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SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND THE PARTY SYSTEMS IN THE LIGHT OF THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS, IN PARTICULAR IN HUNGARY AND ROMANIA

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UNIVERSITATEA „BABEŞ-BOLYAI” CLUJ-NAPOCA
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REZUMATUL TEZEI DE DOCTORAT

SOCIAL-DEMOCRAŢIA ŞI SISTEMUL DE PARTIDE EUROPEAN DIN PERSPECTIVA PROCESULUI INTEGRĂRII EUROPENE: CAZUL UNGARIEI ŞI ROMÂNIEI

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Introduction

Whilst often regarded as the "procedural" conclusion of the 2004 enlargement round, the accession of Bulgaria and Romania into the European Union (from now on: EU) in 2007 offers significant theoretical and empirical insights into the way in which the EU has deployed and realized its enlargement strategy/strategies over the past 15 years.

Ever since their turbulent transition to democracy in the early 1990's, the two countries have experienced a difficult relation with the EU. For officials in Brussels the slow pace of democratic consolidation and domestic economic reform has been a regular source of frustration, necessitating the enactment of special measures to account for the "Balkan exceptionalism" of the two candidates. Naturally, all attempts to differentiate Bulgaria and Romania from the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe have been met with fierce opposition in Sofia and Bucharest, where political elites have found it difficult to reconcile their pro-European rhetoric with the implementation of a reform agenda capable of meeting the considerable conditional ties attached to the enlargement process. Conceptually, the position of Bulgaria and Romania as *"outliers"* in the process of the EU's Eastwards enlargement offers a critical test case to the thesis of *enlargement-led Europeanization*. It also points to the significance of domestic mediating factors that condition the transformational impact of the EU and have produced divergent reform trajectories across Central and Eastern Europe.

In policy terms, too, the imperative of dealing with "outliers" - and more generally with the significant degree of *diversity amongst accession candidates* - underlines the *highly contingent* and *evolutionary nature* of the *EU's enlargement strategy*. The word *"strategy"* is used here with a degree of caution for, ever since its inception in the early 1990's, the EU's approach vis-à-vis its accession hopefuls has been built upon an uncomfortable dualism:

- on the one hand, the building of a *rule-governed process* structured around *the principle of conditionality*;
- on the other, the preservation of a significant element of *discretion* about the *interpretation and implementation* of these rules.

The position of the European Commission in this process – both as a *"policy entrepreneur"* on enlargement and as *the arbitrator* of the "rules of the game" – has been crucially important. From an early stage the European Commission assumed a key role in driving the enlargement agenda forward against the backdrop of internal EU divisions (over the *pace* and *scope* of the process), as well a rapidly changing geopolitical context involving, amongst others, the wars of succession in the former Yugoslavia and NATO enlargement. Under these circumstances the European Commission was called *to exercise discretion* that went well *beyond the bureaucratic oversight* of the *accession negotiations*, and deployed a different mix of rewards and punishments for each candidate country. Naturally, the premises and implications of such discretion acquired far greater significance for "marginal candidates" on the edges of the enlargement process.

By tracing the key components of the EU's response to the Bulgarian and Romanian membership ambitions, this thesis does not simply shed light on facets of an EU enlargement round that is now confined to history. The contemporary relevance of previous EU attempts to deal with "Balkan exceptionalism" remains pertinent, as the

policy legacies of the 2007 enlargement continue to shape the context in which current and forthcoming accession hopefuls pursue their own "return to Europe".

The present thesis also inquires the role of European political parties and especially of those affiliated to the Party of European Socialists, in acquiring the aim of accession of the new member states to the EU, focusing especially on the cases of Hungary and Romania. The two case studies integrated by a comparative perspective helps to enlighten as well the role of political affiliations in decision making concerning accession to the EU of East-Central European states, as also the impact of the differentiated role of the main EU parties and their discursive efforts regarding Europeanization on the post-totalitarian party system in Hungary and Romania. The conclusions of the present thesis argues that accession to EU is a strong instrument for Europeanization – that involves the building of genuine democracies, state of law and functional civil societies in post-totalitarian states –, as the post-adherence agenda is a reassuring and vital means for the efforts of committed governments to fulfill the aims of political, economic and societal transition in East-Central Europe.

The present thesis is structured in an introductory chapter, followed by the seven chapters of the comparative analysis announced by the title – all subdivided in several thematic chapters –, a separate division of final conclusions, annexes and bibliography. The critical apparatus of this work consists of the references contained in the meticulously built footnotes, which completes the information contained in the text of the thesis, often including critical assessments regarding the sources on which the argumentation of the thesis has been built, respecting all the current academic rules for scientific uses, completed by the structured bibliography at the end of this volume, that reveals the referred primary sources and scientific literature on which the argumentation of the work lays.

Concerning the sources used by the author, it includes documents of the main EU institutions (Council of Europe, European Commission, etc.) regarding the processes described and analyzed, the documentation revealing for the first time not only the public papers, but also the materials produced by inner decision making debates, used and integrated in the scientific literature for the first time, completed by public opinion surveys, exit poles, printed and electronic media materials, analysis of the main economic and media actors (such as the Reuters, BBC Monitoring Service, Oxford Business Group etc.). The referred scientific literature includes studies, articles, as well as monographs regarding the process of decision making on EU enlargement, the evolution of the accessing new member states, as well the newest results of the scientific debate on Europeanization and building democracy in post-totalitarian societies.

The annexes of the thesis contains important documents regarding the process of decision making regarding enlargement of the EU, documents to which the analysis presented in this thesis referred to, a very useful chronology of Romania's EU accession process, as also the speeches of the heads of states of the two new member-states in front of the European Parliament, at the special assembly held to honor the two states accessing the EU in 2007, revealed for the first time in their entire original forms.

In the following lines a summary view on the main issues analyzed in the seven main chapters of the thesis are presented, followed in the end by the final conclusions.

I. The EEC/EU enlargements from the beginnings to 1997

The first chapter is dedicated to the process of enlargement of the EEC/EU, focusing on the analogies built by preceding "waves" of enlargement for later evaluating the impact of EU accession for the East-Central European member states. The analysis tries to emphasize the political motivations in shaping the decisions of EEC/EU institutions about integrating new member-states. Also, the author tries to focus on the inner political debate on entering the EEC/EU, especially on the role and the evolution of the positions sustained by the political left towards this process, and also the impact of EEC/EU accession on the political system of the new member-states. It is of a main importance to construct a comparative view for analyzing the role of the decisions regarding enlargement of EEC/EU in stabilizing new democracies, and providing means for improving the political culture and of the interiorizing the democratic values in societies that had known the experience of post-authoritarian/totalitarian political transition.

The process of enlargement of the EEC/EU had already a history of several decades in the late 1990's, that served also as a source of learning and analogies for both the EU and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe aiming accession after the fall of the Communist regimes. Even the mass-media in the CEE countries used massively the references to the previous "waves" of enlarging the EEC/EU as ground of comparison for evaluating the news regarding the process of accession of these states, however they faced an unprecedented process of negotiations, aiming the accession in the EU of states that were part of the Soviet bloc, and that had to evolve from state controlled centralized planed economies to the compatibility with the European Common Market.

However, the political tasks of building functional democracies and institutional stability based on the rule of law, as the legal tasks of harmonizing the national law of these states with the "*acquis communautaire*" of the EU had had some analogies first of all with the previous case of the *"Southern enlargement"* – involving Greece, Spain and Portugal –, but the post-Communist realities were also generating unprecedented issues and situations that had to be met by both parts of the accession process.

It is important to notice that already in the cases of the previous "waves" of enlargement the geopolitical perspective was playing a major role, also the accession of new states was seen not only as a process dominated by technical considerations, but at its core as a political decision and dependent on the will of the EU to enlarge.

When analyzing the process of *European integration*, that led from the first modest attempts at *overcoming the structural deficiencies of the nation-state Europe* to the *European Union* of nowadays, one must not forget about the perspective of the *pro-integration elites* in the original six member states of the *European Coal and Steel Community* (ECSC, founded in 1951, through the Treaty of Paris) and of the *European Economic Community* (EEC, founded in 1957, through the Treaty of Rome) – *France, Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg* –, that started from reconsidering the conflicts of interest between nation-states and their incompatible ambitions that had caused two World Wars, instability and insecurity[1]. The main goal

[1] Gazdag, Ferenc, „Az integráció története", in: Kende, Tamás (ed.), *Európai közjog és politika*, Budapest: Osiris-Századvég Könyvkiadó, 1995, pp. 24-29.

was to create a new politically stable and economically prosperous European order, to overcome the traditional tensions and conflicts between nation states, as also driven by the necessity of establishing new functional means for Western European security, threatened by the reality of an expanding Soviet bloc at the end of the World War II and the setting of a bipolar world.

It also had to be stated that some of the *non-member states had adopted self-exclusive positions* in the first decade after the Schuman-plan was put in act. Some had not believed in the perspectives of the ECSC, some had other preferential policies of external cooperation (like Great Britain, as Winston Churchill placed it in a position of *"mediator"* between the *"three circles of the Western World" – Western Europe, the Commonwealth and the United States of America*), as some had been contained by there inner sources of crisis (like Greece, that had to face civil war, a deep rooted economic backwardness and the issue of Cyprus that tide most of its energies), and others observing the EEC with much skepticism, like the Scandinavian states turned inwards to the policy of Nordic cooperation. After the creation of the EEC through the Treaty of Rome, in April 25th, 1957, *sectoral economic integration* was enriched with *an implicit political dimension*, aiming a horizontal economic integration into a common market, as the long-term aim was set to turn EEC into a fully fledged political community.

The strong economic success that followed in the years between 1958 and 1962 had argued in favor of the extension of sectoral to horizontal economic integration, the EEC becoming one of the world's largest trading powers. Its population of around 170 million, the rise of GNP by 21.5%, the rise of industrial production with 37% had attracted the attention of all neighbors, some of them now reconsidering their position on whether to join the EEC, that had a much more appealing offer and also impact on their own economic situation. *"Economic integration had always also been a means to an end, that is the creation of a new stable political order for Europe. The strategic political objectives could not be served by economic integration alone. From the beginning it involved partly supranational institution-building (…)"* – as Jürgen Elvert[2] had noticed. But he also has stated, that as already in the cases of the first four waves of enlargement could be observed, large parts of the governing elites and the media in the "newcomer states" had not shown a sustained and strong interest in informing the citizens of the *"roots and original intentions of 'core Europe' integration"*, as also there was little societal interest in acquiring wider knowledge of the European integration process, as the focus was set mainly on economic and security concerns, *evaluating EEC/EC accession as a means of achieving specific national objectives*. On the other hand, enlargement could be seen also as means of political socialization into the original and long-term objectives of the emerging European Union, with the original views of the founding members, leading to *competing visions of European integration* and *convergence of these views* – as all enlargements had led to a *"deepening" of the integration* despite the heterogeneity of the enlarged EU. The waves of enlargement can be evaluated as a *mutual learning process* that had certain effects *on the all-European level*, not only on economic and legal, but certainly on political level also: *enlargement had motivated political and economic reform* not only in the candidate countries, but the potentiality of

[2] Elvert, Jürgen, "A fool´s game or a comedy of errors? EU enlargements in a comparative perspective", in: Kaiser, Wolfram, Elvert, Jürgen (eds.), *European Union Enlargement. A Comparative History*, London and New York: Routledge, 2005, pp. 201-221.

future membership had equally proved itself as a powerful means for initiating economic and political reforms in the neighboring countries. On January 15th , 1962, in order to define criteria for examining future applications for membership, a report on *"political and institutional aspects of accession or association with the Community"* was forwarded to the Parliamentary Assembly, in that it was stated: *"Those states whose governments are not democratically legitimated and whose peoples do not partake in the political decision-making, whether it be directly or by means of freely elected representatives, cannot expect to be admitted to the society of peoples which form the European Communities."*[3]

In ***Great Britain***, after 1957 the faith in the value of the "special relationship" with the United States of America had been overshadowed by the "lessons of Suez" and the new Kennedy Administration's pressures set on Great Britain for counter-balancing the De Gaulle-led France in the NATO, and also by entering in the EEC. Also the economic benefits of entering the EEC market in times when the overseas possessions were gradually lost, the Commonwealth had also lost weight as the Third World had been mobilized by the non-aligned movement, and the US had began its long road marked by inflationist policies for financing its strategic defense and Cold War interventionist efforts. ***Ireland***, as its mainly agricultural exports tied it to Great Britain, had forwarded its applying for EEC membership on July 31st, 1961, also conscious of the developing Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the EEC, and of the value of possible technological imports for the modernizing of the country. Through its tight economic relations with Western Germany, ***Denmark*** had realized the importance of pressuring Great Britain for a joint application aiming to enter the EEC, seen as the best long-term solution. For this reason it had forwarded its applying for EEC membership on the same date as Great retain, August 10th, 1961. After 1969, as a result of the new foreign policy line adopted by Western Germany under the administration led by Chancellor Willy Brandt, German-Danish relations flourished, that also had motivated the application for EEC membership. These states began the accession negotiations in 1969, ended with acquiring full membership in 1973, with the exception of Norway, that renounced to ratify the accession treaty after a plebiscite.

In Great Britain, the Labour Party in opposition had campaigned against the signing of the Treaty of Accession, publicly stating in the elections of 1974, that in case of forming the new government they would ***re-negotiate the treaty***. After winning the elections of 1974, the new Labour-led government of PM James Callaghan had indeed called for re-negotiating Great Britain's accession to the EC, threatening with unilaterally leaving the EC in case of a refusal. In front of such an unprecedented situation, the EC renegotiated the Treaty of Accession of Great Britain in 1975, and made important concessions. After succeeding, the Labour Party had campaigned in favor of the renegotiated treaty at the referendum. In 1979, after winning the elections as criticizing the Labour Party's renegotiating of the Treaty of Accession, PM Margaret Thatcher, leader of the Conservative Party, had called once again for renegotiating the treaty and succeeded once again to obtain important modifications regarding financial, agricultural and fishing matters.

Norway – as a very special case – had applied for accession in the EEC first on April 30th, 1961. Also, for the second time, in 1967 applied again, and after successfully

[3] *Ibidem*, p. 103.

closing the accession negotiations in 1972, as the result of the referendum held on the issue had been negative failed to enter the EC. As applying again in 1994, the referendum had once again blocked the accession of Norway in 1995, as it is still not member of the European Union.

Sweden, Austria, Switzerland and ***Finland*** were states that preferred self-exclusion and maintaining of their special neutral positioning yet, each because of different reasons. ***Finland*** – a neighboring state of the Soviet Union - was a stable parliamentary democracy, cooperating with all neighboring Scandinavian states, receiving loans from the USA and Sweden in 1945-1947, and participating in Western European economic cooperation through the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)[4]. It entered the International Monetary Fund in 1948 (IMF), and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) in 1949. The signing of the Helsinki Protocol in 1957 meant the liberalization of trade with Western European countries. Then, in 1961 Finland signed a special association treaty with the EFTA members, called FINEFTA – that practically gave full membership rights as also guaranteed its special political and economic interests, concerning the special Finnish-Soviet relations. Gradually, the Soviet opposition as reason of remaining outside of the OEEC was removed, and Finland joined the OECD, since 1968. However, the Finnish self-exclusion policy regarding the EEC relied on the priority of a domestic consensus towards its national foreign policy, with special attention to the relation with the Soviet Union, established after 1944. However, it can be stated that in rejecting to apply for membership of EEC, ***political motives outweighed the economic ones*** – in either cases of ***Finland*** and ***Sweden***, but because of different and very specific reasons. The economic demands also had led to a form of contractual agreements between both states and the EEC – Finland began to negotiate about a ***free trade agreement*** with the EEC already in 1970, signed in 1973; Sweden, as also Austria and Switzerland, had signed free trade treaties with the EEC already in July, 1972.

Greece, Spain and ***Portugal*** were, in a first stage, excluded from membership because of their inner political evolutions: none of them had met the political criteria set already in the assessment of the Parliamentary Assembly in 1962, as non-democratic systems – Spain being still led by the Franco regime; Portugal known as the authoritarian regime of the Estado Nuovo; in Greece a military coup established a Government led by Generals of the Army[5].

Greece, in the first half of the 1960's, still struggled with the harsh legacy of the civil war, much stronger in the Northern part of the country, as an enduring political instability had loomed over it, as it remained the only non-Communist state in the Balkan peninsula. Greece's balance of payments problem remained unresolved through the next decades, as most of the industrial power was built on foreign investments, and the state struggled with a gigantic and low competence public sector. As the military coup of April 21st, 1967 led to the dictatorship of the Generals (associated most frequently with the name of General Metaxas), it entered an all European isolation. However, the US was supportive with the military regime between 1967 and 1974, as in the same time the public opinion

[4] Ojanen, Hanna, "If in <Europe>, then in its <core>?: Finland", in: Kaiser, Wolfram, Elvert, Jürgen, *European Union Enlargement…*, pp. 161-162.

[5] For the political criteria it is relevant that ***Britain, Denmark, Ireland*** and ***Sweden*** had been among the founding members of the *Council of Europe* in 1949, which ***Austria*** later joined in 1956.

began to identify Washington with the repressive military government in Athens – the period being marked also by the echoes of the Vietnam War. The Turkish intervention in the Cyprus crisis had also an important impact on the public debate regarding the future of Greece, as a charismatic leader for democratization after 1974, a unifying figure, in the person of Constantine Karamanlis. In the preamble of the Association Agreement signed previously by the EEC with Greece, their was stated that: *„the support given by the European Economic Community to the efforts of the Greek people to improve their standard of living will facilitate the accession of Greece to the Community at a later date"*. But as an effect of the military coup, on November 28th, 1974, the European Commission – as a result of the pressures of the European Parliament – decided to freeze the Association Agreement by limiting it to "its current administration".

After the fall of the military regime, in 1974 the transition to democracy was related also to a new foreign policy, assessing the accession to the European Communities like a means with multiple values: a factor in *achieving political stability*, *consolidating a new democracy*, securing *financial resources* and a *large market for the export* of *Greek agricultural products*, all vital for the modernization of the Greek economic, social and political system. This led to a consensus that cut across ideological and political party lines, as the Karamanlis led Government immediately applied for full membership in the European Communities.

The formal negotiations with the EC for full membership lasted from July 27th, 1976 to May 23rd, 1979. The decision of beginning these negotiations with Greece *was primarily a political one*, also aiming to redress the *balance of power between Greece and Turkey* – two Associates of the EC –, as also to ***strengthen the transition towards democracy in Greece***. PM Karamanlis had to decouple the Greek accession negotiations with EC from this regional dispute, and also opted for accepting the *"acquis communautaire"* without raising serious objections. The most pro-accession political force in Greece was the party led by Karamanlis, named New Democracy. After Greece entering the EC as full member in 1981, the New Democracy had lost the elections, than shifted its political options from state paternalism to neo-liberal views, importing the dominant centre-right views of its times in the mid-1980's. The greatest force on the political left, the Papandreou-led PASOK, after Greece entering as full member of the EC, it had won the elections on October 18th, 1981. Papandreou as PM had not made any step towards withdrawing Greece from the EC, or even renegotiating the Treaty of Accession. By late 1980's the harmonization with the communitarian policies and full integration into the EC had been the case for the Greek political decision-making. Papandreou even became a vocal supporter of European unity. The PASOK's election manifesto in 1989 had stood for gradual liberalization of market mechanisms, as privatization became more compatible with Socialist views, after the French Socialists had embraced it in 1984, and even the British Labour Party had thought of it in different terms than earlier, beginning with 1987[6].

Spain had shown great interest for joining as full member of the European community, as the political regime looked through that for an official recognition of its belonging to the Western European political and economic scenery, inside which it was ostracized. Spain resumed its relations with Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Greece, United States of America, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Great Britain in the first

[6] Ifantis, Kostas, *Op. cit.*, p. 93.

months of 1951. Then it succeeded to reopen its diplomatic offices in Paris (December 1951), Bonn (November 1952), signed a new Concordat with the Vatican (1953), succeeded to enter the UN (December 14th, 1955), and the United States of America agreed on aiding financially Spain, as it could open military bases there. Spain became a member of the International Monetary Fund and of the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development in 1958. Then, in 1959 it had entered the OEEC, as implementing an Economic Stabilization Plan. *But the Council of Europe still refused its entrance for being a "totalitarian regime"*. The ***lack of truly democratic political structures***, as also *the influence of Spanish political exiles* in the European political structures had restricted seriously the chances of Spain of accession in the EEC. After the assassination of Admiral Carrero Blanco, the Franco regime entered a deep crisis, as political terrorism was faced by a serial of death sentences pronounced by court-martials. Protest rallies had multiplied abroad. On October 7th, 1975 the European Council announced that negotiations on an Association Agreement between EEC and Spain were to be frozen.

After the death of Franco, Juan Carlos I became the monarch of Spain on November 20th, 1975. The new PM Adolfo Suárez had passed through the Parliament an Act for Political Reform that launched the transition towards democracy in Spain. The PSOE had adopted a moderate, pro-European, reformist line, under the leadership of a politician that had grown under the vestiges of European Socialist parties's traditions as an exile, in the decades before returning to Spain in 1975. As signing the Social Pact at the Moncloa Palace on October 25th, 1977, the parties representing the political left, as also the trade unions had sustained the hard reforms that were evaluated as the price of transition to democracy, building a vital consensus for succeeding, agreeing also to the accession into the EC[7]. Even the moderate nationalist forces in Catalunya and the Basque country had sustained the efforts of the Spanish government towards accession in the EC. The EC responded by resuming the official relations with Spain, as political changes actually took place. After winning the elections in 1977, the new government led also by Adolfo Suárez officially submitted the Spanish appliance for full membership in the EC. It was officially accepted by the European Council on September 20th, 1977.

The dictatorial "Estado Novo" was a major reason for ruling out closer contacts between the EEC and ***Portugal*** in the first period of the European integration process. Evaluated as a non-democratic, authoritarian regime, it qualified Portugal as incompetent with the European Communities' values and aims. Portugal entered the UN and was a founding member of NATO - due to its alliance with the British and US in the first decade of the Cold War. But it was deeply frustrated by the process of decolonization, as it maintained its African possessions as late as until the mid-1970's, facing international condemnation. It was also marked by a low level of urbanization, an overwhelming primary sector based economy, weak industrial background, paralleled by a weak and elitist single party led political regime. The reforms introduced by Marcello Caetano, that followed Salazar in power after 1968, had little effects on the structural level of the state and economy. In May, 1970 the Caetano government had contacted the EC for bilateral negotiations, and formed am Inter-Ministerial Commission for External Economic Cooperation. The accession was impossible because of not meeting the political criteria.

[7] Costa Pinto, Antonio, Teixeira, Nuno Severiano, „From Atlantic past to European destiny: Portugal", in: Kaiser, Wolfram, Elvert, Jürgen, *European Union Enlargement*…., p. 107.

The military coup of April 25th, 1974 had opened the road to the Portuguese transition to democracy, and the independence of its former colonies. International support had been delivered for the transitional governing forces against the radical left in the summer of 1975, as also for the establishment of political pluralism, creation of parties and building civil society. The moderate political forces needed ***financial and technical support from European party groups and affiliated organizations***, as the radical left was rapidly growing. This meant also ***an almost instant affiliation*** of these parties and the trade unions *to* ***European transnational political organizations***, which led to the success of parliamentary parties over military groups and radical political militants' groups. The European Community had sent clear signals that it favored a pluralist democratic system, as also projecting the possibility of beginning negotiations with Portugal, while granting already limited economic assistance. After the elections of 1976, the road to European integration of Portugal met the popular support, as also the option for the Atlanticist and European foreign policy to be seen as parts of one strategy was enacted by the new political elite. The first step was acquiring membership in the Council in Europe - in August 1976 -, that led to the international recognition of the new democratic regime, followed by bilateral negotiations with a series of European states. Portugal submitted its formal applying for EC membership in March 1977, accepted by the European Council one month later, and followed by a favorable report presented by the European Commission in May 1978. The negotiation process began in October 1978, putting Portugal on the road to EC membership. In 1982 the Constitution was revised, and the Council of the Revolution abolished. The National Defence Law had ended to be in act, as the military agreed to subordinate to civilian political control, to the rule of law of a democratic state. As a result, all domestic obstacles looked like to be neutralized.

Greece, Spain and Portugal had re-emerged as new democracies and had clearly opted for applying to EC membership. The aim of strengthening the democratic transition in these Southern European states weighted a lot in the decision of the European Communities to begin negotiations for a new enlargement. All the three governments had not seen an alternative to EC membership that could offer an ***institutional framework four strengthening the re-establishment of a democratic system***, offering a ***source for financial support and modernization***, as well as a ***suitable market for their agricultural products***.

After 1978, the EC's policy was to interlink the accession negotiations of the two Iberian countries, and after 1983 both had evolved in parallel until the closure of negotiations and signing of the Treaty of Accession in June 1985, and becoming full member of the EC from January 1st, 1986.

The next wave of enlargement was the accession of the former neutral states to the EC/EU, a process that emerged right after 1989 and lasted until 1995 – a moment when already the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe had applied for entering the EU. In the meanwhile, following the Tindemans Report in 1975, there was a long process of reforming the European Communities that led, through the Single European Act that was legislated by the EC in 1986, and the Madrid European Council of 1989 that set the stage for negotiating the institutionalizing of the Economic and Monetary Union, to the Treaty of Maastricht, signed in February 7th, 1992, which had instated the European Union. The new agenda of European integration – including the Economic and Monetary Union with the introduction of the Single European Currency

(the Euro), and the institutional reform of the EU – was doubled by the *Treaty between the EU and EFTA* that meant the creation of a wider *European Economic Area (EEA)*, introduced officially with January 13th, 1993, including the territories of states that remained neutral and outside the European integration process' institutional frames. This differentiated status of non-EU members had only to be applied for Switzerland, Iceland, Norway and Lichtenstein. The other states that had self-excluded themselves from joining the European integration until that moment, always referring to their neutrality as the major cause of this decision, had evaluated the changing world political scenery as the cause of rethinking their own neutrality. ***Norway***, as already an applicant for EEC membership in the 1960's, now had forwarded again its official appliance for entering the EC/EU, but once again, after succeeding to close negotiations and sign the Treaty of Accession in 1993, a public debate arose, and accession had been blocked by a vote at the referendum of October 1994 on ratifying the full EU membership. As early as 1967, as Great Britain had applied again to accession into the EEC, the Social-Democratic Party in power in ***Sweden*** had made a peculiar form of an "open application" to accession, without defining what it meant under the term: *"joining the EEC in a way that was compatible with the Swedish policy of non-alignment"*[8]. After Great Britain, Ireland, Denmark became members of the EC, in 1973, Swedish PM Olof Palme had made a series of visits to the capitals of Western Europe – Bonn, Paris, London – as seeking for a form of larger economic cooperation that shall include also Sweden, without the need to engage his country on the road to EC membership. In the end, it was only a free trade agreement to be negotiated between the EC and Sweden in 1972, which contained a "development clause" that meant that the doors to EC were still kept open for Sweden. In 1984, as the free trade agreement between Sweden and the EC had been fully implemented and around half of the exports of this country targeted the European Communities, the Social-Democrats had suggested to negotiate the reducing of tariffs between the EEC and EFTA. The Swedish economy was also hit by a series of problems in the 1980's, as becoming highly overheated and affected by inflation. PM Olof Palme had looked for European Socialist parties' advice, as the relation between Palme and Willy Brandt was known as one of exceptionally good and long lasting. In that moment the SAP, the Swedish Social-Democratic Party had put on its agenda the ideas of "*Sweden's European identity*", "*democratic Europe's community of values*", "*cultural affinity*" of Sweden with Europe - but the violent death of Olof Palme had shocked the entire political scenery. 67% of the Swedish were in favor of joining the EC in 1991, as also the Liberals and Conservatives were pressing a Social-Democratic leadership already facing inner controversies regarding this issue. The European Social-Democratic parties' leaders – like Jacques Delors, the president of the European Commission, Felipe González, leader of the PSOE, Franz Vranitzky, the head of the SPÖ – tried to align arguments for and finally convinced PM Carlsson of Sweden of the necessity of applying for EC membership. Inside the SAP were already several groups whom opted loud and clear for accession to EC, as well as the consultative bodies of the government, including representatives of universities and the civil society – as the Council for Questions on Europe. In February, 1993, however, it was a centre-right led government, led by PM Carl Bildt that represented Sweden at the beginning of the negotiations for accession to

[8] Gussarsson, Maria, "Combining dependence with distance: Sweden", in: Kaiser, Wolfram, Elvert, Jürgen, *European Union Enlargement…*, p. 187.

the EU. The Conservative head of the Government still stated that Sweden will maintain its non-aligned policy, even as entering the EU, the concerns towards the Common Foreign and Security Policy being eluded by the formula reached in the Treaty of Maastricht. The negotiations went without important conflicting moments, concluded on March 1st, 1994. By November 13th, 1994, when the Swedish referendum on EU membership was held, the pro-European vote had remained a majority by a small margin, the "Yes" votes representing 52,3% of all valid votes, 46,8% being against accession as a member state. Sweden became a member state of the EU on January 1st, 1995, along Austria and Finland.

The ***Austrian*** State Treaty of 1955 had put important limitations on the Austrian foreign policy decision-makers options. A declaration of self-restraining neutrality led political line, however, had not eliminated from the public debate the issue of joining the EEC in the first years of the 1960's. The Association of Austrian Industrialists (VÖI) had clearly urged the government, repeatedly, to reconsider joining the EEC. The ÖVP had stated clear its support for European integration initiatives in Western Europe, entering in 1965 the European Union of Christian Democrats (EUCD). The Socialist Party of Austria also had entered the Socialist International. The SPÖ supported wholeheartedly the entrance to EFTA of Austria in 1960, but also had made repeated interventions in the political scene for widening the trade with the Eastern European countries[9]. In 1967 the Austrian government had to face Italy's blocking positioning towards an Association Agreement with the EEC, as the Austrian nationalists of South Tyrol had used political terrorism also for their autonomist idea to be met by the Italian decision makers. In the years marked by Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, Austria met the era of "Eurosclerosis" between 1983 and 1986. Only after the return to grand coalition government a new approach was built, emphasizing again the importance of the European agenda. The impact of the Single European Act, the perspective of remaining outside the Single European Market had also concerned Austria's leading political elite in the second half of the 1980's. After the Reykjavik Summit and Gorbachev's speech on the "House of Europe", the days of the Iron Curtain had ended unexpectedly fast - it was actually first broke through on the border between Hungary and Austria. In the very same moment the Austrian Government had decided also to forward the applying for full membership in the EC on July 17th, 1989. The Austrian Government could rely on a very wide consensus by then regarding the accession to the EC/EU. The industrialists, as well as the large segment of the population engaged in the agricultural sector had agreed that joining the Single Market would be better than remaining outside of it. The SPÖ, as experiencing again a grand coalition cohabiting with the ÖVP, had won over its own uncertainties regarding accession, becoming quite a vocal supporter for it in the early 1990's. Only the FPÖ, led by Jörg Haider tried to build a negative vote on accession to EU, using the general economic situation in Europe, the Yugoslavian crisis and the growing unemployment following unification in Germany as elements of its discourse to build a Euro-skeptic position in the Austrian political scenery. Even facing that group, the popular vote for entering the EU was approaching a consensual "Yes". Austria became, along Sweden and Finland, member of the European Union on January 1st, 1995.

[9] Gehler, Michael, "A newcomer experienced in European integration: Austria", in: Kaiser, Wolfram, Elvert, Jürgen, *European Union Enlargement…*, p. 145.

The fall of the Berlin Wall, and the end of the Central and Eastern European Communist regimes was followed by the disappearing of the Soviet Union in December 1991. Even ***Finland*** that had been very keen on maintaining its foreign policy doctrine, shaped first of all by neighboring the Soviet Union, which had meant a special neutrality status, built as a positive interpretation towards their bilateral relation after 1947, with a self-exclusion from the Western European economic and political intergovernmental organizations, had to reconsider its specific positions. In 1988, the Finnish government had seen the moment proper for establishing a "political dialogue" with the EC. The first meetings were including mainly technocrats, followed by a ministerial level dialogue with the EC representatives. When the Austrian appliance for EC membership had been announced, the Finnish decision-makers where slightly surprised, as they better wished for a joint appliance of the two countries. The Baltic national movements had their first moments, the Finnish government acknowledging that the setting of the whole European scenery was changing. The collapse of the bilateral trade with the neighboring Soviet Union, as well as the financial resources of the EC that could be used for modernizing the Finnish economy, also the security of that country being understood in societal and economic terms more than in other cases, the option had a lot of pro-arguments, more than it could be outweighed by any hesitative stance.

The *public opinion was also involved*, in a much greater scale then in the case of the previous enlargements. It was very interesting that while in a public opinion poll made in May 1990, 60% of Finnish people were definitely for accession into the EC, only 13% was clearly against, as 22% thought that Finland was already a member[10]. The Finnish people mainly were in favor of entering the EC by acquiring full membership, the civil society pressuring the political decision makers in Finland, as already Austria had made its official applying, and even Sweden made its own steps towards the same aim. When, finally, in December 1991 the Government of Finland had stated that it would officially apply for Finland entering the EC, the society, as well as the political actors had assured it of a wide and consensual support. The official forwarding of the Finnish appliance for full membership in the EC had been made on March 18th, 1992.

Finland was the first Nordic state where a referendum on the issue of entering the EU was programmed to be held. In the end of 1992, the support for entering the EU was slightly decreasing. The options were affected also by the negative vote of Danish regarding the Treaty of Maastricht. A year later, in December 1993, the "No" option had held majority in the opinion polls. But the outcome of the 1994 elections in Russia, with Vladimir Zhirinovsky gaining ground, in Finland the idea of joining the European Union became much more tempting. The referendum held on October 16th, 1994 confirmed the efforts towards the aim of accession to EU membership: 56,9% had voted in favour of it in Finland. As a result, on January 1st, 1995, Finland entered the European Union as a new member state, along Austria and Sweden.

II. The fifth EU enlargement (1997-2007)

After 1989, the Central and Eastern European new democracies had signalled their commitment for "returning to Europe" and already had adopted a clear discourse for

[10] Ojanen, Hanna, *Op. cit,* p. 166.

emphasizing their "European vocation". However, the "deepening" of the European integration, as also the accession of the formal neutral states had held the moment in the first part of the 1990's. The institutional framework for realizing the possibility of a new enlargement – this time towards East, regarding former Communist regimes in the midst of the process of democratic transition of these states – was laid down at the *Copenhagen European Council*, in June 1993. The criteria agreed in Copenhagen set down in concrete terms the common values that a candidate country must meet in order to become a member of the EU. These values concern *democracy, rule of law, economic stability* and *the ability to take on the EU legislation*[11]. In not more than two and a half years ten states had applied for accession: ***Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovenia***.

In 1997, the European Commission set the *Agenda 2000*, for setting the frames of not only the prospect of adding new members to the EU15, but to integrate them in an economic and monetary union already in process of redefining itself, also as parts of the newly emerging foreign and security policy, and the institutional reform that was projected to happen, as well as in the already reshaping agricultural, regional etc. policies, as the increase of the EU members certainly would also have its effects upon its content – enlarging an EU already involved in the most impressive reshaping of its inner defining relations being the issue of the second half of the last decade of the 20th century and the first years of the 21st century at the horizon. Agenda 2000 was accompanied by a set of Opinions from the European Commission that led to conclude that a number of candidates were already in a position to begin negotiating their membership of the EU. The Commission wanted to elude new divisions, therefore proposed an inclusive system: it decided to revisit the progress made with the Copenhagen criteria every year – both for those who were not yet negotiating, and for those who were –, and on the basis of its annual examination, through *"Regular reports"*, the Commission *recommended* to the member states *whether or not to begin negotiations* with one candidate or another. The *procedure for the negotiations* aims at ensuring an *effective negotiation*, in which the member states and applicant countries can take decisions that not only reflect the desire of the applicants rapidly to join the EU, but which are also realizable. Each applicant country draws up its position on each of the *31 chapters of the EU acquis*, to engage in negotiations. Each has a *chief negotiator*, usually at the level of *deputy foreign minister*, supported by a *team of experts* from the important line ministries who have to help define *their country's position on each of the chapters*. Since each Member State will need *to ratify the treaties of accession*, usually through an act of Parliament, the member states' governments inform their parliaments in accordance with their own domestic procedure. In the applicant countries, the process of ratification is likely to involve *a popular referendum*. The negotiations themselves focus on the terms under which the applicants will *adopt, implement and enforce the acquis*, and, notably, the granting of possible *transitional arrangements* which must be limited in scope and duration. Under similar arrangements in previous accession negotiations, new Member States have been able to phase in their compliance with certain laws and rules by *a date agreed during the negotiations*.

[11] *Council of the European Union, Presidency Conclusions – Copenhagen European Council: 21-22 June 1993*, Brussels, 1993.

On the side of the European Union, *the 15 Member States* are the *parties to the accession negotiations*. The *Presidency of the Council of Ministers* (which rotates among the member states every six months), *presents* the *negotiating positions* agreed by the Council and chairs negotiating sessions at the level of ministers or their deputies. The *General Secretariat of the Council* provides the *secretariat for the negotiations*. The *European Commission proposes the draft negotiating positions to the member states*, first at the level of *the relevant working group*, which meets regularly, often weekly, and then *at the level of deputies*, and up to *the ministerial level*, and at *the European Council*. The Commission maintains close contact with the applicant countries in order to seek solutions to problems arising during the negotiations. Within the Commission, the work is *coordinated by the Directorate General for Enlargement*. The *European Parliament*, which *must give its assent* to the resulting *accession treaty*, is *kept informed* of the progress of the negotiations throughout.

The *formal 'accession process'* was launched at a meeting of the foreign ministers of the member states and all the candidate countries on *March 30th,1998*, held *in Brussels*. Hans Van Den Broek, then Commissioner for External Political Relations, announced that the process of screening the thirty-one chapters of the acquis communautaire would begin on April 3rd, 1998. On the following day, March 31st, 1998, a series of *bilateral intergovernmental conferences were held in Brussels to open accession negotiations* with ***Cyprus, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, the Czech Republic*** and ***Slovenia***. These countries had been given the green light to start accession negotiations at the *Luxembourg European Council*, *in December 1997*[12]. ***Slovakia*** did not join the *"Luxembourg six"* because it *failed to meet the political criteria for membership*.

First, after the European Council in Luxembourg, in December 1997, had approved the European Commission's Agenda 2000 proposal to open accession negotiations with some applicants, the *negotiations began on March 31st, 1998 with* ***six applicant countries – Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia***. On *October 13th, 1999 the European Commission recommended Member States to open negotiation*s also with ***Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, and the Slovak Republic***. The *Helsinki European Council, on the December 10th and 11th, 1999*, decided *to open accession negotiations with* ***Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Malta***. The *bilateral intergovernmental conferences* with each candidate country were held *in Brussels on February 15th, 2000*.

The Commission proposed in 2000 to the *European Council at Nice* a so-called *road map*. This laid down a calendar for beginning discussion on each chapter of the acquis with each country. The road map foresaw the opening of negotiations with less complex chapters of the acquis which do not involve a large body of EU law, or do not involve politically difficult choices. This allowed the applicant countries' negotiating teams to become integrated into the process over time, and develop the kind of administrative mechanisms that are required in their home countries, where they frequently consult or inform parliamentary committees, meet with the social partners, and so on. The road map presented by the Commission and endorsed by the Nice European Council has turned out to work extremely well. It has proved possible to solve difficult issues in most cases been in accordance with the timetable.

[12] *Council of the European Union, Presidency Conclusions – Luxembourg European Council: 11-12 December 1997*, Brussels, 1997.

At the *European Council in Göteborg in June 2001*, it was agreed that *the end of 2002* could see *the conclusion of the negotiations* with those candidate countries that are ready. The conclusions of the *Laeken European Council, held on December 14th and 15th, 2001*[13], declared that the *accession process was irreversible* and stressed the EU's determination to bring the negotiations with those countries ready to join to a close by the end of 2002. In line with the declaration made at Nice, the Council also decided to convene a *Convention on the future of the Union*, chaired by Valery Giscard d'Estaing, to prepare for the forthcoming IGC in 2003/04. The Council declared that *the candidate countries would take part in the Convention* and would be *represented in the same way as the member states*, although they would not be able to block any consensus which may emerge among the member states.

At the *European Council's Summit of June 2002, in Seville* it was stated that the European Union is determined to conclude the negotiations with ***Cyprus, Malta, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia*** by *the end of 2002*. Also, that these countries should *participate in the elections for the European Parliament in 2004* already *as full members*. The *Brussels European Council, held on October 24th and 25th, 2002*, approved the Commission's conclusions and also reached agreement on the incremental introduction of *CAP direct payments in the new member states*, over the period 2004-2013.

The *Copenhagen European Council, held on December 12th and 13th, 2002*[14], subsequently concluded negotiations with the ten candidate countries listed above, set May 1st, 2004 as the accession date and also adjusted the financial arrangements for enlargement during the 2004-2006 period (previously fixed by the Agenda 2000 agreement). The Council also agreed that ***Bulgaria*** and ***Romania*** should be welcomed as EU members in 2007 and suggested that a decision on ***Turkey*** could be made, on the basis of a Commission opinion, at the December 2004 European Council. On April 9th, 2003, the *European Parliament gave its assent to the accession* of the ten acceding states. The *Treaty of Accession was signed* by the Heads of State or Government and the Foreign Affairs Ministers for the 15 Member States and the 10 Acceding States *in Athens, on April 16th, 2003*. The *accession date*, subject to ratification of the Treaty in the 15 member states and the 10 acceding states, was set *for May 1st, 2004*.

III. Romania and the dynamics of EU enlargement

On January 1st, 2007, Romania acceded to the European Union. This entry was the latest and the most momentous stage in the country's involvement in the process of European integration. It has been a long, arduous process, necessitating painful domestic reforms and significant external pressure for change. It also signaled acceptance by the majority of its European partners of the progress Romania has made in its post-communist transformation from authoritarian dictatorship and near economic collapse to modern democracy, with a functioning market economy. For the EU, it had increased the total number of its members - Bulgaria joined at the same time - from 25 to 27. In doing

[13] *Council of the European Union, Presidency Conclusions – Laeken European Council: 14-15 December 2001, Document SN 300/1/01 REV 1*, Brussels, 2001.

[14] *Council of the European Union (2002b), Presidency Conclusions – Copenhagen European Council: 12-13 December 2002, Document 15917/02*, Brussels, 29 December 2002.

so it brought an end to the process of Eastern enlargement, launched at the Copenhagen European Council more than a decade earlier, in June 1993.

Romania presents an interesting case study of accession to the European Union. Throughout the period between the submission of its membership application, in June 1995, to the country actually joining the European Union, in January 2007, there were plenty of voices questioning its preparedness for membership and the desirability, from the EU's perspective to admit this country to its ranks. Doubt was ever present, whether in the Commission's annual reports or in the decisions to include unprecedented safeguard clauses in the Treaty of Accession and open up the possibility of actually delaying Romania's accession to the European Union. Each country report submitted by the European Commission noted progress, but the tones and the wordings of these country reports was dependent of the Commissioner responsible for enlargement and on the ruling governing party/parties of the country.

What, then contributed to the EU's decision to admit Romania in 2007? What, prior to this, led the EU to consider Romania as a future member, to include the country it in its enlargement process, and allow Romania to move closer to EU membership, despite the persistent concerns about its progress in meeting the prerequisites?

A common starting point for assessing the EU's handling of a state's membership aspiration is it to view it through a neo-realist or "inter-governmental" lens. Here, the process is understood as the consequence of member-state preferences and inter-state bargaining, with special attention being directed to the need, on the one hand, and for finding common denominators between member states for the EU's approach to enlargement and on the other, the importance for applicant countries of sponsors in the EU advancing their integration with the EU[15]. Central to such understandings are cost-benefit analyses focusing on the economic and security benefits of admitting a particular state or states.

Member states have individually and collectively invoked security arguments in favor of enlargement, and there is a plenty of evidence to suggest that security considerations have played a prominent role in Romania's accession to the EU. The Kosovo conflict in 1999 prompted a re-conceptualization of enlargement as a strategy for security promotion, notably in South-Eastern Europe, which in turn led to a qualitative shift in the EU's handling of Romania's membership aspirations.

President Romano Prodi, and his commissioner for Enlargement, Gunter Verheugen (both came from the Socialist political family) - was making progress with enlargement and turning into a more political, as opposed to a technocratic exercise. The member states had already signaled their support for such a strategic shift. Without a real prospect of membership - evidence in the negotiation of the terms of accession – reform-minded governments were facing difficulties in pushing and implementing reforms.

Fears that "the West" was willing to forget Romania and co-sign it to some South-Eastern European "grey zone" between East and West would persist, but Romania was now part of a process that assumed the country's eventual accession: the Luxembourg European Council had made clear Romania was destined to join the EU[16]. But there was

[15] Moravcsik and Vachudova, *Historical Institutionalism and the EU's Eastward Enlargement*, London, 2003.

[16] *Council of the European Union, Presidency Conclusions – Luxembourg European Council: 11-12 December 1997*, Brussels, 1997.

no timetable. Although Romania had been rehabilitated, there was plenty that it still had to do to satisfy the EU. Economically and politically, the country still faced a struggle to become a credible member. When in 1997 the Commission issued its opinion on the membership applications of the Central and Eastern European countries, it was able to conclude in all cases expect two that they met the *political criteria* for EU membership: Slovakia and Romania. Later, there was a shift towards the *"regatta" approach*. An "evolutive and inclusive" accession process would be launched with all applicants, although negotiations would only be opened with five Central and Eastern European countries (plus Cyprus), as proposed by the Commission.

The launching in March 1998 of the accession process and of the enhanced pre-accession strategy signaled a considerable upgrade of Romania's relations with the EU: there was an Accession Partnership setting out the short- and medium term-measures the country would have to take in order to make progress towards accession. A screening process would be used to familiarize the Romanian administration with the *acquis* and identify assistance that would be required to overcome the difficulties. And then there had been traced the annual monitoring of progress with preparations for assuming the obligations of EU membership. In October 1998 the Commission, in its first Regular Report on Romania's progress towards accession, concluded that *"Romania has made very little progress in the creation of a market economy and its capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces has worsened (…)Romania meets the Copenhagen criteria. Much remains to be done in rooting out corruption, improving the work of the courts and protecting individual liberties and rights of the Roma. Priority also should be given to the public administration."* [17] The Commission's second report, published in October 1999, recorded little progress in dealing with many of the issues raised in 1998. Under "normal" circumstances and in a process determined by conditionality, this state of affairs would not have resulted in the Commission recommending that accession negotiations be opened with Romania. However, this is precisely what the Commission did in October 1999. The most obvious reason for overlooking conditionality as the key determinant in the Commission's recommendations was the Kosovo conflict in 1999, and the EU's reassessment of enlargement as a strategic tool to promote security in the wider Europe.

Specific recommendations had been made to the Romanian government by Verheugen during his visit to Bucharest, in October 1999. All the progress allowed the European Council in Helsinki, in December 1999, to take up the Commission's recommendations and announce that negotiations with Romania would shortly be launched. They duly were, on 15 February 2000.

The return to power by the PDSR in 2000 was persistently dogged by allegations of corruption, but also showed a significant reformist track and succeeded in restoring a certain degree of political stability, although it was reliant on the support of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR / UDMR / RMDSZ) to pass legislation. The government of Prime Minister Năstase (PSD) pursued a gradualist approach to reform. It concluded an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which commits Romania to a policy of gradual disinflation and to accelerating structural reforms. The agreement with the DAHR contained pledges on minority rights.

[17] European Commission, 1998 b: 50-51.

The EU's decision at the Laeken European Council in December 2001 not to include Romania in the 'big bang' enlargement scheduled for 2004[18] caused little surprise among the Romanian political elite. The European Council in Copenhagen in December 2002 for the first time established a timeline for Romania's accession to the EU: "the objective is to welcome Bulgaria and Romania as a member in 2007"[19]. In December 2002, an Executive Committee for European Integration, with the Prime Minister as Chair and comprising the Minister for European Integration, the Chief Negotiator, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Public Finances, was established. Commissioner Verheugen was soon in Bucharest, in February 2003, to remind the Romanian government of the need for administrative and judicial reform. And Romania had to meet the EU's key economic criterion for membership: to be a functioning market economy.

A major government reshuffle took place in June 2003. Its main aim was to streamline the administrative structure of the government by reducing the number of ministries. Further changes occurred on October 20th, 2003, when the Minister for European Integration, Hildegard Puwak, as well as the Minister of Health, Mircea Beuran, and the General Secretary of the cabinet, Şerban Mihăilescu, resigned. The resignations followed allegations that they had either initiated, or tolerated corruption. At the beginning of March 2004, Prime Minister Năstase also dismissed the Minister of Justice, and appointed three Deputy Prime Ministers in an effort to speed up EU entry talks. The Commission's Regular Report published in October 2004 openly acknowledged that there were some delays in Romania meeting its obligations from the 27 negotiating chapters already concluded and failed to provide any assessment of the likelihood of negotiations being concluded before end of 2004.

The previously ruling Social Democratic Party (PSD) still won the November 28th, 2004 parliamentary elections by a sizable margin, although with significantly less public support. However, in the subsequent second round of presidential election, on December 12th, 2004, a narrow majority of Romanians showed their discontent with the ruling Social Democratic Party (PSD): Adrian Năstase suffered an unexpected defeat in front of Traian Băsescu, leader of the centrist Alliance for Truth and Justice (D.A.). Both the Romanian Humanist Party (PUR) and the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR), changed sides from an envisaged coalition with the PSD towards the D.A. Alliance. Nominated by the new President Băsescu and approved by the newly elected Parliament, the new government, headed by Prime Minister Călin Popescu Tăriceanu, took office on December 28th, 2004. The new government program covered the main shortcomings, identified by the 2004 Regular Report of the European Commission. The government prepared a "*Plan for priority measures for November 2004 - December 2005*" for the implementation of EU accession related commitments.

The new European Commission, which took office on November 22nd, 2004, was openly more cautious than its predecessor. Olli Rehn, the new Commissioner for Enlargement (Liberal) argued that negotiations should be "*completed in an ordinary fashion respecting the substantive criteria of membership…Schedule cannot overrun*

[18] *Council of the European Union, Presidency Conclusions – Laeken European Council: 14-15 December 2001, Document SN 300/1/01 REV 1*, Brussels, 2001.

[19] *Council of the European Union (2002b), Presidency Conclusions – Copenhagen European Council: 12-13 December 2002, Document 15917/02*, Brussels, 29 December 2002.

substance"[20]. The Commission opposed closing negotiations, but in the meantime the European Council was intent on closing negotiations in time for the next summit. The answer was the drafting of *additional safeguard clauses* which member states and Romania accepted on December 8th, 2004. A final round of negotiations at which the final chapters were formally closed duly took place on December 14th, 2004. Two days later, the European Parliament adopted a resolution supporting the closure of negotiations before the end of the year.

It was widely accepted that Romania had not met all the necessary accession criteria and that it might not yet do so before January 1st, 2007. Evidently, the decision to conclude was *first of all political*, than it was simply procedural. This is not to dismiss the significant progress Romania had made either in meeting the EU's membership requirements or at least putting in place mechanisms to ensure it could, and convincing the EU that it would ultimately deliver on commitments.But politics played their role, with several factors being of particular note.

First, the EU's member-states found themselves *rhetorically committed*, and arguably entrapped, into admitting Romania. The European Council in 1997 had talked of membership being Romania's "destiny", and since then target dates for the conclusion of negotiations and accession had gradually been programmed into the process.

Secondly, there was *the coupling of Romania's accession bid alongside Bulgaria's*. To have postponed the conclusion of negotiations with Romania would have been to delay to Bulgaria's accession.

Third, it had long been the view among several member states supportive of enlargement that the *EU's opportunities to influence reform in a candidate state* could be just as great as once negotiations had been concluded, and even post-accession, than simply through accession negotiations.

This leads to a fourth consideration: the *economic, political and security interests of the EU* that facilitated the closure of negotiations. They clearly derived from the ideas of using enlargement as a strategic tool to promote reform, economic and political stability, and the desire to send positive message about the EU's commitment to create security by integration in South-Eastern Europe.

PM Tăriceanu committed itself immediately on taking office to implement the necessary reforms to ensure accession in 2007. Despite its concerns, the European Commission soon issued a positive opinion - the reason behind it might be the change of government and a new Commissioner, both affiliated to the same political family, from the Liberals - on the outcome of negotiations. With the Council approving the accession of Bulgaria and Romania on April 25th, 2005[21] the way was now clear for the Treaty of Accession to be signed the same day in Neumünster Abbey, in Luxembourg. Also, the Romanian MPs and Senators were in a joint parliamentary meeting and voted overwhelmingly in favor of ratification.

The EU's 25 Member States had to each ratify the Treaty. Moreover, even if ratification were completed in time, accession could be delayed by a year. Only six weeks after the Treaty of Accession had been signed, the European Commission sent a "warning letter" to Bucharest indicating the inadequate implementation of certain reforms. It also

[20] *Financial Times*, December 2nd, 2004.
[21] *Council of the European Union (2005), Decision of 25 April 2005 on the Admission of the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union*, OJ L 157, 21 June 2005.

reminded all concerned that the safeguard clauses contained in the Treaty of Accession meant that accession could be postponed by one year. By early 2006 Bulgaria and not Romania was the focus of concerns about preparations for membership. The Commission, in its second monitoring report in May 2006, called for further efforts in tackling corruption and implementing judicial reform areas[22]. However, the Commission's final monitoring report, published in September 2006, was positive[23], noting Romania's 'considerable efforts' in addressing earlier concerns, and concluding that the country was 'sufficiently prepared' to meet the EU's accession criteria by January 1st, 2007. The Council subsequently welcomed the Commission's recommendation. No move was made to activate the safeguard clauses and delay accession.

In Germany, centre-right politicians had long been expressing their doubts about Romania's preparedness for membership and were openly calling for the Commission to use safeguard clauses from the date of accession. The German MPs only approved the Treaty of Accession after special appearance by Commissioner Rehn before the Bundestag's EU Committee in an attempt to assuage concerns. Once Germany formally completed ratification on December 20th, 2006 - the way was clear for Romania to join the EU. Then, formal sitting was held in the European Parliament on January 31st, 2007, where the President of Romania Mr. Traian Băsescu and the President of Bulgaria Mr. Parvanov Georghi delivered their speeches.

We also have to highlight the extremely important and effective role of the Party of European Socialists. Without their continuous political and technical support, Romania and Bulgaria couldn't have joined to the European Union. The commitment of parties of the political left in support of the accession process is clear.

IV. The Party of European Socialists: A Programmatic Change

European Social Democracy, over the past decade, has opened a new front in terms of its actions, priorities and challenges. This new front is the European Union, that is, its policy agenda, its supranational as well as intergovernmental institutions, and finally, the European level in general, in which transnational networking and organizing is obliged.

In 1961, the Socialists in the European Parliament attempted to produce a common *European Socialist Program* but were neglected due to the applications of Britain, Denmark, Ireland and Norway to join the European Communities. In 1973, the enlarged Socialist Congress met in Bonn and inaugurated the Confederation of the Socialist Parties of the European Community. In 1978, the Confederation of Socialist Parties approved the first common European Election Manifesto. Two years later, the Luxembourg Congress approved the first Statue of the Confederation of Socialist Parties. The accession of Greece in 1981, followed by Spain and Portugal in 1986 brought in more parties. In 1984 another common Socialist Election Manifesto was approved at a congress in Luxembourg. In 1992, the *Party of European Socialists* (PES) was founded in order to give Europe's Social-Democratic parties a better means of translating their shared

[22] European Commission (2006c): *Monitoring report on the state of preparedness for EU membership of Bulgaria and Romania*, COM (2006) 549 final, Brussels: European Commission, 2006.
[23] European Commission: *Monitoring report on the state of preparedness for EU membership of Bulgaria and Romania*, COM (2006) 549 final, Brussels: European Commission, 2006.

concerns onto the European level. With the European Communities becoming the European Union, and with the Treaty of Maastricht establishing the framework for political parties at the European level, the Confederation was able to mobilize a majority of delegates in favor of transforming it into the Party of European Socialists. The PES instituted Party leaders' summits at the time of European Council meetings revamped bureau and secretariat, and a number of initiatives involving working parties bringing together both party leaders and socialist members of the European Parliament.

Starting from the main question: what are the challenges of the EU enlargement for the PES? - in this section of the thesis the author connects PES activities to wider changes in its operating environment, the EU. Three issues are briefly considered:

- relations with parties in Central and Eastern Europe,
- implications on the Party statute,
- the role of the PES regarding an elected president of the European Commission.

Relations with political parties in Central and Eastern Europe. After the collapse of the Communist regimes in CEE the first task to be faced by prospective social democratic parties was that of establishing themselves. The PES has been identified as a crucial agent of socialization for these parties. At the same time the Eastern enlargement was identified as likely to have "more problematic consequences for Euro-parties as all previous ones". The CEE states were bringing in a potentially very difficult set of issues and problems. First of all, the countries and the parties were lacking any democratic roots. This created two sets of consequences. It meant that there were particularly strong organizational challenges involved in establishing parties in CEE, and it meant that patterns of party competition were particularly fluid and flexible at this time. Thus, the role of the EU in shaping social democracy in the CEE states faced three significant challenges – in terms of party organization, in terms of patterns of party competition and in terms of programs and policies.

"Europeanization" has been defined broadly as the "process by which domestic policy areas become increasingly subject to European policy-making"[24] or the "process in which Europe, and especially the European Union, become an increasingly more relevant and important part of political reference for the actors at the level of the member states"[25]. Political parties are among those actors influenced by the EU and integration. They have been faced with the organizational implications of having to contest a new political arena, and they have adapted their internal structures in order to do so. *"Europeanization"* has led to changes in party programs.

PES was in a position to advice parties on issues such as organizational development in order to influence the partisan composition of governments. Also, by influencing the partisan composition in nation states the PES could try and influence the "balance of power" in an enlarged EU.

Organizational adaptation. At the organizational level, the problems associated with establishment in the immediate post-Communist period were common to all parties. Fifty years of authoritarian rule meant that neither politicians nor public had any experience of

[24] Borzel, T., "Towards Convergence in Europe? Institutional Adaptation to Europeanization in Germany and Spain", in: *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 37, 1999, p. 574

[25] Hanf, K., Soetendorp, B., "Small states and the Europeanization of public policy", in *Eadem* (eds.), *Adapting to European Integration: Small States and the European Union,* Longman, 1998, p.1

a functioning democracy. There was a weak civil society base and a high degree of public distrust of politics and politicians. Social-Democratic parties faced particular additional problems: There was a very natural and understandable public antipathy to anything at all that smacked of Socialism; the newly-emerging Social-Democratic parties in Central and Eastern Europe had to deal with that taint of the past regime and its failed policies, as they had some common left-wing heritage with Communism; the new Social-Democratic parties were actually derived from or associated with the former ruling Communist parties. In addition, independent Social-Democratic parties from a number of countries were kept alive in exile.

A second major theme of the "Europeanization" of parties is the impact it has on patterns of party competition. The immediate post-communist period was one of great fluidity in terms of party systems. From the outset, very large numbers of new parties appeared which were trying to gain a toe-hold in the political arena. And as elections were held and systems began to solidify, some of those parties disappeared or merged with others to form more substantial blocks. Although Social-Democratic parties had a clear party identity and lineage to portray, they still had to contend with the vagaries of the evolving systems. A particular challenge lay in trying to establish their relationship with former Communist parties. Three types of relationships between Social-Democratic and Communist parties can be identified – *antipathy, accommodation* and *adaptation*: There are those who have sought to identify themselves by *their antipathy to any collusion with the former Communist party* (This would include for example the Estonian Social-Democrats, though the picture here is muddied by the overlapping ethnic tensions between Estonians and Russians - the Social-Democrats is a largely Estonian party, the former Communists being predominantly Russians); there are Social-Democratic parties that have sought *an accommodation with the former Communist party*, either through some form of electoral co-operation or through allowing the one-time Communists to merge with them; finally, there are situations in which *the former Communists have successfully adapted*, and whose re-invention has involved claiming a Social-Democratic mantle for their own. But sometimes successor parties teamed up with newly-founded Social-Democrats, often to save themselves from sinking into electoral irrelevance, and thereby creating more serious identity problems for the parties.

Some argues that the most successful strand and the most like West European Social-Democracy were the parties in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland[26]. There they have been able to form governments on a number of occasions, although the recent implosion of Social-Democracy in Poland suggests that they were not all as well established as first thought. In other countries, Social-Democrats have been less successful. The Romanian party has lagged behind, while Social-Democratic parties in the Baltic States have struggled to play a key role in the political landscapes of their respective countries.

The PES took time to respond to the changed situation post 1989. In the early phases of the establishment of social democratic parties in CEE, support tended to come more from bilateral ties. Once the EU adopted the Copenhagen criteria, the PES moved to incorporate CEE parties into its decision-making structure. Parties from CEE states have had to climb the hierarchy until they reached full membership, and they did so at varying

[26] Delwit, Pascal, "Electoral Developments in European Social Democracy", in: *Idem* (ed.), *Social Democracy in Europe*, Brussels: ULB, 2005, p. 74.

speeds. In 1995 six parties (two of them from Poland) were granted observer status. Two parties from Romania became observer parties in 1998. In the case of Bulgaria, the PES sought additional 'observation time', due to the perceived complexity of the case. 12 CEE Socialist and Social-Democratic parties were "upgraded" to associate party status by the PES Congress held in Milano, in March 1999. Then, in May 2001, the parties from Central and Eastern Europe were integrated into the PES's internal decision-making machinery with a view to full membership, once the negotiations between their country and the European Commission had been successfully concluded. This PES decision basically allowed the parties to become full members of the PES before their countries officially became EU member states. This status conferred legitimacy upon these parties and allowed them to distance themselves from any Communist past. Some argue that by socializing parties from Central and Eastern Europe prior to membership via associate membership, the PES was able to socialize these parties comparatively more easily.

Also, EU expansions can have negative effects on Euro-parties as they expose themselves to disturbances coming from arenas not yet socialized to EU rules and procedures. The major debate within the PES appeared to be focused on the attitudes of members to former communist parties. Initially, former Communist parties were generally treated as "pariah parties". But subsequently, the PES shifted to working with former Communist parties, in part due to the weaknesses of its original strategy. The strategy failed to take account of the realities of the situation on the ground in Central and Eastern European states.

The main criticism of PES involvement is that it has created parties that are highly dominated by the elite. But while it is clear that most Social-Democratic parties in Central and Eastern Europe lack a broad membership, this must be seen at least partly as an inevitable result of the exigencies of the time. The parties were being established virtually from scratch, and as a result most of them were created as elite-led organizations with limited organization on the ground. It remains a significant challenge as to whether Central and Eastern European Social-Democratic parties can successfully reach out to civil society in their countries. In addition, it also remains to be seen if the PES can support them in so doing.

It is argued that many of the parties from CEE learnt to say the right things but whether they had inculcated themselves within those norms is another matter. Two good examples come from Slovakia and Romania. In October 2006, the PES was forced to suspend the Slovak SMER party after they formed an electoral alliance with the far-right Slovak National Party. SMER regarded this as a normal political decision. The PES felt that their decision to go into power with the Nationalists was a step too far. This willingness and ability to sanction members is an important institutional development for the PES. The situation in Romania is also interesting. The social democrats emerged out of the National Salvation Front, a grouping made up initially of a number of Communists. The fact that PDSR (Romanian Social-Democrats) was not yet a member of the Socialist International in 2000, when it won the elections, was felt at the level of the party's leadership as an important deficiency, which had to be urgently removed. In 2001, the PDSR absorbed a smaller Social-Democratic grouping and changed its name to the Social Democratic Party (PSD). PSD's relations with the PES have meant an acceleration of the democratization process of a structure that has inherited strong authoritarian and conservative influences from its electoral basis. This international recognition was made

even more necessary by the fact that the main rival the Democratic Party (PD) used to constantly attack PDSR on the grounds of its "not being a true social democratic party", claiming that PD was "the only authentic left party". In May 2005 the PSD was granted provisional membership of the PES, which prompted the PD to announce in June 2005 its decision to give up its associate membership of the PES.

The programs of the PES clearly acted as templates in some countries. In Slovakia and Poland, the construction of early programmatic documents owed much to borrowing from the PES. In Romania, affiliation to PES meant adopting some themes which were not present earlier in the PSD programs: the European social model, the environment problem, gender – balance, etc. The conditions placed upon applicant parties proved to be a powerful incentive for programmatic adjustment. For the parties from CEE states, demonstrating their own independence and capacity was an important part of trying to establish their electoral identity, so that being seen to be reliant on PES prescriptions in the policy sphere caused some problems. This was particularly true in terms of very general differences of opinion about the nature of Social-Democracy. There was little sense that newcomers would be asked *"what is your definition of social-democracy?"* The fact that the PES failed to engage in any significant policy discussion with its new members becomes significant. Social-Democratic parties in the CEE states had a quite different conception of economic and social policies than many of their west European counterparts.

Also, research carried out prior to accession suggested that the majority of Social-Democratic parties in CEE states were relatively Euro-enthusiastic, with Euro-skepticism mainly a right-wing phenomenon. To what extent does this pro-EU position remains true three years after enlargement? To what extent has the experience of membership and economic policies altered views within social democratic parties? Were pro-EU sentiments adopted merely out of political expediency, an expediency that has shifted as public disquiet with EU membership has grown and potentially has become an electoral liability? The enthusiasm of Social-Democrats frequently fails to translate into any more practical support. EU is seen as being a rather abstract idea and a rather remote entity, so the vast majority of people are therefore not interested in it. Their primary concerns are practical, concrete problems – low wages, unemployment, emigration. As another respondent put it, domestic problems always overwhelm the European questions. Partly as well, this arises because countries sought membership as a goal in itself, and did not have an agenda they wished to pursue post-accession. But EU is still seen as a very important guarantor of democracy in the CEE states. Europe is a warranty of democracy for us. Since 2003, the PES has tried to become more involved in discussions of domestic policy issues and to promote policy co-operation in specific policy areas between the member parties.

The PES Party Statute, Article 191. In the Treaty of Nice (2000), there is a Statute regulating the financing of European level parties. Basically is meant to bring greater transparency to the manner in which the European Parliament party groups support their respective transnational parties. It had to await ratification of the Nice Treaty, which was postponed due to the Irish referendum rejection. In October 2002 the Irish again voted on the Nice Treaty, opening the way for a majority vote on the Party Statute. In any event, with eventual approval of the Party Statute, the existence and role of transnational parties is further inscribed into the "constitution" of the EU.

Election of the Commission President. In the spring of 2003, the Convention on the Future of Europe presented the heads of State and Government with its *Treaty for a new Constitution and new operating procedures for the European Union*. On the issue of the Presidency of the European Commission, the heads of State of Government tried to find a balance between intergovernmental and supranational viewpoints. The initiative to nominate the candidate was still up to them, but they had to do it taking into account the European election trends and the person put forward had to have the endorsement of the European Parliament. For the European Council itself, it put an end to the rotation every six months. The Presidency was set for two and a half years and a president could be re-elected once. EU institutional changes have had repercussions on PES activities: it affected issues of financing and organization relating to PES operations.

V. The impact of EU enlargement on the Hungarian party system

The main aim through this chapter is to identify the main ties between the debate concerning the EU enlargement and the positioning of the political parties in one of the political systems of a Central and Eastern European states in transition to democracy after 1989. The chapter is structured in five different parts. The first is analyzing the setting: the Hungarian party system as it emerged after 1990, and the involvement of the main actors in the debate on EU enlargement. Than, the second part is following by analyzing the identification of Hungarian parties with a European profile, which has its continuation in the third part that inquires the public attitudes towards Europe in Hungary of the years between 1990-2004. Following that, the fourth part is based on the interpretation of the referendum held in Hungary on joining the European Union. The last part of the chapter offers a perspective built on the conceptual frame of "Europeanization" a new perspective on the evolution of the Hungarian party system. The chapter ends with some preliminary conclusions.

The objective of entering the EU as a new member state enjoyed an overwhelming support among political elites; therefore it was also seen as a possible mean for raising support in the domestic political scenery in the first years after 1989. Almost every party had stated the "return to Europe" as a goal, and identified pro-European positions with its inner values. However, in the following years the inter-party relation emerged as much more conflict based then initially envisaged, it can be stated, that discourse on EU enlargement diversified, became a tool of political (re)positioning for the emerging parties.

One of the main aims of this chapter is to assess the extent to which party identity and ideology are reliable guidelines to trace the Hungarian political parties' attitudes towards Europe, and also to identify the new, specific elements that emerged from the inner logic of the political struggles on re-setting these political parties' positions toward the issue. The *political space* in which Hungarian parties exist is structured primarily by a dimension of *cosmopolitan opening vs. national closure* rather than a socio-economic dimension. This, together with the country's solid position among the front-runners for EU membership make the political system of Hungary a particularly interesting and suitable case study, which has so far received relatively little scholarly attention. The case also presents also *a paradoxical situation*: Although European integration has implications for many of the issues that the *cosmopolitan opening vs. national closure*

dimension sums up (views on the definition of political community, national identity and culture), this dimension does not directly correspond to official policy positions taken by parties on EU membership: even parties with national closure profiles have favored fast EU accession and most continue to do so, although perhaps with waning enthusiasm. An event consumed in 2000 – the signing of a formal declaration by all six parties represented in Parliament expressing support for the goal of fast EU accession – seems to indicate a *degree of consensus* among the Hungarian political elite that is rather unusual even among CEE applicant countries. It appears, thus, that the issue of EU membership has to a large extent been de-coupled from identity politics that otherwise constitutes the main point of reference for parties' differentiation.

In the post-Communist period, the Hungarian party system seems to be unusually stable. Even the principal issues that define left and right are the same today as in 1990. But from the original, moderately fragmented party system *a strongly polarized quasi-two party system* has developed. The relative significance of individual parties also fluctuated drastically, prior to 2000. But the main forces polarized around the leading Socialist Party (MSZP), that led the governing Social/Liberal coalition twice (between 1994-1998 and 2002-2010), as the opposing center right coalitions were led between 1990-1994 by the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), then from 1998 to 2002 by the Union of Young Democrats (FIDESZ). After being the leading force of the right wing government, the MDF first had survived by joining the FIDESZ led coalition, then left it for joining the Socialist led Social/Liberal coalition, to end in 2010 by falling out of the Parliament. Since 1997, FIDESZ has been the dominant right-wing party of the Hungarian party system. After left-libertarian (1988-1990) and mainstream liberal (1990-1994) periods, the party moved to the right. Today it is a conservative, culturally right wing, economically centrist party that often relies on populist/anti-capitalist, anti-Communist and Nationalist slogans. It succeeded to dominate after 1998 the Agrarian Independent Smallholders' Party's authoritative leader József Torgyán (which lasted as a middle size popular party until 2002), as also the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP, merged in a coalition with FIDESZ in all elections after 1998), that became partially integrated as a political satellite.

The extremes are represented by the far-right dissidence since 1993 of the former MDF, the Hungarian Truth and Life Party (MIEP) – that after a short parliamentary experience had disappeared – , which has its ideological continuation in the JOBBIK Party, that entered in 2010 the Parliament as the third political force of Hungary; as also on the far left extreme the former Communists had their organization named Munkáspárt (Workers Party), that failed to have any Parliamentary representation in the last decades.

The political left, led by the Socialist Party, also contains the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ), which is a Liberal Democratic political platform, very vigorously involved in the transition to democracy in the years between 1989-1991, but which has lost its support, ending in 2010 by failing to enter the Parliament. The party has roots in the anti-Communist opposition of the 1970's and 1980's, but has cooperated since 1994 with the Hungarian Socialist Party. The Free Democrats are leftist in cultural values and right wing in economic policy. The center-left Liberal platform is now represented in the Hungarian Parliament by a new emerging party – the LMP (Lehet Más a Politika / Politics Can Be Different), which also relies on generational votes, ecologist views, civic organizations.

The drop in the number of effective electoral parties from 6.7 to 2.4 shows that, in terms of voter support, the country is very close to a two party system. The number of parliamentary parties also decreased from 7 to 2.2, but there are still more than two players as far as the government is concerned.

In terms of cultural issues, the parties provide distinct alternatives. Anti-Communism, Clericalism, Nationalism and Libertarianism are the principal issues that differentiate left and right. Economic attitudes play some role in party choice, but as government incumbents are more pro-market than the opposition economic issues have not produced a stable division between the parties.

European integration seems to have set firm constraints within which mainstream parties can move. It delegitimized from the outset *Nationalist* and *Communist* forces. Neither citizens nor elites support parties that may "rock the boat". The vice-chairman of FIDESZ has explicitly acknowledged that a coalition with MIÉP is not possible, because it would cause the country too much international damage (as it happened in 9/11/2001). But when it's needed; external support was much more appreciated by the government, in 1998-2002 without any hesitation.

The central role of cultural issues provides the primary ground on which opposing positions have been taken on this issue: *Joining the EU was a fundamental goal for most of the parties* in 1989. MSZP, SZDSZ and to a large extent, MDF continued to be the fore in accepting EU norms and regulations. This also applied to FIDESZ until late 1990's, when the party's position became more ambiguous. For most of its carrier KDNP also cultivated a pro-European image but in a more radical period, between 1996 and 2000, it became *Euro-skeptic*. The extreme right MIÉP and the extreme left Munkáspárt were the only parties that opposed Hungary's integration with NATO and the EU; a positive derived from their common radical stand against the countries prevented the emergence of strong nationalist opposition to the EU.

Motives and arguments for joining the EU varied because interpretations of what the EU stood for ranged from *cosmopolitan* (left) view to a *traditionalist, anti-Communist* (right) approach. Right-wing parties associated the EU with the *fight against Communism*, Christian Democratic principles and economic benefits. The left emphasized the EU's *anti-nationalist credentials* and its provision of an optimal framework for further modernization. Politicians on both sides could claim represent integration more genuinely than their counterparts.

Accession became a contested topic in 2002, when Brussels decided to give the new accession countries lower agricultural subsidies. The Socialists, than in opposition, criticized FIDESZ for mishandling the negotiations, while some FIDESZ leaders expressed their indignation about the attitude of EU officials. They accused the left of submitting to Brussels just as it used to obey Moscow. The party's pro-integrationist program did not change, but the gap between party official policies and the gestures of FIDESZ politicians' widened the party tried to capture the "Euro-skeptic" vote while preserving its mainstream status. The complexity of the party's current attitude is reflected in the fact that the party displays itself ad committed to the "Europe of Nations" model while party leaders often call for more cross-nation uniformity in foreign policy.

While party identity has not changed spectacularly, there have been slight *modifications in the self-images projected*. MDF, SZDSZ and MSZP strengthened references to the party family they belonged to, advertising themselves as

"Conservative", "Liberal" and "Social-Democratic" respectively. But the pull of European standards has proved to be far from universal. FIDESZ shifted in the opposite direction: the rhetoric of the party recently turned towards denying the relevance of left and right, and regards *ideological labels as "old-fashioned"*. To some extent this is, of course, a general European phenomenon. The proposed *reference to Christianity* in the Constitutional treaty offered an excellent opportunity to re-emphasize party identity. SZDSZ strongly campaigned for "No" vote, while right-wing parties supported its inclusion and Orbán regarded the issue as one of the utmost importance.

The Hungarian public has always been in favor of accession, and in 1990 the Eurobarometer already found 81% to be in favor of EU membership. The proportion of respondents who were uncertain or rejected the European Union rarely reached a third, with transition losers and rural population constituting the most skeptical segments[27]. The greatest enthusiasts are found among the young and educated, although social structural variables explain only a small portion of the variance on this issue[28]. The EU was mostly associated with positive phenomena such as the freedom to travel, peace, democracy, etc. Among the negative phenomena listed in the questionnaire (bureaucracy, wastage, inadequate border controls, loss of identity, etc.) only criminality was associated with the EU to any significant extent. As a result of tough negotiations with the EU and increasingly party polarization on these issues, the 64% approval rate declined to 45%, and negative opinion increased to 32% just before accession.

As the April 2002 parliamentary elections approached, the incumbent right-wing prime minister, Viktor Orbán of FIDESZ-Hungarian Civic Party, introduced a distinction between "good" and "bad" EU accessions and suggested that the continuation of his government's domestic policies was required if Hungary was to achieve a "good" accession. In mid-September 2002, when launching FIDESZ's local election campaign, Orbán announced that his party was setting conditions for its support for the constitutional amendment. This marked a sudden politicisation of the EU accession process. Finally, and even after the constitutional amendment was passed in mid-December 2002, Orbán bitterly attacked the EU and the Government for what he claimed were the poor and damaging accession terms negotiated at the Copenhagen summit, principally as regards agricultural and other financial transfers.

However, Orbán's stance during the autumn had two longer-term effects going into the referendum campaign:

1. ***Public opinion:*** Public support for EU membership fell and opposition rose significantly, particularly after the Copenhagen summit. A January 2003 opinion poll showing the "Yes" camp down to 56% of the electorate came as a shock to the pro-accession political elite.
2. ***Right-wing alliance-building***: Relatedly, Orbán's handling of the accession issue highlighted and exacerbated the strains involved in building *a single right-wing political force*, including former extreme right voters, as Orbán had been seeking to do since the 2002 elections. FIDESZ's small junior electoral partner, the conservative Hungarian Democratic Forum, did not support all of FIDESZ's

[27] Csepeli, G. and Závecz, T. , "Várakozások, remények, félelmek: az Európai Únió képe a Magyar közvélemyényben", in: *Politikai Évköny 1997*, Budapest, 1997, pp. 650-669.
[28] Karácsony, G., "Az EU csatlakozás támogatottságának meghatározói Magyarországon", in: Tamás, K., György, T.I., György, V. (eds.), *Társadalmi Riport 2004*, Budapest: Tárki, 2004, pp. 456-470.

"Eurorealist" positions. On the other hand, Hungarian Justice and Life and some other radical right elements, which had come to support Orbán by the time of the 2002 elections, now broke with him again, disappointed at his continued support for accession.

April 12th, 2003 as the date of the referendum was marking exactly a year into the government's four-year term. After a clear win in the October 2002 local elections, the main governing Socialists went into the referendum campaign with a solid opinion poll lead.

The 'Yes' campaign involved three principal sets of actors:

1. ***The Foreign Ministry***: This put its long-running, EU-backed information campaign into a new phase, with a new website and telephone hotline. It also facilitated media and press coverage.
2. ***Political parties***: The four parliamentary parties ran a joint road show of public meetings, as well as individual campaigns. All of them stressed general economic development prospects and accession's historic nature. The Socialists' campaign was the most general, associating a "Yes" vote with: "Europe", success and the future as well as higher incomes and living standards, greater life opportunities, EU transfers, greater Hungarian influence and closer links with Hungarians in neighboring states. The Free Democrats focused on democracy and rights issues. FIDESZ became more positive than in late 2002, using many of the same themes as the Socialists, but laying more stress on dialogue with the voters.
3. ***The EU Communication Public Foundation (EUKK)***: This was an agency created and funded through the Prime Minister's Office to run a "Yes" campaign. The aim was to avoid the campaign being associated only with the government.

The campaign included direct mail shots to all households; the operation of another telephone hotline; the organization of cultural and other events which principally associated accession with a "feel good" factor; and a media, press and billboard advertising campaign. Here, the immediate pre-referendum phase featured sports and entertainment personalities known to be rivals pictured together enjoining a "Yes" vote.

On the "No" side, the small far-left Workers' Party dropped its opposition to accession, deciding that its wish for a radically different EU could best be pursued from inside. This left the "No" camp confined to the extreme right: the Party of Hungarian Justice and Life; the World Federation of Hungarians; and a number of smaller groupings, some new and some better-known, especially from their activity during the 2002 Parliamentary elections. 19 of the anti-EU groups organized themselves into a *"Movement for a Free Hungary"*. The 2002 Parliamentary elections had proved that none of these groupings was attractive to a broad mass of the electorate. The Hungarian "No" campaigners were explicit that they did not reject "Europe" but rather the EU's current form, and / or Hungary's accession terms, and / or the timing of Hungary's entry given the country's current state.

The referendum delivered a clear "Yes" result: 83.76% of those who voted supported EU membership, with only 16.24% opposed[29]. However, the turnout was only

[29] Karácsony, G., "Az EU csatlakozás támogatottságának meghatározói Magyarországon", in: Tamás, K., György, T.I., György, V. (eds.), *Társadalmi Riport 2004*, Budapest: Tárki, 2004, pp. 456; Idem, "A választói magatartás trendjei Magyarországon", in: *Magyarország politikai évkönyve*, Budapest:

45% - equal to the lowest turnout in any valid national vote in post-Communist Hungary (the second round of the 1990 parliamentary elections) and the lowest in any EU accession referendum to date. While the low turnout was mainly responsible for the high "Yes" vote, it also meant that accession was actively supported by just 38% of the electorate. The geographical pattern of turnout was largely in line with other national elections, being lower in the poorer East and South, and higher in the richer Central and Western regions and Budapest.

Parties exploit the newly opened opportunities, but mainly in order to strengthen established organizational and ideological identities. For an innovative party leadership, Europe provides plenty of new resources - a development that is true irrespective of the party's ideological identities. A new career path has opened for politicians, and parties can use the new positions to resolve internal tensions. Organizational techniques can now be justified by reference to practice of European sister parties. The two parties that most emphasized their international embeddedness, the Social-Democrats and the Christian-Democrats (who used the EU flag in their campaign), emerged from the founding election as marginal players. While European party structures do not seem to be able to sustain otherwise unpopular actors, they do prove to be able to inflict damage on parties that deviate from European norms. Representatives of the European Peoples Party and Christian Democratic International repeatedly urged the Smallholders and the KDNP to return to a more moderate course, and at one point they publicly distanced themselves from both these parties. While it is difficult to prove that such gestures caused the marginalization and ultimate disappearance of these two parties from the Parliamentary scene until recently, the party elites were definitely embarrassed and the international opposition was provided with powerful weapon.

At the other end of the spectrum, the ex-Communists, now Socialists, fought very hard to acquire a democratic image through an association with Western and European party structures. In 1989 MSZP endorsed the program of Socialist International; in 1995 it became a full member of it and, in 2003 the party joined the PES as a full member.

FIDESZ and SZDSZ had no such problems with their democratic reputation. They both became members of the Liberal International and affiliate members of ELDR during the early 1990's. At that time the two parties competed fiercely for influence within European Liberalism. Ironically, the party that was more successful in this regard, FIDESZ, finally decided to withdraw from the Liberal organizations and joined right-wing alliances, such as the EPP, the EDU and CDI (Christian Democratic International).

This movement across federations illustrates beautifully the interlocking of the European and domestic political arenas. FIDESZ by this time has conquered the right-wing segment of Hungarian politics, gradually adopting an anti-Liberal discourse. Membership of the Liberal International and the ELDR was increasingly embarrassing, particularly as it entailed an association with SZDSZ, an arch-enemy of the Hungarian right. The domestic situation clearly called for a different position in the international sphere. Interestingly, the main reason that FIDESZ leaders referred to in public had nothing to do with inter-party relations or ideological position: The party emphasized rather that it would be better able to represent Hungarian interest in the EPP, the most powerful European political grouping. They conceived the Hungarian voters as

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Demokrácia Kutatások Magyarországi Központja Alapítvány, 2003; Gallup 2004, *The end of the campaign: focusing on the participation rate*, 2004.

indifferent or even hostile to ideological argument, and they also wanted to divert attention from the discrepancy between the parts past and present orientation.

Hungarian experience also shows that a simultaneous presence in several arenas allows parties to form different images and attract divergent groups of supporters. It seems that playing with Europe is a potentially promising activity, even if Europe as an issue has a relatively low salience. In the coming decades the winners are likely to be the parties that acquire the skills relevant to this new environment and its particular dynamics.

VI. The impact of EU Enlargement on the Romanian party system

This chapter is structured mainly chronologically, focusing on the evolution of the Romanian party system in the post-1989 decades, leading from the Revolution that had given birth to a new pluralist setting of the Romanian political landscape, until the moment of joining the EU in 2007. Has the process of joining Europe had any significant or observable impacts on it? Have new parties appeared in order to challenge European integration or, if not, is there any party from those already established which has assumed the role of the opponent of EU membership? How it evolved, since the 1997 moment, when Romania, as also Slovakia at that moment, had failed to meet the political criteria for EU membership? In 1997 the European Commission had concerns over respect for the primacy of law and about fundamental rights, corruption, the working of the courts, individual liberties, the activities of the police and secret service, the situation of the Roma, and the protection of children in orphanages. However, it is to be noticed that while support for Romania's public institutions has remained low among Romanian citizens[30], the popular support in Romania for joining the European Union, 80% according to a poll at the end of 1996, has been consistently stronger than in *any* other associated post-communist country[31].

In 1996 there was an all embracing consensus over the aim of entering EU as member state, also stating that enlargement of EU can be evaluated also as means and catalyst for internal structural reform - in other words, the accession was seen at the same time as a consistent part, an instrument and an objective of the reform in Romania [32]. It is thus interesting to consider whether the European Union, by providing legal and institutional requirements and the incentive of future membership, has assisted Romania in overcoming its multitude of difficulties and directly influenced Romania's transition process in a significant, positive, and lasting way.

In 1989, originally there was a general hope that the repudiation of Communism and the East would automatically bring Romania invitations to join Western European organizations. The government soon realized that European integration required a huge and difficult task of rebuilding the very basis of Romanian society. Romania had long

[30] See, for example, polls cited in: Robert Weiner, "Democratization in Romania," in: Lavinia Stan (ed.), *Romania in Transition*, Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1997, pp. 12-13.

[31] Eight percent of those polled in 1996 were undecided and only two percent said they would vote against EU membership for Romania. *European Commission, Central and Eastern Eurobarometer*, March 1997 (No.7), text figure no. 9.

[32] Teodor Meleşcanu, "The Accession to the European Union: The Fundamental Option of Romania's Foreign Policy," in: *Romanian Journal of International Affairs*, 2, no. 4, 1996, p. 26.

struggled to satisfy fully the Commission, the EU's member states and the European Parliament about its preparedness in terms of the political criteria for membership. It had succeeded in proving that it was a democracy, but there was always scope out at Copenhagen - the rule of law, human rights, respect for and protection of minorities - were being respected. The same was true regarding the administrative capacity to implement the acquis. Progress has always been made, and in each European Commission and European Parliament report this was recognised. However, the process had been long and often arduous, and even at the time of accession concerns persisted about whether outstanding issues concerning for example, corruption, would be addressed.

In terms of party families, there have been five major groups in the Romanian party system.

A. By far the largest family group is that of *the Social-Democrats*, which has been composed of the Social Democratic Party (PSD; PDSR – Party of Social Democracy in Romania from 1992 to 2000), the Democratic Party (PD since 1992) and historical, smaller Romanian Social-Democratic Party (PSDR). The first two parties emerged in 1991-1992, when the National Salvation Front - which won the first election in 1990 with a comfortable 66% of the votes - split between reformists (PD) and conservatives (PDSR). While both parties have assumed a Social-Democratic orientation, they have been in fierce opposition ever since. The major change in this party family, and in the party system as a whole, occurred after the 2000 elections, when the PDSR and PSDR emerged into a single Social-Democratic Party (PSD), which governed between 2000 and 2004. It helped the PDSR to join the Socialist International after almost eight years of unsuccessful attempts.

In the elections of 2004 the PSD ran in coalition with the Humanist Party of Romania (PUR, after 2005 renamed as Conservative Party), a small party with a fluctuating ideological position. Although this coalition obtained the largest number of parliamentary seats if failed to form a government because of the veto powers of the new Romanian President, Traian Băsescu, candidate of the Justice and Truth Alliance (D.A.) for Presidential office. The D.A. Alliance had been recently formed by the Democratic Party joining with the National Liberal Party (PNL) to contest the 2004 elections. The President refused to appoint the leader of PSD as Prime Minister, but instead asked the D.A. leader, the Liberal Călin Popescu Tăriceanu, to form the new government. Threatened with new Parliamentary elections, PUR and the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR) agreed to switch coalition partners and joined D.A. in a new government - which replaced PSD in power.

B. The second major party family has been the *Christian Democrats* – represented first of all by the PNŢCD, an important historical party that managed to lead opposition forces to the first democratic change of government, in 1996, after obtaining a poor electoral result in the 1990 election. Soon, before the general elections in 1992, the party formed a heterogeneous coalition with the Liberals (PNL) and various other smaller parties and civic platforms, under the label of the Democratic Convention of Romania (CDR). The Convention, together with PD, PSDR and UDMR, formed a coalition government between 1996 and 2000. But the poor government performance of the coalition led PNŢCD, the largest party of the coalition, to lose all Parliamentary representation in the 2000 elections.

C. The *Liberals* represents the third major family, which has been the most fragmented in Romanian politics, with no fewer than four liberal political parties between 1991 and 1996. Three of the four Liberal parties joined the Democratic Convention, while the fourth (still called PNL) did not enter parliament after running alone in the 1992 elections. After 1996 elections, the four liberal parties merged again under the label of the National Liberal Party (PNL), which has also played an important historical role in the Romanian political life. As with the Christian Democrats, the performance of the 1996-2000 coalition also affected PNL, so that in the 2000 elections the party obtained a poor result, but - unlike PNŢCD - still succeeded in entering the Parliament on its own account. However, the party returned to power after the 2004 elections when it linked up with PD to form the Justice and Truth Alliance (Alianţa Dreaptate şi Adevăr), and proceeded to form a government. After a conflicting government experience, PNL had left its ally, the PD. A dissidence of it joined the PD, resulting a new, enlarged formula – the PDL; the main body of the PNL entered opposition, as in 2011 joined an alliance with the PSD against its former ally, the governing PDL.

D. The fourth group consists of *Nationalists*, namely the Romanian National Unity Party (PUNR, from 1990 to 2000) and the Greater Romania Party (PRM, since 1992). Both parties proved to be quite successful in electoral terms, and they were able to join the coalition government with PDSR between 1992 and 1996. Both parties remained reliable partners of PDSR during the 1996-2000 period, but in the 2000 elections the electoral growth of PRM (when the leader of the party received the second number of votes after the leader of PDSR/PSD in the Presidential elections) took the party into opposition to the Social Democrats, while PUNR failed to pass the electoral threshold. In 2008 also PRM failed to enter the Parliament, while still holds representatives in the European Parliament.

E. The fifth major group has been formed of the representatives of *minorities*. The dominant political party in this group has been the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR, in Romanian: Uniunea Democrată a Maghiarilor din România, UDMR). In addition to UDMR, another 12 to 18 minorities have received one parliamentary seat in Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of the Romanian Parliament.

As elsewhere in the region political parties have been weak agents of transition. They have been products of political leaders (even the large PSD is arguably the creation of former president Iliescu), have shown low programatic coherence, have attracted few members and have been heavily dependent on statute on state subsides. Their weak relationship with society has resulted in high electoral volatility and instability in terms of the party system format. There has, however, been significant stability in terms of party mechanisms and patterns of inter-party competition, with Liberals (PNL), Democrats (PD) and Christian Democrats (PNŢCD) opposing an originally dominant Social-Democratic Party (PSD).

1989-1991: Revolution and the absence of a European narrative. Romania's new political leaders were consumed by the need to promote domestic political and economic stability. Yet the idea of a Romanian "return to Europe" was not totally absent from the rhetoric of either the interim government or the political parties that were quickly forming. It was also present in the ten-point program of December 22nd, 1989, a fundamental document for the later National Salvation Front (FSN). Also, the democratic opposition, that soon rallied around the "Proclamation of Timişoara" issued by activists

in "the home of the 1989 Revolution", referred to a future "European House" and sought to "re-Europeanize Romania". Yet the pronouncements of the government rarely invoked notions of European integration. The matter simply did not appear to be on the political agenda. Political figures in Romania were neither aware of what integration and membership really entailed nor sure whether this was something they wished for. Certainly, internalization of the norms and political values associated with integration was neither explicitly nor vigorously by the FSN government. In providing for democratic institutions and setting out a series of political, social and economic rights, the new Constitution signaled a significant commitment to the establishment of a modern, democratic state. But at that time any reference was absent to European integration or relations with international – and in particular supranational – organizations. The nature of the regime, still lacking a decisive break with the communist era and with Iliescu exhibiting forms of 'residual authoritarianism', suggested there was no enthusiasm either.

1992-1996: Shifting policies and agendas. In September 1991, a second set of Presidential and Parliamentary elections won by Iliescu and his Democratic National Salvation Front (FDSN) - made up of former FSN members who had left the party with Iliescu following his failing out with Petre Roman, leader of the FSN that turned to be named as Democratic Party later (PD) – resulted the Government of Prime Minister Nicolae Văcăroiu which did not command majority in Parliament. Later on it received the support of Nationalist and former Communist leaders led political forces (PUNR, PRM, PSM). Romania's democratic credentials remained in question and would continue to be so until after the next elections, in 1996. This was certainly the view of the European Parliament. A report made in 1993 concluded that the elections of 1992 "have failed to confirm beyond a doubt the credibility of Romania's process of transition towards full democracy". Concerns about the state of Romania's progress with democratization were also voiced at the time the Europe Agreement was signed in February 1993.

A Department for European Integration was duly established by the Romanian Government in February 1993, with a sub department dedicated to relations with the European Commission. Later the same year, in November the Parliament created a National Consultative Council for Euro-Atlantic Integration whose key task was the promotion of legislative harmonization with the EC. In February 1994 the government presented a White Paper on Romania's Integration Program focusing on implementation of the Europe Agreement. Following the first "historic" meeting between EU and CEE Ministers of Foreign Affairs, in October 1994, Iliescu, along with other CEE leaders, attended the Essen European Council two month later. Equally significant was the announcement of the Copenhagen European Council that "the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe that so desire shall become members"[33]. Here was a window of opportunity to become more closely involved in the European integration process, provided Romania's international image could be improved. But there was only limited evidence at this time that Iliescu and the FDSN had a clear preference for integration. Only in 1995 were the democratic requirements of membership acknowledged by the FDSN – under the new denomination as PDSR – and considering given to what preparations accession would entail.

[33] *Council of the European Union, Presidency Conclusions – Luxembourg European Council: 11-12 December 1997*, Brussels, 1997.

The EU was moving from political declarations on Eastern enlargement to a "Pre-Accession Strategy". The response of Iliescu and the Romanian government, at the urging of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was to establish a National Commission comprising representatives of all the political parties represented in parliament, academics, and representatives of civil society to draw up a *National Strategy for Preparing Romania's Accession to the European Union*. The resulting document reflected a consensus among political parties on the desirability at least of joining the EU. The consensus was seen more evident in the *Snagov Declaration*. It was signed by the President, the Prime Minister, the Presidents of the Parliaments two chambers and the leaders of 13 political parties, who stressed that the objective of accession to the EU was a major point of convergence and solidarity for all political and social forces in the country. But it was clear that two of the signatories of the Snagov Declaration – the PRM and the PUNR – were essentially opposed to integration. The same was said of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Together, they presented a view of Romania as possessing a unique Latin-Orthodox culture, and whose Orthodox ties required separation from the West. On the contrary, as the 1996 Presidential and Parliamentary elections approached most parties and presidential candidates were presenting themselves as pro-integration.

1996-2000: Europeanization of politics. With the victory of the former opposition, the CDR in the 1996 Parliamentary elections, a change appeared imminent in Romania's post-Communist reform process and its integration efforts. Iliescu and the PDSR accepted their respective defeats and moved into opposition. The CDR chose to include the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) in the new government, led by Victor Ciorbea, that was also more committed to apply for membership of the EU. In the CDR's "Contract with Romania" and in the government's Governance Program it was stated as its main goals to be "sustainable economic development and, on that basis, the curbing of poverty and creation of conditions for Romania to be admitted into NATO and for negotiating Romanian's integration in the European Union". The eight months covering the 1996 elections and the publication of the Commission's opinion represented a turning point in EU-Romania relations. The EU, through the pronouncements of the Commission, the Member States and the EP, has over the years gradually refined what is understood or accepted as meeting the criteria, notably regarding democracy. Despite the instability of the government, Romania did made progress in consolidating democracy. By 2000, corruption was also attracting the attention of the EU. The European Commission report stating that corruption "*continues to be widespread and systematic problem*". Moreover, the Commission maintained that corruption was leading to a "*loss of confidence in public authorities*". In its conclusion, the Commission noted that little progress had been made in reducing levels of corruption. A year later, it was raising the corruption issue again. By then, however the CDR was no longer in power, and corruption played its part.

Public opinion was overwhelmingly in favor of EU membership. Furthermore, consensus among political parties on this central foreign-policy goal was hardening. Indeed, there was a considerable competition among Romania's political parties to improve their European credentials, whether through affiliation with the EP's political party groupings, or more importantly, in terms of their policy programs, not least in order to secure domestic support.

In terms of acceptance by admission to the European political families, the PNȚCD gained observer status with the European Peoples party (EPP) in December 1996, with the UDMR following in 1999. Meanwhile, the PD and the small "historical" Romanian Social Democratic Party (PSDR) obtained observer status with the Party of European Socialist (PES) in March 1998, and the National Liberal party (PNL) joined the European Liberal Democrats and Reform grouping in April 1999. The PDSR would remain unaffiliated and indeed outside the Socialist International until after the next elections.[34] However, the PSDR was "Europeanizing" its policies. This was signalled by the adoption in 1997 of a new *Program* that noted the "European vocation", and an accompanying *Declaration on Romania's integration into the EU and other Euro-Atlantic structures*. By the 2000 elections Iliescu and the PDSR had also adopted a more European discourse, losing much of their nationalistic reputation and seeking to gain a European respectability.

The apparent consensus on the desirability of EU membership was reflected in a second Snagov Declaration signed on March 16th, 2000 on the occasion of the adoption of the *Medium-Term Economic Strategy* (MTES) drawn up as a condition for the opening of accession negotiations. The Declaration revealed the support of 16 political parties or groupings for the MTES whose purpose was to prepare Romania for accession in 2007. No serious party campaigned against membership.

2000-2004: New commitment to the European integration. The 2000 elections were won by Iliescu and the PDSR and so Romania experienced its second alternation of power since 1989. However the outcome of the elections was far from being an endorsement of what Iliescu and the PDSR stood for. Rather it was the result of popular dissatisfaction with the CDR. The PDSR certainly appeared far more enthusiastic about integration than previously, but it was far from certain that it would succeed in implementing further economic and political reform and progressing with European integration. Such concern was shared by the European Commission. Verheugen had previously warned that Romania would risk isolation if Populists and Nationalists entered government. Iliescu's response came in September 2000, when visiting Brussels. He agreed to maintain commitment to the MTES and retain the 2007 target date for entry. PDSR merged in 2001 with the PSDR and changed its name to the Social Democratic Party (PSD). It also entered into a post-election pact with the UDMR in order to obtain its support in the Parliament. The new government intensified efforts to pass blocked legislation necessary for furthering economic reforms, also putting forward constitutional amendments necessary for Romanian accession. The package of amendments required popular approval, and in the absence of much voter interest in the referendum in October 2003, the government soon sought to secure the requisite turnout by turning the referendum into a vote on EU membership. It was no real surprise that the amendments were endorsed by 89,7% of those voting. Persistent criticism led the government in March 2004 to announce a new "zero tolerance" campaign towards corruption. This was welcomed, but subsequent assessments continued to show that progress in rooting it out was proving painfully slow. The concerns of the European Commission and others - the

[34] The PD and the historical Social Democrats (PSDR) had secured consultative membership of the Socialist International in 1996, becoming members in 1999. Only in 2001 was the PDSR – now PSD – granted consultative member status. Two years later it became a full member. It gained observer status with the PES in 2001. In 2005, following a move to the right, PD obtained observer status with the EPP.

EP continued its calls in 2004 for more to be done to combat corruption. As it became clear that corruption could derail Romania's progress towards membership, the potential of the EU to influence domestic developments gradually increased.

2004-2007: Agreement on Europe. Romania was on verge of concluding its accession negotiations when Parliamentary and Presidential elections were held in November and December 2004. While PSD was able to maintain its share of the vote, this was not enough to remain in government. The surprise defeat of Năstase by Traian Băsescu in the second round of the Presidential elections meant that the Alliance for Justice and Truth (Alianţa D.A.) – which comprised the Băsescu led' PD and the Liberals (PNL) –, which had gained 31.48 per cent of the vote, was called on to form a coalition government. This was created dully under the leadership of Călin Popescu Tăriceanu (PNL) with the involvement of the UDMR and the Humanist Party (PUR). Yet, just as its predecessor had faced difficulties in consolidating democracy, as also did the D.A.-led government. Concerns persisted over corruption, even if the new government had brought some "big fish" under investigation and before justice courts. In addition, the new government was plagued by increasingly fractious relations between the Prime Minister and the President. Romania was seeking to finalize its accession to the EU, the instability persisted such that Romanian politics were soon characterized by increasing uncertainty. Although the coalition in-fighting did not feature in the Commission's reports in the lead up to accession, both the European Commission and the European Parliament, were quickly to comment in 2005 and 2006 on what improvements still had to be made "in context of the political and economic criteria for membership". It was clear that standards still fell short of what the EU ideally wished to see. It also points to the limits of the EU's transformative power and capacity to promote "Europeanization", notably when confronted with domestic resistance and a political climate far from conductive to the taking of hard decisions that threaten entrenched, institutionalized interests. All this meant that by the time Romania entered the EU on January 1st, 2007, although few could doubt the progress made in establishing and consolidating democracy in the country over the last decade, it remained far from being the mature democracy associated with EU member-state status.

A particularly important area of *potential impact for the Romanian party system*, as the policies of governing parties have already been severely constrained since 1999, is enlightened by changes had occurred on the economic left of the political spectrum. The Social Democratic Party (SDP) has opposed rapid economic reform the very early 1990's, using quite strong anti-market appeals and it supported a very large and inefficient economic state sector through the policies of its former governments. Even when the party operated in opposition, it's expressed strong criticism of privatization and the elimination of state subsidies. However, after 2000, when the prospects of enlarging the EU to include new democracies from CEE were becoming stronger, PSD began to change its declared economic policy. Under pressure from international institutions (the Commission, but also the IMF and the World Bank) the Social Democratic government of 2000 and 2004 continued the privatization process begun by the former centre-right coalition and it also succeeded in bringing down inflation, which had been a major macro-economic problem for post-Communist Romanian governments. There is an inconsistency between PSD's policy in government between 2000 and 2004 and the party's policy position as they have been perceived by country experts. Although the PSD

government continued to privatize economic assets, the party itself seemed reluctant to follow the same policy. This perceived *difference* in the case of PSD *between government policy and official party policy* points to one *very important direct influence of the Europeanization process*. Because of the pressure coming from EU officials and institutions for policy change, government policy and official party policy have become dissonant. Many middle-rank politicians and activists consider that the government has followed an inappropriate economic strategy and tension have begun to strengthen between party leaders (generally members of the government) and low ranking PSD members grouped around the figure of President Iliescu. Parties have only limited room for manoeuvre in terms of policy, and once they exceed that space they are likely to be punished by their electorate. But it is not surprising that the electorate often has quite contradictory policy preferences and that parties need to accommodate themselves to intransitive sets of preferences. Although a large part of the Romanian electorate supports the integration process, which requires certain policies and implementation of the rules of market economy, most of the voters still support the existence of a large economic controlled and owned by the state. A sudden change in a party's policy preference could dissatisfy its own electorate and thus result in an electoral loss that would jeopardize the party's chances of doing well in elections. As a consequence, parties on the left are able to alter their policy positions only to a small extent in a relatively short period of time, as their reputation would be affected by large changes.

The concerns voiced over the years by the EU about Romania's progress in adopting and adhering to the norms and principles embodied in the political criteria for membership underline the fact that the challenge and burdensome process of accession coincided with the period in which Romania has been coming to terms with the meaning and practice of democracy while at the same time experiencing the intrusive nature of EU monitoring. It is to be noticed also, that the various mechanisms at the EU's disposal – notably the Commission's regular reports, the EP's reports and resolutions, and the European Council's gate-keeping role in determining access to the next stage of accession – have had an impact in highlighting accepted EU understanding of what democracy entails and in promoting reform and change in Romania. The EU may not be able to claim full responsibility for bringing about clearly identifiable changes in the development of Romania as a democracy, but it has been significant player in providing guidance, pressure and a degree of coercion for change.

Romania's record in establishing itself as functional democracy shows that the EU's efforts to promote change are rarely received enthusiastically. Rather, domestic political and institutional actors – governments, political parties, civil servants – often mediate the EU's influence. As a consequence, although the EU may be seeking to promote the consolidation of democracy, it cannot guarantee that improvements in democratic standards and practice will rapidly ensure. *Europeanization* and *democratization* can complement one another, and there is evidence of EU influence through the accession process where democratic institutionalization is concerned. Moreover – and the evidence of increasing consolidation of democracy in Romania over time tend to support this view – accession makes democratic consolidation 'probable'.

VII. Some conclusions for the EU after its Eastern Enlargement

For the ten new EU member countries, most of them from Central and Eastern Europe, enlargement meant they were "at home again," because the *leitmotiv* of their difficult path of reforms after 1989 was the wish to "return to Europe." Not in geographical terms, but after four decades in the Soviet sphere of power they wanted to rejoin Europe - i.e. the West -, in a political, economic, and civilization matter.

The old member states were ambivalent. On the one hand, they had signaled openness toward the young democracies. This was consistent with the idea of European integration which has always aimed at the unification of the divided continent. In a historical situation, when the Eastern bloc collapsed, it would have been a blow to European *credibility* if the European Communities would have ignored the wishes of their neighbors to join them. But what was more important was the intention to *consolidate fragile societies and political systems*. The prospect of membership turned out to be an ideal means to speed up the difficult transformation of economies and political institutions. The member states sharing common borders with the post-Communist countries were especially interested in extending the "zone of stability and prosperity" Eastward. That is why Germany became a powerful "engine of enlargement."

However, from the very beginning of the process *there was considerable skepticism* among at least some of the old member states. They would have preferred to form an informal European Confederation or other arrangements of tying the new democracies to the European Communities. After enlargement turned out to be irreversible and accession negotiations with the European Union were opened, aversions were rising even in the pro-enlargement countries. Now, when both sides came down to the nitty-gritty of the *acquis communautaire*, the costs of enlargement became tangible. Also, the EU was afraid that it would not be able to carry out the necessary institutional scaffolding before a big number of new members would join. But the process had advanced too far, and the EU could not leave the path of enlargement.

Six years after the EU expanded, the pros and cons of enlargement are more visible. No doubt, there are lots of positive results - for all sides: for the new members, for the old members, and for the EU as a whole. The majority of the countries that recently joined has a positive track record of *market reforms* and witnessed a *substantial growth*. For many of them *the real economic convergence* toward old EU levels is a realistic prospect. The frontrunners have already caught up with old EU countries like Greece or Portugal. Slovenia and Slovakia have already adopted the euro, while Estonia is at the door, a step which required bold *fiscal reforms and monetary stability*.

Also, at the end of 2007 the Schengen area was extended. This means that there are no border controls between Germany and Poland, for example, and people can travel from Portugal to Estonia without showing their passports. This was possible only after the new members undertook substantial reforms in the field of *internal security* and imposed a restrictive travel regime on what are now *the external borders of the EU*.

Overall, the Eastern enlargement was an example for how the EU can act as an anchor of stability and apply its transformative power.

Of course, the first few years of the larger EU have also shown the downsides and opened questions of enlargement. Although the accession process was better prepared than previous enlargements, the EU was *not able to eliminate major deficiencies* in the new member countries before they joined. Of major concern are the functioning of states and their governance systems. An ailing public sector with low wages and dissatisfied public limits the administrative capabilities of a state and creates inroads for corruption. It has to cause unease that in some countries important governance indicators (e.g., those for corruption and state capture) have stagnated or even deteriorated. Furthermore, in many new member states the political scenery is far from stable. Political culture is aggressive and conflict highly antagonistic; Populists, Euro-skeptics, and simply strange political entrepreneurs are gaining ground.

Does the existence of these "dark sides" of enlargement mean that it was a mistake to do the "big bang" enlargement of 2004? The answer is "No". What would it mean for the (old) EU to have internally-divided, societal-fragmented, highly corrupt, and ill-governed countries on its Eastern flank? It would result in slowly-developing countries that would not have had a massive influx of investment, and where the only realistic option for reaching Western standards of living would be to leave as soon as possible. Additionally, these countries might have ambivalent foreign policy orientations, which would create insecurity and openings for new dependencies on external powers.

In short, the EU would have a considerable bunch of instability in its direct neighborhood, and this region would require additional efforts and help. Especially in a time of a harsh economic downturn, when some of these countries struggle not to default, it is better for them and the EU to be inside the European house than "to stand in the rain". This does not mean that the EU and its members should not learn from the 2004 (and 2007) enlargements and their implications.

Three things are especially important:

First, ***the new member states have to complete their membership***. Formal accession happened in May 2004, but in many respects they still have yet to fully integrate in the Union. The most important objective is to join the Monetary Union. What timing is optimal for particular states and economies can be discussed, but signaling reluctance or resistance is risky, especially in a time when there are voices calling for the upgrading of the euro-zone into something like the hard core of a multi-speed Europe.

Second, in this context, it is important for the new members ***to avoid "old vs. new Europe" symbolism***. It would be more useful for them to cooperate in bilateral or multilateral coalitions together with old members and to focus on certain issues.

By following ***a more consistent enlargement policy***, the EU will ***not forget about its interest to export stability to its peripheries***. However, the challenge is to find new forms of intensified cooperation with countries that are more than neighbors and less than members (at least for the time being). That is why it is so important to have efficient alternative models for enhanced involvement. The future association agreements with the countries of the EU's ***Eastern Neighborhood*** might be such an instrument. If these agreements (we could call them transformative associations) work, a lot can be reached.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Romania's journey from international isolation during the later years of the Ceauşescu era through engagement with European integration and pre-accession to EU membership in 2007 was completed – despite the economic, political and social legacies of the Communist system, and weak domestic impetus for reform following the "Revolution of 1989", during the subsequent years of transition and transformation.

Indeed, given the scale of the economic, political and social challenges facing post-Communist Romania, it is remarkable that the country managed to move closer to and ultimately gain entry to the EU, when it did. Domestic social capital generally remained weak during the last decade and a half. Therefore, a coherent and sustained reform-minded coalition of forces intent on overhauling the country's political, administrative and economic structures, progressing domestic reform and securing preparations for accession has yet to emerge. As a consequence, Romania has often struggled to meet the EU's criteria for closer ties and for certain has generally found it impossible to justify inclusion among the avant-garde of CEE countries moving closer to the EU. Nevertheless, Romania has been involved in European integration and is now a member of the EU.

As it had been argued in the preceding chapters, Romania owes its membership as much to the engagement of the EU and the dynamics of the organization's enlargement process generally, as it does to the efforts to successive Romanian governments to meet the accession criteria and present the country as a credible candidate for membership, and gain entry on the basis of merit alone.

The *process of enlargement*, while very much on a day-to-day basis dominated by *technical* considerations, is at its core *political* and dependent on the will of the EU to enlarge. If the EU and its member states wish for an applicant to join, then that country usually becomes a member. Ways and means exist to enable an outcome if this is seen to be in the best interest of the EU and its member states, whether individually or collectively.

In Romania's case there have been member states offering strong support for its candidacy, notably the United Kingdom and some of the countries in Southern and South-Eastern Europe. Others, with economic interests in Romania, have provided support, too. In general, however, the interest has been *a collective one*, and reflective of the *anticipated strategic value of enlargement "per se"* as opposed to any specific advantages of admitting Romania. So, notwithstanding the added-value associated with Romania' accession, countries seeking membership can benefit from the EU's broader approach to enlargement. They can also benefit from how the approach evolves and the initially cost-free and rhetorical commitments the EU makes regarding enlarging.

Romania, in contrast to Turkey, for example, has undoubtedly been a beneficiary of the *EU's enlargement "largesse" of the late 1990's and early 2000's*. The country may have made significant progress towards and in meeting the criteria for EU membership, but conditionality does not explain how Romania secured entry.

Security considerations played a significant role in alerting the EU's appreciation of the potential value of enlargement. Indeed a strategic reorientation of relations with the CEE countries in the aftermath of the Moscow coup in 1991 and of the following wars in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990's, as also the Kosovo conflict in 1999 - coupled with

refusal to differentiate dramatically between the CEE countries – helped carry Romania towards EU membership as part of *an historically and security inspired Eastern enlargement*. Add to this some of the dynamics of the process itself – e.g. the EU's language of commitment, the issue of target dates and the sense of an EU obligation to deliver on "promises" – and membership was effectively assured provided domestic reforms continued, irrespective in some instance of their speed. *Such an assessment is not offered in ignorance of domestic reform efforts in Romania in the period 1990-2007*. There were certainly reforms devised by Romanian experts, politicians and officials, particularly in the country's first decade of post-Communist transition. The direction and success of these were, however, insufficient to progress Romania's integration with the EU and secure a positive evaluation of its membership prospect from the Commission in its 1997 opinion. Subsequently, with the engagement of the EU, however, better results were produced and progress towards membership was made. Indeed, some commentators have argued that the EU should have engaged much earlier, more intrusively, and in a range of areas beyond its established remit. Engagement was necessary, since the threat of exclusion from developments in relation between the EU and CEE countries had proved almost ineffectual in stimulating domestic reform.

In moving beyond the "negative conditionality" associated with the threat of exclusion to providing guiding principles and establishing short- and medium-term priorities, the EU gained leverage over economic and political reforms in Romania, even if this did always correspond with good progress of domestic reform. The opening of the accession negotiations in 2000 was a defining moment in this respect, and built on existing assistance through PHARE, contractual obligations in the Europe Agreement, and the conditionality associated with Romania being a "pre-in" applicant. *It secured the EU unprecedented influence over domestic reform agendas* in many if not all of the areas covered by the 31 negotiating chapters. It also *offered to Romania a "straitjacket" for reform* that would prove largely successful in bringing the country closer *to meeting the requirements of membership*. The EU's "acquis communautaire" could not, however, offer blueprints for reform in all the areas where reform was necessary. Many areas were (and remain) beyond its remit, even if *politicians were tempted to justify certain reforms as being required for accession to the European Union*. That the EU was able to exercise some leverage over reforms in Romania was due not only to its more proactive engagement following the launch of its "inclusive and evolutive" accession in 1998, and especially with the post-Kosovo reorientation of its enlargement strategy, but also to the domestic appeal of EU membership.

Despite widespread ignorance of what was involved in preparing for entry or what membership would entail, *there was in Romania both a popular and political consensus of the desirability of the country acceding*. Consequently, there was *considerable political and electoral capital to be gained* by domestic elites in bringing Romania closer to the EU and ultimately being able *to claim responsibility for securing membership*. The quest to claim the "EU membership prize" galvanized a reform impetus that would otherwise have been much weaker. In this sense, "positive" conditionality has proved relatively successful. In offering incentives – primarily progress in negotiations – the EU was able to promote reform.

It is clear, however, from the post-closure monitoring of membership preparations and the subsequent post-accession monitoring of compliance with set benchmarks

regarding corruption and judicial reform, that the EU's influence was mediated by its own political decision to proceed with admitting Romanian in 2007 as scheduled. The EU's influence has also always been mediated by the domestic context. The simple fact that the EU provided guidance, financial assistance, templates and incentives for reform did not automatically result in the desired outcomes. Indeed some domestic players *the attraction of engagement with the EU was less the reform and obtaining membership for Romania, and more the access to funds* and therefore increased patronage and personnel enrichment opportunities.

Moreover, EU engagement did not result in consistent patterns of reform. Variation has long been evident. *In the economic field*, following years of decline and stagnation, Romania's recent performance has been satisfactory. Macro-economic stabilization, with some caveats, has also been achieved, although it has been long time in coming.

In terms of political reform, Romania is a significantly different place from that of the early 1990's. It is a *democracy* where levels of electoral competition compare favorably with those on other CEE countries. Inclinations towards authoritarianism have become fewer and further between, even if Populists continue to attract support, and *constitutional reform* has taken place and proved reasonably successful. Some of this has been inspired by the demands of accession to the EU. In other areas – consolidation of the weak and fragmented *party system*, for example – the EU has not been able to influence developments to a greater extent. Parties continue to resemble loose coalitions of narrow interests and their ideological outlook remains weak.

By contrasts, in some other areas the EU has been more persistent in its demands for change. The most obvious examples concern *combating corruption and accelerating of judicial reform*. Here, the record of reform has been rather patchy. Throughout the later stages of the accession process, and indeed beyond January 1st, 2007, Romanian policy makers struggled to defend the credibility of the country's justice system in upholding the EU's "*acquis communautaire*". Indeed, despite intensive monitoring by the European Commission, six month after Romania joined the EU, the progress in the judicial treatment of high-level corruption was deemed to be "still insufficient". Only "some progress" in reforming the judicial system could be recorded.

So, despite progress with democratic consolidation, the process remains incomplete. This is reflected in – and partly fuelled by – patchy record of executive reform. *At senior level of government*, engagement with the EU, and EU assistance has led to *an improvement in expertise, but problems of coordination persist*. The *politicization of the civil service* and its weak capacity continues to be a major problem that impedes both democratic development and economic growth.

A similar argument can also be made *regarding the centralizing tendencies of the Romanian state* which have proven to be remarkably resilient. While these have been challenged by EU integration, notably through preparations for and the management of structural funds, the accession process has also reinforced them, with the heavy reliance on executive-led coordination of reforms, and the marginalization of Parliament from policy making.

There can be no doubt that Romania in 2007 was in a better state politically and economically than it was at the outset of the 1990's. Progress can be seen on numerous fronts, even though this has generally been slower and remains less than in the CEE

countries that acceded to the EU in 2004. *A major catalyst for progress has been the EU*. However, it is open to question *whether the influence of the EU has produced paradigmatic change, a major and irreversible shift*, in Romania's political system. Tensions remain between reform and retrenchment, though, and these have contributed to the halting progress in meeting the prerequisites for EU membership. They have also been particularly evident in the immediate post-accession political travails Romania has faced, which cannot fail to remind observers of the entrenched weaknesses of the party systems. The basic aspects of democratic consolidation may have been met, but the quality of democracy remains low. This has a negative impact on both the economy and the development of the country's civil society at large. It also threatens Romania's ability to make the best of its membership of the European Union. Indeed, Romania runs the risk of being a marginal player within the EU. This is despite its size (the seventh largest by population in the EU), its demographic and economic potential (22 million citizens), and its geo-strategic importance - as the EU addresses the security of energy supplies and engages more with its Eastern neighbors.

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