

Europeum Conference, Prague, 23 September 2005
ROLE OF NEW MEMBERS IN EU FOREIGN POLICY
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I will make some initial observations about the enlarged EU and its foreign policy, and then look at three areas worth considering following the entry of the Central-East European (CEE) states into the EU: diversification, the Eastern dimension, and the new Atlanticism.

A fundamental requirement for an emerging and expanding international entity such as the European Union is its capability to develop a unified foreign policy based on a collective identity around which common interests can be defined. Instructively, the EU did develop an effective common policy of inclusion toward eight CEE aspirants as there was overall consensus that EU enlargement and CEE stability and prosperity would bring security benefits to the entire Union. And a timetable was set for the entry of two further states, Bulgaria and Romania, in 2007 in order to keep their reformist endeavors on track. Indeed, the gravitational pull of the Union and the strict conditions that had to be met by each country to secure membership has been the most successful aspect of EU foreign policy over the past decade.

However, following the large enlargement eastwards, the debate over the EU's internal structure and ultimate spatial contours has preoccupied all member states, while the crafting of a coherent EU external policy remains problematic. EU members exhibit diverse positions on specific issues and the institution as a whole does not possess the instruments, particularly military, in conducting an effective foreign and security policy. Moreover, a potential economic downturn, the discarding of the Constitutional Treaty, and the slowing down of EU enlargement as a result of internal resistance could make the Union less attractive for neighboring states and further undermine its ability to exercise international influence.

With the entry of eight Central-East European (CEE) countries in May 2004, and two more expected to accede in 2007, the EU will consist of 27 states with a combined population of some 480 million people and producing a quarter of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). But size and economic weight in itself do not ensure that the EU will automatically develop into an important political player on the international stage. Indeed, most analysts would agree that the Union is underperforming despite its significant potential. It is distracted by diverse national interests and is unable to convert its economic power into political clout.

The EU's substantial enlargement eastward has added novel challenges both in its internal functioning and its external relations. The new members have injected differing foreign policy priorities into an already complex institutional and decision-making

process. Additionally, any decisions on further enlargement will need to weigh the positions of the new members, their relations with applicants, and negotiations over the apportioning of structural funds and other elements of the EU budget. On the other hand, without the promise of inclusion in the Union, EU influence along Europe's eastern and southern borders could significantly diminish in the coming years. Let me now turn to the potential impact of the new member states.

Diversification

It would be difficult to envisage a joint grand strategy by all the CEE countries in their policies within the Union. Although each CEE state will have some impact on decision-making, they are likely to uphold differing national interests and priorities and are unlikely to agree on all fronts. Rather than a blanket impact on EU foreign and security policy, the influence of CEE capitals will need to be measured on a case by case basis, whether in dealing with EU regional policy toward Ukraine, Russia, the West Balkans, or the Black Sea region, or EU functional policy regarding borders, security, migration, or taxation. Several CEE countries have been campaigning to bring Ukraine and other post-Soviet states into the EU fold, but have encountered stubborn resistance from the larger WE members.

In some instances, interest groups within the EU will be formed to push for a particular policy approach, and these may include both WE and CEE member states as was the case with the invasion of Iraq. Other potential crises are likely to materialize that will either give the CEE countries opportunities to work in unison or may contribute to diversifying their approaches.

Diversity in the CEE has already been evident on a range of internal and external issues, whether regarding the Constitutional Treaty, voting rights, or further EU enlargement. The smaller countries such as Slovenia, Slovakia, or the Czech Republic that do not feel vulnerable to pressures from the former Soviet space may increasingly adopt the positions of some of their WE neighbors on various foreign policy issues and favor "soft security" approaches to global threats.

If political forces come to the fore that stress the alleged loss of national identity and state independence to EU institutions, some capitals may increasingly opt for a form of foreign policy neutrality that will not promote either EU or American interests. A nationalist resurgence in several CEE and WE states cannot be discounted, whether this is based on a protectionist agenda, on majority-minority disputes, or on an intrusive cross-border orientation to protect kindred in neighboring states.

Eastern Dimension

The CEE countries have sought to prevent the descent of a new division between themselves and the rest of Eastern Europe. Several capitals have supported the further eastern enlargement of both NATO and the EU. However, with its internal constitutional controversies, CEE capitals fear that the EU may turn increasingly inward, focus on its institutional capacity, and become less creative and inviting in its Eastern Dimension.

While some CEE capitals have also attempted to construct a common EU foreign policy toward Russia, the Putin regime complains that the CEE states have infected the EU with “Russophobia” and made it more difficult for Moscow to cooperate closely with the EU. The Kremlin has singled out Baltic representatives for special criticism, claiming that they are purposively “complicating” Russia’s dialogue with the EU. Russian officials are seeking to promote fractures in the EU by appealing to traditional partners in Paris and Berlin and complaining about the alleged dangers posed to the EU-Russia relationship by the CEE states.

In reality, many of the new EU members have contributed a dose of realism about Russia and Putin’s expansionist ambitions in Eastern Europe, especially toward those countries that are most prone to Russian influences. The new members are pushing for the EU to respond appropriately and in unison to a concerted Kremlin-directed threat to redivide Europe. But their approach is resisted by most of the larger WE members. For Germany and France in particular commercial pragmatism prevails over geostrategic calculation and long-term political impact. By contrast, several CEE capitals are determined to maintain contentious issues regarding Russia on the EU radar screen, wary of any compromises with the Kremlin that will weaken the U.S. role and endanger their own security interests.

The majority of CEE states have been firm supporters of both NATO and EU expansion eastward not only to Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova but also to all the Black Sea states, including those in the south Caucasus. But older members led by France and Germany calculate that the EU has virtually reached its maximum extent and may have expanded too far and too fast already. While Warsaw and the Baltic states argue that the EU’s neighborhood policy has been inadequate in providing struggling democracies with a sufficient incentive to reform, Paris and Berlin contend that the Union has only limited funds available to pursue a wider Europe strategy or to offer entry to countries such as Ukraine.

Concurrently, Russian officials are active in deflating EU capabilities in their neighborhood. They were buoyed by the failure to pass the EU’s Constitutional Treaty and claimed that the Union’s enlargement strategy was the cause of the Union’s internal problems because Brussels supposedly overestimated its absorption capacity with the

accession of the CEE countries. Moscow has felt strategically challenged by the EU's eastward expansion for several reasons: It felt excluded from the process of a United Europe, it brought into the Union allegedly Russophobic states, and it encouraged Russia's "near abroad" to canvass for EU membership. Kremlin officials are likely to use the constitutional failure to encourage a halt to further enlargement, demand the EU's acknowledgement of Russia's primary responsibility in the post-Soviet states, and push for a closer link between "two unions" – the EU and the "Russian-East European" sphere.

Atlanticism

When assessing the long-term impact of the CEE on EU policy, several questions also need to be posed regarding CEE relations with the U.S. For instance, will close relations with America strengthen or weaken any country's regional role or position within the EU? It is unlikely, especially in the wake of the Iraqi conflict, that the CEE states will simply follow Washington's lead especially if this conflicts with their national interests inside the Union or estranges them from Brussels and other larger member states. Moreover, it does not serve U.S. interests to have compliant partners inside the EU that have little constructive input into American or EU policy making and little lasting influence in Brussels.

Increasing institutional complexity resulting from enlargement may in itself affect the internal cohesion, functioning, and policy consensus of the Union and have an impact on the EU's reliability as a U.S. partner. The addition of new members with diverse interests may lead to more intensive struggles within the Union and impact on EU policy in areas of particular interest to Washington, including trade, business, environment, monetary policy, and security issues. For example, the future role of NATO will remain contentious within the EU. There is substantial resistance within the Union to expand NATO's mandate beyond the European theater. France especially has been opposed to extending the Alliance role in Iraq, in the Middle East more generally, or in counter-terrorism operations, preferring to work through the EU. By contrast, the CEE states tend to prefer NATO operations as this keeps the organization active and the US engaged with its European allies.

Some U.S. policy makers may prefer a less coherent and effective EU, which is less likely to consistently oppose American foreign policy. This would evidently serve to strengthen bilateral links with individual EU countries and enable Washington to bypass the complex EU decision-making process. The U.S. could thereby allegedly build more effective alliances and even play off individual member states against each other to achieve its objectives. Such a strategy is generally opposed in the CEE capitals, which resist the nationalization of foreign and security policy and seek a strong and capable leadership in Brussels in which they are closely included in decision-making. For them, "disaggregation" may simply strengthen the role of the older and the bigger EU states.

Hence, they are more integrationist than inter-governmental, viewing the latter approach as more beneficial for the larger West European states.

In sum, most CEE leaders have calculated that it would better serve both American and European interests to have a more coherent and pro-Atlanticist CFSP than a fractured EU approach that will be exploited by capitals seeking to lessen U.S. involvement in European affairs and the marginalization of the CEE capitals. It is in U.S. national interests to have a coherent and united European ally that can cooperate and complement the projection of America's political authority, economic strength, and military power. Conversely, a more Atlanticist EU may encourage a more multilateralist U.S. policy at least on issues of primary concern to both sides of the Atlantic. In the optimum scenario, CEE inclusion in the EU will buttress the Union's security capabilities and reinforce the trans-Atlantic connection. However, the likelihood of such a development is contingent on several evolving and unpredictable variables.