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Facultatea de Istorie și Filosofie

EUROPEAN ENLARGEMENT AND THE REDEFINING OF
TRANSATLANTICISM

PH.D. Dissertation

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Executive Summary

The history of the European Union enlargement and integration is firmly intertwined with the history of the transatlantic relations. Research of the origins and gradual development of the European Union (EU) concept unveils the tight mesh of connections between and among the European nations and the United States (US). On political, economic, social, and cultural levels, the transatlantic relations have developed into a strong body of agreements, arrangements, plans, conferences, initiatives, and policies that reflect the historic circumstances as well as the challenges to and opportunities for the European Union (EU) and the US.

Now, in early 21st century, the history of the EU enlargement has closed a five-decade chapter that led to the EU's progressive maturity and, following the full implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon, has opened a new chapter that will define the EU's global impact and the new trends in transatlantic relations. The growing strengths of the EU institutions and the EU market signal the coming of age of a strong partner for the US and of an equally strong competitor likely to challenge the dominant power of the American colossus.¹ As the concept of a Union of the European nations was budding in

¹ Nye, J.S. (2002), *The paradox of American power. Why the world's only superpower can't go it alone.* New York:OUP.

slow motion soon after the end of World War II (WWII) and the communist threat was spreading, the European-American relations were redefined, and the US emerged as the "undisputed leader of the Western world."² US leadership, alongside with economic and financial assistance, made possible the restructuring of Western Europe and created on the Old Continent conditions that would allow and encourage Western European nations to consider the feasibility of establishing an economic and political union.

This century has enhanced the global power of the US and has consolidated its role as the only global superpower. The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the American soil added new dimensions to the US hegemony, such as the undisputed (and, at times, resented) demonstration of American's military force leading to the significant deterioration of the US relations with its traditional European allies. To continue mending the fracture of the transatlantic relations, Atlanticism and Europeanism will have to be replaced by transatlanticism, and it is the firm belief of this author that the positive evolution of transatlanticism will become possible as the US re-assumes its leadership role globally and welcomes the partnership of a strong European Union. In the words of Cohen-Tanugi, "[t]he

² Biedenkopf, K. (2002), *The United States and Europe: changing dimensions of transatlantic relations*. Madison: University of Wisconsin. p. 22.

complementarity between a stronger Europe and a more open America and the prospects that their renewed alliance would open for the world militate strongly in favor of such vision.”³

The fifth wave of the European Union enlargement, during 2004-2007, has been a success. Seven and, respectively, four years after the unprecedented eastward two-step widening of the Union, the twelve new member states continue the integration process and none of the skeptical doomsday scenarios has materialized. “All win as new member states get richer,” announced an EU Press Release posted on the European Commission Web site in May 2006.⁴ On May 1, 2004, eight former communist countries and two Mediterranean nations joined the EU: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. On January 1, 2007, they were joined by Bulgaria and Romania, enlarging EU to 27 members and creating a market of half a billion people. The EU considers the enlargement process an opportunity to promote stability on the continent and to foster the integration of the Union members.

The integration process for the EU acceding countries of the fifth enlargement wave was launched within the strategic ten-year goals the EU adopted at the Lisbon Summit in March

³ Cohen-Tanugi, L. (2003). *An alliance at risk. The United States and Europe since September 11*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.p. 128

⁴ European Commission.(2006), Press Release. Retrieved from:
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleases.do?reference=IP/07>

2000.⁵ The EU pledged "to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion."⁶ Fully aware of the challenges of accepting new members, the EU officials later noted that "2004 was a historical milestone in terms of enlargement."⁷ The EU monitored Bulgaria and Romania closely to ensure their membership in 2007 and continued its strategy of promoting regional cooperation. Croatia and Turkey have been negotiating their accession bids, and the nations of the Western Balkans are expected to start the accession process when they are ready to fulfill the EU's rigorous accession conditions.

The fifth enlargement wave pulled a lot of traction since it coincided with an equally momentous expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Building on the Vilnius Proposal of 2000 to consider a large scale enlargement of the Alliance,⁸ in line with NATO's *open door* policy and with the

⁵At the EU Summit in Lisbon, Portugal, in March 2000, the European leaders set the target of achieving 3 percent average economic growth and creating 20 million jobs by 2010. The Lisbon Agenda included a series of goals in areas such as employment, innovation, free enterprise, trade liberalization, and the environment.

⁶ European Council. (2000), Conclusions of the Presidency. Para. 2. Retrieved from: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm

⁷ Rehn, O. (2005), Enlargement under Stress: the policy of consolidation, conditionality and communication. Retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/ear/publications/main/pub-speech_20050712.htm

⁸ At the Conference on *NATO's Role in the Changing Security Environment in Europe*, held in Vilnius, Lithuania, 18-19 May, 2000, the governments of Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia expressed their commitment to join NATO.

United States' call for a *Europe whole, free, and at peace*, seven new countries were invited to join NATO at the Prague Summit, in November 2002. One month later, at the Copenhagen Summit, in December 2002, ten nations were invited to join the EU. Both enlargements became effective in 2004.⁹

In the second half of the 20th century, the transatlantic relations evolved around the security issues guaranteed by NATO, and Americans and Europeans successfully coordinated their efforts against a mutual adversary during the Cold war. The Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991 bringing the Cold War to an end and confirming the success of decades of persistent and cohesive deterrence.

The transatlantic relations have treaded a rocky path in the post-Cold War period. Intense debates and ample literature speak about the transatlantic *rift*, the *cleavage*, the *widening gap*, the *split*, the *growing divide*, and the *divergence* in the relations between the United States and Europe.¹⁰ The West seems to have brought the Cold War to an end at the expense of the gradual worsening of the political and strategic dialogue

⁹ On March 29, 2004, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia formally joined the Alliance. On May 1, 2004, ten new member states joined the EU. Bulgaria and Romania became EU members on January 1, 2007.

¹⁰ See Cohen-Tanugi, L. (2003), *An alliance at risk. The United States and Europe since September 11*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University; and Serfaty, S. (2005), *The vital partnership. Power and order. America and Europe beyond Iraq*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

between the traditional allies. International and regional developments, compounded by domestic pressure, have increased gradually the tension in the transatlantic links.

Thesis Objectives and Research Questions

Starting from these considerations, this paper focuses on three main objectives. The first objective is to demonstrate that, following the successive events that led to the establishment and progress of the European project, the fifth wave of enlargement has contributed to the consolidation of the Union. Research shows that EU and NATO membership were decisive factors for the successful implementation of accelerated reforms in the new member states of the former communist bloc during the pre-accession and post-accession periods. We also demonstrate that the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon is a significant stepstone that empowers the EU and will consolidate the Union's position as a global actor.

The second objective is to demonstrate that Romania's accession to the European Union was a challenging process marked by alternating success and shortcomings. This process is still unfolding, and it will be up to the Romanian citizens and the Romanian officials to transform Romania into a meaningful contributor to the EU decision making process.

The third objective of this thesis is to build a case supporting the idea that, in the 21st century, the US and the EU have made concerted efforts to overcome most of the tensions in their relations and to bridge the perceived gap between them. The direct impact of the *rest of the world* on the US leadership position in a multi-polar world is changing the flow of the transatlantic relations between the two traditional allies. The US, the EU, and NATO are critical decision making factors on global issues and this thesis demonstrates the need to establish a new US-NATO-EU Forum that will allow all EU and NATO members to bring their contribution to the global decision making process.

Is the US-EU tension likely to have damaged significantly the transatlantic relations? What are the main apparent causes of the worsening of the transatlantic relations in the post-cold War period? Is NATO an obsolete organization? How should the US policy makers react to an enlarged and potentially stronger EU claiming a partner's role in the transatlantic relations? This research seeks possible answers to these questions in an effort to outline some of the options in redefining the transatlantic relations in the 21st century.

Contributions of the Thesis

With an overview of the EU history based on specialized literature, EU documents, and reliable media reports, we create a synthesis of watershed moments of the EU project. Although it is focused mainly on the relevance and weight of the fifth enlargement wave of the European Union, the thesis also discusses current events that are relevant to the research questions.

The study case of Romania analyses the country's accession with a focus on the results during the negotiation period, on the substantive guidance provided by the EU documents, and the results today. Using scholarly sources, interviews with participant actors in the accession process, and EU technical documents, this research contributes to a better understanding of Romania's special case as a candidate country and a junior member after the January 2007 accession.

For the 21st century, we recommend that the US and the EU should adopt and implement a policy of close cooperation and the US should continue its policy of supporting European integration. A politically integrated Europe will continue to enhance European stability and helps promote world economic growth and financial stability in a post-Great Recession context. A coherent European foreign and security policy based

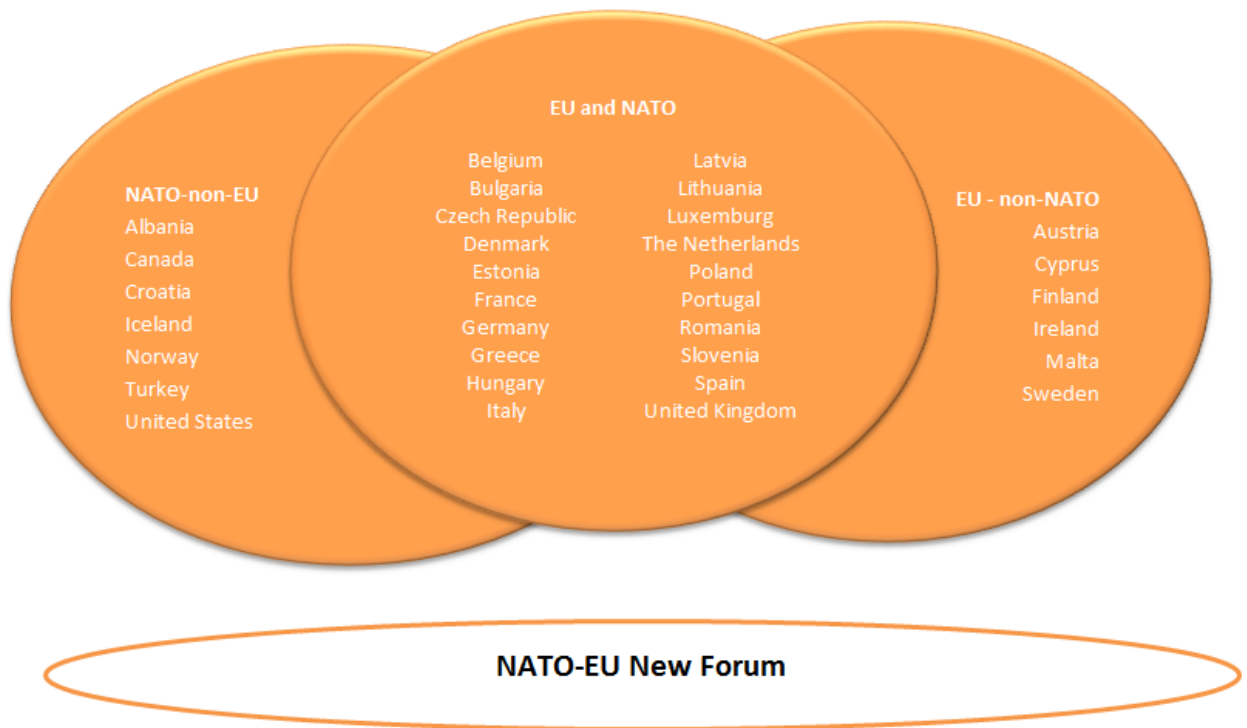
on the tenets of the Lisbon Treaty is likely to offer an alternative to US involvement in conflict areas of the world and may provide the US with a long term effective partner to address the critical issues and share the burdens of global security.

The success of the fifth EU enlargement demonstrated that EU integration of Central and East European (CEE) nations was critical to promoting their economic growth, easing transition to the free market economy, solidifying democratic governments, containing ethnic conflicts, and providing enhanced security. European integration offered critical economic and political benefits that complemented the security advantages of NATO membership. Against the backdrop of changing global priorities, with significant shifts towards East Asia, unprecedented watershed developments in North Africa, and an increased number of global actors claiming a place at the decision-makers' table, we recommend that the US should support a EU security policy that promotes complementarity with NATO reforms. It is a given that EU will move slowly towards a European defense identity, but we think it is in the US interest to encourage EU defense capabilities for the following reasons: (1) the EU, as a whole and through its member states, will increase its contribution to NATO; (2) the EU may become a more effective partner for joint operations outside NATO; (3) the EU may take the initiative of a military response when the US decides not to act (possibly the

Balkans and, as demonstrated in early 2011, in the Mahgreb). Such a complementarity will make criticism that an independent EU defense identity will be detrimental to both US and EU a moot point.

We support Simon Serfaty's recommendation for a separate forum that will facilitate EU-NATO partnership. Right now, said Serfaty in a recent discussion,¹¹ the Europeans are not speaking with a common voice yet, and they cannot be heard one at a time because, one at a time, the European states are no longer sufficiently powerful and capable to assert a significant role in the world at large, be they larger or smaller European states - an opinion that has been validated by the developments and intervention in North Africa in March 2011.

¹¹ Author interview with Dr. Simon Serfaty, on January 21, 2011, in Washington, DC.



We posit that an EU-NATO New Forum to include the seven NATO but non-EU nations, and the six EU non-NATO nations, together with the EU and NATO member states will add value to the EU - NATO dialogue.

Methodology and structure of the dissertation

The dominant theoretical paradigm in the study and practice of international relations after World War II (WWII) has been realism. The political realism championed by Hans Morgenthau and Henry Kissinger needs to be systematically complemented by the complex interdependence approach of Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane to be able to understand and only modestly forecast global developments. This research contributes the description

of the new transatlanticism that is the result of increased interdependencies worldwide.

We use a qualitative approach to meet the objectives of this dissertation and structure the argument in seven chapters. Chapter 1 highlights benchmarks of the European Union process. Based on a subjective selection of the research material, this chapter includes an historic overview of the European Communities and builds a substantive outline of the main treaties that culminated with the Treaty of the European Union.

Chapter 2 includes a detailed presentation of the fifth enlargement wave of the European Union. Using EU documents and scholarly sources, we analyze the distinct features on the fifth wave and discuss the membership criteria and the democratization priority of process. We also discuss the complementarity of the EU and NATO enlargements and the big-bang effect for the new member countries of the former communist bloc.

Romania's European Union accession is the case study discussed in Chapter 3. Research focused on three distinct periods of the accession process, underscoring the main hurdles during the negotiation phase of 2000-2004, the challenges of the monitoring period, and the uneven path Romania has followed as an EU member.

The innovations and the first results of the Treaty of Lisbon are discussed in Chapter 4 that highlights the strengths

and the weaknesses of the Treaty. The analysis is based both on this researcher's understanding of the Lisbon Treaty and on conclusions drawn from personal interviews with EU and US scholars and with European and American current and former officials.

Chapter 5 offers a synthesis of relevant points in the US perspective on the EU fifth enlargement wave. Using scholarly sources, this chapter draws a parallel between the US and EU enlargements, discusses the dynamics leading to the shaping of the US position in the transatlantic relations, and points out the principal US decision making factors with direct impact on these relations, such as the US Congress and the White House.

Chapters 6 and 7 make an assessment of the transatlantic relations and add substance to the concept of transatlaticism. Chapter 6 makes an inventory of the facts and perceptions related to the transatlantic relations, identifies the main causes of the rift, underscores challenges that can be transformed into opportunities for improved relations, and includes an overview of the transatlantic economy.

The final chapter of the dissertation, Chapter 7, includes an analysis of the EU neighborhood policy as it interacts with US interests. The US military power, NATO, and ESDP are also sub-sections of this chapter that concentrates on transatlanticism and on the impact of *the rest of the world* on

the relations between the two traditional allies. A discussion on the US and EU bilateral and trilateral relations with China, Russia, countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and Latin America provides arguments used to develop recommendations aimed at improving relations across the Atlantic and at redefining transatlanticism.

The Conclusions section summarizes the main findings of this research and highlights the EU strengths following the fifth enlargement and the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon. The relevance of the case study on Romania's EU accession is presented in the context of EU conditionalities that have helped the candidate countries' progress in the accession process. We strongly believe that the redefined transatlanticism for the US and the EU is the most effective policy approach for the two traditional allies in the multipolar world of the 21st century.

KEY WORDS: European enlargement, European Union, transatlantic relations, transatlanticism, globalization, NATO, global interdependencies, US foreign policy, the Treaty of Lisbon, Romania's accession.

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