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The Impact of Eastern Enlargement on the Barcelona Process

Madalena Meyer-Resende

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The European Union (EU) recently underwent the largest enlargement of its history. In May 2004, the process initiated in 1989 reached a new stage as ten new countries (eight from the CEEC – Central and Eastern European Countries) became full EU members. Since then the EU has different neighbours and more diverse foreign relations. To better deal with this reality the European Commission developed new instruments to deal with southern and eastern neighbours through the Wider Europe Framework (WEF),¹ which brings together TACIS, MEDA and PHARE programme financing. CEEC governments, which strongly support a special eastern neighbours policy, will be important shapers of the EU neighbourhood policy. Some analysts predict that CEEC ideologies and preferences are incompatible with the Barcelona Process.²

In 2003, the war in Iraq and the European Convention debate showed that CEEC views on the institutionalisation of a EU foreign policy differ from French-German ideas. Because they are close to the US, the CEEC are vocally Atlanticist. Some CEEC governments have expressed a preference for the EU as a Christian enterprise. In geopolitical terms, Poland is also a leading advocate of the development of an eastern dimension for the foreign policy of the EU³, the primary aims of which is to bring other Christian nations into the EU away from the Russian sphere of influence.

This paper addresses the potential direct and indirect impact of enlargement on the Barcelona Process. The direct impact relates to the concrete interests that CEEC actors will bring to European institutions and the budgetary process; the indirect impact relates to the influence exerted by new members on the identity and foreign policy of the Union. In the context of the Wider Europe strategy, the attitude of the new members towards the underlying principles of European integration becomes relevant for the Barcelona Process. What will the consequences of this added diversity of interests be? Will it lead to the dilution of the commitments of the EU towards the MEDA region or will it create greater financial constraints? Is it leading to increased attention and greater definition and implementation of EU instruments as part of a reinforced neighbourhood policy?

The enlargement to the CEE involves three types of countries in geographical terms: the Baltic States (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia), the Visegrad Countries (Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia) and the Southern Eastern European members (now only Slovenia, but soon also Bulgaria, Romania and perhaps Croatia). Classic geographical splits in terms of Mediterranean relations are no longer the only determinant of attitudes⁴, and other geographical criteria determine the input of CEEC on the Wider Europe Framework. For example, Lithuanians are more concerned about the instruments and incentives to democratisation devised within the Wider Europe Framework due to their neighbourhood with Belarus.⁵ The manner of defining the identity and frontiers of the Union is certainly a determinant of the ultimate relationship of the Union with the Islamic neighbouring countries. The Lithuanians, the Poles, the Slovaks and the Hungarians express strong preferences for the European Union to remain within the frontiers of Christianity. Their Christian stance derives from the salience of the debate on the identity of the National State within their national party systems, and the intensity of Nationalist Catholicism as an identity of their right wing parties. Czechs, Estonians, and to an extent Latvians and Slovenians are less concerned about this issue since their internal party competition is rather fought along economic lines.

Another possible category of countries derives from the different intensity of interests towards the development of its Eastern Neighbours. This preference is important for the impact of their action towards the Mediterranean neighbours since the Neighbourhood Framework will rule the relations of the Union with all its Neighbours. Coincidentally, it is the Poles, the Slovaks, the Hungarians and possibly the Lithuanians, the countries with minorities in the Eastern countries, and stronger cultural and historical roots with the Eastern neighbours the ones that display a stronger Christian identity.

Introduction

The Actors

1. The interest of the Polish government and other Visegrad neighbours in developing eastern dimension appears to be at the heart of the Wider Europe Framework. Lynch, D. (2003), 'The New Eastern Dimension of the Enlarged EU', in *Partners and Neighbours: a CFSP for a Wider Europe*, Paris: Chaillot Papers, 64.

2. These are to some extent relevant since most of these countries inherited ties established during the communist regimes. For example the Polish and the Hungarian MFAs have embassies in each of the MEDA countries.

3. Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (2003), *The New Neighbours – A Framework for Relations, Proposals from Poland*. In this paper a Commissioner for Neighbourhood Relations is also called for to head the development of action plans for the next two years. The proposals include the possibility of offering Moldova and Ukraine 'association partnerships'.

4. Perthes, V. (1998), *Germany Gradually Becoming a Mediterranean State*, EuroMeSCo Working Papers 1; Schumacher, T. (2001), 'The Mediterranean as a New Foreign Policy Challenge? Sweden and the Barcelona Process', *Mediterranean Politics*, 6(3).

5. Author's interview with Ulrich Weins, Member of the Wider Europe Task Force, February 2004.

CEEC Views of European Identity

The European Union as an entity is justified and founded upon different political ideas. The Christian Democratic vision of the EU is that it is a political community based on religious cosmopolitanism (i.e. Christianity is the basis of economic and political community), while Socialists have become more pro-European in recent times because they began to see the EU as a regulatory agent of markets. Liberals favour the European Union because it facilitates market liberalisation and cooperation between open societies.⁶

Only recently have CEEC political elites openly declared their views on the identity of the EU in the context of the European Convention. CEE governments, particularly from Catholic countries, were the most insistent that a reference to Christian values should be included in the Preamble of the EU Constitution. Most CEE governments expressed their support for the inclusion of a reference to the Judeo-Christian heritage as a basis of European political integration, projecting the nature of their own states onto the EU. The view of various CEEC is that Europe should remain firmly under national control, but also in the hands of Christian nations. The demand for a Christian reference in the European Constitution reflects the attitude of these governments, particular that of their right wing parties, towards a European religious identity.

The Christian identity of EU integration was contested by very few parties and was in some instances supported by Liberals and Socialists. An explicit example of this consensus is the resolution adopted by all the Polish parliamentary parties in favour of the government's stance at the Rome IGC, which called for the inclusion of a reference to Christian values in the preamble and the recognition of NATO as the basis for European security.⁷

The consensus of most parliamentary parties in the region on the inclusion of a reference to Christian values was accompanied by unprecedented unanimity between the Visegrad countries regarding a series of other positions to take in the IGC. It is important to note that in the past the Visegrad countries have often been competitors rather than allies in their relations with the European powers. At the last meeting of the Visegrad Council of Cooperation in 2003, Central European leaders pledged to maintain a united front so as to ensure the inclusion of references to Judeo-Christian values as the basis of European identity and to high level trans-Atlantic cooperation.⁸

The Christian nationalist conception of political units is crucial for the identity of right wing parties in Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Lithuania and Latvia. Inter-party conflicts are based on different visions of the nature of the state, its political identity and its social regulatory role. The strength of Catholicism as a social force means that debates about secularism, social authoritarianism and nationalism become central themes of political contestation among elites and voters. These concepts underlie party competition in these countries, which are riven by heated cultural debates. The debate on European integration became a sub-set of these debates and the views of European identity are a salient national issue. In countries where political party competition is primarily about economics, as in the Czech Republic and Estonia, conflicts are not so much about the degree to which the state should regulate the market but rather about the extent to which the state should control social and political issues.

Union Identity and the Barcelona Process

Domestic political configurations in member States affects two issues that are relevant for attitudes towards the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Barcelona Process in particular: parties' views of political community influences their perception of the basis of European integration. The basic community can be the nation, social class – the working class or peasantry for example – a religious community or liberal cosmopolitanism. In post-communist Europe the search for new political identities occurred simultaneously with the process of Europeanisation. There was therefore a strong connection between 'Europe' as the only symbol of the future and party political identities.

The close relationship between CEEC party identities and Europe is a result of the post-communist condition and recent de facto independence. In the context of transition, 'Europe' was a significant political symbol and seen as a guarantee for protection against potential Russian threats. This meant that even nationalists accepted integration and proceeded to define Europe on their own terms and as part of their identity-building process. Bearing in mind that the axis of cultural conflict is the fundamental one in

6. Marks, G. and Wilson, C. (2000). 'The Past in the Present: a Cleavage Theory of Party response to European Integration.' *British Journal of Political Science* 30(3).

7. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 3 October 2003 and RFE/RL, Central European Newline, 10 and 22 September 2003.

8. Visegrad Prime Ministers Meeting, 2nd October 2003, RFE/RL, Central European Newline.

most countries in post-communist Europe⁹, the definition of European identity is part of competition over political identities. In countries where the cultural conflict is most intense like Poland, Hungary and Lithuania, the conservative right portrays Europe as an enterprise of Christian nations rather than as a cosmopolitan alliance of civil societies. Although liberals and leftists naturally profess a cosmopolitan vision of the European Union, the latter find it difficult to present an alternative vision of European integration. This is why CEE governments of every political colour supported the inclusion of a reference to Christianity as the basis of European integration during the European Convention debates in 2003. In a competitive environment, where the perceived threat of the far right is real or discursively significant, a Christian discourse could shape intra-EU negotiations.

Liberals view the Barcelona Process as promoting the approximation of states and societies of the EU and the Mediterranean basin. For liberals, moreover, Barcelona is not only about free trade but also about political liberalisation. Liberals, and to an extent socialists, see the Barcelona process as based on the identity of the European Union as a community of open societies and liberal political systems. Liberals' 'genetic code' takes civil society as Europe's fundamental political community, and therefore sees liberal democratic regimes as the basis for integration. According to the liberal vision, the Barcelona Process should be ultimately about the integration of Europe's Muslim neighbours, provided they adopt liberal democratic systems of government. Conservatives or Christian Democrats, paying tribute to the idea that the European Union is a political system overcoming national borders in the name of religious solidarity, see European integration as occurring within the borders of Christianity. Therefore Christian Democrats view the integration of Islamic societies with extreme suspicion (the CDU stand on negotiations with Turkey is a good example). This issue, while perhaps not immediately important in practical terms, is fundamental for the definition of the finality of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. According to Christian democratic values the Barcelona process is part of EU foreign relations and the question of democratisation is therefore less of a priority. CEEC geographical distance is reinforced by these Christian Democratic views. For these countries, relations with the Mediterranean countries are clearly a part of foreign relations.

Given the CEEC view of the nation as the basic political community, sovereignty and military power *per se* are seen as fundamental for security.¹⁰ While Western European states have accepted that the Second World War and globalisation have rendered traditional understanding of security as sovereignty obsolete, CEEC elites still feel that national security is guaranteed by state sovereignty and effective armed forces. Thus, CEEC countries tend to see the development of the Common European Security and Defence Policy as unwanted competition for NATO.¹¹ CEEC do not feel comfortable with European military weakness. Their perception of Russia as a potential threat reinforces this perception and leads them to oppose the dissolution of NATO security guarantees. Central Europeans see the US as indispensable to counterbalance Russia. The alternative of a strong German-French axis would necessarily be an entente with Russia, leading to a soft European policy towards Russian imperial impulses and the dissolution of the hard military guarantees provided by NATO.

The exclusion of military cooperation is therefore seen as a positive feature of the Barcelona Process and the Wider Europe Neighbourhood Framework. CEEC therefore strongly support NATO and US involvement in both neighbouring regions. Although integration with Europe is changing attitudes, strong trans-Atlantic relations is still the ultimate security guarantee in most CEEC security policies. This view is reinforced in the case of the Mediterranean by participation in US-led forces in Iraq. However, while many Central Europeans are proud of their surprising role as international players, there are voices warning against Washington-fuelled 'global ambitions' that can backfire in the EU. Since the invasion of Iraq, relations with the US have soured because of visa restrictions and the failure to win contracts in Iraq, both of which have prompted elites to engage in some soul searching about the proper place of trans-Atlantic relations. Poles reluctantly acknowledged that Poland is merely a partner of the US and not an ally like the UK.¹² Given the bad reception in some European capitals of support for the US in Iraq,¹³ the new member states began to fear the long-term consequences of their position, and to portray themselves as 'bridges'.¹⁴ German and French interest in such a role may be limited¹⁵, but the new members will certainly shift the balance in favour of pro-Atlanticist members and increase the probability of continuous military and political cooperation with the US. This has made the French more suspicious of

The CEEC, the US and the Mediterranean Dimension

9. Elster, J. et al. (1998), *Institutional Design in Post-Communist Societies: Rebuilding the Ship at Sea*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Kitschelt, H. et al. (1999), *Post-Communist Party Systems, Competition, Representation, Inter-Party Cooperation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

10. Osica, O. (2001), *Common European Security and Defense Policy (CESDP) as Seen by Poland, Reports and Analysis 5/01*, Warsaw: Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych; Buras, P., Cichocki, M., Osica, O., Reiter, J. (2001), *The Most Serious Challenges Facing Poland's European Policy, Reports and Analysis 4/01*, Warsaw: Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych.

11. Labuszezwska, A. Zarebska, M. (2003), *NATO's New Role in the NIS area, Interim Project Report*, Warsaw, Centre for Eastern Studies, December 2003, p.6; Pelczynska-Nalecz, K. Duleba, A. Poti, L. Votapek, V. (2003), *Eastern Policy of the EU: the Visegrad Countries' Perspective*, (2003), Warsaw, Centre for Eastern Studies Policy Briefs; Pelczynska-Nalecz, K. (2003), *The Enlarged European Union and its Eastern Neighbours: Problems and Solutions*, Warsaw: Centre for Eastern Studies Policy Briefs.

12. Interview Zbigniew Brzezinski with Gazeta Wyborcza, January 2004.

13. Chirac said that the letters signed by the Vilnius 10 group were 'childish' and 'dangerous', and noted that the CEEC had 'missed a great opportunity to shut up'.

14. In February 2003, Polish Prime Minister Leszek Miller laid out the elements of a successful transatlantic cooperation. 'Miller: Elementy Skutecznej Współpracy Transatlantyckiej' (Elements of a Successful Transatlantic Cooperation.), Gazeta Wyborcza, 12 February 2003.

the new members and their role in EU foreign policy.

Despite CEEC government support for the US war in Iraq and the rift that this caused within the EU, the former want to overcome their perceived second-class status through cooperative strategies. The development of a cooperative approach towards the development of a EU neighbourhood policy is an opportunity for the CEEC to play a positive role in the EMP. Just as EU regional policy is seen as the basis for the Spanish-Polish alliance within the EU, the promotion of a strong and effective neighbourhood policy can lead to an agreement between Southern and Eastern States.

Given CEEC sensitivity to US global preferences and the desire to act as bridges across the Atlantic divide, the US strategy for the 'Greater Middle East' that has the same broad aims of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership can be a positive factor for CEEC attitudes towards the Mediterranean. CEEC participation in the Iraqi military mission has already made them partners in this enterprise.

CEEC Preferences for the Wider Europe Framework

The identity and geopolitics of the new member States affect their participation in EU Foreign Policy, particularly in the Neighbourhood Policy of the Union – the Wider Europe that is now emerging, given their status as border states. Predominating religious nationalist conceptions of European identity could affect cosmopolitan and pluralist Europe and influence the course of the Barcelona Process.¹⁶ The risk of this happening increases dramatically if Mediterranean and Eastern policies are discussed separately as competitive dimensions of EU Foreign Policy, because Christian Europe can be used to justify giving more attention to the east than to the EMP. However, reinforcing the structure of the Wider Europe Framework can prevent this from happening and promote cooperative behaviour among the states strongly supportive of the EU Neighbourhood policy.¹⁷

The Wider Europe Concept: Institutionalising the Neighbourhood Policy

It is well known that the top CFSP priority for the CEEC is the establishment of an eastern dimension. The main aim of institutionalising this policy is to differentiate and de-link Ukraine and Moldova, and Belarus in the long run, from the Russian sphere of influence¹⁸. The importance of the eastern dimension for Poland in particular is clear in statements such as that made by Aleksander Smolar: 'Politically our role and place in Europe will be largely contingent on the nature of our ties with the countries east of the Bug River, on how effectively Poland can influence the policies of the European Union and the United States in this region. This is where our ability to co-design the history of Europe rather than to follow the scripts written by others can indeed manifest itself'¹⁹. An eastern dimension of EU Foreign Policy that aims to integrate the Ukraine into the European system has implications for the Wider Europe Framework, and consequently, for the EMP.²⁰

CEEC are concerned with responding to the anxieties of their eastern neighbours, particularly of the Ukraine, which focus mainly on surmounting their present status as laid out in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA) of the early 1990s. The Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs (MFA) presented its preferences in a non-paper on EU Eastern Policy in December 2002, and has advanced fundamental proposals on the shape of EU eastern policy that were translated into cornerstone concepts of the Wider Europe Framework. The document states that: 'EU relations with its future eastern neighbours should be differentiated, depending on the progress of the countries concerned in their reform process, the degree of convergence of their values and foreign policies with these of the EU, and relevant to their aspirations concerning their relations with the EU.' The Polish non-paper also asks for the introduction of a policy framework that 'will enable the individual development of relations with each of the countries concerned, without prejudicing their final formula'.²¹ The Polish position, corroborated by other Visegrad countries, clearly defends that differentiating relations with different partners should be based mainly on progress with democratisation.²² This seems to be the innovation introduced to the EMP by the Wider Europe Framework. Many observers have warned that the enlargement to states with such financial, geopolitical and symbolic interests will lead to the dilution of the Barcelona Process.²³ However, the development of the Wider Europe Framework shows that the added diversity of interests resulting from enlargement does not necessarily lead to a

15. In a meeting of the Weimar Triangle joining Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and French President Jacques Chirac in Wroclaw, both Schroeder and Chirac made clear that neither Berlin nor Paris wants Warsaw to be a broker in dealings between Europe and the United States. RFE/RL Newswire Service, October 2003.

16. CEEC's proclamation of the EU's Christian identity is interpreted by the MEDA partner countries as another sign that the present enlargement is detrimental to the Mediterranean Dimension, both in terms of economic liberalization, direct subventions to the economy and potential accession.

17. This goes incidentally against the positions of the Polish MFA: 'We are of the opinion that there are important reasons for differentiation of EU relations with countries of both regions as well as with individual countries'. Author's interview with Agnieszka Tekeli 'Separate strategies for individual neighbouring regions (e.g. the Western Balkans, the Eastern Neighbourhood) should be formulated; Within the general neighbourhood strategy, separate strategies for individual regions should be formulated, including a strategy for the region comprising the EU eastern neighbours. Such regional strategies should establish funds addressed to individual neighbouring areas. They should also define main goals and priority areas of action for each individual region.'

competitive attitude by the CEEC. Initially conceived as a framework to deal with the new eastern neighbourhood of the EU, the Wider Europe framework actually attempts to institutionalise merit based competition between all EU neighbours according to democratic performance.

The Wider Europe Framework seeks to standardize EU financial instruments to deal with its neighbourhood, but it also envisages the introduction of positive conditionality clauses. The concept of differentiation²⁴ in the relations between the EU and its neighbours is partly just a formalisation of actual EU support, but it also provides an opportunity to link democratisation and financial aid in the EMP. A dynamic is emerging in the policy instruments of the EU, which institutionalises and clarifies the differences in relationships between the EU and its neighbours. Fears of dilution expressed both by the actors of the EMP and the proponents of the EU eastern dimension – Poland in particular – should focus instead on the overall size of the envelope of financial assistance.

Although the future of the Barcelona Process is not only about economic relations, several analysts sustain that the future of Euro-Mediterranean relations hinges on economic aspects for the time being, particularly on the prospects for the liberalisation of agricultural trade and on financial allocations from the EU.²⁵ Several authors and the political elites of the MEDA countries fear that the budgetary constraints on the EMP will increase as a result of enlargement. This is partially a natural perception arising from the spectacular undertaking of the last ten years where the CEEC are concerned (from a near non-relationship to membership in 15 years). According to this rationale, the EU will now continue to invest its limited budget in developing the economies of the new member States. It is also argued that as members, the CEEC will continue to lobby for their cause (EU development financing) and, moreover, to promote the financing of further engagement of the EU with the eastern neighbours. This view ignores the long-term strategic rationale that CEEC governments have adopted where the budget is concerned. The argument also becomes outdated given the Commission proposal to create a fully integrated funding instrument to cover all neighbours.²⁶

The analysis of CEEC strategies for budgetary talks over the next cycle (2007-2011) shows that rather than a competitive approach regarding other potential recipients of EU money, these countries go to great lengths to create alliances with recipient countries they see as potential allies where regional and structural funds are concerned. The CEEC have been showing that their strategies in negotiating with the EU on financial matters responds to institutional incentives for cooperation. An example of this behaviour was the Polish-Spanish alliance during the last IGC in favour of the Nice voting system²⁷ and, ultimately, the maintenance of the regional policy. The rationale is that the higher and more powerful the number of countries that profit from regional policy, the more likely it is that the policy will be maintained over the next thirty years, particularly after 2011.²⁸ Thus, the long term conflict is rather among those attempting to keep the EU budget ceiling at around 1% of EU GDP and those advocating that this ceiling makes it impossible 'to finance the existing politics and instruments of the EU extended to 27 member states, not to mention the development of activities in new areas'²⁹. The question is not who will receive more scarce regional funds but rather how to develop a strategy to combat the second preference of net contributors, which aim to reduce the EU budget in the long term.

The rationale of long-term cooperation for the maintenance of European Solidarity, developed for budgetary talks can be replicated in negotiations on the financing of foreign policy instruments. The CEEC aim will be to maintain financing for the neighbourhood instruments. Given the high priority of the eastern dimension, CEEC lobby for the development of the Wider Europe Framework. Actually, several interviewees in the CEEC link EU allocation of funds within the MEDA framework to the possibility of funding an eastern policy. Even before the Wider Framework was conceived, MEDA was linked to the possibility of EU budget lines for the eastern neighbours.³⁰ The institutional set up and financial instruments of the Barcelona Process are seen as models and 'path breakers' for the eastern dimension of EU policy.³¹ Although the attitudes towards the Mediterranean are subordinated to considerations about how it may influence the development of the eastern dimension, in particular the chance of including Ukraine in the EU, there is a chance that the two

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18. Central European leaders have been doubtful of the extent to which the EU is willing to promote Ukraine's integration with the EU in spite of Russia's opposition. The EU's 'Russia first' policy made Poland trying to distinguish Ukraine of Russia and inventing the term Western New Independent State (WNIS). However, the Russia factor is not resolved or integrated by the CEEC, and the fact that the road to Kiev might be through Moscow is not accepted.

19. Smolar, A. (2002), 'Poland's Eastern Policy and Membership in the European Union', in Kowal, P. (ed.), The EU 'Eastern Dimension' – An Opportunity for or Idée Fixe of Poland's Policy?, Warsaw: Centre for International Relations.

20. Until 2001 the Polish insistence has centred on the need for a clearer signal to Ukraine about eventual association and eventual accession. The Polish Government has since then steered away from this position and been less clear on pushing for a guarantee of eventual membership.

21. MFA of the Republic of Poland, 'EU Eastern Policy Non-Paper', May 2003.

22. Peczynska-Naecz, K. Duleba, A. Poti, L. Votapek, V. (2003), Eastern Policy of the EU: the Visegrad Countries' Perspective, Warsaw, Centre for Eastern Studies Policy Briefs.

23. Sobh, S. 'L'élargissement à l'Est Inquiète Les Pays Arabes Méditerranéens' (in Arabic), Al-Hayat, 8 December 2002, p.13. Khader, B. (2003) 'Eastern Enlargement and Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: A Win-Win Game?', EuroMeSCo Working Papers, 20, pp. 10.

24. Differentiation principle means that different levels of relations with the EU depend on the State in question and the progress that this State makes in reaching agreed benchmarks of reform. The Wider Europe framework previews that the EU can use eleven instruments in all areas of partnership and policy to reward and advance integration with the different states.

25. Lynch, D. (2003), 'The New Eastern Dimension of the Enlarged EU', in Partners and Neighbors: a CFSF for a Wider Europe, Paris: Chaillet Papers, 64.

26. European Commission 'Paving the Way for a New Neighbourhood Instrument', COM (2003) 393 final, Brussels, 1 July 2003.

27. This blocking of the reform of the Nice voting procedures was also justified as a way to safeguard the right of a blocking minority over the extinction of regional and Structural funds.

28. Analytic Report on the Strategies to adopt on the 2004 budgetary talks Prepared by experts of the Committee for European Integration (KIE), Jacek Pawlicki, 'Dylematy Polski Przed Negocjacyjnymi Budżetowymi w Unii Europejskiej', Gazeta Wyborcza, 19 January 2004.

29. Idem.

30. The fact that the Barcelona Process is especially designed to deal with countries that, for the foreseeable future, will remain EU outsiders inspired the governmental strategy paper, while other EU geographic dimensions, like the Northern Dimension, was designed as a policy for members, future members and non-members of the Union.

31. Author's interview with A. Frydrychowicz-Tekeli, Polish MFA official in charge of relation with the Mediterranean region.

are seen not as a zero sum game but rather as compatible enterprises.

Since the Wider Europe Framework proposes the creation of a global financial aid envelope and European peripheral countries are the most intensely interested in the development of the Neighbourhood, this alliance could work for the increase of EU generosity regarding the Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood countries. In the short run, however, if the New Neighbourhood produces the integration of the MEDA funds in a common Neighbourhood package the result can be the decrease of financial flows to the Mediterranean region. Although this can harm the EMP, it can also work for a clarification of the content of the relationship between the European Union and the Mediterranean partners. Hopefully, financial help and progress in the relationship will result from performance of the neighbouring country evaluated in realistic targets and consistent procedures, which would allow the Commission to justify rationally progress or stagnation in the relations with different countries. However, implicitly, if some of the countries move up on the scale of relationship and financial aid with the EU (which is *de facto* already the case with Morocco), others will get lower on the scale.

Democratisation and Accession Issues

The CEEC contributed to democratic conditionality in the development of relations with EU neighbours. The National Action Plans that are part of the Wider Europe Framework³² are the first EU initiative in which progress in democratisation and human rights are clearly stated as conditions for the advancement of relations between the EU and the Mediterranean partners. Until recently, the EMP focused more on economic development and the third basket of the Barcelona Process was largely neglected. The theory that economic cooperation and liberalization are the core business of EU foreign policy and will ultimately lead to the democratisation prevailed in the Commission's strategy.³³

The new impetus given to democratisation has been largely the result of different thinking about foreign relations within the Commission as a result of the last enlargement, for which democratic conditionality was part of the formal criteria of accession (the Copenhagen Criteria). Further, because the CEEC are interested in the democratisation of their eastern neighbour countries and have made a democratic and westernised Ukraine an aim, they played an important role in giving weight to the 'political aspects' of the partnership. The Polish non-paper of May 2003 reads: 'The obvious objectives are the furtherance of democratic reforms, development of civic society including local governments and establishment of civil control of the army. Nevertheless, these objectives will be difficult to meet if there is insufficient legal framework, if institutions are ineffective and the administration does not have adequate capacity, if the judiciary and law enforcement institutions do not work and corruption is rampant.' It seems clear, therefore, that the CEEC vision of EU neighbouring policy demands clearer EU democratisation programmes. In practice, the re-conceptualisation of the Wider Europe New Neighbourhood Framework can foster a linkage between aid and the introduction of political conditionality. This certainly calls for a clarification of the political content of the EU relationship with the MEDA countries (i.e. democratisation must become a pre-condition of stability and neighbourhood relations must be about shared values as well). Democratisation seems to be gaining a more prominent role within EU foreign policy, as witnessed by the conditionality introduced within the National Action Plans.

Although the Wider Europe Framework allows the progressive use of different instruments of foreign policy to the point of granting the four freedoms, it does not say anything about further EU enlargement. The Framework states that, 'Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union stipulates that any European state may apply to become a member of the European Union', and further that 'accession has been ruled out for the non-European Mediterranean partners'. This debate lies in the future and may differ from country to country, but CEEC influence on this debate is predictable. As shown during the Convention debates, most of the CEEC have strong opinions about the identity of the EU as a union of Christian nations. Taken at face value this could lead one to believe that some CEEC governments, particularly those with right wing parties, could join the German Christian Democrats, for example, to exclude Turkey and other Islamic countries from membership on the basis of the cultural identity of the Union. Since geography alone does not provide an answer to the limits of Europe, this could become a key debate.

However, the way that the CEEC deal with the issue depends on the way in which the

32. The Commission is now consulting with seven neighbours about the National Action Plans: Ukraine, Moldova, Israel, Palestine Authority, Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan. The National Action Plans will supersede common strategies and become the main EU policy document for relations with these countries.

33. Schmid, D. (2003), 'Interlinkages Within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Linking Economic, Institutional and Political Reform: Conditionality Within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership', EuroMeSCo Working Paper, 27.

question of further enlargement is formulated. If the choice is between enlargement or is limited to 27, the integration of Turkey can be seen as positive for the inclusion of other eastern neighbours. As stated in the Polish non-paper on EU Eastern Policy 'In the long-term, if they so wish it and can meet membership criteria, the countries should be able to choose to accede to the European Union (...) The prospect of joining the EU, however distant, would constitute for them a strong incentive to undertake efforts in furthering democratic and economic reforms'.³⁴

The CEEC determination to maintain an 'open door' policy because of their eastern neighbours can lead to openness regarding over countries. Thus, the Commission must maintain the Wider Europe framework and must not allow geographic criteria to overtake political, merit-based criteria to shape policy towards EU neighbours.

Former Eastern Bloc governments have promoted a view of European identity and foreign policy that led some analysts to announce hard times ahead for Barcelona. This paper has outlined CEEC ideological attitudes towards and interest in the EU neighbourhood policy. The CEEC preference for projects involving the US, their view of the basic Christian identity of the EU, and the high priority of establishing a strong eastern dimension in EU foreign policy all seem to indicate that the EU25 will focus less on the EMP than the EU15. However, as argued in this paper, while the long-term attitudes of Central Europeans towards the EMP are shaped by cultural identity issues, rational considerations and strategies of negotiation within the EU can put paid to the view that the Wider Europe Neighbourhood is a zero-sum game in which there is competition between the Eastern and Mediterranean dimensions of EU policy.

The Wider Europe Framework can actually become the structure that prevents competition. By linking progress in both policies through a set of common conditions, the EU can ensure that the two neighbourhood policies benefit mutually from the development of instruments created to tackle common problems. The benefits of the Wider Europe Framework are already visible. The EMP has gained a new bilateral instrument – National Action Plans – that add to the tool kit of mechanisms to promote change. The National Action Plans are more flexible than the multilateral instruments, increasing the chances for the informal use of democratic conditionality.

By making uniform the instruments to deal with a diverse neighbourhood, the European Commission has somewhat mitigated the problem of competition between the proponents of the two regions and created a dynamic instrument to democratise and open up political and social systems. However, to realise the full potential of the Wider Europe Framework differentiation based on geographic criteria must be avoided. The Commission must restate that progress in political dialogue with any partner can be based only on actual merits and sharing common values.

An analysis of the strategies of CEEC in the development of the Wider Europe Framework shows that a cooperative strategy is emerging. The positions and strategies devised to deal with potentially divisive issues are marked by moderation and a long-term vision. The cooperative attitude of the CEEC is particularly visible in their participation in the development of the EU neighbouring policy. As the Barcelona Process is linked with the reinforcement of the eastern policy the new member States can therefore play a positive role. However, cooperation in the long run depends on abandoning the view that the European Union is a community of Christian nations and accepting it as a post-sovereign liberal polity.

Conclusion



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