Sarajevo Summit in June 2010 for the first time the Serbian and Kosovar ministers of foreign affairs were present together in the same venue.

The overcoming of the contentious border issue between Slovenia and Croatia, the renewed an intensified relationship between Croatia and Serbia and their two presidents Josipovic and Tadic over the past 10 months. are but the tip of the iceberg of these positive regional dynamics. The series of reconciliatory acts, gestures and speeches on issues such as Srebrenica and Vukovar by the Serbian parliament and president, or those of the Croatian

president in Bosnia-Herzegovina this summer, or the electoral and post-electoral statements of the newly elected member of the Presidency of BiH Bakir Izetbegovic, are not to be underestimated. On the contrary, politics being still very much top down in these early democracies, the message coming from the highest democratic authorities are important for the changing value orientation towards the strengthening of a democratic political culture.

The willingness of Belgrade and Pristina to begin a dialogue on finding a settlement for the unresolved issues relating to Kosovo, under the auspices of the EU are both a sign of the maturing times but also a challenge. This process will take time, confidence will need to be built between the two sides. Yet the fact that Serbia found common ground with 27 EU member states to jointly present a resolution to the General Assembly of the United Nations on 9 September was a forceful indication that the Serbian rhetoric of "Serbia wants to be part of the solution" was now taking practical shape. Forthcoming December parliamentary elections in Kosovo will probably somewhat delay the beginning of this dialogue.

Nongovernmental sector have traditionally played an important role in the process of reconciliation. In many cases NGOs were the first to collect and make public the information regarding war crimes in their respective countries, as well as to bridge the gaps in the region. Currently underway is the NGO-driven regional initiative RECOM, which involves many NGOs and other stakeholders across the region and aims at comprehensive regional approach to reconciliation.

Generally, in difference to other regions neighboring the EU the Western Balkans is characterized by strong economic (foreign trade, FDI, tourism), social, academic, media and sports ties stemming from the Yugoslav legacy. Moreover, in the recent years these ties have been substantially enhanced. The rise of economic cooperation epitomized by the renewed cooperation between the railway companies of Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia, as well as by the renewal of the railway connection between Sarajevo and Belgrade, and intercity bus lines between Belgrade and Pristina. Clearly the global economic crisis has been

conducive to an understanding that only together, only by pooling resources and relying more on each other can the individual small and impoverished countries emerge onto the world market.<sup>67</sup> The term “Yugosphere” coined by Tim Judah of the London Economist, although contentious for some, encompasses these relations between the independent, sovereign states that have emerged during the 1990s.

The rising struggle against organized crime is an excellent example of this wish to work together and testifies to the understanding that little can be done by individual countries alone on this and other issues. A spate of killings, money laundering activities, influence of organized crime on society and politics have helped focus the minds of security services and politicians to act in order to protect and reinforce the rule of law. The state has reacted and confronts the challenge of these mafias. The region has here also strengthened cooperation at all levels. Let us mention two recent such meetings. A first was the 30 September meeting<sup>68</sup> of all chiefs of military intelligence services of the Balkans in Belgrade (SEEMIC) – unimaginable just a few years ago. The Fourth meeting of meeting of ministers of justice and interior affairs held in Belgrade on 4-5 October under the title “Strengthening regional and trans-national cooperation as a pre-condition for the successful fight against organized crime in Southeastern Europe”, highlights the awareness that only by joint efforts will the scourge of organized crime and corruption be successfully tackled

On the other hand, Effective regional cooperation is burdened or stalled by fundamental problems which are common to all countries or specific to one but affect the region as a whole. These problems are often intentionally overlooked by both Brussels and the political establishments in the Western Balkans because addressing them requires resolve and strategic commitment. Each problem poses a risk as it could potentially create a domino effect across the region. For instance, these problems are those of confronting the past and reconciliation, freedom of movement or regional tensions over Kosovo’s independence. At the same time, the risk is often misperceived or the assessment of potential instability underestimated in Brussels, leading

to a disengagement of the EU too early too often, or applying quick-fix solutions which generate further problems, or in the worst case succumbing to the threats by destabilization made by local politicians and accepting compromises which fall well below EU standards and principles.

While CEFTA (the free trade agreement in the region) proved to be among the rare successful formal regional initiatives, its full implementation and the positive effects for all countries are prevented by a number of factors, among which are varying degrees of institutional capacity across the region, political tensions, lack of standardized trade framework due to varying degrees of progress in adopting EU standards and procedures. An important obstacle has also been the ban on goods and services transportation from Kosovo to and transiting BiH and Serbia. Both these countries do not recognize the independence of Kosovo and this issue has not been addressed properly in the region. Future talks between Serbia and Kosovo should involve technical matters such as these, and barriers should be removed regardless of the non-recognition of independence of Kosovo by BiH and Serbia, as it is in the interest of region as a whole for CEFTA to be fully implemented. The EU and its member states, on their hand, should support the removal of the barriers even though five of its member states have not recognized the independence of Kosovo.

Similar barriers are imposed on the free movement of people in the Western Balkans. While BiH has had a long-standing mutual agreement with Croatia and Serbia on their citizens crossing each others' borders with simply identification cards, the movement between other countries is permitted only with the use of a passport, and in the case of Albania it is in some cases required from citizens in the region to obtain visa. There is a noteworthy recent agreement between Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro which liberalize crossing the borders between these countries. On the other hand, Kosovo citizens have difficulties travelling to Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina – in most cases they cannot cross the border at all, although notable exceptions do exist with quite a number of Kosovar Albanians bearing passports of Serbia, Macedonia, Albania and UNMIK.

Despite positive developments, processes of reconciliation have not yet produced radical changes in the region. Prosecution of war crimes in both International Crime Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia and local courts have had impact only marginally as there has been no comprehensive approach to reconciliation and, more importantly, no decisive political breakaway from the ideologies of 1990s. Most of the countries are criticized in progress reports regarding full cooperation with ICTY, while failure to arrest general Ratko Mladic and Goran Hadzic is considered to be a major obstacle in further EU integration process of Serbia. Mladic as an individual became a benchmark, as there has been a failure on the side of EU and Western Balkan governments to place Mladic in the wider context of facing the past and regional relations. Representatives of the EU have recently come up with the phrase they often repeat and that is “forget the past, turn to the future”. This approach is problematic in many ways as it prevents restorative justice, creates obstacles to the establishment of the rule of law and stable democracies, and just hides the tensions both in the region and within individual societies. The Presidents of Croatia and Serbia, Mr. Josipovic and Mr. Tadic, have made attempts to intensify the process of regional reconciliation but only with reexamination of the wartime and breaking entirely with ideologies of the 1990s, such initiatives will reach their full potential.

## Recommendations for the EU

The EU and the aspiring candidates of the Western Balkans are linked by a bond of mutual responsibility. This southern European peninsula is slated to follow the Iberian and Apennine peninsulas. There is a potential success story of accomplishing a Europe whole, free and at peace. It is fundamental that elected governments pursue the hard work of democratic reform and modernization. It is equally crucial that the EU and U.S. continue to be focused on the region with both policy and resource support as other parts of the world continue to present much greater and more difficult challenges. It is crucial for all

actors to keep focused on the continuation of it. It is necessary to further devote time and resources to help the process notwithstanding other burning issues elsewhere in the world and in the neighborhood. Donor support, whether EU, US or others is crucial to the success of the process. The EU and its member states are the biggest donors by far and European solidarity in dire times is even more important. The EU should eventually understand that a tangible Europeanization of candidate countries will not come through an artificial prolongation of integration process, but through a genuine determination of local elites to implement the necessary reforms. This determination should be encouraged and supported by Brussels. Therefore, the EU must retreat from the current 'reactive' attitude to enlargement in favor of more assertive approach. The motto of the EU's new strategy should be "we are more demanding, but also more generous".

The successfully accomplished road-maps on visa-free travel have shown that when very concrete, time-constrained tasks were defined by the EU the administrations in the Western Balkan countries found ways to mobilize internal resources and accelerate the fulfilling of requirements. This is potentially a model for enhancing the establishment and implementation of the *acquis communautaire*: more detailed and defined road maps of all existing necessary reforms. It would be also practical and beneficial, regardless of the candidacy application and approval process, to present questionnaires to both BiH and Kosovo. That would give a clear picture of the stages individual countries have reached as well as provide for comparative regional insight, and it would give a clearer idea to local institutions and governments as to where they stand and how to plan future tasks.

The EU should push for a fair compromise on the Macedonia name dispute taking into account also now the Macedonian internal relations. Greece should not be allowed to call the shots with unreasonable requests and in doing so abuse its EU membership and Brussels backing. At the same time, even if they wanted to, Greek political representatives can hardly now distance themselves from the nationalist discourse that already has a life of its own. In this

light, a modified form of the recent proposal by the European Stability Initiative for Macedonia to suspend the constitutional name with the clause that it will change the name upon joining the EU and based on the agreement with Greece, might seem reasonable. This will possibly unblock the negotiation process of Macedonia with the EU, buy Macedonia some time, and ease the tensions both within Macedonia and between Macedonia and Greece.

In Bosnia the EU should implement the so called “European clause” respectively to abolish the right to veto by constituent peoples regarding the EU-related laws and reform adoption and entrance into force in order to equip the state sufficiently with authority and capacity to meet the EU integration conditions and obligations towards EU. The Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina must be changed in order to eliminate discrimination, strike a fine balance between collective and individual rights (preventing dominance of collective over individual rights), and make the state well-equipped and functional for the benefit of all its citizens.

Extremely important is to prepare and introduce a ‘special track of accession’ for Kosovo. It shouldn’t significantly differ from a model applied towards the “normal” candidates. Its purpose ought to be a de facto Kosovo’s membership. The EU should also support the development of relations between Belgrade and Pristina within the framework of regional cooperation. The EU should also urge Belgrade that -as a candidate- it ought to further strengthen its co-operation with the EU mission in Kosovo (EULEX). If this strategy is to succeed all EU member states, those who have recognized Kosovo and those who have not must strive to have a unified position. The main argument should be a stabilization of the region.

## Recommendations for Poland and the Czech Republic

The new EU member states could be strong advocates for a change in the politics of Brussels towards Western Balkan

countries as well as excellent, well-informed and well-experienced, partners to these countries in the period of transformation. They should in general be louder advocates of enlargement, especially now when reluctance by old EU members slows down the positive trends in the region. The EU members who joined in 2004 have undergone a transition process that began from a very different starting point compared to that of the Western Balkan countries. This process in the Central and East European countries took place in very different circumstances and atmosphere as it was defined by a slightly different motivation within these countries. It took place in a Europe-wide context of a drive towards democratization and visions of the EU as a historic project. Nevertheless, many of the specific experiences that the new EU member states underwent can provide guidance to aspiring members, to Brussels and EU capitals. These experiences range from the effects conditionality as applied in the 1990s had on the democratization of new EU member states, through the significance of the value-based EU enlargement framework, to the specific experiences in different sectors of reform.

Poland and Czech Republic have the opportunity to play a very positive role in the region due to the fact, *inter alia*: that they recently underwent the processes of reform and enlargement. Also the Czech Republic has the experience of having gone through a process of separation from the Slovak Republic. This means there is a sensitivity to the difficulties and challenges facing the new countries arisen from the former Yugoslavia. The geographic proximity and certain elements of a shared political-cultural past should not be underestimated. The relationship that the Western Balkan countries have with both Poland and the Czech Republic are most positive. Conversely the image that Poland and Czech Republic have in the region is positive and can serve to a certain degree as a gaze into the near future and in certain aspects as a model.

Both Poland and Czech Republic experienced transition in entirely another setting than countries of the Western Balkans. Priority was given to the respect for human rights and democratization of society. The EU enlargement was considered historic process at the time. Lack of such framework and

prioritization as well as strategy and resolute on the side of EU and its tendency to enter into political negotiations over its own standards and principles compromises conditionality and substantial democratization in the region of Western Balkans. New EU member states can press for more principal approach. Local political leaderships in the Western Balkans in most cases avoid providing information on the EU as they want to avoid taking over the responsibility for the process and being deprived of position they enjoy now, which involves less accountability and transparency. Misinterpretation of the EU integrations process is widely spread, and citizens in the region lack information and understanding of the EU. Citizens most commonly associate EU membership with EU funds and the rise in living standard. Stable democracy, respect for human rights, free speech, free media, free movement, economic opportunity, have all been in use only as phrases without substance. Governmental and nongovernmental actors from new EU member states should be more present and engaged in the public debate on the EU in Western Balkan countries. They can present their experiences and contribute to the understanding of the idea of the EU and EU integration process.

Both Poland and Czech Republic can provide assistance and partnership to countries of the Western Balkans in particular fields such as agriculture, financial system reforms, preparation of strategies and projects for the use of EU funding. They can warn against mistakes they made and provide ideas for practical solutions and reforms. Experiences of new EU member states, gathered recently and where many countries had to start building up institutions and developing policies from the scratch, are invaluable to Western Balkan countries.

The slowdown of the integration process sends negative signals to the whole region regarding EU membership prospects, and compromises the principle of conditionality as well as the rules of game. Poland and the Czech Republic can advocate for setting the date of the beginning of negotiations with Montenegro in the immediate future, as this is critical for Montenegro and the region as a whole. Slovakia's turn towards the EU inte-

gration process in 1998, after years of authoritarian and anti-European rule by Vladimir Meciar, and the rapid reform process that ensued in the following six years were instigated by the steady progression of neighbouring countries towards EU.

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<sup>62</sup> At present, fourteen EU missions are active across the world, three of which are located in the Balkans (EUFOR and EUPM in Bosnia, and EULEX in Kosovo). 65 percent of the staff active in the EU missions are engaged in the Balkans. However, it is worth adding that some of the EU missions in regions other than the Balkans are very limited or are functioning only on paper (Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine).

<sup>63</sup> See the regular opinion polls Balkan Monitor conducted by Gallup: [www.balkan-monitor.eu](http://www.balkan-monitor.eu)

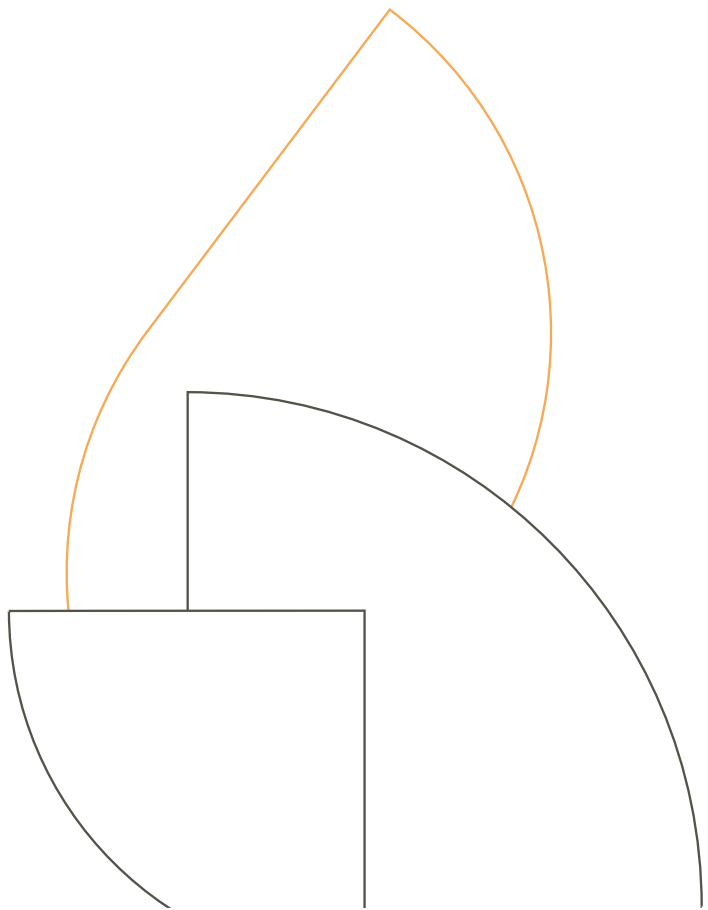
<sup>64</sup> Most recently this has been done by former French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur in an interview to the Paris daily newspaper Le Monde 25 September 2010: "La sagesse commande de repousser tout élargissement de l'Europe à 27 comme de la zone euro".

<sup>65</sup> On the other hand, according to the UN report "Crime and its impact on the Balkans", "Kosovo provides a good example of the way that strengthening the rule of law can retard the growth of crime. [...] It was the chaos accompanying the war and economic collapse that led to the growth of ethnic Albanian organized crime groups, and growing order appears to be undermining their competitiveness. [...] The more that social and political conditions normalize, the more that criminal groups will lose their grip on Kosovo." UNODOC, Crime and its impact on the Balkans and affected countries, New York 2008, p. 23.

<sup>66</sup> The text of the declaration can be found on: <http://www.igman-initiative.org/images/Sessions/21/izjava.pdf>

<sup>67</sup> A recent study published by Bruegel the Brussels based European think tank "Whither growth in central and eastern Europe? Policy lessons for an integrated Europe" (Blueprint, 24 November 2010) written together with the Vienna Institute of International Economics (focusing on both CEE and SEE) argues that in view of the depth of integration in Europe, the development model of the central, eastern and south-eastern Europe (CESEE) region, despite its shortcomings, should be preserved. But it should be reformed, with major implications for policymaking both at national and EU levels.

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.armyinfoforum.org/Armyblog/index.php/2010/10/01/saradnja-obavestajnih-sluzbi-jugoistocne-evrope/>



## EU's Eastward Enlargement: How to Make the Impossible Possible?<sup>69</sup>

**Stanislav Secieru<sup>70</sup>**

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) incorporates six European neighbours of the EU: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. East European vicinity of the EU is positioned at the nexus of sphere of the 'privileged interests' Russia harbours for, traditional area of Turkish economic and security interests in the Black Sea region and increasingly attractive terrain for China's economic power projection. The EaP countries enjoy strong economic relations with the EU. In regard with accession to the EU, the EaP states display various perspectives. Officially, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine yearn (even if in the long term) for the EU membership status. However, these aspirations are treated with scepticism in the EU. Many in Europe regard EU's further eastward enlargement as a mission impossible.

Although support in the EU for enlargement stays relatively high, the number of those opposing the process has climbed steadily in the opinion polls<sup>71</sup>. The countries of the Western Balkans (except Croatia<sup>72</sup>) are muddling painfully through the pre-accession phase, fomenting the reluctance inside the EU to extend membership perspective guarantees to anybody else. The accession talks with Ankara have stalled as major EU member states are concerned about impact of Turkish membership. The EU itself struggles to recover from the fallout of the Greek debt crisis and the political reforms

(the Lisbon treaty), investing more energy in domestic urgent agenda. The EaP countries face multiple structural problems that often discourage the EU from deeper engagement in the Eastern neighbourhood. The EaP states failure to deliver on reforms also breeds disillusion within the EU. Last but not least, the concerns about Russia's reaction frequently prevent the EU from promoting a bolder approach in the Eastern neighbourhood.

In consequence, the perspectives of EU's eastward enlargement are extremely bleak in the short and mid term. Nevertheless, the debate and work which will make this objective possible have to start without delay. In terms of the widening, the European integration project is incomplete without eastern neighbours, who at least geographically fit the criteria set for a candidate country in the treaty. The normative foundations of the EU reveal its moral duty to defend the people's right to freely choose the political and economic model of development and to uphold democratic aspirations of citizens across Europe. Besides, the EU has important economic and security stakes in the region too, which if neglected could threaten Europe's security (energy transit routes, illegal immigration, smuggling, organized crime, protracted conflicts, and political instability). On the other hand, the region is also an opportunity for the EU (gate to Russia, China, the Middle East and Central Asia, new emerging markets, source of labour supply). Indeed, the Eastern neighbourhood is inseparably linked to EU-Russia relations. Thus, instability in the 'common neighbourhood' undermines prospects of sustainable cooperation with Russia. In addition, EU's international credibility is posed to suffer if it fails to stabilize and transform the immediate vicinity.

The EU has to assume a greater role in the transformation of the region as NATO and the US are compelled to focus on other strategic priorities. In addition, after the Russian-Georgian war, 'NATO leads, the EU follows' approach is not applicable any more in the Eastern neighbourhood. However, this does not imply disentanglement between the EU and the US. Successful democratization and modernization of the Eastern neighbourhood still require a coordinated transatlantic policy, which if put in practice will strengthen links between allies. Poland and the Czech Republic

could play prominent role in shaping and promoting transatlantic approach in the Eastern neighbourhood because they could give a strong impetus and provide model for reforms as well as play a role of eastern neighbours' advocates within the EU, contributing to environment in which accession will become feasible.

## EU and the EaP States: Plurality of initiatives and attitudes

### EU in the Eastern neighbourhood

It is in the EU interests to stabilize and democratize the Eastern neighbourhood. Two decades ago, it first stepped in the region with mainly technical assistance programs. Gradually the area of the EU involvement in the post-Soviet states has expanded. As a result the EU set more ambitious goals in the Euro East. However, intra-EU divisions between member states on the best approach to follow and divergent views on the future of the region have undermined consistency and to some extent credibility of the EU policy in the Eastern neighbourhood.

EU's contractual relationship with eastern neighbours is based on Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA) concluded in the 90's.<sup>73</sup> The prospects of the EU enlargement (2004-2007) intensified EU's search for new ways to approach and interact with the would-be immediate neighbours<sup>74</sup>. As a result the EU developed a distinct from enlargement, European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which also encompassed five states from the East (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). The eventual inclusion of Belarus in the ENP has been conditioned by progress on human rights and democratisation. Between 2005 and 2006, the eastern neighbours agreed and signed with the EU Action Plans which outlined the EU's renewed offer of support and list of reforms states committed to adopt and implement.

In 2007 the German Presidency of the EU sought to bolster the European policy in the Eastern neighbourhood, an initiative

which has been dubbed 'ENP Plus'. It partially was reflected in the EU Commission strategy paper. Aiming to strengthen the ENP, the document envisioned enhancing economic relations, facilitating mobility, promoting people-to-people contacts, and boosting political, regional and financial cooperation with neighbours<sup>75</sup>. A year later, in an effort to invigorate the regional sectoral cooperation, the EU launched the Black Sea Synergy (BSS), which besides the EU, included also main regional stakeholders (Russia and Turkey) the South Caucasus, Moldova and Ukraine. In 2009, building on Poland and Sweden proposals the EU inaugurated the EaP which in addition to the five eastern neighbours that were already part of the ENP included Belarus, but only in the multilateral framework of program. The EaP increased EU's bilateral offer to the eastern neighbours (Association Agreements – AA, Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area – DCFTA, visa-free dialogue, Comprehensive Institution-Building programmes – CIB) and proposed thematic multilateral platforms aimed to amplify intra-regional cooperation between states.

The brief overview of the EU efforts in the East shows that the region has no shortage of EU-driven programs and initiatives. The multitude of initiatives in the region points to EU's continuous search for the most effective approach to promote the neighbours' convergence in the absence of a membership perspective. The annual attempts to improve the ENP indicate that it is very much a project under construction. It also serves as proof of EU's dissatisfaction with the way in which programs designed for the Eastern neighbourhood work. Seen in this light, the EaP, which mimics the enlargement process, is an attempt to make EU's offer attractive enough to enable it to employ effectively positive conditionality. Given the short time span of the EaP, it might be too early to extend this assessment towards the EU's latest initiative in the region.

### **Plurality of attitudes towards the EU in the East**

The success of the EU in the East is conditioned not only by internal coherence and more 'sweet' incentives to spearhead reforms, but also by approaches to the EU in the region as well as the neighbour's

aspirations and expectations from the EU. There is a plurality of views about the EU and membership perspective in the EaP states. While Belarus and Azerbaijan do not regard membership as an objective of cooperation with the EU, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine view accession as the final destination on this path. Unlike the self-declared EU hopefuls in the East, Armenia is less ambitious at the rhetorical level on the European integration, but acts consistently, without much publicity, towards building closer ties with the EU.

In spite of many handicaps, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are the most advanced in relations with the EU. They are also more pluralist than Armenia (which nevertheless has relatively strong pro-European political opposition) and especially authoritarian Azerbaijan and Belarus. In consequence, this group of states includes the most probable candidates from the neighbourhood as it looks now and probably will remain so unless major political or economic shocks occur in the neighbourhood. Over the last year, Moldova has tried to improve domestic performance and use at maximum opportunities provided by the EaP. This in turn might generate a healthy 'European integration' competition between front-runners from the East.

Only radical political changes in Belarus and Azerbaijan and accession to the WTO could set them on the path of closer political and economic association with the EU which in the future could open up the membership perspective. Such changes are not in sight and the EU's ability to apply conditionality is limited in these states.

Alliance with Moscow, necessary in the eyes of Erevan in order to safeguard its vital security interests, often precludes Armenia from a deeper engagement with the Euro-Atlantic institutions. Armenia's trajectory towards the EU will greatly depend on the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the degree of Russia's tolerance (or lack thereof) of the European vector in Armenia's foreign policy.

Although EU membership has been spelled out as the main goal of the euro-enthusiasts in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, the at-

itudes of political elites' (and the rest of population) towards the EU vary from time to time, while the European integration efforts' of governments oscillate quite often. But EU's presence is much stronger in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine which endows it with greater prowess to effectively use its transformative power. Ultimately, successful Europeanization in these countries will invariably have a spill over effect on Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, and possibly even Russia.

## Perceptions of the EU: Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine

### **Civil society**

Civil society is the most pro-European constituency in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The exceptions are networks of Russian funded NGOs, which try to portray the EU, not without effect, as a decaying civilization or egotistic commercial power. Although being European-friendly, the third sector displays signs of disappointment with the EU, which is partially shared by the political class. There are a wide range of issues which raise concerns; from the selective implementation of the Sarkozy-Medvedev peace plan in Georgia, through visa issue procedure to Brussels's weak support for the European integration agenda, feeble reaction to the democratic backslide and reluctance to open up the European market. Recently, these concerns have been alleviated to some extent. European top officials visited Georgia in July 2010, EU Delegation in Kyiv engaged more actively NGOs to monitor closely government's policies and European Commission proposed to increase Moldova's export quota on wine and cereals to the EU.

The preponderantly non-cooperative attitude of the governments and the internal weakness of the third sector in these countries translated in a very modest civil society's impact on public policies targeting Europeanization. As a confirmation, the EU Commission criticized Ukraine's government environment

programmes developed without having dialogue with the civil society<sup>76</sup>. The situation has improved in Moldova since the pro-European coalition assumed power in 2009, but there is still a lot to be done to effectively institutionalize the dialogue between the government and civil society. So far, the third sector has exercised influence on public policies through the 'export' of its best representatives to the governmental structures, usually in the aftermath of democratic changes (Georgia – 2003, Ukraine – 2004, and Moldova – 2009) rather than via a permanent link with the authorities.

### **Public opinion**

On the level of public attitudes towards EU membership, Georgia heads the top with almost 80 % for and only 2% against accession to the EU. Around 45 % of Georgians assess positively the current state of affairs with the EU<sup>77</sup>. The gap between support for accession and level of satisfaction in relations with the EU reveals the dissatisfaction that the Georgian public holds to some extent about the EU. In Moldova, support for the membership in the EU secures 63%. While nearly 10% oppose accession to the EU, 20% remain undecided. Opinion polls show that sympathy for the EU in Moldova is lower among Russian, Ukrainian and other national minorities. Ethnic minorities also compose the largest group of the undecided in regards to EU membership. In general, Moldovans (more than 60%) are satisfied with the current state of relations with the EU<sup>78</sup>. In Ukraine, 53% of citizens are in favour of integration with the EU, while 26% oppose this process. It is worthwhile to mention that attitudes towards the EU in Ukraine have oscillated over the last years. Thus, between 2002-2008 the support for the EU has fluctuated between 65% and 40%, at the same time opposition to the European integration swayed between 13% and 36%. The latest public surveys demonstrate regional and generational divisions in the Ukraine regarding the EU membership. Major support for European integration comes from central and western regions and Kyiv. Ukrainians between 20 and 39 years old represent the backbone of the pro-European camp<sup>79</sup>. In Ukraine and Moldova, besides the European option, the population yearns for strong

ties with Russia, be it in the form of a 'strategic partnership' (46% in Moldova) or Union with Russia and Belarus (more than 60 % in Ukraine).

### **Political elite**

An accession to the EU is an indispensable element of the legitimizing political discourse in Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova. Almost all the major political forces support EU membership at the declarative level as the ultimate goal of cooperation with the EU. Given the substantial public support for accession, politicians are compelled to regularly reiterate their pro-European stance. On the other hand, currently there is a more realistic assessment of the real chances to get membership perspective among the EU hopefuls in the post-Soviet region than there was a few years ago. As a result, politicians tend to put the emphasis on integration and less on membership in the club. But European integration remains an elusive concept as political forces display different understandings of what it means and how far government should advance on this path.

After the short war with Russia, which eliminated accession to NATO as a realistic option in the foreseeable future, the EU emerged (in addition to the US) as the main anchor of Georgia to the West. Nevertheless, the political class is split on how far Georgia should go on integration with the EU and how strictly it should follow European advice. Ultra-liberals, aiming to attract FDI and pursue a swift economic modernization advocate for a greater deregulation of the economy, a vision often incompatible with the EU model. They tend to see the EU and its economic future with scepticism. Some influential members of the Georgian government also question the value and quality of the incoming EU advice<sup>80</sup>. On the other hand, the most 'pro-EU camp', with the main engine located in the Foreign Ministry and the Office of the State Minister for Euro-Atlantic Integration, sees no alternatives to full political and economic integration in Europe.

The two strands of thought have been reflected in Georgia's policy regarding the EU. In the early stages, ultra-liberals promoted the

idea of concluding with the EU of a FTA-lite, to avoid the regulatory convergence with the EU. During 2009, Georgia registered progress on preparation for negotiations on DCFTA<sup>81</sup> which shows that ultra-liberals' position has been relatively shaken. EU's tough stance played not the last role. However, slow progress in approximation and implementation of legislation necessary for DCFTA (partially explained by the high costs of reforms) also demonstrate that ultra-liberals remain influential and are able to hamper efforts to this end. In the very near future the Act of Economic Liberty (if adopted) could generate more obstacles for Georgia's economic association with the EU. The provision which prohibits creation of the new regulatory agencies directly collides with institutional building Georgia is supposed to conduct for DCFTA, the effort financially shouldered by the EU<sup>82</sup>.

The ingredients of Tbilisi's outlook on the EU could be summarised as follows: membership is a long term goal; pursuit of sectoral integration step-by-step (e.g. common aviation area with the EU); reforms for the sake of Georgia and not for the EU; Europe is important for domestic development; the EU will not sacrifice its interests and relations with Russia for Georgia; and that relations with the EU could upgrade (though still not solve or guarantee) the security of Georgia by reducing the risk of a Russian attack (continuous presence of the EUMM monitors is deemed vital).

In the aftermath of the Orange revolution, new Ukrainian leadership adopted strong pro-European stance. Unfortunately, discourse has not translated into coherent strategy of Ukraine's Europeanization. In 2010, Ukraine went through alternation of power. From the outset president Yanukovich sought to equilibrate Western-leaning foreign policy by pursuing closer relations with Russia and looking with increased interests to China. As concerns European vector, the current leadership in Kyiv insists that accession is the final goal of Ukraine's European integration. But the Ukrainian officials recognize that the chances of getting a membership perspective in AA are close to zero. Without a membership perspective on the table, the ruling elite adopt a utilitarian approach towards the EU, trying to eschew

from conditionality and extract as many advantages as possible. Thus, it seems that Kazakhstan's multi-vectorism is perceived by many in Kyiv as a text book case and a guide for action.

Although the government includes many conservative and few liberal elements from the Party of Regions, the strategic course in regards to the EU is shaped largely by the president and his administration. The ruling of the Constitutional Court which abolished constitutional reform (dating back to 2004) will further strengthen presidential grip on formulation of Ukraine's European policy. On European direction visa-free dialogue, macro-financial assistance and negotiations on DCFTA dominate Ukraine's immediate agenda. Hence, in a relatively short period, Ukraine adopted laws on public procurement, personal data protection, gas market liberalization, raised domestic gas prices, concluded an agreement with Russia on land border demarcation (maritime border remains disputed) and is negotiating the debt issue with Minsk which precludes the border treaty with Belarus to enter into force. In consequence, the EU approved financial package for border management and macro-financial assistance worth €500 million and provided Ukraine with two-sequence action plan towards the visa liberalization. However, the question remains open whether government will be able to implement measures envisioned in the adjustment programme agreed with IMF and the action plan. Apparently, Kiev believes that the 2012 European Football Cup (co-organized with Poland) could serve as a shortcut towards a visa-free regime with the EU despite partial implementation of the action plan provisions.

With regard to the economic dimension of the EU-Ukraine relations the main issue are the negotiations on DCFTA. They are advancing slowly mainly because of the Ukrainian government protectionist mood. It is not difficult to understand why. According to one top Ukrainian official, the EU is a 'machine for acquiring markets' while eventual DCFTA will represent 'agreement between competitors'<sup>83</sup>. Therefore, Ukraine intends to adopt European standards and regulations if they suit its economic interests. In addition, for any concession to liberalize its own market, Ukraine expects reciprocity from the EU. This approach shows

that short-term economic interests in Ukraine prevail over the long-term advantages that the DCFTA will bring to its economy. It also proves Ukraine's willingness to challenge the asymmetric nature of its relationship with the EU<sup>84</sup>. Given its size and geographic position the leadership believes that Ukraine is entitled to have a special status while negotiating with the EU. This approach encourages Kyiv to engage in 'battles' it cannot win (e.g. geographical identification of product origin) or insist on unreasonable demands (e.g. opening of EU agricultural market, while trailing behind in implementation of sanitary and phyto-sanitary norms). Ultimately, it significantly slows down the process of economic association of Ukraine with the EU.

The multicolour coalition which assumed power in 2009 in Moldova made European integration its main policy priority. Moldova's top officials underpinned absolute compatibility between the reforms the government undertakes domestically and the European integration objective. The EU is regarded as vital for Moldova's successful transformation. Chisinau hopes that rapid reforms might convince the EU that it deserves an explicit recognition of Moldova's membership ambitions in AA. The reforms implemented within the visa-free dialogue with the EU, adoption of legislation to accede to the Energy Community and the rapid pace of negotiations on AA serve as a good example of the new approach towards European integration. Moldova also improved its human rights track (in particular in field of mass media freedom<sup>85</sup>) and adopted sectoral judicial reforms (e.g. establishment of private judicial executors system). In November 2010 Moldova held parliamentary elections which met most international standards. In turn, the EU signed with Moldova framework document for comprehensive institutional building and approved Moldova's participation in several programs reserved for candidate states.

Despite the fact that all political forces which make the pro-European alliance declare support for European integration, words often have not matched with deeds. For instance, several important governmental initiatives aiming to overhaul the justice system (e.g. elimination of economic and military courts) and liberalize the air transportation market have met stiff resistance from the inside of

the ruling coalition. The alliance rightly dismantled the 'power vertical' erected by the Communist Party. But it was unable to replace it with an efficient bureaucratic mechanism for the implementation of the reforms. That very fact kept plenty of reforms on paper. While young professionals recruited by the government brought new dynamics, they were neither able to compensate for the underperformance of weak institutions nor outweigh 'bureaucratic islands' resisting the change. Therefore, in spite of the 'correct rhetoric' on the European integration and improvements in several fields, Moldova has not moved on the European track as fast as many have expected in autumn 2009. In the second half of 2010, the elections rush and premature self-satisfaction with the pace of integration with the EU (among some members of the alliance) have switched the focus from reforms to political battles inside the coalition as well as with the main opposition force.

## Obstacles and opportunities on the road to Europe

EU's eastward enlargement depends to a large extent on the reforms the EU hopefuls should implement as well as the consensus inside the EU. While building support inside the EU remains an important element on this road, ultimately only reforms in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine will diminish the scepticism in the European capitals and will neutralize the arguments against further enlargement. Thus, it is necessary to focus not on the obstacles for enlargement per se, but on what hinders the reforms which would open perspectives of candidate status and what are the opportunities to reignite the Europeanization process.

### Obstacles

There are common roadblocks Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia are facing on the European track: anaemic or fluctuating political will to carry out reforms; waste of political energies on collateral issues and lack of strategic vision on European inte-

gration; the effects of the global economic crisis which increase the cost of reforms in the short and mid run; wide spread corruption (to a lesser extent in Georgia) and a dysfunctional justice system; weak institutions and a deficit of qualified specialists; excessive centralization of power at the centre and weak local authorities; civic passivity; marginalization of the public from European integration debate and agenda; reticence of the government to engage actively with civil society; and the Russian factor. But each country also has to confront in the short and long run individual 'demons' too.

In Georgia, the power (non)transition in 2012-2013 will test how credible the leadership's announced intentions are to move closer politically to Europe. Mismanagement of democratic rules to preserve power could severely damage Georgia's image and weaken support in the key European capitals. Fragmented opposition in Georgia, so far, has underperformed, failing to present a credible alternative to the actual leadership. The ultra-liberal economic philosophy and its proponents could significantly delay Georgia's economic association with the EU. The Russian factor in Georgia will negatively impact its drive toward Europe. Moscow is expected to be heavily involved in the 2012-2013 electoral cycle and fuel the regime change, a move which could destabilize the political situation in Georgia. Mounting Russian military presence in South Ossetia and Abkhazia will continue to breed deep feelings of insecurity in Georgia and possibly deflect the government resources and society energies from reforms. The Russian military build-up in the breakaway regions might keep some foreign investors out of Georgia, directly affecting the country's economic development. Finally, Turkey's less clear European trajectory coupled with Ukraine's East-West zigzagging leaves Georgia in a much tougher regional environment for Europeanization.

In Ukraine, the proclivity of a rent-seeking elite for the status quo will hamper the implementation of reforms necessary to draw the country closer to the EU. The democratic backslide will leave Ukraine with fewer European friends and undermines substantially chances for the EU membership bid. There

are worrying signals about freedom of assembly and freedom of speech in Ukraine. Mistreatment of NGOs and media as well as attempts to bar important opposition forces from participating in local elections shows government uneasiness about 'excessive pluralism' and what it sees as meddling in its internal affairs. At the same time, disorganized and discredited political opposition will encourage indirectly the ruling majority's authoritarian reflexes. The Russian factor will hardly be conducive towards a swift Europeanization of Ukraine too. By providing credit with no democratic strings attached and relatively cheap gas, Russia weakens the incentives for reform (non-transparent deals in the gas sector preserve an inefficient energy system) and undermines EU's ability to enforce conditionality. The new wave of Russia's economic expansion seeks to lock Ukraine into Russia's economic space and derail its economic association with the EU.

Incomplete power transition remains in the short- and mid-term the biggest challenge for Moldova. The failure of the constitutional referendum in September 2010 means that parliament still has power to elect the head of state. After early parliamentary elections in November, the parties representing former governmental coalition gathered 59 seats, short of 2 votes necessary to elect the president. There are few possible solutions out of this deadlock: a bipartisan consensus on the constitutional amendments regarding the procedure of electing the president which would prevent such blockage in future; agreement on electing neutral candidate accepted by all political forces; formation of super-majority between two major political parties which will guarantee enough votes to elect president in accordance with provisions of the current legislation; political migration of at least two MP's from Communist party towards renewed coalition of pro-European forces or support of four MP's from liberal wing for candidate of the centre-left coalition (57 seats). However, more challenging for Moldova could be the situation wherein no coalition will emerge in order to form a new government. A prolonged power vacuum will significantly delay reforms and will risk fomenting a 'Moldova fatigue' in the EU. In the condition

when the pro-European coalition reunites after elections and installs government, but fails to secure the position of the head of state (another election will probably take place in one year), mutual suspicion among the members of the alliance about their intentions will hinder the coherence of the European integration efforts. The Russian factor will play the divisive role in Moldovan society stimulating debate (via Church or Russian sponsored NGOs) on contentious identity issues (e.g. language, interpretation of the history). It is quite likely that Moscow will continue to manipulate the Transnistrian dossier to confuse Moldova from the European path and in the best case (for the Kremlin), to push for a dysfunctional reintegration of Transnistria under which the sovereignty of Chisinau to decide on its external orientation will be severely limited. During post-electoral political battles, Russia will act to form a Moscow-friendly coalition in Chisinau (between Communist and Democratic Party of Moldova) and if necessary also use economic pressure to get the result it yearns for.

### **Opportunities**

The long list of challenges does not encourage much optimism and confirms the assumption about a bigger volume of work to be done in the neighbourhood in order to get accession perspective. But upon a closer look some challenges may turn into opportunities, too.

Local elections in Georgia in May 2010 took place in a highly competitive environment. The defeat of the opposition represents a chance to regroup or coagulate around a credible leader in order to win the parliamentary (or at least enough seats to be part of the power sharing scheme) and presidential elections. In June 2010 Georgia signed a visa facilitation agreement with the EU which will ease the conditions for obtaining a visa for several categories of citizens. Its implementation will open the possibility to initiate a visa-free dialogue, which coupled with EU's substantial financial assistance and presence on the border within the conflict regions, will boost EU's position to apply positive conditionality to Georgia, speeding up reforms in this way. The prolonged deadlock guaran-

teed militarily by Russia over South Ossetia and Abkhazia, could motivate Georgia to channel energy on internal development which ultimately makes it more attractive for the break-way regions (if by then the separatist regions will not be absorbed totally by Russia). The launch of negotiations on AA in July 2010 could represent a new impetus in Georgia's relations with the EU. It also represents the opportunity for Georgia to multiply links with the EU and get closer to Europe. Although still slim, the chances for normalization of relations with Russia in coming years (taking into account constraints of the post-war environment) could not be ruled out. Georgian authorities genuine efforts to this end, even if not reciprocated by Russia, could reduce Georgia's 'troublemaker' image entrenched in several important EU capitals. Whether Russia will change its stance, normalization of relations will make the situation in the region less worrisome.

In case of Ukraine the business lobby, inside the Party of Regions, for greater liberalization and closer economic association with the EU, will likely to put pressure on the protectionist oriented government and economic groups around it (energy lobby). This could help to advance, and even speed up, the negotiations on DCFTA. Ironically, a more centralized power structure in Ukraine might prove harmful for the rule of law, but it may be more efficient than the Orange coalition in adopting and implementing economic reforms. Relatively independent mass-media and active third sector which emerged under the Orange coalition will resist infringement on fundamental rights and liberties, observable under the new leadership. The Constitutional Court ruling on constitutional reform (2004) could encourage opposition to work more closely against the monopolization of the political scene by the Party of Regions. As the economic reforms reduce popularity of the government, opposition could capitalize on painful social effects in order to strengthen its position vis-à-vis president Yanukovich and the Party of Regions. Russia's plans to take control over the gas transmission network and refusal to let Ukraine buy gas directly from Turkmenistan could serve as a wakeup call for the elites which tilted dangerously close to Russia. These developments, coupled with Ukraine's acces-

sion to the Energy Community and legislation approximation in this field, could pave the way for reforms in the energy sector, increasing in the mid- and long-run energy efficiency and reducing power of the Russian energy leverage. The multiplication of institutional links between the EU and Ukraine will increase the number of bureaucrats involved in the European integration process. This in turn will have a strong socialization effect, expanding the pro-European constituencies among the middle-ranked public servants who deal with the integration in the EU on a daily basis.

After parliamentary elections in Moldova there are fair chances for re-creation of the Alliance for European Integration, which will enjoy with 59 mandates (previously it held 53 seats) a more comfortable majority. If the Communists are unable to recover power (in case talks with PDM fail), they will still remain a strong political force which will keep the government's actions under scrutiny. This in turn might improve governmental coalition performance. At the same time, another year (or four years, pending to election or non-election of the head of state) in opposition could flare up the internal infighting in the Communist party, pushing it to either modernize or fragment. Proliferation of TV channels and on-line info-sources (rapidly developed since 2009) will ensure greater transparency and accountability of the government. Diversified mass-media will also resist to attempts of authoritarian comeback in Moldova. While a 'Ukraine scenario' (2004-2009) in Moldova can not be ruled out (dysfunctional coalition), several factors could help Chisinau avoid it: a strong support for the EU on the level of public opinion; dependence on EU's economic assistance and access to the internal market. The action plan prepared by the European Commission towards lifting visas for Moldovans will boost the incentive to implement reforms in the fields of justice and home affairs. Moldova's interconnection via Romania with the European Energy market will provide an alternative energy source in case Russia decides to coerce Moldova or Ukraine. Eventual institutionalization of a regular EU-Russia security dialogue at a high level might have a positive impact on the Transnistrian issue, by improving trust between the key actors which could ultimately lead, in the best

case scenario, to re-opening of negotiations in the '5+2' format and the replacement of the Russian 'peacekeepers' with a mixed format of EU-Russia civilian monitors.

## EU hopefuls' perceptions of Poland and the Czech Republic

Poland and the Czech Republic have positive image in Georgia, Moldova and the Ukraine, but there are nuances that differentiate them, too. Generally, both are seen as examples of a swift democratic and economic transition. Poland's strong economic performance during the economic crisis strengthened its positive perception in the region. Poland is regarded as a regional leader (among the EU newcomers) which managed to enhance its diplomatic weight inside the EU. Poland is seen as having more influence to promote Eastern agenda of the EU. However, some EU hopefuls (especially in Georgia) are worried about side effects of Polish-Russian rapprochement. The Czech Republic is not regarded as somebody's advocate for accession in the region. It is rather viewed as an actor interested in democracy promotion in the neighbourhood and supporter of the Eastern Partnership.

Georgia highly values political-diplomatic Poland provided during the war in 2008. It also appreciates jointly funded projects by Poland and the Czech Republic which are developed by Georgian NGOs on the local level. Tbilisi is keen to boost economic bilateral relations with Poland and the Czech Republic. Georgia regards the two as attractive markets for its wines and mineral water, as well as a source of possible FDI. Given the change of power in Poland (a new president), Tbilisi does not expect from the current leadership in Warsaw the loud political support it received during Kaczynski's term in office. Georgia closely follows the Polish-Russian rapprochement, hoping that this will enable Poland to forge a broad consensus inside the EU for an active and forward-looking policy in the Eastern neighbourhood, particularly in

South Caucasus. Still there are concerns in Tbilisi that improved relations between Russia and Poland might have also negative side effects for Georgia. Although not that influential, the Czech Republic is expected to work closely with Poland, keeping the Eastern Partnership in the EU's focus. Tbilisi also counts on Czech support for EU's energy diversification projects which would transit Georgia and amplify economic ties between South Caucasus and the EU.

Until recently, Ukraine deemed Poland one of the key regional economic partners and its main advocate in the EU. However, since prime-minister Tusk's ascendance to power, Kyiv observed growing signs of 'Ukraine fatigue' in Poland. The new ruling majority is viewed as less committed to Ukraine's European aspirations, a fact reflected by the disinterest in bilateral cooperative projects. At the same time, realistically assessing Ukraine's performance many recognize that Kyiv is very much responsible for the sceptical mood in Warsaw. Thus, the enthusiasm after the Orange revolution has evaporated, giving way to mutual disappointment in Poland and Ukraine. There are concerns that the Polish-Russian rapprochement might further reduce intensity of Poland's advocacy for Ukraine's membership in the EU. Nevertheless, the government in Kiev strives to re-energize the economic relations (e.g. involvement in modernization of Ukraine's gas-transit network) and hopes to conclude negotiations on DCFTA under the Polish Presidency in the EU. The Czech Republic is not perceived as an advocate of Ukraine's membership in the EU. It is viewed rather as an actor investing energy inside the EU to promote the Eastern agenda. It is also regarded as an interested economic player which looks for investment opportunities in Ukraine. On the other hand, the Czech Republic is an attractive labour market for Ukrainians<sup>86</sup>; but the subject of visa issuing for Ukrainian citizens (additional documents e.g. medical certificate) sparked frictions between Kyiv and Prague, poisoning the atmosphere in the bilateral relations.

Moldova enjoys good relationship with Poland which during short tenure of pro-European government provided not

only strong political and diplomatic support inside the EU (proposed to allocate to Moldova €50 million from the Governance Facility), but offered bilateral financial assistance (€15 million) and expertise. Polish experts conducted early screening of the legislation related to visa-free dialogue with the EU, while its former chief-negotiator with the EU visited Chisinau to share experience in dealing with the EU institutions. Chisinau sees the renewed economic interests from Poland to invest in Moldova. In its turn, Moldova is eager to deepen economic ties with Poland, which is the largest buyer of Moldovan wine in the EU. The economic relationship with Poland gains significance as Moldova's access to Russian market has been temporarily suspended or barred for political reasons. The government has high expectations from the Polish Presidency of the EU in 2011. It hopes to realize some breakthroughs which will draw Moldova closer to the EU. The Czech Republic provides substantial development funds (environment, agriculture and healthcare) and is active in transferring expertise on European integration. The Czech Republic is an attractive destination for Moldovan citizens who want to work or study (especially Russian-speaking minorities) abroad. However, the Moldovan community in the Czech Republic is in absolute numbers much smaller than the Ukrainian one. Chisinau counts on Czech support for the Eastern Partnership, investments in economy and expertise in institutional building.

## Recommendations

The proponents of the eastward enlargement should not expect the proper context for accession; this one must be fostered. It will necessitate a combination of long term approach and short term energetic actions addressing the neighbours' immediate needs. The EU is crucial for success of this endeavour. Poland and the Czech Republic have also an important role to play in Europeanization of the Eastern neighbourhood. The major responsibility for mission accomplishment lies, however, on the states in question.

## EU

Without neglecting Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus, the EU should pay extra-attention to self-declared EU hopefuls from the East – Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Progress in those three states can alter positively the general atmosphere in the region and induce changes in euro-sceptics' EaP states. In order to succeed, the EU has to strengthen the positive conditionality and focus more on monitoring of the reforms implementation. However, conditionality will work if the EU delivers on its promises, while rewards are related to vital issues for these states (e.g. energy, macro-financial stability, protracted conflicts). The EU also has to better correlate its messages (the EU Commissioner and the EU delegations). The non-critical approach of the Commission often complicates the EU's heads of mission efforts to draw the central authorities' attention on critical problems to be addressed. The EU should react promptly to authoritarian reflexes together with the US. Joint or parallel EU-US critical response to authoritarian impulses will act as a powerful tool enforcing political conditionality.

The EU has a tendency to invest in pro-European governments and neglect the civil society funding. The EU should allocate substantial financial support to civil society, in an effort to build bottom-up pressure on government irrespectively of their political orientation. Given the difficulty of the institutional engineering process and the importance of regulatory convergence, the EU has to invest more in building and consolidating institutions. To this end, the EU also has to speed up the procedure of allocation of funds necessary for institutional building projects. After the Lisbon Treaty entered into force the EU Delegations in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine turned into the EU embassies. Having more political clout the EU embassies can make a big difference. These should be beefed up and consolidated to increase the operational capacity for projects implementation and close monitoring of the governments policies. The EU embassies have to organize wide outreach information campaigns about what the EU does in respective countries and how it impacts citizens' life. The EU ambassadors in these states have to be visible in public space and interact closely with authorities pointing out to the issues from

European integration agenda the governments have to attend to. The EU has to demonstrate symbolic support (high level visits), involve neighbours in cultural events on the European scale and expand its presence in the post-Soviet information space. Finally, the review of the ENP is unlikely to generate additional funds for EaP. Thus, the EU should think how it could attract other like-minded actors' funds (Canada, South Korea, Japan, and Australia) or regional stake-holders (Turkey) to support its policy in the East. More synergy between US and EU-funded programs in the region is also needed in order to amplify the impact.

### **Poland and the Czech Republic**

Poland and the Czech Republic have to be patient as the Europeanization of the Eastern periphery will be a long ride with multiple hurdles on the way. Therefore, to succeed in the Eastern neighbourhood, Warsaw and Prague have to prove strong, sustainable and long term commitments for the Eastern Partnership. Poland and the Czech Republic have to promote a wise lobby inside the EU, by avoiding sharp divisions, maintaining EaP on the EU agenda, approaching disinterested or pessimistic EU member states and shaping inclusive consensus on the Eastern neighbourhood. At the same time, Poland and the Czech Republic have to explain to the EU hopefuls that their lobby will have little impact without domestic performance. Political leaders should send a strong signal against the democratic backslide, pointing to extremely negative consequences for the European perspective. More than that, Poland and the Czech Republic should point to the fields where reforms are urgently needed. Reforms linked to implementation of the action plans towards visa liberalization with the EU are a case in point. If governments will request assistance, Warsaw and Prague should be ready to provide advice on how to devise and implement such reforms. As negotiations on AA accords with Moldova and Ukraine will be close to the end, Poland and the Czech Republic have to intensify inter-parliamentary contacts with the EU member states legislatures to smoothen the ratification process. Anticipating the AA ratification, Prague and Warsaw could help with setting up an inter-ministerial coordination mechanism necessary for

the implementation of the AA agenda and share expertise on how it worked during the accession phase. Later, Poland and the Czech Republic also should launch the debate inside the EU about rewarding the best performers from the EaP with potential candidate status if certain criteria are met.

Until the conclusion of the AA, both states have to develop as many links as possible with the euro-enthusiasts in the East, engage in transfer of know-how on institutional crafting and perform early screening of legislation (on request). Poland and the Czech Republic should also pay attention to the local communities largely ignored by the central authorities. By developing projects on the local level, Poland and the Czech Republic will empower local constituencies and will show how the EU can change their life for the better. Initiatives on the local level are an indispensable part of the bottom-up approach on EU integration in the Eastern neighbourhood. Last but not least, mass-media outlets from Poland and the Czech Republic could organize visits or short-term training for journalists/reporters who cover the EU related issues in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. By sharing their experience, colleagues from Poland and Czech Republic will contribute to the quality of analyses and reporting on the European integration topics in the East.

### **Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine**

Obstacles to Europeanization identified above prepare the general guidelines along which these three states have to act. Firstly, “the euro-enthusiasts” have to demonstrate a strong commitment to the final objective, namely membership in the EU. This should not be conditioned by the explicit offer or promise from the EU. The objective has to be pursued despite unfavourable context for enlargement. Secondly, the best way to prove the seriousness of its European aspirations would be to implement reforms, which ultimately are to the benefit of these states. In their effort, EU hopefuls have to make use of the EaP instruments as well as the bilateral assistance Poland, the Czech Republic and other EU member states could provide. Progress on visa issues and DCFTA are of particular importance, as both will have a profound social and economic impact on societies. To ease the process, EU hopefuls could learn

from Balkans experience (visa-free dialogue) or each others practices (e.g. police reform in Georgia). Thirdly, a smart and sustained diplomatic campaign to conquer the hearts and minds of European public and of political leaders is an imperative. While Moldova made new friendships in Europe, Georgia and Ukraine has lost many supporters in the EU, whom they have to win back. Although the Kremlin opposes the Europeanization of the Eastern neighbourhood, the EU hopefuls should strive to have normal and non-conflictual relations with Russia. However, such an effort should not come at the expense of European aspirations of the EaP countries. Therefore, normalization of relations with Russia should go hand in hand with the domestic consolidation and reforms in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine which will weaken the Russian spoiler prowess and will boost the transformative power of Europe.

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<sup>691</sup>The author is greatly indebted to all experts and officials who generously shared valuable information and opinions.

<sup>701</sup> Stanislav Secieru is an associate researcher at the Centre for East-European and Asian Studies, Bucharest/Chisinau.

<sup>711</sup> See, Alan Mayhew, A Certain Idea of Europe: Can European Integration Survive Eastern Enlargement?, SEI Working Paper, No.93/07, Sussex European Institute, [http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/documents/sei\\_working\\_paper\\_93.pdf](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/documents/sei_working_paper_93.pdf)

<sup>721</sup> Macedonia is a candidate state, but still has to open accession talks which have been delayed due to 'name dispute' with Greece.

<sup>731</sup> In the light of political developments, the PCA along with Belarus did not enter in force, and relations are based on the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) signed with the USSR in 1989. To facilitate the transition to a market economy and forge closer links with the eastern neighbours the EU developed several programs and initiatives (Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS), Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe (INOGATE) and Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia (TRACECA), providing technical assistance and opening new opportunities for investments in energy and transportation infrastructure.

<sup>741</sup> European Commission, Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours, 11 March 2003, [http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com03\\_104\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com03_104_en.pdf)

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- <sup>78)</sup> Barometrul Socio-Politic – Sondaj la nivel national, Noiembrie 2010, [http://www.ipp.md/public/files/Barometru/2010/BOP\\_Noieembrie\\_2010.ppt#632,2,Programul Barometrul Opiniei Publice](http://www.ipp.md/public/files/Barometru/2010/BOP_Noieembrie_2010.ppt#632,2,Programul%20Barometrul%20Opinieii%20Publice)
- <sup>79)</sup> More than half of Ukrainian's support European Union membership, Kyiv Post, 12 May 2010, <http://www.kyivpost.com/news/nation/detail/66442/>, Bolshinstvo ukrainsev za soyz s Rossiei i Belarusiy, LB.ua, 26 April 2010, [http://lb.ua/news/2010/04/26/41262\\_bolshinstvo\\_ukrainsev\\_soyuz.html](http://lb.ua/news/2010/04/26/41262_bolshinstvo_ukrainsev_soyuz.html), Does Ukraine Need to Join the European Union (2002-2008), Razumkov Center, [http://www.uceps.org.ua/eng/poll.php?poll\\_id=387](http://www.uceps.org.ua/eng/poll.php?poll_id=387)
- <sup>80)</sup> Interview with Minister of Interior Vano Merabishvili, Kommersant, 7 April 2010, <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=1350011>
- <sup>81)</sup> European Commission, Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2009: Progress report Georgia, 12 May 2010, [http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/progress2010/sec10\\_518\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/progress2010/sec10_518_en.pdf)
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- <sup>83)</sup> Interview with Deputy Minister of Economy (Ukraine) Valery Pyatnitsky, Radio Svoboda, 13 August 2010, <http://www.radiosvoboda.org/content/article/2127368.html>
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# Turkey and Europe: Convergence and Divergence Between the Political Paradigms



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A spectre is haunting Turkey today. This is the spectre of West-scepticism, with its twin streams of Euroscepticism and anti-Americanism<sup>88</sup>. Euroscepticism and anti-Americanism have fed one another and together have led to increasingly powerful movements of West-scepticism, anti-Westernism, and national isolationism. West-scepticism has left its mark on almost all ideologies and movements of the left and the right, albeit to varying degrees. However, it has found an autonomous and authentic ideological articulation in the so-called “neo-nationalist” current of thought, which in Turkey has come to be named as “ulusalcılık”. Although “ulusalcılık” literally means nationalism in Turkish, it has been used in place of the older and more popular Turkish term for nationalism, “milliyetçilik”, to put the accent on the West-sceptic and isolationist tendencies of the neo-nationalist movement. Moreover, while classical nationalism, “milliyetçilik”, has usually had Islamic overtones, neo-nationalism, “ulusalcılık”, has hailed secularism and emphasised the Turkish rather than Islamic dimension of national identity.<sup>89</sup>.

In recent years there has been an intense questioning of the country's relations with Europe, America, and the Western world in general. The West has been blamed for a lack of understanding, a lack of respect, and in many cases for a lack of friendship in its relations with Turkey. It has been portrayed as selfish, using Turkey when it badly needed the latter's help during the Cold War, but subsequently forgetting all its past obligations, commitments, and promises. According to this West-sceptic narrative, the moment Turkey lost its value for the West, the latter did not waste a moment in reasserting historical claims threatening the territorial integrity and very existence of the Turkish state. Hence, Turkey has been pressured to acknowledge the Armenian genocide (and to comply with the financial and territorial compensation that would follow that recognition); to yield to Kurdish demands for regional autonomy and eventual independence; to recognise the establishment of Greek authority over Cyprus; to allow neighbouring Iraq to be partitioned along ethnic and sectarian lines; to swallow humiliating remarks by European politicians that Turkey is not European and thus not fit for EU membership; and to make all the reforms demanded by a patronising EU, without any assurances of membership in the foreseeable future.<sup>90</sup>

This West-scepticism, of which Euroskepticism is a constituent part, has grown particularly since the start of the accession negotiations with the EU in October 2005. Public support for EU membership fell sharply, from a peak range of 75 percent in 2003-04 down to the 60-65 percent interval in 2005, and then to 55 percent in 2006-07. Even more alarming than the falling approval rates was the rise of Euro-rejectionism, partly due to defectors from the Euro-supportive camp and partly to undecided voters moving to the Euro-rejectionist camp. Hence, the ratio of those would say no in a hypothetical referendum on Turkey's EU membership rose from 15-20 percent in 2003-04 to 35-40 percent at the end of 2005 and have stayed around that level since.

World War I, World War II, and the Cold War constitute the most important historical factors in determining the inclusion or exclusion of Turkey in the map of Europe. It is therefore worth having a closer look at the paradigms these wars destroyed, invalidated,

and made indefensible, as well as those they established, disseminated, and made supreme. What could be said in short is that while Turkey had been able to adapt to the European paradigm (political values, attitudes and institutions) that emerged after World War I, for the most part it remained outside the realm of the European paradigm that came to the fore following World War II. The Post-Cold War period, in its part, poses a “post-modern” window of opportunity for a re-synchronization of the political regime and social culture of Turkey with that of Europe. In what follows we will examine the development of the Turkish perceptions on Europe, by underlining the ideological legacies of the decline of the Ottoman Empire (the Tanzimat and the Sevres Syndromes) at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, and by pointing the major turning points at the end of the World War One, World War Two, and the Cold War.

## The Legacies of the Imperial Decline and the War of Liberation

The Tanzimat syndrome and the Sèvres syndrome represent two premises of the genealogical narrative of modern Turkish nationalism. It was on these two premises that modern Turkish nationalism has constructed its historical narrative of the decline and collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the foundation of the Turkish Republic, covering roughly the one hundred year-period between the early 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century. The syndromes have essentially been consolidated by Kemalism, the founding ideology of the Turkish Republic founded in 1923, and they have been popularized in the larger society by the Kemalist-controlled school system, press, and literature. However, the roots of the syndromes go back to much earlier than Kemalism, to the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid (r. 1876-1909) and the Young Turks (r. 1909-1918), embodying an ideological continuity between the late Ottoman and early Republican state elites.

As Western powers played a determining role in both the collapse of the Empire and the founding of the Republic, both syn-

dromes offer a specific interpretation of the nature of relations between the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, on the one hand, and European great powers, on the other, highlighting the turning points, major actors and their intentions. Although both syndromes give an account of the actions and intentions of the West towards Turkey, each encapsulates a different moment of Turkish-Western history and emphasizes a different facet of the West. Among the two, the Sèvres syndrome is more central, focuses upon Turkey's foreign relations, and offers a general account of the Western strategy towards Turkey and of what Turkey should do in order to put off direct foreign intervention and subversion. The Tanzimat syndrome, on the other hand, focuses upon domestic politics and identifies the West's likely collaborators within Turkey itself. These potential collaborators of the West have typically been identified as the Christian minorities (Armenians and Greeks); Muslim but non-Turkish communities (Arabs and Kurds); Muslim and Turkish but over-Westernized segments of the society.

The syndromes are rooted in the fact that the Turks, beginning with the Seljuks in the 11th century, but particularly with the Ottomans since the 14th century onwards, conquered and settled in the lands, Anatolia and then Rumelia (the Balkans), which had originally belonged to the Christian peoples. Anatolia had been a territory of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) empire, and long after the Seljuk Turks had captured it piece by piece and made it their new home, they continued to call it as the "Land of the Romans" (Diyar-i Rum). Once the Ottoman Turks replaced their Seljuk predecessors as the new masters of Asia Minor, they changed the direction of their conquest and settlement towards Constantinople and the Balkan possessions of the Byzantine Empire. The Balkans became the Ottomans' "Land of the Romans", who called the area as Rumeli, a name that is still a common parlance today. The Turkish-Islamic conquest of the Christian territories, the Turkish nationalists believe, prepared the ground for a European-Christian revanchism and restorationism, which started with and is epitomized by the Crusades of the middle ages. The Europeans, in the Turkish nationalist narrative, never gave up their historical mission of driving the Turks

away from the historic lands of the Christians and back to the steppes of Central Asia. Hence, in the Turkish nationalist narrative, the Crusades of the Middle Ages, the capitulations (trading privileges) that the Ottoman Empire granted to certain European states beginning with the 16th century, colonization of some Ottoman territories in the 19th century, the occupation and the final division of the core Ottoman lands by the Allied powers after the First World War, and the American and European political, economic, military and cultural hegemony over Turkey in the period following the Second World War, all are incarnations of the eternal European “crusade” against the Turks.

The Tanzimat and Sèvres syndromes are syndromes, in the sense that they refer to a certain mode of perception, and a resulting code of operation, which are rooted in a traumatic past experience with the West, and which are not revised afterwards, no matter how the real relationship with the West has changed over the years. On the one hand, it is not rational to stick to a past memory of a relationship, and the corresponding reflexive reaction to it, even though the nature of that relationship has significantly changed over time. On the other hand, though, it is not uncommon for states and similar organized collectivities, like big corporations for instance, to develop syndrome-like perceptual and operational patterns and transmit it from one generation to another as the time-honored wisdom of the past. This seemingly irrational behavior may have to do with the overwhelmingly high transaction costs of adapting one’s mentality and behavior to the changing conditions, particularly for the big organizations like states. Because of the sheer size of a state-like organization, it takes so much time and work for the acquisition, processing and possessing of information that there occurs an almost natural resistance within the organization to revising that information and adapting organizational behavior in line with the changing conditions. Particularly when the information in question has to do with the survival of the organization in a world populated by rival organizations, then the organization in question may overvalue that information and develop an even stronger resistance to its revision. As such, the syndromes refer to the “deep memory” and the associated “deep policy” of

the Turkish nationalist elites regarding the West and its domestic allies. In what follows, we will explore, in more detail, these deep memories and deep policies.

The term *Tanzimat*, which means arranging things in a new and better order, refers to a series of modernizing reforms in the Ottoman Empire, which were set in motion in 1839 by the promulgation of the Imperial Decree of *Gulhane*. The *Gulhane* Decree was later supplemented in 1856 by the declaration of another major statement, called the Reform Decree (*Islahat Fermanı*). The backbone of the *Tanzimat* reforms was to provide the Ottoman subjects with modern citizenship rights and to create a state based on the rule of law. These basic citizenship rights included equality before law, irrespective of one's social status and religion; supremacy of law over the acts and decisions of the political authority; security of life, property and honor of all citizens; regulation of taxation and putting an end to the arbitrary confiscations of property. The Reform Decree of 1856 brought special new rights and privileges to the Christian subjects of the Empire, including freedom of prayer; the right to establish their own educational institutions; the right to enter into the military service; and equal taxation.

One particular expectation of the Palace from launching this reform program was to regain the allegiance of the Empire's Christian subjects (mostly Greeks and Armenians) and thereby to contain their separatist tendencies. Another expectation was to stop the Great Powers of Europe from interfering in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, the European states, particularly Britain and Russia, had long been active in mobilizing the Christians against the Ottoman state, and they were putting demands on the Palace to grant the Christians with economic, political and cultural liberties and advantages. By engaging itself in the *Tanzimat* reforms, the Ottoman center was hoping to satisfy some of the demands of the European Great Powers and thereby to put an end to their provocation and support of the Ottoman Christians towards separatism.

This is not the place to judge the value, wisdom or success of the *Tanzimat* reforms. However, even a cursory look at Ottoman history

after the initiation of the Tanzimat reforms in 1839 reveals a constant process of imperial collapse, which was brought about by the successful independence movements of the Christian and non Turkish peoples supported by this or that European power. As a result, between 1839 and 1908, the Empire lost its entire east central European lands. The Balkan and North African territories were gone between 1908 and 1918, during the Balkan Wars, the Italian invasion of Ottoman North Africa, and the First World War. Finally, during the Allied occupation of the Empire between 1918 and 1922, the defunct Treaty of Sèvres detached large chunks of Anatolia from the Empire, which had been already reduced to a symbolic entity.

One reason for the reverse effect of the Tanzimat's society empowering reforms was that they remained suspended in the air as the Ottoman imperial center could not develop a new institutional model of center periphery relations and it could not define a new imperial ideology which might have contained community demands under the roof of a revitalized empire. Under these circumstances, granting modern national, religious, and legal rights to the peripheral communities, in accordance with Russian and Western European demands, resulted in nothing but the destruction of the traditional center periphery relations and the rapid weakening of the Center's hold over the periphery. In many cases, the imperial center had to engage in state strengthening reforms just to be able to contain the divisive consequences of the previously undertaken society empowering reforms.

This historical record taught the Ottoman statesmen and the Republican founding fathers two lessons. One was that giving rights and freedoms to a people would not make them more loyal to the state; on the contrary, this would even supply them with more opportunities to organize a stronger assault on the state. The second lesson was that the real intention behind the European demands of respect for human rights was to divide the Turkish nation and weaken the Turkish state. The combination of these two lessons, which are so deeply engraved in the historical memory of the Turkish state and society, and which makes up the main axis of the mentality of contemporary Turkish conservatism and isolationism, we call the Tanzimat Syndrome.

The best policy alternative, implied by the Tanzimat Syndrome, has been to deny the very existence of the ethnic and religious minorities, and to try to assimilate them into the mainstream national culture by all means at the disposal of the state. However, if the state had to recognize the existence of a minority, and if assimilation policies did not bring about the total transformation of a group, then it would become essential to resist, as much as possible, their demands for recognition and cultural rights. It was believed that it was the Western powers who would galvanize the minorities to come forward with more and more demands for rights and freedoms. Hence, granting any rights to the minorities would make them less, rather than more, loyal to the state. More rights and freedoms would simply give birth to more and stronger secessionist movements among the minorities, and the Western powers would not hesitate to give them their ideological, political and sometimes military support. In the end, the minorities would end up founding their own independent state, which would be nothing more than a puppet state under the protection of one or more Western powers.

A more general, and certainly more significant, policy prescription of the Tanzimat syndrome is a delegitimization of the very idea of rights, including individual rights, as it was believed that rights would endow the individuals with a larger space of action, and individuals would use that larger action space to engage in anti-state activities. Therefore, the state had to resist granting even the basic rights to the individuals, in order not to weaken the authority of the state over the society. The state, perceiving the world through the lenses of the Tanzimat syndrome, perceived a zero-sum game between state and society, between state authority and societal rights, the latter being either collective or individual rights. Hence, the state perceived itself as a Leviathan and demanded absolute submission from social groups and individuals. Rights simply did not fit into this Hobbesian picture, and all kinds of rights were perceived as challenges, big or small, to the authority, and more than that, to the very existence of the state.

The Mondros Armistice of October 30, 1918 marked the final defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the World War I. The Mondros treaty

provided for a total and unconditional surrender of the Ottoman Empire. The new situation was formalized in the Treaty of Sèvres, signed by the Ottoman Empire and the Entente powers on August 10, 1920. According to the Sèvres Treaty, the Arabian Peninsula and Mesopotamia (Iraq) was ceded to Great Britain; Syria and the southeastern Anatolian provinces of Antep, Mardin, and Urfa was taken by France; eastern Thrace, and Izmir and its environs were surrendered to Greece; and western Anatolia except Izmir was designated as the economic dominion of Italy. The Sèvres Treaty also stipulated that an independent Armenian state under American mandate would be created in northeastern Anatolia, and an autonomous Kurdistan would be established in southeastern Anatolia. According to the terms of the treaty, all the non Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire who had been previously expatriated would be allowed to return to their homelands and their initial wealth and property would be returned to them. Istanbul was left as the Ottoman capital and the seat of the sultan, but the Straits was taken under the control of an international commission. The Ottoman government was denied the right to have armed forces other than a gendarmerie for internal security purposes. The Ottoman finances were to be regulated by a permanent Allied commission and part of the Ottoman revenues was to be reserved for payments of reparations to the Allies.

The circumstances created by the treaties of Mondros and Sèvres, and especially the prospect of the foundation of Armenian and Greek states in Anatolia, led many Turks in the occupation zones to found Defense of Rights Committees and to start to start an armed resistance movement. The Kemalists entered the stage after these initial organizations and forms of nationalist resistance had already taken root. What Mustafa Kemal Pasha and the Kemalist revolutionaries did was, first, to organize the various Defense of Rights Committees into a centralized resistance organization called the Committee for the Defense of Rights of Anatolia and Rumeli. Another contribution of Mustafa Kemal Pasha and the Kemalists to the nationalist cause was to replace the irregular guerilla forces by a regular army called the National Forces (*Kuvva i Milliye*). In 1922 the national resistance movement ended in victory, and many of the territorial losses of the Sèvres Treaty were reversed under the Lausanne Treaty of 1923. The

Lausanne Treaty also implied the Western recognition of the Kemalist state as the new political authority of Turkey, replacing the defunct government of the Ottoman sultan.

The basic assumption underlying the Sèvres syndrome was that the Europeans perceive the Turks as the illegitimate invaders and occupiers of the European-Christian lands and as the oppressors of the European-Christian peoples. Therefore, the syndrome went on, the Europeans have always tried to sweep the Turks away from the ancestral European-Christian territories and to restore those lands back to their rightful owners, the Armenians and the Greeks in the past and now the Kurds. Scrape every European and you will find a Crusader behind it! The Sèvres Treaty, and with it the Crusader mission of driving the Turks away from Anatolia, became defunct as a result of the Turkish national resistance. However, according to this discourse Europeans, and the Christian minorities inside Turkey, have never given up the Crusader's mission. Even today, in the eyes of the Turkish nationalists the European Union's seemingly innocent demands for individual and minority rights are nothing but concealed attempts to revive the terms of the Sèvres Treaty, and they simply want to get by peaceful means what they could not achieve by the force of arms eight decades ago.

## The End of World War I and Turkey's Paradigmatic Synchronization with Europe

At the end of World War I, and during the interwar period, Turkey experienced a more or less complete paradigmatic synchronization with Europe, but entered a period of de-synchronization following World War II, and deviated from the European paradigm. Turkey, after World War I, and as a result of the Kemalist reforms, had adapted to the politico-cultural development of the Western Europe of the time, with its state institutions, education system, legislative system, symbolism and ideology. In fact, Western authors writing on Turkey view

the Turkey of Atatürk's time as the furthest point Turkey ever reached in terms of Westernization, and claim that after 1950 Turkey began to move away from Westernization with peripheral powers putting their weight on national politics, and that the political culture, institutions, and attitudes underwent a process of re-traditionalization.

Following World War I, what were the leading politico-cultural values and institutions in Western Europe? Primary among these were étatism (construction of a modern state), nationalism (construction of a nation and a national economy by the state), republicanism (anti-monarchism), and secularism (deriving the main constitutive principles of the political community, and the major premises for knowing about and making sense of the world, not from religion but from reason). The 1920s and 1930s were the golden years of étatism and nationalism, which reached their pinnacle via fascism and communism. During that time, development and the state were in the forefront; not democracy and the individual. Again, during that time, in terms of politico-cultural and daily life values and institutions, synchronization had begun to be established between Kemalist Turkey and Western Europe. In its most distinct form, this synchronization made itself apparent in the fact that some basic laws were directly borrowed from Western Europe, especially the main body of the Civil Code. In fact, with regard to the area of women's rights that were put into effect within a framework reflective of the "First Wave Feminism" of the era, which was later dubbed Kemalist Feminism in Turkey, Turkey had then boasted legislation that was much more egalitarian than many European countries.

## The End of World War II and the Paradigmatic De-Synchronization between Turkey and Europe

Following World War II, after fascism was defeated and the Soviet system closed upon itself after absorbing Eastern Europe, Western Europe began treading a new politico-cultural

path that criticized the state, étatism, nation, and nationalism, and brought to the fore human rights, minority rights, and democracy. One of the most concrete indicators of this phase is the many declarations of “positive” rights, ratified through the 1960s and later by international organizations such as the United Nations and the Council of Europe, such as economic and social rights, cultural rights, women’s rights and children’s rights, which went much further beyond the concept of basic rights or “negative” rights. In short, while the concepts of state, nation, development, and republicanism as anti-monarchism came to the fore following World War I, after World War II these were replaced by suspicion toward the concept of “raison d’état” and the state in general, anti-totalitarianism (anti-fascism and anti-communism), democracy, the individual, and sub-national minorities. And the basic concept underlying the political culture of Western Europe following World War II was, without a doubt, the concept of “rights,” or human rights.

It was during this phase that Turkey began to experience difficulty in adapting to Western Europe’s new political culture, and the gap between the political values and institutions of Western Europe and Turkey began to widen. This de-synchronization did not make itself apparent in every area to the same extent. Yet, it was blatant especially within the area of “rights.” The area of “rights” already constituted one of the most crucial dilemmas of Turkish democratization, due to the Tanzimat and Sèvres syndromes<sup>91</sup>. The Tanzimat and Sèvres syndromes, with Cold War anti-communism added to it, made it difficult for a series of “negative” and “positive” rights, especially social and cultural rights, to be accepted by Turkish decision makers, who deemed that these rights incorporated heavy risks. Turkey’s understanding of “Europe” and “Europeanness” became fixed on the European political culture of the era prior to World War I, defined with the concepts of étatism, nationalism and “raison d’état”, and encountered difficulties in adapting to the new, post-World War II European political culture based on the concepts of “rights” and “individual.” A great contradiction made itself apparent at this point. On the one hand, there was talk to the effect that Turkey had not yet fully completed her state-building and

nation-building processes, or in other words had not yet been able to resolve her pre-World War I issues, and thus embracing the post-World War II political culture would tear Turkey apart. Yet, on the other hand, it was also argued that Turkey had a historical right to enter the European Union that was being constructed precisely on these post-World War II values, which were viewed with much suspicion. The most important dimension of the process of becoming a part of the European Union, and the most crucial criterion in getting Turkey back onto the map of Europe, is re-synchronization in the area of political values. The new Civil Code, the legal reforms of August 2002 and all other subsequent reforms, dubbed “harmonization laws,” are the result of efforts toward fulfilling this said re-synchronization, at least in the area of law.

## **The Post-Cold War Period and the Opening of a “Post-Modern” Window of Opportunity for a Re-Synchronization of the Political Culture of Turkey with that of Europe**

The picture of Europe, and Turkey’s place in it, started to change for the post-Cold War generation. First of all, the good old Charlemagne Europe, which had already betrayed its original idea with the northern enlargements of the 1970s (UK, Ireland, Denmark) and the southern enlargements of the 1980s (Greece, Spain, Portugal), literally crumbled with the inclusion of the central and eastern European countries in 2004. Secondly, the very idea of geography started to change, geography meaning more a sense of “space” and less a sense of “place”. Instead of imagining Europe as one whole physical place made up of contiguous countries, the post-Cold War generation began to view of Europe as a patchwork of cities, regions, web sites, streets, rivers, highways, internet discussion groups, sporting competitions, film festivals, music festivals and song contests, busi-

ness centres, airports, vacation resorts, friends here and there, NGOs, academic meetings, restaurants, and museums.

This new, post-modern European space is a Europe re-defined in the language of globalization, and it is itself a part of the emerging global space. Dramatically increased, diversified, individualized and cheaper means of communication and transportation, from the email to SMS and easy jet, supplied the material conditions for the passage from place to space. In the old times, when Europe or any other continent was viewed primarily as a place, whether a given country was part of it or not was not so much open to debate or discussion. Either a country was “there”, lying within the recognized borders, or not. This new European space, on the other hand, is a competitive arena, with continually changing, sometimes expanding, sometimes contracting “boundaries” rather than fixed “borders”. It is competitive in the sense that how much, and for how long, a given city, event, happening, building, art form, NGO or even individual will be a part of it is not to be taken for granted but decided competitively by the “market”, i.e. by the decentralized decisions and signals of all the individuals who interact through that space. Because the insertion of something in the new European space, and its position in the ranking of Europeanness, is never guaranteed, regions, cities, universities, NGOs, museums, individuals, and others all try to increase their European value by means of imaginative ways. The almost complete overhauling of Barcelona as the quintessential “Eurocity” is a case in point.

Some cities, institutions, individuals and happenings of Turkey can certainly find their ways into this newly emerging European space. Antalya, for example, has already gained wide recognition as a favourite European summer vacation destination. Orhan Pamuk has become renowned as a leading European writer. The largely Kurdish-populated southeast Anatolian city of Diyarbakır, although it is not located in the European place in the old sense of the term, has recently become a centre of attraction for many European politicians and NGOs because it is perceived as the test case of the political Europeanization of Turkey. In other words, it all depends on how much a country,

a city, a university, a museum, an individual spends efforts to find a place for itself in the newly forming European space, and on how well-endowed, receptive, willing, creative, imaginative, skilful it is.

In the effort to include Turkish cities, regions, academic institutions, political parties, art galleries, museums, labour unions, student associations, political parties, and the like into the emerging European space, the following factors may act as a point of departure: The first is that European culture is a structure that is not completed, but one still in the process of being constructed. Thus, Turkish culture should be viewed not as a foreigner who wants to move into a finished, completed building; but as a neighbour who puts forth her own ideas about a building that is still being constructed, on issues such as its cement mixture, architecture, decoration, and inhabitants. Consequently, the opinions of both Europeans and Turks, pertaining to European culture and the place of the Turkish culture within it, must not be judged as proven facts, but as subjective “narratives.” Within this context, European culture must be considered as a variable and dynamic fiction, an arena where different answers to such fundamental questions as “Where does Europe begin, and where does it end?” and “Who is a European?” compete with one another. Embarking from these views, Turkey’s contribution to European culture must be to enter this arena with “different” narratives, and participate in the formation of this fiction with her own, “authentic” narratives. This is not a process – it is too big and dynamic – for one or two political leaders to denounce or forbid.

At this point, one must distinguish “different narratives” from “counter-narratives.” Especially in countries that have been influenced by European colonialism, constructing “counter-hegemonic narratives” within the post-colonial paradigm, claiming that they embody a culture that is fundamentally opposed to the hegemonic European culture and that these two cultures are by nature opposed to each other, has become common practice. The common aim of such efforts is to embark from

a religion (e.g. Islam), a nationality (e.g. Arab), or a cultural geography (e.g. the Mediterranean), and create a new hegemonic narrative that will overthrow and replace the hegemony of European culture. The handicap common to these types of alternative narratives is that they secretly acknowledge and internalize the exclusionary theses concerning non-European cultures put forth by the very European orientalism they purport to reject. Therefore, post-colonial counter-hegemonic narratives usually become transformed into a mirror image of colonial hegemonic narratives, and cannot go any further than becoming “derivative narratives.” A distinct contribution Turkey, which has felt but not experienced European colonialism, would be able to make to debates on European culture is her ability to present the historical and intellectual grounds necessary to move beyond the post-colonial framework. On such grounds, it is possible to participate in debates on the foundations and boundaries of European culture with different, but not opposite, narratives. It is also possible to offer an insider’s critique of approaches that constrict and make European culture superficial and thereby to deepen, diversify, and truly enrich European culture.

## Future Prospects: Party Strategies and the Issue of Europe

Turkish Euroskepticism leaves us with a puzzle: although the general public appear to be influenced by many of the identity-based Euroskeptic claims of the Turkish nationalist and Islamist radical right parties, they still want Turkey to join the EU. In 2006-7 popular support for EU membership seems to have been stabilised in the 55-60 percent range, while the popular opposition has come to orbit in the 30-35 percent interval. There appears to be a sharp discrepancy between the relatively widespread and still widening ideological influence of the radical right parties and their limited political strength. Turkish people seem to think radical but vote moderate.

In the 1970s and 1990s, radical parties could substantially increase their share of the votes, and accordingly of political power, only in times of political crisis, often coupled with severe political violence. Following Juan Linz, a political crisis can be characterised as a situation in which there occurs an “unsolvable” problem – unsolvable, that is, by the left-wing or right-wing pro-systemic mainstream parties. Only then, when mainstream parties prove to be powerless and hopeless could radical parties present themselves to the public as a credible alternative and gain public approval.

In the light of these observations, a rational strategy for radical parties is to engage in what may be called “crisis engineering”, that is, selecting certain problems and trying to convince the public that these cannot be solved by the pro-systemic forces, while the radical parties have a quick and effective solution for them. This is what radical parties in today’s Turkey are trying to do. Two issues have the potential to become unsolvable problems: the Kurdish and Cyprus questions. An increase in Kurdish separatist violence would immediately call into question the validity of EU reforms in the area of minority rights. Similarly, an EU policy favouring the Greek Cypriots over the Turkish Cypriots and punishing Turkey for not yielding to the EU demands in that regard, would also play directly into the hands of Turkish radicalism. So far, the typical reaction of Turkish mainstream parties of both left and right, when faced with the rising public influence of the radical parties, has been to adopt a radical rhetoric themselves, with the purpose of “pre-empting” their radical opponents. Radicalisation of the mainstream parties at the rhetorical and to some extent policy levels, was a significant feature of the 1970s and 1990s. The net outcome of this strategy of being “plus royalist que le roi” was just the opposite of what the mainstream parties had expected: by adopting a radical rhetoric, they legitimised the position of the radical parties in the eyes of the public, thus strengthening their own opponents. In 2006-7, with the radical parties deep into the business of crisis engineering, the mainstream parties – the governing AKP and particularly the opposition CHP – have given strong signals of being about to fall, once again, into the “radical trap” described above. The continuation of Turkey’s Europeanisation process therefore largely de-

depends on the mainstream parties' avoiding competition with the radical parties on the latter's terms.

Meanwhile, the Europeanisation of Turkey will be an extremely difficult task if it falls only on the shoulders of the former Islamists (AKP) and the Kurdish nationalists (DTP), while the Turkish nationalist MHP and Kemalist-secularist CHP continue to oppose it. The MHP is unlikely to diverge from its hard Euroskeptic position, which paid off well in the July 2007 elections, raising the party's votes from around 8% in 2002 to around 15% in 2007. Thus, the key actor would appear to be the CHP. As indicated above, Euroskepticism is relatively new to the CHP constituency and has not yet become a firm and fixed characteristic of this group. A September 2007 survey of the Turkish middle classes Yilmaz found that 57 percent of CHP voters (just one point below the national average) would support Turkey's EU membership in a referendum, while 39% would oppose it (7 points above the national average). The proportion of CHP supporters feeling they had benefited from the EU-inspired reforms of recent years was 63%, i.e. 4 points higher than the national average. This suggests that the CHP leadership could return to a pro-EU position with minimal electoral cost. Following the MHP's return to parliament after the July 2007 election, the nationalist flag has been reclaimed by its "true owner" and the CHP will have to look for other insignia to distinguish itself from the MHP. The cause of secularism alone would limit the party's appeal to a small portion of the population. Hence, it might be rational for the party to add other items to its policy mix, including a pro-EU orientation. A CHP turn to a clear, albeit critical, pro-EU position would no doubt create a sufficiently wide political consensus to carry out the challenging tasks of the accession process. In contrast, a potential CHP drift to a harder Euroskeptic position would leave the AKP alone on the pro-EU wing of the Turkish party system. The risk-averse, indecisive and sometimes openly reactionary stance which the AKP has already demonstrated after 2005 on issues evoking heightened nationalist emotions might then dramatically slow down or even block meaningful advances in the accession negotiations. Thus, it would appear that the country's European prospects are closely linked to the future development of Turkish Euroskepticism.

## Possible Contributions of the Czech Republic and Poland to the Europeanization of Turkey

The Europeanization of Turkey is not solely dependent on developments internal to Turkey. The signals that are coming from outside of Turkey, particularly from the political, intellectual and cultural leaders of the EU member states, have also been immensely influential in shaping the Turkish elites' and the general public's attitudes towards the EU. One can only mention here the negative impact of the anti-Turkey discourses of the French President Nicolas Sarkozy and the German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The most significant impact that the Czech Republic and Poland can exert in this regard would be that they might bring the much-needed value of "fairness" in the relations between the EU and Turkey. The Turkish elites and the public opinion do not believe that the French and the German positions with regard to the EU-Turkey accession negotiations are fair, simply because both the French and the German governments had unmistakably declared that they do not want to see Turkey in the EU. Hence, the Turkish side can never be sure whether France and Germany oppose the opening of a chapter out of technical reasons or because of their ideological convictions. Time and again we have found in the opinion polls that the Turkish public think that the EU has been treating Turkey "unfairly" and that the EU would not accept Turkey as a member even if Turkey met all the necessary political and economic criteria for membership. This widespread perception of an "unfair" EU has been very easily manipulated by all sorts and varieties of anti-EU movements in Turkey, linking the EU's "unfair" treatment of Turkey to the Tanzimat and Sevres syndromes. It was for this reason that the portion of the general population who were opposed to Turkey's entry to the EU kept rising from as low as 15% to the alarming level of 40% over the last 7-8 years. A new Czech-Poland initiative for the EU enlargement, which would be based not on "politics" but on ethics; not on ideology but on objective conditionality; and not on self-centredness but on fairness, would do

a great service to improve EU-Turkey relations. Such an initiative would also help restore the image of the EU as a fair player and it would thereby enhance the “soft power” of the EU in Turkey and the Middle East.

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<sup>88)</sup> See ARI Movement for survey data on the issues, varieties, and intensities of anti-Americanism in Turkey today. ARI Movement. 2005. “Turk Kamuoyunun ABD’ye ve Amerikalılara Bakışı Araştırması [Research on Turkish Public Opinion on America and the Americans]”. Available at <http://www.ari.org.tr/>.

<sup>89)</sup> See Tanıl Bora’s article for an analysis of old and new nationalist discourses in Turkey today. Tanıl Bora, “Nationalist Discourses in Turkey”. *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102:2/3, Spring/Summer 2003, pp.433-451.

<sup>90)</sup> See Çerçi (2002), İlhan (2003), and Manisalı (2001) for leading examples of West-sceptic and Euro-sceptic thinking in Turkey. Tamer Çerçi, *Avrupa Yalanı: Avrupa Birliği Virajında Türkiye*. [The Lie of Europe: Turkey at the Crossroads of the EU], Istanbul 2002. Suat İlhan *Avrupa Birliği’ne Neden Hayir? Cilt 2*. [Why No to the EU?] Istanbul 2003. Erol Manisalı, *Avrupa Çıkmazı: İçyüzü ve Perde Arkasıyla Türkiye-Avrupa Birliği İlişkileri*. [The European Impasse], Istanbul 2001.

<sup>91)</sup> For a conceptualization of the Tanzimat and Sèvres syndromes in Turkey see also Hakan Yılmaz, “Turkish Conservatism and the Idea of Europe”, in *Between Europe and the Mediterranean: The Challenges and the Fears*, ed. Thierry Fabre and Paul Sant Cassia, New York, 2007, pp. 137-161.

Cover design:  
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