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The European Union and Its Changing Periphery: Stabilisation, Integration, Partnership

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The record

Over the past decade in particular, the European Union has pursued at least *two* distinct approaches (and policies) towards its immediate neighbourhood:

- an approach aiming, first and foremost, at *stabilisation*, mainly based on fostering regional cooperation and broad partnerships ('regionality'); and
- an approach aiming at (instead of or in addition to) *integration* proper, i.e., at bringing neighbour countries directly into the EU through a bilateral process based on strict 'conditionality'.

Stabilisation

The *first policy approach* – stabilisation as a goal, regionality as a means – is typical of the security policy of any regional power. It was first tentatively adopted *vis-à-vis* the crumbling Yugoslav Federation in the early 1990s, but with very little success¹. It was then applied to the Central European countries and the Baltic States - the Balladur Pact of 1993-95 (the first Stability Pact proper) - and with a significant degree of success in both cases. However, in South-Eastern Europe, the same approach bore little or no fruit until it was somewhat blended with the second

¹ For a tentative overview cf. G.Edwards, "The Potential and Limits of CFSP: The Yugoslav Example", in E.Regelsberger et al. (eds.), *Foreign Policy of the European Union: From EPC to CFSP and Beyond*, (Lynne Rienner, Boulder-London, 1997), pp. 173-195.

one, which instead envisages integration as a goal and conditionality as a means. Furthermore, between 1994 and 1995 the EU has signed so-called Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) with Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus. With the exception of Belarus (due to objections on the EU side to President Lukashenka's policies), the agreements have been ratified by all countries and taken effect: they combine a Western interest in bilateral political cooperation/dialogue on democratic foundations with an Eastern interest in economic cooperation, managed through the Union's TACIS programme. Strictly speaking, however, they cannot be considered as aimed at *stabilising* the countries concerned. The PCAs with Ukraine and Russia were supplemented by a 'Common Strategy' for each, approved in June and December 1999 respectively, in the context of the Union's common foreign and security policy (CFSP). Neither, however, adds much to the existing policies nor envisages eventual EU membership². More recently, Moldova has been included in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe as a recipient country, although it does not entirely belong there geographically or politically: in fact, the dividing line between the Russian and the Ottoman Empires ran through its current territory – and still does, in a way, with Transnistria basically cut off into what could now qualify as a small 'Balkan' country.

The Euro-Mediterranean Conference initiated in 1995 – now more commonly referred to as the Barcelona Process – can be considered a by-product of this approach in that it was (and is) not meant to lead to full integration into the EU in the first place. Arguably, it was rather meant to prevent that, at least for the foreseeable future, by

² In December 2000 the Secretary General of the EU Council and High Representative for the CFSP, Javier Solana, released an "evaluation report" on the three 'Common Strategies' hitherto adopted by the Union that sounded fairly critical of the method and the substance of the exercise (introduced with the Amsterdam Treaty): see "Common Strategies Report", repr.in A.Missiroli (ed.), *Coherence for European Security Policy: Debates – Cases – Assessments*, Occasional Paper 27, WEU-ISS, Paris, May 2001, Annexe E, pp.80-86 (www.iss-eu.org). For specific evaluations cf. G.Sasse, "The EU Common Strategy on Ukraine: A Response to Ukraine's 'pro-European Choice'?", in A.Lewis (ed.), *The EU & Ukraine: Neighbours, Friends, Partners?*, (Federal Trust, London, 2002), pp.213-220, and H.Haukkala, S.Medvedev (eds.), *The EU Common Strategy on Russia: Learning the Grammar of CFSP*, (FIIA-IEP, Helsinki-Berlin, 2001).

setting up an alternative form of partnership based on economic/trade cooperation and a rather unqualified political 'basket'. Yet the lack of solid incentives (the 'carrots', as opposed to the 'sticks') on the Union's side, coupled with the heterogeneity of the Mediterranean partners involved in the Euromed framework (let alone the different priorities of the EU member states), has made it less and less effective: the relevant 'Common Strategy' adopted in June 2000 says next to nothing as to the way ahead in the process³.

Finally, over the years, the EU has set up a wide array of multilateral and bi-regional tables – the so-called 'group-to-group' diplomacy – with areas far and away from the European continent: Central and Latin America, Asia (the ASEM framework) and Africa, not to mention the peculiar world of the former European colonies that are tied to the EU through preferential trade arrangements, the so-called ACP (African, Caribbean, and Pacific) countries⁴. None of the latter properly fits in the neighbourhood policy of the Union, although they shape a wider web of relations based on historical and economic ties.

I. a. The first Pact on Stability was launched by the then French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur in the Spring of 1993 as an instrument of preventive diplomacy in post-communist Europe: its main objective was to set out in detail and implement some basic principles with regard to borders and minorities in the area and to organise and coordinate the action of the institutions involved, especially the EU, the CSCE/OSCE, and the Council of Europe. It also built on the web of multilateral sub-regional relations established through the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), launched in late 1992 by the Visegrad group and later extended to fellow applicants, and other partnerships in the area, all partly supported also by the EU's Interreg-CBC programme. In December 1993 the EU Council approved a CFSP 'joint action' to that end, and in May 1994 a conference was held in Paris with the participation of the nine

European countries that had hitherto signed the Europe Agreements (Slovenia would follow suit in 1996-97). Regional round tables were organised in the following months, and a concluding Conference took place in Paris, once again, in March 1995. The resulting Stability Pact consisted of a political declaration and about 100 bilateral agreements, the most tangible one being a treaty between Slovakia and Hungary regarding the Magyar minority in Slovakia. It included also a series of projects on regional cross-border economic, cultural and environmental cooperation to be funded by the PHARE programme (*Pologne-Hongrie - Assistance à la restructuration des économies*: the acronym borrows the French word for 'lighthouse'). The Pact's follow-up would be handled by the OSCE and would have generated a mixed record: on the one hand, of the approximately 50 bilateral agreements or arrangements concluded between EU member states and the Middle European associates/candidates, only half have been registered with the OSCE; on the other hand, the OSCE – and notably its Commissioner for national minorities – has since played an important (if hardly visible) role in advising the Baltic States on how to solve the thorny issue of Russian-speaking minorities inside their borders⁵. On the whole, however, it is fair to say that the relative effectiveness of the first Pact on Stability was mainly due to the 'golden carrot' of EU membership, that is, to the early overlap of the second approach: in other words, full integration and direct conditionality have mostly superseded (for the better) the initially more limited scope of the first approach – including that of CEFTA, that by 1997 had more or less achieved its goal of creating a tariff-free area for trade in industrial goods and therefore came to constitute the starting point for the countries' accession to the Union's single market.

³ See M.Maresceau, E.Lannon (eds.), *The EU Enlargement and Mediterranean Strategies: A Comparative Analysis*, (Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2001).

⁴ See M.Holland, *The European Union and the Third World*, (Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2002), and more generally C.Piening, *Global Europe: The European Union in World Affairs*, (Lynne Rienner, Boulder-London, 1997).

⁵ On this phase cf. K.E.Smith, *The Making of EU Foreign Policy: The Case of Eastern Europe*, (St.Martin's Press, New York, 1999); and P.Luif, "The European Union's Projection of Security and Stability onto Central and Eastern Europe", in Luif (ed.), *Security in Central and Eastern Europe: Problems – Perceptions – Policies*, (Braumüller, Wien, 2001), pp.307-342. For a broader approach and a thorough analysis of the various sub-regional groupings and initiatives cf. A.Cottey (ed.), *Sub-regional Cooperation in the New Europe: Building Security, Prosperity and Solidarity from the Barents to the Black Sea*, (East-West Institute, New York, 1999).

I. b. This may help understand why the so-called 'Royaumont Process' has had, instead, such a modest impact on the EU's immediate periphery. At the suggestion of Brussels and again based on a French initiative, a "process of stability and good-neighbourly relations" in South-Eastern Europe was inaugurated at the Royaumont meeting, near Paris, in December 1995. It tried to take into account the experience of the previous Stability Pact and the latest developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but it lacked substance in that it failed to address the key issues (notably, borders and minorities) and limited itself to promoting dialogue and better understanding among governmental and non-governmental actors in the region. On top of that – but understandably so, at that point in time – the Process did not establish any link between policy change and future association to the EU, thus offering no 'carrots' whatsoever to the countries in question. Much as the Union went as far as to appoint a special coordinator, in November 1997, the Royaumont Process never took off the ground.

Only in the summer of 1999 - in the wake of the fourth consecutive war of Yugoslav succession, so to speak – did the Union change its approach by offering a framework for economic and political cooperation between the Fifteen (plus other international organisations) and the countries of SEE that put some solid carrots on the table. However, it stopped short of creating a direct 'conditionality', i.e. an explicit link between compliance and good behaviour on the one hand and the accession process on the other. This is probably why the jury is still out on whether the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (SPSEE) – in which the EU acts as a coordinator and facilitator - can be considered a) a fundamental policy shift as regards the membership prospects of Balkan countries, or b) an effective means to either end (stabilisation and/or integration). On the one hand, the SPSEE also encompasses countries – such as Bulgaria and Romania – that have already signed Europe Agreements (EA) and started accession negotiations (let alone a country like Moldova, hardly a Balkan country by any standard), thus blurring the possible nature of the Pact as a more or less explicit anti-chamber of the Union; on the other hand, since late 2000 the Union has autonomously set in motion a so-called Stabilisation and Association Process meant to

foster peace, prosperity and democracy in the western Balkans: it sets out elements of policy that, by resorting to a 'contractual' relationship between the EU and the 5-6 relevant states or entities (Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, plus Kosovo), tries to bridge the gap between 'simple' stabilisation and 'full' integration and supplements them with an ad hoc programme called CARDS⁶. To date, only two countries (Macedonia in 2001 and Croatia in 2002) have signed so-called Stabilisation and Association Agreements (SAA) with the EU: their successful implementation is a prerequisite for any further assessment of their respective prospects of accession. In other words, the maximum status the SAP can award is that of 'potential candidate'. Meanwhile, the EU has decided temporarily to 'freeze' the drafting of the fourth CFSP 'Common Strategy' envisaged after Amsterdam, notably on the Balkan region.

Such ambivalence over the final outcome of the process is understandable, especially in light of the past instability of the region: it would be the first time, in fact, that certified failure (rather than prospective success) is rewarded with EU membership. At the same time, such ambivalence is partly due also to a fundamental uncertainty (and a certain degree of internal divisions) over the future geographical and functional scope of the European Union as such, for which the Balkans are an important test-case and precedent – an uncertainty that deeply affects the policy of the EU towards its changing periphery.

Integration

By contrast, the *second policy approach* – based on integration as a goal and conditionality as a means - has been much more successful. Actually, enlarging the EC/EU has been, and still is, a quintessential security policy. It is a security policy by other means, so to speak, and a security policy in its own right. By other means, because extending the Union's norms, rules, opportunities and constraints to the successive applicants has made instability and conflict on the continent

⁶ For an overall assessment see M. Brusi, N. Galer, "South-Eastern Europe and the EU: Problems, Actors, Policies", in W. van Meurs (ed.), *Beyond EU Enlargement*, vol. II, The Agenda of Stabilisation for South-Eastern Europe, (Bertelsmann Foundation Publishers, Gütersloh, 2001), pp.45-71.

ever less likely. And it is a security policy in its own right, too, because the entrants have brought in interests and skills that have broadened the scope of common policies and strengthened the EC/EU as an international actor.

This was the case with the first enlargement of the European Community, which incorporated the British (and partially Danish) outreach overseas and gradual Anglo-Irish détente via Brussels. It was all the more so with the Southern enlargements of the 1980s, that paved the way to the successful completion of post-authoritarian transitions to democracy, a significant reinforcement of the EC's presence in the Mediterranean basin, and an equally significant extension of European influence in the Americas. Finally, the 1995 enlargement of the newly created EU brought more stability to the Baltic 'rim' and strengthened the Union's drive to cooperate with the UN and the OSCE.

The current enlargement, however, is nothing like the previous ones. It is fundamentally different in size, scope, and character: going from an EU at 15 to an EU, say, at 25 will mean an increase of population of 20% but an increase in GDP of only 4%, coupled with an increase of 'small' members from the current 10 to 19. It is therefore likely to change radically the institutions, the policies, even the nature of the Union⁷. It will probably affect also the way in which the EU projects itself externally: perhaps not so much so in terms of its common foreign and security policy, to which the current applicants are expected to add little in terms of interests, inclinations, and capabilities. Much more so, however, in terms of neighbourhood policy, stretching from border issues (permeability vs. control) and the rights of transnational minorities to the ultimate *finalité géographique* of the EU⁸.

II. a. It is worth noting here that the process started out relatively early: PHARE was created in December 1989 to support the economic reform process in Poland and Hungary, and subsequently extended and adjusted. The Europe

(Association) Agreements were signed in early 1992 by the Visegrad countries (then Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia), soon followed by Romania and Bulgaria, the Baltics and, finally, Slovenia. However, only at the Copenhagen European Council of June 1993 was the direct link between association and (future) membership made clear and explicit, thus giving the Agreements a wide-ranging and hitherto unique scope. That included 'conditionality' as spelt out in the so-called 'Copenhagen criteria', thus setting a series of benchmarks for the opening, first, then the successful completion of entry negotiations. At that point in time, in fact, it was widely assumed that the next enlargement of the Union would be quite selective in the first instance, and the criteria served the purpose of drawing a relatively objective functional roadmap for EU membership. Therefore, it should come as no particular surprise that the Luxembourg European Council in December 1997 earmarked only six applicants for the opening of accession negotiations: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic (that had also been invited to join NATO a few months earlier), Estonia, Slovenia, and Cyprus. Only two years later, upon pressure from some member States, did the Helsinki European Council extend the procedure to the five remaining applicants plus Malta and award Turkey (the longest-awaiting associated country) the status of 'candidate', though one not yet ripe for opening accession negotiations⁹.

II. b. In the end, therefore, the integration-conditionality approach has fundamentally taken over in most of the region, not least because the tension and the potential contradiction with the stabilisation-regionality approach were damaging the over-arching security goal (stabilisation) by triggering a 'beauty contest' among the applicants, fostering a dangerous sense of exclusion among those who lagged behind, and thus potentially undermining the existing sub-regional cooperation. Actually, such a risk cannot be ruled out once and for all even now that the enlargement endgame is on and the process is about to come full circle with the European

⁷ For a general overview cf. G.Avery, F.Cameron, The Enlargement of the European Union, (Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, 1998).

⁸ See A.Missiroli (ed.), "Bigger EU, Wider CFSP, Stronger ESDP? The View from Central Europe", Occasional Paper 34, EU-ISS, Paris, April 2002 (www.iss-eu.org).

⁹ See U.Sedelmeyer, H.Wallace, "Eastern Enlargement", in H.Wallace, W.Wallace (eds.), Policy-Making in the European Union, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000 (IV ed.)), pp.427-460. For an update on the current state of play cf. G.Avery, "Endgame for EU Enlargement", *Prospect*, July 2002, pp.54-57.

Council to be held in December 2002 (“from Copenhagen to Copenhagen”). The opposite is true, as also the recent controversies over the Hungarian law on Magyars living abroad and especially the so-called ‘Benes decrees’ in post-war Czechoslovakia have shown, there remains a potential for sub-regional conflict (over minority issues in particular) that perhaps only the EU norms and obligations can help overcome¹⁰. On the one hand, the fact that Romania and Bulgaria may miss the forthcoming wave of accessions may create some problems, especially if their eventual integration takes longer than foreseen due to the aftershocks of the first wave inside the Union and the likely repercussions in the two countries (likely to be joined on the waiting list by Croatia). On the other hand, the problem will not necessarily go away once the current enlargement process is completed and all the applicants brought into the EU fold. New minority and border issues are bound to emerge, in fact, this time with the new ‘periphery’ of the enlarged EU.

Between integration and partnership

The two approaches described above have hardly corresponded to policies that were fully and/or thoroughly conceived from the outset. On the contrary, they have been rather reactive than proactive, and a certain measure of ambiguity over the final outcome has always been there, fostered also by different visions of enlargement among the current member states. Over time, however, it has become evident that such ambiguity has limits: unlike NATO - that with its Partnership for Peace programme has managed quite successfully to blur the difference between members and non-members, thus distributing security benefits without significant institutional costs - the Union has serious problems in doing that effectively without clarifying (internally as well as externally) the ultimate goal of its

¹⁰ See H.Grabbe, “The Benes Decrees: Implications for EU Enlargement”, Briefing Note, CER, London, June 2002 (www.cer.org.uk); “A Spectre over Central Europe”, *The Economist*, 17 August 2002, pp.23-24. More generally cf. E.Berg, W.van Meurs, “Legacies of the Past, Ethnic and Territorial Conflict Potentials”, in I.Kempe (ed.), *Beyond EU Enlargement, vol.I, The Agenda of Direct Neighbourhood for Eastern Europe*, (Bertelsmann Foundation Publishers, Gütersloh, 2001), pp.129-163.

partnerships and regional policies. And, unlike the OSCE and/or the Council of Europe, the EU cannot water down its nature and scope for the sake of extending its membership: it would lose its main strength and, consequently, its very appeal¹¹.

Differentiation

On the one hand, therefore, the Union needs to assess how far it can stretch its present structure and policies, both geographically and functionally: this may lead to the explicit introduction of forms of *internal* differentiation in order to accommodate potentially conflicting demands. The current institutional review process (the European Convention, followed by another intergovernmental conference) may well serve this purpose. In addition, a debate on the ultimate conceivable border of the wider Union – the *limes*, so to speak - may prove useful, if not conclusive. In fact, art. 237 of the Rome Treaty stated that “any European State” could apply to become a member of the EEC. Since Copenhagen and since the Amsterdam Treaty (art. 49 cons. TEU), ‘European-ness’ has been combined with conditionality. Since the Kosovo War, finally, the prospect of EU membership has been floated in areas of the continent that had been hitherto ruled out, from the Balkans to Ukraine. Lately, in the aftermath of its rapprochement with NATO, even Russia has been quoted as being a potential future candidate, although it is much more likely to remain an external (if ever closer) partner. Perhaps it is high time the Union addressed the issue in a more stringent manner and devised coherent policies to solve it¹².

On the other hand, the EU should also conceive of forms of partnership and cooperation (bi- and/or multi-lateral) that may stop short of full

¹¹ For comparisons between the different enlargements of European organizations over the past years see S.Croft et al., *The Enlargement of Europe*, (Manchester University Press, Manchester-New York, 1999); and A.Hyde-Price, “The Antinomies of European Security: Dual Enlargement and the Reshaping of the European Order”, *Contemporary Security Policy*, XXI (2000), No. 3, pp.139-167.

¹² For an interesting overview cf. T.Christiansen et al., “Fuzzy Politics Around Fuzzy Borders: The European Union’s ‘Near Abroad’”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, XXXV (2000), n.4, pp.389-415.

eventual integration but nonetheless bring about a sufficient degree of cooperation and stabilisation. The difficulty lies in the fact that the most effective regional policy tool at the disposal of the Union to this end has been conditionality: conditionality, however, really works only when eventual membership is at stake. When it is not, it proves a much weaker instrument, as the experience of the past decade has shown. Therefore, if membership is the 'golden carrot' but is not at play, what 'silver' and/or 'bronze' carrots can be devised for the regional power EU to carry out effective policies in its (old and new) periphery? Probably, a certain degree of *external* differentiation with respect to the various areas and countries involved has to be put in place: not a differentiation by accident and reactive improvisation, as displayed by the current array of diverse institutional and contractual relations (from the PCAs to the SAP, from Euromed to other formats), but one that takes adequately into account the peculiarities of the actors and issues involved.

III. a. First of all, the Union will certainly have to sort out its collective attitude *vis-à-vis* Turkey: the constructive ambiguity that has dominated so far on both sides will have to be overcome sooner rather than later: in one direction (full membership, with a roadmap and a tentative deadline) or the other (structured bilateral partnership). The EU decision over Cyprus' entry may well become the catalyst for that. In fact, Turkey is demanding an official date for starting pre-accession negotiations and a credible roadmap: and, to date, all the countries that have started negotiations with the EC/EU - with the exception of Norway, but out of an autonomous national decision - have ended up as full members. The endgame, therefore, is approaching, and its outcome will have repercussions on several tables. The European conference that was invented in 1997 to accommodate Turkey's peculiar status has proved an empty shell, and the Customs Union has not entirely got off the ground yet. At the same time, Turkey is an active NATO ally, is engaged on the ground in the Balkans, and is a crucial partner in the Middle East, the Gulf, and the Caucasus. The structural imbalance between its strategic value and its economic weakness has to be addressed with instruments capable of meeting the specific (and at times contradictory)

demands that come from both Turkey itself and the eastern Mediterranean region at large¹³.

III. b. As regards Norway, Iceland and Switzerland, the decision between structured partnership and full membership lies exclusively with them. All three countries are already *de facto* members of the single market through the European Economic Area. Norway and Iceland are also part of 'Schengenland' through the Nordic Passport Union. Finally, their acceptance by the EU citizens is very high, as the Eurobarometer polls keep showing. In this peculiar case, in other words, there is nothing new to be put on the table: all the elements are there already.

III. c. As explained above, the jury is still out as far as the (remaining) Balkan countries are concerned, namely Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia, Albania, and Macedonia. Some of them are also candidates for NATO membership, and the expansion of the Alliance may somewhat influence EU policy towards them. However, the crucial issue here is whether and, if so, on what conditions full EU membership is both conceivable and acceptable on the Union's side. If it is conceivable (and all the countries in question meet the 'European-ness' criterion), it has to be made also acceptable: first through a stringent scrutiny over the implementation of the SAP; then through a closely monitored roadmap to eventual accession. However, there will remain doubts as to whether the whole process can overcome the low acceptance most Balkan countries enjoy among EU citizens, which may eventually play a decisive role. In fact, integrating countries whose social and economic development is lagging and marred by criminal networks, democratic credentials unproven, and administrative practices pre-modern, is a daunting challenge. A possible fallback position could be either (in the event of accession) an ever increasing internal differentiation in the enlarged Union - something very close to a multi-tier EU - or a very solid 'silver carrot', encompassing, e.g., a brand new status of 'associate member' that would give both tangible benefits (customs

¹³ For an analysis of the issues involved see A. Missiroli, "EU-NATO Cooperation in Crisis Management: No Turkish Delight for ESDP", *Security Dialogue*, XXXIII (2002), n.1, pp.9-26.

union, economic and administrative assistance) and a European 'identity' (*photo de famille*, structured political partnership) without forcing onto either side the risks of an undesired or unaffordable membership. In a way, the choice is between further enlargement proper, with all its foreseeable costs on both sides, and a sort of enlargement 'by other means'. At the same time, again, it may be in the short-term interest of the Union's security policy to postpone such a choice as long as possible in order to exploit all the potential of the 'golden carrot'.

III. d. Once the current enlargement process is completed, the wider EU will automatically acquire some new neighbours, starting with Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus. To a certain extent, some of the dilemmas illustrated above for the Balkan countries may apply also to the three westernmost members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), much as they differ from one another in terms of history, size, and potential problems, they are all 'European', at least geographically, but they have a long way on their path to 'Europeanisation'. Furthermore, Ukraine and (though less explicitly) Moldova have manifested their interest in becoming, one day, EU members, while Belarus has not. At all events, the challenge for the Union is to try and disconnect its two main virtues in the eyes of most of the neighbouring countries, namely it being both a vehicle for change and a potential end-goal. This implies conceiving of an approach that conveys a sense of inclusion in 'Europe' separate from the end-state of full EU membership, while working to foster the kind of change that may make it possible at some point in the future, given appropriate circumstances, to consider this very membership. This means, in other words, a reversal of emphasis, stressing the process of adaptation to rather than the end-goal of integration in the EU structures and policies. What the Union could sensibly do, in the meantime, is increase the eastern neighbours' awareness of membership requirements, and foster ever more decisively the process of democratisation, state consolidation, administrative reform, and economic liberalization. Both ideas would contribute to stabilising the eastern 'rim' of the enlarged EU and facilitate their gradual entry into the European 'mainstream'.

This said, the peculiarity of the three Eastern 'new neighbours' - as distinct from all other potential members and partners - is their relationship with (and dependency on) Russia: as such, it may shape a sort of 'eastern dimension' of the EU, namely one based on a set of trilateral relations in which those countries represent, to varying degrees, an interface between Moscow and the Union and an explicit element of their direct bilateral partnership. In the case of Belarus, its likely eventual inclusion into the Russian Federation would clearly simplify the picture, also regarding the issue of Kaliningrad, while Moldova's Russian connection is mainly linked to the issue of seceding Transnistria. As for Ukraine, its willingness to 'go west' still is not matched by consistent domestic reforms while its strategic position in the energy supply market makes it a crucial partner for both Russia and the EU. The EU could therefore envisage a neighbourhood policy to the East including two main components: one would be the reinforcement of links with each of the three countries, with due regard to their specificity; the other would be the development of a regional approach - an *Ostpolitik* in its own right - that would encompass all three and place them in the context of EU-Russia relations¹⁴.

III. e. Finally, the Barcelona Process may have to be streamlined and redefined, with a more realistic but also more tangible prospect of structured partnership for the Mediterranean countries, possibly including a certain degree of differentiation among them. Of the 12 partners in the Barcelona Process, in fact, three are already involved in the current enlargement (Cyprus, Malta, and Turkey), one tried - not long ago but in vain - to be accepted as a potential candidate (Morocco), and 2 are involved in a bilateral conflict (Israel and the Palestinian Authority) while being both important EU trade partners and aid recipients. In other words, the Euromed partners can hardly be considered as a single and homogeneous unit: eastern Mediterranean, the

¹⁴ See I.Kempe, W.van Meurs, "Strategic Challenges and Risks of EU Eastern Enlargement", in Kempe (ed.), Beyond EU Enlargement, (quot. fn.10), pp.11-43; S.White et al., "Enlargement and the New Outsiders", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, XL (2002), n.1, pp.135-153; and C.Guicherd, The Enlarged EU's Eastern Border: Integrating Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova in the European Project, (SWP-Studie 20, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin, Juni 2002).

Israel/Palestine compound, Mashrek and Maghreb are distinct sub-regional units, each with its own specific features. Having this in mind, much can still be improved on the existing programmes and their implementation, including the extremely delicate security aspects. Failing a shared and credible all-encompassing rationale, however, it may be wiser to envisage a set of targeted regional programmes - silver and/or bronze carrots - aimed at addressing common as well as distinctive issues¹⁵.

The EU and its peripheries

A policy towards the periphery is an essential feature/requirement of any regional power, and the EU claims to be(come) a fully-fledged one. At the same time, the Union conceives of itself also as an international actor, at least on the economic and (to a lesser extent) diplomatic front. That does not mean that it has the ambition to be a global power in its own right nor that it can/will operate worldwide across the policy board, especially as regards military intervention and strategic issues such as non-proliferation and energy supply, on the contrary. If one looks for instance at the aid flows emanating from the EC/EU, it becomes clear that the range of its interests and partnerships is rather selective and corresponds to that of a regional power with some clearly identifiable overseas interests: in 2000, out of the €12 billion of the Union's aid budget (EC plus European Development Fund), roughly €2 billion went to the Central/Middle European candidates, €1 billion to emergency, humanitarian and food aid (mostly directed to Africa), €1 billion to the Mediterranean, and €500 million each to the CIS, Latin America and Asia. Insofar as it is directed overseas, however, EU aid mostly ends up in ACP countries. And the picture is more or less the same, with marginal nuances, if one looks at the bilateral aid given by individual EU member states. This shows that the Union has a geographical periphery (the immediate neighbourhood) as well as a historical/economic periphery, which basically coincides with the post-colonial links and preferential partnerships of its member states. As for security policy proper, the current provisions

for the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) envisage a virtual geographical scope for EU military crisis management (up to approx. 4,000 Km from Brussels) that roughly covers the present immediate neighbourhood - starting with the Balkans but touching only lightly the CIS proper and the Southern Mediterranean shore - but does not rule out, at least in principle, also the 'outer' periphery, as past discussions over deployment in the African Great Lakes or East Timor prove. Furthermore, soldiers and officials from EU individual member states are already engaged in multilateral peace support operations in the Balkans or in those parts of the wider world that embody some broader European and/or national interest.

In other words, there seems to be after all a discernible pattern for, and a substantial geographical overlap between, the Union's various external policies: trade, aid, diplomacy, and crisis management proper. What still lacks is a more streamlined and coherent approach, especially to its immediate periphery, after a decade of mostly reactive decisions and constructive ambiguities. To give just a practical example: does it make sense, once the current enlargement process is completed, to preserve the current rigid separation (also in bureaucratic and procedural terms) between the Interreg, PHARE, CARDS, and TACIS programmes, thus perpetuating the tension between the two approaches analysed above?

The forthcoming enlargement, coupled with the growing demand for a more active foreign policy, could hopefully force a more systematic approach onto the relevant policymakers. In terms of external policies, it will add next to nothing to the outer periphery - none of the applicants, with the partial exception of Turkey (Middle East, Caucasus, and Central Asia), have an imperial past or extra-European ramifications - but plenty to the immediate one, which they were part of in the past and will be mostly in contact with in the future. Indeed, the most important contribution of the new member states to the Union's policies is expected to be in this domain, especially as regards the 'Eastern dimension' and the *Ostpolitik*: an interesting test-case ahead of time, so to speak, has been the controversy over the transit to and from the Kaliningrad enclave.

¹⁵ See F.Tanner (ed.), The European Union as a Security Actor in the Mediterranean, (Zürcher Beiträge zur Sicherheitspolitik and Konfliktforschung, n.61, Zürich, 2001); and D.Schmid, "Optimiser le processus de Barcelone", Occasional Paper 36, EU-ISS, Paris, juillet 2002 (www.iss-eu.org).

As for the global dimension, much will depend on the extent to which the CFSP/ESDP turns into a driver of European policy at large and, therefore, commits the member states to pooling interests and capabilities that go well beyond - for some of them at least - the immediate periphery of the present (and foreseeable) Union.