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Chairman
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EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE

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Report of the Reflection Group on the Diversity and Unity in the Enlarged European Union

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Introduction

More than ten years after the end of the East-West conflict it is still difficult to say anything comparatively final concerning the current structure of international relations. Analysts speak about a post-Cold War era as eloquent demonstration of uncertainty. The little we know is that the international system has departed from bipolarity and has increasingly been dominated by a combination of hegemonic unilateralism and limited multipolarity of a concert of great powers. It is a system of democracies in the sense that democratic countries play a major role in it. It is more democratic than the bipolar one left behind. It is not a democratic system, nevertheless. This fact is relevant as none of the candidate countries for EU membership are great powers – the absence of great powers in East-Central Europe has characterised the region for some time. Thus, even though the end of the rigid bipolar structure of international relations resulted in a fundamental change for the countries of East-Central Europe, it did not mean they could become either major or independent actors of international relations. The drastic change seems fundamental enough to get out of the shadow of the ailing Soviet Union and revise their political orientation, it did not basically change their importance in international affairs.

This paper attempts to present the links established between the second pillar of the European Union and the candidate countries, the significance of this association with the EU for East-Central Europe and the repercussions of the recent evolution of CFSP upon the prospects and dilemmas of relations between the EU and the candidates.

1. The Question of Regional Identity

It is an important preliminary question to decide whether we can speak about a regional identity in East-Central Europe and thus whether there is a chance to form some identical expectations towards the region. There are four factors one should bear in mind: 1. The region consists of small and medium size countries. 2. The countries are all located between the western border of the former Soviet Union and the eastern border of Germany. This means they certainly have a *Zwischeneuropa* identity. 3. During the East-West conflict era these states belonged to the group of socialist countries. This was reflected in the lack of private property (with the exception of agriculture in some countries), the absence of democracy and *de facto* or *de jure* one party rule. 4. The international commitments, as the aspirations, of the ten countries are largely similar. Each of them has concluded so-called Europe or association agreements with the EU and embarked upon negotiating their membership. Each of them has participated in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), in the Partnership for Peace programme and members of the Council of Europe. Beyond these similarities

there are important differences: Three countries of the region, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, have become members of NATO, four of them, the three mentioned previously and Slovakia, have joined the OECD.

Rather then presenting a detailed map of historical differences it is suffice to point out that the region is an artificial construct. In spite of this the world at large has had a tendency to regard the region as a unit at least temporarily. This is not explained by long-term cultural considerations, not based on the difference between civilisations. It is determined by the need of actual politics and to some extent explained by history. This is due to the 'double identities' "which shape the domestic and foreign policy agendas and the articulation of national interests" of the East-Central European states. "The concept of double identity refers to the two distinct components of the national identity of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe which determine the nation's self-perception and strongly influence the government's foreign policy. These two components of identity are the *traditional* identity, dating from the pre-Second World War period when these countries were part of the unstable balance of power system before and after the Versailles settlement, and second, the *post-communist* identity which is centred around the urgent need for political and economic reconstruction in the wake of the failed communist experiment."[1] There is also a more recent commonality, namely that they "have succeeded in avoiding the military escalation of international disputes, their political agenda has been dominated by non-military issues, and they all want to integrate into Western security institutions".[2] Hence there is some practical reason to keep the group together at least for the time being.[3]

It is not contrary to the above-said that differentiation, based on the self-differentiation of the candidates, will be unavoidable in due course. This has already happened practically in every (formerly) western institution and the experience of the last decade does not give any indication why it should not continue. It has been one of the most persistent efforts of western institutions and their member-states to postpone such differentiation as much as possible in order no East-Central European country would face the humiliating effect of not performing well enough. More precisely put it is important to avoid it as much as possible in order to keep countries on track and not let them lose momentum stemming from their willingness to integrate.

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[1] Stefan Tafrov, Interests and Identities in Central and Eastern Europe, in Ian Gambles (ed.), *A Lasting Peace in Central Europe?* Chaillot Paper no. 20, October 1995, pp. 81-82.

[2] Pál Dunay, Whence the Threat to Peace in Europe? In Ian Gambles (ed.), Op. cit. p. 41.

[3] This does not exclude that further countries joining the group would not jump ahead of the list in the future. This may well be the case with Croatia that initialled its association agreement with the EU in May 2001. It is the general expectation that soon after this agreement comes into force Croatia will submit its membership application.

2. The Foreign Policy Orientation of East-Central Europe

When analysts have addressed the foreign policy orientation of the countries of the region after the end of the East-West conflict it has been the most important methodological shortcoming that they have *started out from the international interests of the countries rather than their broader political orientation.* Had they started out from the "desire" to prosper and be democratic the international engagement would have been self-evident. The countries faced a difficult situation when the East-West conflict came to an end. They had to identify their new political course and the new international engagement they opt for accordingly. According to a British analyst the countries of the region had seven options to provide for their security and set their new international agenda. 1. A reformed alliance with the Soviet Union, 2. Neutrality or non-alignment, 3. Regional security co-operation within Eastern Europe, 4. Integration with the West, 5. Pan-European collective or common security through the CSCE, 6. A realpolitik balance of power policy, or 7. Reliance on their national resources.[4] If one takes a closer look and starts out from a comprehensive analysis of the new democracies it is easy to draw the conclusion that these scenarios did not have equal relevance for the East-Central European countries. Ad 1) They said goodbye to the Soviet system and were certainly unwilling to establish any new arrangement with that country.[5] For many (e.g. Czechoslovakia and Hungary) the era of socialism meant a relative economic decline compared to the 1930s. Ad 2) The same cannot be said about neutrality which was quite popular in some countries that left the Warsaw Treaty. The situation was the most spectacular in Hungary, the country where Prime Minister Nagy declared neutrality during the October 1956 revolution. Nonetheless, the political elite gave increasing credit to that neutrality can only be a transitional measure until a more clear determination to belong to the West, including its institutions, when it can be declared. Ad 3) Regional co-operation was an idea that countries of the region gave serious consideration and regarded as it an important ingredient of the post-Cold War structure of international relations. It has always been regarded as a complementary element rather than a comprehensive agenda. Ad 4) Integration with the West was the arrangement that was regarded as a panacea for many problems of the region. There are two fundamental differences between other arrangements and western integration, however. A) There is a combination of

[4] Andrew Cottey, East Central Europe after the Cold War: Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary in Search of Security (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1995), p. 13.

[5] It is suffice to mention that with the exception of Romania no former member of the Warsaw Treaty signed a bilateral agreement on friendship and co-operation with the Soviet Union. Romanian analysts are of the view that the signing of the accord by Bucharest did not happen in good faith as their country was unwilling to bring the treaty into force.

sticks and carrots provided by the western democracies and their institutions.[6] B) The West has demonstrated the capacity to resolving broader problems, including the request of the region to be prosperous as well as stable and secure. Ad 5) The idea of a collective security system in Europe was nurtured by some far-fetched visionary thinkers, some of them also gained political power. The best known was Czechoslovak, and later Czech, President Vaclav Havel. In this case the idea was given up by the Central and Eastern European countries not so much because of opposition, but for the conclusion that it cannot be realised. Furthermore, any real "collective security" regime based on the CSCE would have unavoidably meant that the organisation would have gained more teeth, including eventually the differentiation between smaller participating states and great powers. Moreover, as the Soviet Union, and in the early phase of its existence the Russian Federation, were so adamant to subordinate other security institutions to the CSCE the countries of Central and Eastern Europe were highly suspicious about it. As there are no great powers in the region these countries will always be suspicious when the role of great powers has been mentioned. This was particularly the case in 1990-91 when they were full of illusions concerning the democratic nature of international politics in the post-Cold War era. Ad 6) The concept of balance of power was not seriously considered by countries of the region. Beyond the philosophical opposition to it one has to understand that when the main source of concern is instability and not a concrete threat it is difficult to apply such a concept. Ad 7) Reliance on national resources, sort of a "stand alone" policy in international relations was regarded entirely as inadequate. Bearing in mind the historic experiences, the capabilities of the countries of the region and the complex external challenges they have faced, this approach was understandable. Consequently, both in light of the new political orientation of the East-Central European countries and their international agenda the attempt of western integration was the unrivalled dominant idea in the region.

The western integration effort of East-Central Europe consists probably of four major elements: 1). The East Central European countries have always felt that they belong to European civilisation irrespective of how short-lived democracy was in the history of some of these countries. Most countries of the region have no other roots than the one connecting them with European civilisation and (western) Christianity. Many intellectuals in the region felt that their countries were torn apart from their root of civilisation against their will. Furthermore, democracy is the model the majority of the population is willing to

[6] As a Polish document states "... a membership in EU will be the best guarantee of consolidating Poland's democratic political model. It will ensure the irreversibility of the transformation process by consolidating Poland's democratic political model. It will ensure the irreversibility of the transformation process..." See, Stanislaw Parzymies, Poland negotiates EU accession, http://www.msz.gov.pl/english/unia/polandnegot.html.

follow in these countries.[7] 2). The region west of East-Central Europe is economically more developed than the region proper. Hence the "return to Europe" according to their conviction would boost their economic development. This process has been underway and has brought certain results. 3. The West has been connected by several institutions and demonstrated significant stability in the last half a century. 4. The West is tied by a security web that also includes the strongest military power of the world, the United States. These four factors have all been present when the countries of East-Central Europe strive to join the West. Western analysts share this opinion. The process implies "rejoining the cultural, normative and religious mainstream of Europe, joining European institutions such as the Council of Europe and the EU, integrating into the European economy and participating in the transatlantic and West European security community".[8]

The strife for western integration resulted in a situation whereby the countries of East-Central Europe wanted to join every western institution and programme without discrimination and hesitation. This has reflected certain non-discrimination in the process. On the other hand, there was certain discrimination in the process as well. Every institution has had a specific contribution to make according to the expectations of the countries of the region. NATO has been the security provider, the EU's primary task has been to contribute to economic modernisation and prosperity whereas the Council of Europe should confirm the achievements of democratic transformation. The overlaps for example between the membership requirements of the Council of Europe and the first part of the EU Copenhagen criteria[9] or between the NATO enlargement study of 1995 and any of the former did not matter much to the east-central European conception of the role of each institution. That is why I find it relevant to mention that *the western integration of East-Central Europe* in light of the political establishment of the countries of the region *takes place in "boxes"*. The box of the EU, despite its three-pillar structure since the Maastricht Treaty, is economy, the first pillar more broadly, including the Schengen regime and not much else. This is one of the reasons why the East-

[7] This is correct despite the disillusioning experience in several countries in the first years after the political transition. Furthermore, it complicated the situation that the system change was accompanied by severe economic decline in most countries. Consequently, the population could conclude democracy results in declining standard of living, unemployment and poverty.

[8] Adrian Hyde-Price, *The International Politics of East Central Europe* (Manchester – New York: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 188.

[9] One could prove this with many citations. It is suffice to cite the programme of the Hungarian government that stated "the objective of the EU accession negotiations is to realise the economic interests" of Hungary. See Az új évezred küszöbén: Kormányprogram a polgári Magyarországért /On the eve of the new millennium: Government programme for civic Hungary/, Budapest, n.p. 1998, p. 63.

Central European countries are astonished when the regular country reports comment on the state of democracy, the freedom of the press or the treatment of the roma population – matters that supposedly belong to the realm of other institutions. The approach and later the accession to different institutions has had an important legitimising function confirming that the given country is on the right track. The fact that western integration has been put on the top of the political priority list in most East-Central European countries resulted in that the performance reflected in gaining membership, starting accession talks, in the participation in certain projects or the lack thereof, becoming a source of controversy.

3. The Association of East-Central European countries with CFSP

As early as 1990, prior to the signature of the Europe Agreements with the first three East-Central European countries, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, the governments of the region started to make significant efforts to align their foreign policies with those of Western Europe on an *ad hoc* basis. The rediscovery of the 'European destiny' needed to be substantiated by the countries of the region. This could be done easily through the policies of these governments on remote crises. Though much of these policies followed the new political philosophies of the democratically elected governments, it seems that at least some of them stemmed more from the will to demonstrate political solidarity than from genuine political concern or economic interests.

The political dialogue started early on 2 April 1992 in Lisbon at a meeting at the level of political directors. A more institutionalised form of co-operation was established after the Copenhagen summit of June 1993. It was further extended by resolutions of the General Affairs Council on 7 March 1994 and guidelines accepted by the political directors on 25 October 1994. Later it was modified by the revised guidelines of the political dialogue accepted by the political directors on 19 October 1995. The regular political dialogue under Article 2 (1) of the Europe Agreements is formulated somewhat ambiguously. It states that the EU "assists the associated country in its full reintegration into the community of democratic nations, involves better understanding and an increasing convergence of positions on international issues, enables each party to consider the position and interests of the other party in their respective decision-making process, and it contributes to the rapprochement of the parties' positions on security issues and enhances security and stability in the whole of Europe". Various levels and channels of communication between the EU and the associated country are named. According to the agreements co-operation takes place at all diplomatic levels but primarily in the UN General Assembly[10] and

[10] The like-minded character of the associated country and the member states can be easily described with voting coincidence. For empirical information during the first years of co-

the CSCE/OSCE. It is another form of co-operation that regular information is provided to the associated country on CFSP activities.

The associated countries have access to four foreign policy instruments. They may align themselves with EU declarations, may adhere to EU political démarches and with *separate declaration* may join EU common positions[11] and joint actions.[12] In each case the conditions of participation are decided strictly by the EU and the extremely cautiously worded provisions of the guidelines leave ample room to find reasons not to invite the East-Central European countries at the EU's full discretion. Of course, this impact is ensured not by direct political statements, but by devising very flexible rules. According to the revised 'Guidelines for enhanced political dialogue' accepted on 19 October 1995, "due to the *time factor* involved ... it may not always be possible to have the associates participate". Moreover "the EU side reserves the right to derogate from the above guidelines when this is warranted by the *urgency* of the matter or any *other overriding concern*".[13] The guidelines contain a further built-in restriction as well, though this may have some justification. The last sentence of point 1 reads: "in particular, the above guidelines may be non-applicable when a declaration or a démarche is addressed to one of the associated countries."

With regard to joint actions, the EU has invited the associated countries only a few times to participate since the beginning of the co-operation. Therefore the main devices of foreign policy co-operation between the associated countries and the EU are in fact instruments which were characteristic features of the European Political Co-operation, and which have continued to dominate after Maastricht, namely declarations and démarches. In the beginning the EU invited the associated countries to join those declarations that concerned mainly matters of a less direct importance to East-Central Europe, such as democracy and peace in various countries of the Third World. The logic of invitation has not always been clear: for example the associated countries were invited to two declarations concerning the trial of an opposition leader in Nigeria but were not subsequently invited to the declaration condemning his execution. It is difficult to draw general conclusions concerning

operation see Pál Dunay, Tamás Kende and Tamás Szűcs, The Integration of Central and Eastern Europe Into the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Fifteen, in Marc Maresceau (ed.), *Enlarging the European Union: Relations Between the EU and Central and Eastern Europe* (London – New York, Longman, 1998), p. 331.

[11] For quite a while the EU did not let the associated countries join common positions. See *Guidelines for enhanced political dialogue with associated countries* adopted by the EU Political Committee at its 31 May 1996 meeting.

[12] It is legally impossible that candidate countries join common positions and joint actions directly.

[13] Point 1 of the Guidelines, while point 6 reads: The EU and the associates will instruct their representatives "in international fora to co-operate *whenever possible*" (Emphasis added).

the EU policy on these matters. One can state preliminarily the following: The attitude changed gradually and particularly in the early phase of such co-operation was based on caution. Later, gradually the associated countries were invited more frequently. On the average the associated countries are invited to join approximately one-third to half of all declarations.[14] Nevertheless it is founded to state that the opinion of the associated countries has been asked almost exclusively on issues non-essential for them.[15] The experience may suggest that the EU invited the East-Central European countries when the presidency has been 'enlargement minded' or when – on non-controversial issues[16] – it can be politically demonstrated that the presidency is conscious of the fact that it may draw on the support of the associated countries. It is obvious that such a limited contribution to EU declarations is not in the interest of the associated countries. It is one of the main efforts of the candidate countries that the closer they get to membership they would have more relevant and active contribution to CFSP. Particularly when the accession negotiations are finished it would make perfect sense to associate those states with CFSP in its entirety. If it does not take place the gradual lead in to pillar 2 will not succeed and the socialisation with this policy of the EU would be postponed until after membership. Bearing in mind that associated countries have experience and insights on matters where the general knowledge of the EU is weaker then this early association would be mutually advantageous.[17]

The first time when the foreign policy structure of the associated countries and their ability to implement the CFSP acquis was tested could be seen in the country reports published in the summer of 1997. As will be demonstrated later, no particular problems emerged concerning CFSP and the emergence of no major problems could be expected during the screening in this field.[18] This was,

[14] This is the situation recently. Earlier, in the first half of the 1990s it was approximately 15 per cent. See Dunay, Kende and Szűcs, Op. cit. pp. 333-334.

[15] It is suffice to mention a few examples that followed each other: East Timor, Myanmar, Afghanistan, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the arms embargo for ex-Yugoslavia. The first three are definitely of no import for the associated countries.

[16] Nearly 15 years ago in an analysis of Warsaw Treaty Political Consultative Commission decisions I had to draw very similar conclusion. Namely that several elements of the declarations of the Warsaw Treaty (Cambodia, Horn of Africa, Angola, Mozambique, etc.) did not matter to any member state but the Soviet Union. The importance and world political outlook of the candidate countries, many of which were member states of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, did not change since. Thus a very similar conclusion can be drawn for such associations as well. See Pál Dunay, Hungary's Security Policy, *Hamburger Beiträge,* No. 17, April 1987.

[17] It is suffice to mention Poland's experience with Belarus and Ukraine as an example.

[18] It is suffice to cite the position of Estonia on Common Foreign and Security Policy in its entirety to see how little problem the candidate countries anticipate in this policy area: "Based upon the conclusions of the screening of the above mentioned chapter Estonia is prepared to accept the *acquis* with respect to common foreign and security policy. Estonia does not intend

however the first opportunity for the EU to make an overview of its CFSP acquis.[19] No transitional period or derogation was requested and the negotiating positions of the candidates demonstrated problem-free harmonisation in this area. The only candidate country where problems have been visible is Cyprus due to the division of the island. It was much later, during the Portuguese presidency in spring 2000 when a compromise solution was achieved on the matter in co-operation with the French, Dutch, Greek and UK governments. This made possible to close the CFSP chapter of the negotiations with the candidates. It seems that the problems of the negotiations related to that chapter are confined to technicalities. Problems are mentioned related to "diplomatic and consular protection, co-operation with third countries and international institutions..."[20] Hungary reported the need to carry out "structural changes in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs enabling it to fully participate in the formulation and implementation of CFSP (the establishment of a Political Director's post). The technical capacity for electronic communication of the Ministry will also be stepped up."[21] In some other cases the consular protection of citizens of EU countries may present a problem.

After having presented this idyllic picture about the prospects of co-operation in the field of CFSP in preparation for membership of the East-Central European countries it is necessary to consider whether any problem can emerge after accession. CFSP relies primarily on declaratory measures and in its current form does not pose any problem for the candidate countries. Consequently, the fundamental question is whether there is any perceivable difference between the foreign policy orientation of the western European countries as a bloc and some of the candidate countries. It is necessary to emphasise here again that none of the candidate countries are great powers and none of them have major interests outside the Euro-Atlantic area. Consequently it is not expectable that any candidate would have any problem with the extra-European policy of the Union. Declarations on the cultural heritage in Afghanistan, the welcoming of the ratification of the Treaty on the International Criminal Court by Andorra or human rights in sub-Saharan Africa will go through the channels of the Union

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to request any transitional period or derogation to the *acquis* in this chapter. Estonia is prepared to adopt the *acquis* in this chapter in full on accession to the European Union." Estonian position on adoption of the relevant *acquis* on Common Foreign and Security Policy. http://www.vm.ee/euro/english/positions/chap27.html

[19] During the accession talks with Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden the acquis was strictly limited.

[20] Negotiating Position of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on Chapter 27 – Common Foreign and Security Policy, 10 September 1998. The government of Slovenia had promised to adopt a new law on foreign affairs that was adopted actually in 1999.

[21] Negotiation Position of the Government of the Republic of Hungary on Chapter 27 Common Foreign and Security Policy, 8 September 1998. The technical facilities have improved whereas the post of Political Director has not been established, yet.

just as smoothly as nowadays. There are three areas where problems might emerge in the future. They are the following: 1. Eventual ruptures between Europe and the United States. 2. Policy with respect of the Russian Federation and the CIS area more broadly. 3. Human rights, more specifically the minority policy of some countries.

As far as *U.S.-European relations* are concerned it is fairly difficult to predict their future evolution. It is obvious that there are important common interests and values shared by these two important players of international relations, the EU and the U.S. There are some divisions as well, however. If one tries to understand why the United States should find it advantageous to have a Europe with a more independent CFSP the following can be drawn. Bearing in mind that Western Europe is *the* partner of the U.S. that shares most of the fundamental values it has declared it may be to the benefit of the new "uni-pole" to have a critical partner that does not challenge it.[22] One may call this "Europe as a reality check". Europe may also be the partner that represents "a new concept of power" combining military and non-military factors of security. This is particularly to the advantage of the U.S. in those cases when the U.S. as "trigger happy sheriff" may be tempted to rely on military force prematurely or unnecessarily.[23] It may well be, however that reason will not dominate foreign policy thinking and actions in Washington. If there is rivalry between the two actors the U.S. may be tempted to have as many countries "on its side" as possible. This is the worst nightmare of decision-makers in East-Central Europe. It results in a situation that the two "mentors" of these countries are pulling them into different directions. The candidate countries are not only confined to the European theatre in their international relations but have been policy taker and not policy maker countries for several decades. Europe, or some Europeans at least, reacts vehemently when allegiance with the U.S. seems to contradict European commitments. France, for example blamed Poland as a "Troyan horse of America in Europe building its independent military capability".[24] It is fully unpredictable what will be the position of the candidate countries in case they face a "choice" between the U.S. and the EU. Most probably they would not be able to live up to a strategic choice and would rather pursue a "muddling through" policy.

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[22] An American scholar in an interview in Washington said to the author that it may be so on the scholarly, analytical level. The perception may be fundamentally different on the level of inter-state contacts where such a critical or maverick attitude may not be welcome by the U.S. government. Interview at the Brookings Institution on 7 September 2000.

[23] These reasons (and a third one) are listed by Julian Lindley-French, Why America needs Europe, Institute for Security Studies of the Western European Union *Newsletter* no. 31, October 2000

[24] Polska krytykuje plany obronne UE (Poland criticises the defence plans of the EU), *Rzeczpospolita,* 12 December 1999. Quoted by Ryszard Zieba, Development of European Security and Defence Identity: A Central European Perspective, p. 33.

It is the *Russian Federation and the CIS area* generally where some of the candidate countries have an understandably high political profile. The bitter experiences of decades and in some case centuries left their imprint. Some candidate countries regard the recent experience with Russia as a series of attempts by Moscow to play great power games and disregard the perceived national interests of some small countries of the region. This Russian attitude has generated sensitivity and may occasionally result in over-reaction. Geographic proximity fuels this further. The EU has developed a co-operative engagement policy with the Russian Federation and tries to induce, largely unsuccessfully, positive developments over there. For these reasons the Russia policy of Poland, Hungary or the Baltic states, particularly Estonia and Latvia which host sizeable Russian ethnic minority, differs from the course taken by some European great powers that intend to placate Russia.

It is suffice to cite two recent statements to illustrate the hard feelings in East-Central Europe. "We, in Poland, are willing to build good neighbourly relations with Russia. We are saying this in a new political situation, with Poland involved with Euro-Atlantic and European solidarity structures which, although not anti-Russian, do not include Russia as their participant. Poland's membership of Western alliances and its endorsement of the independence and pro-Western orientation of states created on the rubble of the Soviet empire should not stand in the way of development of economic and cultural relations between Russia and Poland..."[25] The words of the Hungarian Prime Minister a year later are similarly illuminating: "... Hungary has occupied its place in the western world while its geographical position did not change. Hungary does not regard the countries further to the east as enemies, seeks to co-operate with them. ... I would like to make it clear that the two matters that Hungary is a committed supporter and part of the western security system and that we seek good economic relations with Russia do not contradict to each other. ... [W]e seek good relations, want to strengthen our economic relations, we are gladly taking part in co-operations of cultural character, but there is a clear dividing line between us in the sense of security and defence policy. I could say the more intensively we co-operate economically, the clearer and sharper dividing line has to be drawn between us, the eastern-most member-state of NATO and the territories further to the east, in the field of security and defence."[26] It is clear from Orbán's statement that his most important security-related preoccupation is the instability of the region further to the east of Hungary. To put it differently,

[25] The Government Statement on Directions of Foreign Policy of the Republic of Poland Presented by His Excellency Prof. Bronislaw Geremek, the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the 78th Session of the Parliament on May 9th, 2000, p. 8.

[26] A miniszterelnök a feladatszabó értekezleten /The Prime Minister at the Task Assigning Conference of the Hungarian Defence Forces/ 1 March 2001, p. 2. http://www.honvedelem.hu/cikk.php?cikk=717

Hungary is willing to co-operate with Russia in low politics, while it has severe reservations to do it in high politics. It was not the first time that the Hungarian Prime Minister shed light on his impressions about the Russian Federation. In 1999 he said in an interview to the Canadian daily Globe and Mail that even though Hungarians would not receive it happily in the case of a crisis situation the Hungarian government would be ready to consider the deployment of NATO nuclear weapons.[27] Hungarian opposition politicians and experts denied the need and the possibility of such deployment whereas Russian military circles interpreted it as "psychological preparation" for nuclear deployment on the territory of the three new NATO members.[28] Even though the great majority of Hungarians do not react emotionally to Russian developments a decade after the last Soviet soldier left the country some parts of the establishment have apparent problems to pursue a non-adversary based security policy. Similar feelings are known to be present in Warsaw, Tallinn and Riga and they are not entirely unfounded. It stems from the fact that Russia has enormous difficulties to adapt to a situation where it is an important regional actor but nothing else. States transiting from one international status to another, either declining or rising, often have a difficult period of accommodation.

As far as *national minorities* are concerned it seems certain that some countries joining before others will import some minority related problems. Some have sizeable minority groups on their territories, like Estonia and Latvia others have ethnic minorities in neighbouring countries, like Hungary. Currently the fact that associated countries do not participate in démarches related to the treatment of minorities in other candidate countries or in countries not candidates for membership puts the problems that may stem from the situation on the backburner. The moment some countries join the EU, like Hungary probably acceding before Romania and Slovakia, they will have formal influence on eventual future EU actions on this matter and a chance to influence the common position of the Union. In spite of some difficulty that may stem from this I see no reason to be concerned for a number of reasons. The "demander" state has always had a chance to express its opinion in case it found the treatment of its ethnic brethren's inappropriate. Through integration in CFSP the statements of the member country, in case it opts for an EU channel, would go through a screening process. It would be confronted with the position of other members less directly involved in the matter. This may contribute to moderation and ease rather than burden the matter. It is highly unlikely that the one "directly affected" country would determine the opinion of others rather than the other

[27] Orbán a saját "atomfegyver-nyilatkozatáról" /Orbán about his nuclear weapons statement/, *Népszabadság*, 1 November 1999.

[28] Orosz fenyegetés az új NATO-tagoknak atomfegyver-telepítés esetére /Russian threat to new NATO members in case of nuclear weapon deployment/, *Magyar Távirati Iroda* /Hungarian News Agency/, 3 December 1999 cites Col. Gen. Ivashev.

way round. This conclusion can be drawn easily if one starts out from the power relations more broadly, and does not focus exclusively on the concrete issue. Consequently, there is no reason to assume that this matter would cause a problem following eastern enlargement.

The rhetoric, if not the policy, of some candidate countries may cause some difficulties after EU accession and may require a certain adaptation period particularly in case some of them decide to keep a high profile in common foreign policy. There are three observations that may ease the concerns: 1. The first three East-Central European countries that have joined NATO kept a fairly low profile, co-operative attitude ever since, including the highly controversial Kosovo crisis. 2. The first decade of co-operation between the EU and the East-Central European candidate countries was a mutual learning process. The socialisation of national establishments has played an important role in it. The coming half a decade or so will further strengthen this process. Consequently there is reason to assume that by the time the first countries of the region will have full access to CFSP mutual understanding will prevail. The preparation for membership should help that membership would not come as a shock to the new members. 3. The professionals of the state administrations have already toned down occasional inflammatory political rhetoric and represented continuity. It is suffice to mention the course of EU enlargement talks in this context. Negotiators have carefully measured the long-term national interest of the countries and made sincere efforts to carry them into effect. They have made attempts to civilise their masters, the politicians in government who rotated more often than it would have been practicable. In sum, worries may remain but will have to remain limited.

4. Common European Security and Defence Policy and the Associate Countries: Has Everything Changed?

When the system change occurred western concerns were voiced about the prospects of the democratic control of armed forces in East-Central Europe. Pessimism extended both to the danger of military praetorianism and the prospects of modernisation of the armed forces. Since then, patterns of civil-military relations have become more complex and varied. The world has been facing a "parting of the ways". It is a common characteristic feature that the military made no attempt to gain control of the state anywhere in the region. In some cases, however the militaries played some political role (as on 4 October 1993 in Moscow) and there were cases where relations of the civilian and military leadership have become symbiotic, like in Croatia and Serbia throughout the 1990s.

In the more narrowly defined geographic area, those of the EU candidate countries, this paper aims to analyse the situation looks more reassuring. Due to the coexistence of a number of factors, both internal and external, the political control of the armed forces has been firmly established, the military has accepted the new political system and internal modernisation of the armed forces has started. Three countries have become members of NATO and other associates of the EU are waiting for their NATO membership invitation. In the invitation of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland military considerations played marginal role. The whole process was politically driven. Some politico-military matters played a certain role in it, like the formal political control of the armed forces, etc. Late in preparation for the first invitations, military considerations started to appear on the margin. They were confined to a "fiscal approach" and addressed the costs of enlargement. The cost issue dominated the debate in three senses: a) How much will enlargement cost? b) Who (which country – current or future members) will bear them? c) How can military modernisation be fostered in the candidate countries through the increase of military appropriations? The result of these considerations was the following: Enlargement was carried out "on the cheap". The official study of the Alliance, contrary to two earlier studies, those of the Rand Corporation and the Congressional Budget Office, minimised the costs for the 16 members. The majority of the costs will have to be borne by the candidate countries. A formal commitment was taken by the candidates during the accession negotiations to increase their defence budgets compared to their GDP. The result of this narrow and somewhat arbitrary interpretation of military requirements before NATO membership resulted in a situation that the first three members from East-Central Europe have faced some difficulty to live up to requirements and an increasing dissatisfaction of some other members, primarily of the United States and the leaders of the political and military structures of the Alliance. The lesson was learned and the Atlantic Alliance stepped up requirements for future candidates. The Membership Action Plan (MAP) aims to prevent the recurrence of similar situation. The U.S. Senate did not only commit the executive branch to consult it before the next invitations are extended but required detailed information about the military capabilities of the candidates and their potential to contribute to collective defence. Bearing in mind the pivotal importance of the consent of the U.S. to further NATO enlargement(s) the adaptation of the defence sector of candidate countries will have to take place before gaining membership, at least partly. This could provide an easy escape route for the 19-members alliance. With reference to the insufficient level of military adaptation it is easy not to extend invitation to any country. The situation of course becomes delicate and complex if we conclude that the dominance of politics will continue to lead the process. I.e. the role of military considerations has been upgraded but will not dominate except in case used as pretext.

There are different ways to assess the performance of the militaries in East-Central Europe. It can be measured against the complexity of the transformation of the societies and economies after several decades of "socialism". If one starts out from that there is reason to show understanding to that the reform of the defence sector, particularly as far as its investment heavy phase, was not high on the priority list of the candidate countries. It can also be taken into consideration that the transformation of the military sector of those NATO countries, which gained membership during the Cold War, took many years, in cases decades, as well. Last but not least, it has to be taken into account that the candidate countries are all willing to the limits of their capacity, to participate in the conflict management and post-conflict settlement efforts of the international community.[29] It is extremely important to emphasise it as there have been concerns that East-Central European countries want to join the "old" NATO focused on Article 5 commitments. Even though countries of the region perceive to have a security deficit where Art. 5 commitments come in handily as compensation it does not mean they neglect the conflict management task of the Alliance. This is important for the EU as well as the East-Central European countries. The candidate countries will be co-operative partners in implementing the Petersberg tasks as they are defined currently. There is another way to measure military performance, however. Namely, it can be compared to that whether the countries live up to the maximum they could have achieved in a decade since the system change. In that case the result is far more disappointing. In many cases there is insufficient determination to modernise the armed forces, zigzags, reform plans drafted hastily, but never carried into effect. In sum, the political and politico-military adaptation is underway whereas there are severe shortcomings in the military-technical field.

The Atlantic Alliance is regarded as the primary external security provider for the region and the most important security institution. That is why the advice of NATO, with the decisive involvement of the United States, is listened most attentively. No other international institution, except the WEU that has never been taken seriously in the region,[30] is assumed to be able to contribute substantively to the security of the East-Central European countries. This is due, among others to the fact that many candidate countries have some residual concerns that may make (individual and) collective self-defence necessary. It

[29] It is suffice to mention that each East-Central European candidate for EU membership participates in SFOR and eight countries are also participating in KFOR. It is only Latvia and Romania, which are not present in KFOR. See the "Nations Contributing to SFOR" http://www.nato.int/sfor/nations/sformations.htm and "The Nations of KFOR" http://www.kforinline.com/kfor/nations/default.htm

[30] I recognise that it would be extremely difficult to provide evidence to this. Official politics will never declare that an institution is irrelevant when at the same time the respective country seeks to gain membership in it.

does not mean that these countries are mavericks, which do not share the importance of power projection capabilities or pay lip service to conflict management exclusively. It does mean, however that the security perception of these countries induces a different mix of power projection and territorial self-defence than that of many EU member-countries. Consequently, *only such an institution can claim credibility in the security of these countries that can address the full continuum of military capabilities ranging from low intensity peace-keeping to high intensity collective self-defence.* In light of this the EU that has recently started to claim to have some security relevance also in the military sense faces a number of difficult challenges. It does not have to fight the disadvantage of a newcomer security institution, only. Furthermore, it has to counteract a temporary disadvantage. Namely, NATO has "completed" its first eastern enlargement earlier than the EU. Thus it has gained a "premium" credibility as an institution that has "meant" enlargement. The EU has to face a clear definition of its potential security role. Its current, Petersberg confined, definition does not cause problem to the candidate countries.

Whereas the EU has gained some vague security relevance in the Maastricht Treaty it took nearly a decade to move from verbal reassurance to the expression of the willingness to build some operational military capability in order to carry out the so-called Petersberg tasks.[31] Irrespective the objective of the EU confined to the Petersberg tasks the matter has become highly controversial. For some it is the first step in the direction of a collective defence capability of the EU, for others the Petersberg tasks represent the maximum acceptable. Certain co-operation mechanisms have been established in order to create an inclusive project. It gives preference to two groups of states: The European members of the Atlantic Alliance (the group of six composed of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, Poland and Turkey) and the candidates for EU membership and the European NATO members (the group of 15 – 13 candidates and two European NATO countries, Iceland and Norway).

The idea of the EU to gain some security relevance represents a major challenge for the countries, which would like to integrate both in NATO and the EU. The challenge is that none of them want to jeopardise its interests at either organisation. Furthermore they are strongly committed to the presence of the United States in Europe and would not subscribe to a project that threatens with disengagement of the U.S. from Europe. In this sense *the view of the candidate countries is a mirror image of the old Soviet – and now to some extent Russian – view that Europe without U.S. presence gives more room for manoeuvring to the Soviet Union and thus a better place.* The candidates are strongly of the view

[31] It is impossible to address the basics of CESDP here. For my views on the topic in more details see "U.S.-EU Relations after the Introduction of the Euro and the Reinvention of European Security and Defence". *Perspectives,* summer 2001 (forthcoming).

that Europe is safer with the presence of the U.S., among others as it keeps Russia under control. It is probable that this view is shared by many EU-member-states as well.

Already at an early stage of the EU plans to bring about CESDP the candidates expressed their view clearly. Poland, among the basic principles of the development of European security and defence policy mentioned that "such arrangements, aimed at developing a European crisis response capability, should reinforce the transatlantic link and the USA presence in Europe and thereby stability and security on the continent. That makes it essential to see that they reflect the role of the Atlantic Alliance in the security sphere and its pivotal significance for the defence of the whole North Atlantic area..."[32] Hungary expressed its view somewhat more enigmatically: "The continued commitment to a firm transatlantic relationship and the strategic co-operation between NATO and the European Union are the prerequisites of the effective European crisis prevention."[33] After the Helsinki EU summit and the publication of the headline goals the four Visegrad countries declared that they perceive the Petersberg operations "as enhancing the Euro-Atlantic security, of which the North Atlantic Alliance is the cornerstone".[34]

The new members of NATO demonstrated the fundamental difference between a *de facto* non-aligned country and a member of the Atlantic Alliance: "Over a year after that memorable date of March 12, 1999, we can derive with satisfaction from the fact that we have managed to ensure for Poland the highest standard of security. Without it, all our other achievements and striving would have been burdened with the risk of impermanence..."[35] The Prime Minister of Hungary expressed it somewhat differently in relation to the Kosovo conflict: "Due to our fast NATO accession we have arrived at the outbreak of the warlike conflict not defenceless, lonely but as equal member of the strongest military alliance."[36] It is clear the new members of the Alliance regard their membership as symbolic arrival on their way to become a full-fledged member of the western security community.

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[32] Polish Position on the Development of European Security and Defence Policy, November 1999, p. 1.

[33] Hungary's position on European security and defence, November 1999, p. 1.

[34] Joint Declaration of the Chairmen of the Foreign Affairs, European Integration and Defence Committees of the Visegrad Four Countries adopted at their 5th Meeting, Bratislava, 26th to 28th of January 2000, p. 1. http://visegrad.org/events.php?kdy=2628april2000

[35] Geremek, Op. Cit. p. 1.

[36] Parlamenti vitanap: a miniszterelnök expozéja (29 April 1999) /Day of Debate in the Parliament: The exposé of the Prime Minister/, p. 1. http://www.meh.hu/Kormany/Kormanyfo/1999/04/990429.htm.

Despite the strong NATO commitment of both the first three East Central European member states and the candidates for membership in the Atlantic Alliance these countries do not want to challenge CESDP openly for a number of reasons. One, maybe the most important of them is that it would be unwise not to demonstrate commitment toward an organisation to which the country hopes to join. Furthermore, nobody knows whether the CESDP will turn out to be a success or a failure. It is impossible to predict whether due to a declining U.S. commitment to Europe CESDP will gain weight or not. The mixed signals of Washington during the last two years have certainly prevented the candidate countries to increase their effort in the CESDP. The candidates were giving in to expectations and offered their contributions to the EU Capabilities Commitment Conference held in November 2000. Eight of the ten candidates[37] offered smaller or larger contingents ranging from one thousand soldiers (Poland) down to a couple of dozens. Beyond the symbolic contribution eight East- Central European candidate countries have made, they all feel strongly about the right to participate in shaping those decisions that lead to putting an operation into practice. Some aims to achieve this co-operatively, others, notably Turkey, are determined to block the decision-making process if necessary. With reference to danger of mission creep and the rights Turkey enjoyed as associate member in the WEU it does not want to give its consent to the autonomous use of NATO assets and capabilities for EU military operations. This is certainly an important part of Turkish thinking on CESDP, a country in close vicinity of most conflict zones where CESDP could be invoked. There is another factor as well. It is understandable that Turkey, a country with no chance for EU membership in the coming decade, wants to get closer to the EU in areas where it has leverage. According to a Turkish foreign ministry official: "... we should establish a mechanism where all NATO and EU governments concerned could be represented throughout the critical stages of defence planning. ... non-EU European Allies should be able to discuss their contributions to the Headline Goal in the presence of all the countries concerned ... the ongoing process in the EU as regards the Headline Goal should be open to all non-EU Allies. This means participation in the planning, preparation, implementation and review processes of Headline Goal itself."[38] It is not surprising that other candidate countries do not support the position of Turkey. They are afraid in case NATO assets and capabilities are not offered to the EU for CESDP missions

[37] The two countries that refrained from taking a commitment were Bulgaria and Romania. In case of the latter it is clear the timing of the capabilities commitment conference was unfortunate as it
coincided with parliamentary and presidential elections. In case of the former the invitation to contribute arrived late it did not leave time for serious professional consideration and was thus not regarded a serious offer by Minister of Defence Noev, former NATO ambassador of his country.

[38] Amb. Sadi Calislar, Director General for International Security Affairs of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Turkey on 18 January 2001.

automatically there will be more temptation to develop autonomous planning capabilities in the EU. This may bring EU – NATO/U.S. de-coupling closer – an idea none of them favour.

It is premature to tell what direction the evolution of the CESDP will take in the years to come. The current heavy emphasis on the military side of conflict prevention and management is not necessarily the one that fills in a niche. The shortage of competence and resources is far more eloquent in the areas of international policing as well as other non-military forms of conflict management. Thus a reorientation of the project in that direction would certainly be welcome by the East-Central European countries among others in order to better contribute to European security and avoid unnecessary duplication with NATO. This would make it possible for them not to face a painful choice between their Trans-Atlantic and European allegiances. It is clear that in this early stage of the project it would be fairly difficult to adapt to it anyway. When it is further exacerbated by the project's elusive character and the situation is aggravated by that one presidency country puts a clearly different emphasis than the other this is nearly impossible. It is suffice to quote a French official: "The real problem is the Swedish presidency... Sweden is changing the terms of reference agreed at the Nice summit last year by dealing much more with NATO"[39] Most probably similar statements will be aired later about the selection of priority by one presidency country or the other. The insufficiently clear orientation of CESDP makes adaptation difficult even for the "best pupils" among the candidate countries.

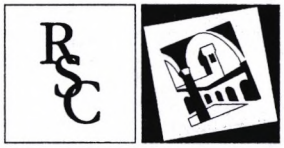
5. Conclusions

The countries of East-Central Europe consider their integration in conservative categories based on boxes. In this system the Atlantic Alliance is the security provider. The European Union is not regarded as a security institution and beyond the weight of its components it is not supposed to be a security giant. The countries of the region do not have any problem with the declaratory part of common foreign and security policy. They are at ease to be associated with it. They are somewhat dissatisfied with their current level of integration in CFSP just a few years away from membership.

The security concept of the East-Central European countries is based on the need to combine conflict management and collective defence capabilities. Consequently, only those security institutions can count with the support of the EU candidates that can provide for all parts of the spectrum. The Petersberg tasks as declared by the Amsterdam Treaty stop short of this. In case the EU

[39] Judy Dempsey, EU defence policy 'being hampered', *Financial Times,* 30 March 2001.

goes beyond its current confines transatlantic solidarity is endangered if not the EU will be in the position of being unable to satisfy the security needs of the region. It is for this reason that the support of the candidate countries will remain lukewarm for the CESDP. A more clear orientation of the project and the promise that it would be put into practice could certainly contribute to a bit more support for CESDP in East-Central Europe. Moving from declaratory policy to operational activity represents a quantum leap for the EU and it is no less important for the candidate countries either.



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