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Enlargement Fatigue in the European Union: From Enlargement to Many Unions

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Summary

For a long time, enlargement has been considered one of the EU's most successful policy instruments. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was created in anticipation of the fifth enlargement round in order to provide an answer for the EU in its relations with its new neighbours. The dual policies of enlargement and ENP were conceptualised as distinct EU strategies. Recent EU documents, discourses and events show that due to a certain enlargement fatigue the originally clear separation between EU enlargement and ENP is become vaguer, to the visible disadvantaging of enlargement. In addition, there is trend towards the creation of different regional cooperation forms for the area surrounding the EU. These represent a new approach towards the two policies and lead to alternative formations in the EU's neighbourhood or intermediate steps to enlargement. The driving force of these new dynamics is the scepticism affecting the EU's citizens, mostly as a result of a lack of communication regarding the EU's policies in this field

Introduction

Since its origins in 1957 the European Union (EU) has been enlarged in five rounds. Generally, enlargement has been considered a European 'success story'. Following the completion of the last round in 2007, however, the unquestionably positive overall assessment of enlargement gave way to scepticism. The so-called 'enlargement fatigue' became a critical issue in the discourse of EU institutions and member states and especially affected public opinion. There has been a shift in the official assessment of enlargement as a success story to an emphasis on enlargement fatigue. Even stakeholders that used to be in favour of the EU's enlargement are becoming more cautious in their discourse, avoiding too enthusiastic expressions. This is where the narrative of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) as the EU's 'new' success story began. This working paper outlines how two initially distinct policies –enlargement and ENP– became increasingly blurred, resulting in the establishment of new regional forms of cooperation in which they merge in the form of "unions": Mediterranean, Black Sea and Eastern Partnership.

This Working paper analyses the possible answers to this enlargement fatigue. First, it outlines the genesis of the EU's enlargement strategy. Then, it sketches the EU's response to its new neighbourhood following the fifth enlargement and shows how the ENP originated, analysing the relation between enlargement and ENP. In a third step, it provides an overview of the recently developed "unions" around the EU in relation to enlargement and the ENP, showing how they are tending to merge. Finally, it draws attention to the impossibility of future enlargement without an institutional consolidation, focusing especially on communication with the public. The positions of the EU's institutions, member states and general public are taken into account in the analysis and due importance is given to official EU documents and the discourse of the various EU member states.[1]

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[1] Concerning the positioning of the EU institutions, the sources that have been used contain the European Commissions (COM) yearly Enlargement Strategies 2005- 2008, the Commission's communication on ENP between 2003-2007, the European Parliament's (EP) resolutions and plenary debates and the Council conclusions on the same topics. The positions of the Member States (MS) are taken from several discourses and the publics attitudes are excerpted from the Eurobarometer.

EU Enlargement: From Success Story to Fatigue

Success Story: A Continent's Reunification
The EU has expanded continuously throughout its history of over 50 years. Enlargement from the original six member states –The Benelux, Germany, France and Italy– in 1957 to the present EU of 27 members was achieved in five rounds,[2] with the last and biggest round being completed in two stages. In the first, eight Eastern European states[3] plus Cyprus and Malta entered the EU on 1 May 2004. In the second, on 1 January 2007, the fifth enlargement round was completed with the admission of Bulgaria and Rumania. This allowed the EU to welcome around 30 million new citizens, taking its current total population to approximately 490 million. The fifth enlargement round is generally considered an answer to the post Second World War division of Europe. The entry of 10 former communist states helped to overcome this division and ensure peace and stability on the European continent. EU officials, as well as political representatives from the member states, considered this fifth enlargement round a unique historical achievement for Europe and the EU.

In public discourse, official documents and political analyses enlargement policy was declared one of the most important and successful instruments of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CSFP) which the EU had at its disposal. The Commission's former President Romano Prodi described it in 2002 as 'one of the most successful and impressive political transformations of the twentieth century'.[4] It was unthinkable to offer any option other than EU membership to the countries in Central and Eastern Europe that had been subject to half a century of communism. Although the EU has not only promoters of enlargement to the East (such as Germany and the UK), no member state escaped the euphoria of the fifth enlargement. Even reluctant members such as France, the traditional brake to enlargement,[5] did not oppose the process. Driven by the historical necessity to reunify Europe, all five enlargement rounds have been presented as an overall victory and success stories, as confirmed by the encouraging wording in all official EU documents related to enlargement[6] and in the discourse of most member states.

The narrative of enlargement as a success story had already started by the end of the 1990s –long before the actual fifth enlargement took place–, in speeches, discourses and official EU statements. However, the narrative about current and possible future enlargements has changed and the overall positive assessment is no longer valid for future enlargements. The EU's institutions, member states and citizens appear to be less enthusiastic about welcoming new members and the creation of a Union larger than the current EU-27.[7] Even stakeholders that used to be very much in favour of enlargement, and who actively promoted it, are becoming more guarded in their discourse, avoiding overly enthusiastic and optimistic assessments and instead pointing to the challenges brought about by enlargement. Despite the great success of Enlargement, the EU is increasingly faced with what is written off as enlargement fatigue. The shift in rhetoric about enlargement being a success story to a more cautious and hesitant narrative is not only true when analysing public discourses but can also be found in official EU documents. In addition to clearly underlining the benefits and success of enlargement,[8] the documents analysed show a tendency towards also mentioning the shortcomings of enlargement, mainly because it has not been adequately explained to the public. The Polish Commissioner Danuta Hübner clearly admits in a speech that the EU does 'not communicate enough the advantages of being open, and we do not argue with sufficient rigour against the myths

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[2] 1st round 1973: Denmark, Ireland and the UK; 2nd round 1981: Greece; 3rd round 1986: Portugal and Spain; 4th round 1995: Austria, Finland and Sweden; 5th round, 1st part, 2004: Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia; 5th round, 2nd part, 2004: Bulgaria and Romania.
[3] Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.
[4] Prodi (2002), Speech/02/619, p. 3.
[5] Lipperta (2007); Sjursen & Romsloe (2006).
[6] European Commission (COM), Enlargement Strategies of the years 2005, 2006 and 2007.
[7] Eurobarometer (2006), Special Eurobarometer 255.
[8] 'EU enlargement is for all practical purposes already a reality and a remarkable achievement. It will be a success and the Union will come out stronger'; Verheugen (2003), Speech, p. 11.

and misperceptions about enlargement'. Furthermore, she asks herself in the same speech 'why, if the benefits outweigh the drawbacks, there is so much popular opposition to these processes'.[9] This is one of the many proofs of the shift from a highly enthusiastic positive view of enlargement as a success to a more neutral assessment.

According to the Eurobarometer (2006), the EU's citizens are not well informed about enlargement, with two-thirds confirming they do not feel well informed. Furthermore, they do not perceive enlargement as a win-win situation and consider that it only benefits the newly acceding members. The benefits and advantages for the old EU member states are not sufficiently explained and therefore less easy to identify with by their citizens. On the contrary, they are more concerned about the problems that enlargement could bring about –eg, to the economic situation in their own country– rather than being aware of any benefits.[10] This was already true for the 2004 enlargement and remains so for future enlargements. Thirty per cent of the EU citizens polled in 2006 were opposed to the entry of Croatia and 48% against the accession of Turkey. The Eurobarometer indicates that citizens who feel they are better informed are more in favour of enlargement than those who do not. Therefore it can be concluded that a lack of information affects attitudes towards enlargement and that non-consultation can be a reason for dissatisfaction, which translates into enlargement fatigue.

Up to and including the fifth enlargement round, the citizens of the EU have to a certain extent been excluded from the process. No direct approval in the form of referendums on the accession of new countries have taken place in the existing member states and the process has therefore not been decided with the active participation of citizens, but rather by the political elites in the EU's institutions. The political and historical necessity of enlargement was more important than the active search for a direct dialogue with the European public. Ultimately, the lack of enthusiasm for enlargement gave way to the questioning of its success.

Growing Fatigue: Necessity and Genesis of the Enlargement Strategy
Having completed its biggest and most significant enlargement round, voices arose in the EU claiming that a halt in further enlargements was necessary. Since the most recent enlargement in 2007, the question has again arisen as to whether this marks a break or even the end of the enlargement policy pursued by the EU so far. For now, there is no real consensus on where the EU's ultimate borders lie and if an EU with 30[11] or 35 member states could still function efficiently. The Commission's former President Romano Prodi pointed out that 'a debate in Europe to decide where the limits of Europe lie'[12] is needed. EU institutions and member states are now underlining that before more states can be integrated into the EU, reform of its institutions would be necessary. This would enable the Union to retain its capacity to act in the future. They point out that an unlimited enlargement of the EU-27 would seriously endanger the ability of its institutions to function and the efficiency of its decision-making processes. Proof of this newly hesitant attitude towards future enlargements is provided by the EU's institutions themselves, in their official documents (eg, 'we cannot enlarge *ad infinitum*'),[13] by the member states (with debates about possible referendums on enlargement) as well as from the European public at large as shown by the Eurobarometer opinion polls.

This hesitancy is one aspect of enlargement fatigue, a generic term for the citizens' fear of an uncertain future for the EU, their anxiety over continuous enlargements, their absence of conviction in the development of EU policies and their lack of enthusiasm and/or belief in the overall

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[9] Hübner (2006b), Speech/06/534, p. 8.
[10] Eurobarometer (2006), Special Eurobarometer 255 (2006), p. 74.
[11] EU-27 and the three current candidate countries: Croatia, Turkey and the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).
[12] Prodi (2002), Speech/02/619, p. 3.
[13] Ferrero-Waldner (2005), Speech/05/797, p. 3.

enlargement project. The European Commission's Enlargement Strategy of 2005 is an attempt to answer to this state of fatigue and mainly consists of three leading elements: (1) it provides the candidates with guidelines on their way towards EU accession –putting forward the agreed conditions for membership–; (2) it underlines the benefits of enlargement for both current and future member states; and (3) it emphasises the need to explain and communicate the process and objectives of enlargement to the public.

Besides its technical role in the enlargement process, the European Commission has also played a political role since the very first enlargement in 1973, which consisted of promoting enlargement on a supranational level. But only after more than 30 years of enlargement history has a strategy for this policy field been contemplated. Consequently, the strategy was opened for inter-institutional debate:[14] on the one hand in the European Parliament –so far the only direct representation of the European people and therefore a bridge between citizens and institutions–; on the other, in the European Council –that mainly represents the national interests of the EU's member states. The European Commission's first Enlargement Strategy dates from 2005 and has been published on a yearly basis since then. Over time the enlargement document has become more detailed and has grown in length.[15] In all existing Strategy Papers (SP) the historic dimension of the fifth enlargement round is positively recognised and its benefits are mentioned. The fifth round was said to have strengthened the unity of the European continent and to have brought peace, prosperity, stability, security and substantial economic benefits. The end of Europe's divisions and its contribution to the peaceful unification of the continent is described as the very essence of European integration. Enlargement is referred to as one of the EU's most powerful and successful policy tools. The soft power of the EU's enlargement policy is underlined as is said to have inspired a political transformation with democratisation and reforms (SP 2005-2007).

Despite all the benefits of enlargement and the positive description of it in the Strategy paper, the overall agreement on it being an unquestionable necessity has fallen apart after the fifth round. Especially in the case of the current enlargement agenda –including the Western Balkans and Turkey– the consensus on the need for enlargement is now lacking. In its 2005 Enlargement Strategy paper, the Commission has recognised that a renewed consensus on enlargement was needed. According to the Commission, the so called absorption capacity[16] –which refers to the completing of institutional reforms, the respect of budgetary limits and the proper functioning of common EU policies– would have to form the basis for this renewed consensus. In 2005, the Commission still called for the EU to continue with enlargement but to take into account the Union's absorption capacity. This renewed consensus was even more necessary as the referendums in France and the Netherlands on the European Constitutional Treaty[17] in June 2005 were a major setback to the overall European political project, including the possibility of further enlargement.[18] Some politicians quickly blamed this reaction on enlargement, when in fact the result had more to do with domestic dissatisfaction or with the consequences of globalisation than with the results of previous enlargement rounds.[19] After the referendums in France and the Netherlands, the EU

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[14] The Commission, in general, presents a Strategy Paper (SP), which has to be approved by the Council and has to be commented by the European Parliament. Through the draft of the common position of the Council the Commission decides on the agenda.

[15] Whereas the first Strategy paper from 2005 was 17 pages long, the 2008 one had 61 pages.

[16] The term 'absorption capacity' used in the Enlargement Strategy in 2005 was changed to 'integration capacity' in 2006 and has remained so since then.

[17] The main aims of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe were to replace the overlapping set of existing treaties that compose the Union's current legal basis, to codify human rights throughout the EU and to streamline decision-making. The Constitutional Treaty was signed in 2004 by representatives of the 27 member states but was subject to ratification by all. Most of them did so, by parliamentary ratification or by referendums, but France and the Netherlands rejected it in referendums.

[18] Ferrero-Waldner (2005), Speech/05/797.

[19] According to the Eurobarometer in the autumn of 2005 public opposition to enlargement played only a minor role in the electorate's rejection of the proposed European Constitutional Treaty.

entered a 'period of reflection' and the Commission put forward its so-called Plan D,[20] which aimed to open up a debate built on a clearer view of citizens' expectations. With its Plan D for debate, democracy and dialogue, the Commission not only intended to regain the trust of the EU's citizens but also wanted to fight against the rising enlargement fatigue. In 2006, the Council defined the renewed consensus and even based its Enlargement Strategy on three principles: consolidation of commitments, fair and rigorous conditionality and better communication with the public. These three principles were combined with the EU's capacity to integrate in order to give more substance to the Enlargement Strategy and to increase its visibility. The Enlargement Commissioner, Olli Rehn, underlined that the Enlargement Strategy was about implementing this new consensus: 'We are taking steps to improve the quality of the Enlargement process: extensive use of benchmarking, impact studies on issues related to integration capacity, better linkage of political and economic reforms and negotiations, more transparency in accession negotiations'.[21]

Consolidation, the first of the principles, was meant to express that the existing enlargement agenda had to be secured. Consolidation also meant that the EU had to admit its responsibility towards the countries with prospects for EU membership and had to keep its word with respect to the existing commitments, as the EU's credibility would otherwise be questioned.[22] The Commissioner Olli Rehn underlined in different speeches that the existing enlargement agenda was 'already stretched to its limits', and that the EU 'must be very cautious about taking new commitments'.[23] The Commission pointed out that the current candidate countries had to respect the criteria to the letter and that the pace of negotiations depended on the achievements of each country.[24] With the term Communication, the Commission underlined that enlargement had to be better explained to ensure public support. By providing specific measures to fight against enlargement fatigue and through better communication the Commission aimed to achieve a broader acceptance of enlargement.

Today, besides the existing Copenhagen criteria,[25] enlargement has to be essentially seen in the context of the EU's capacity to integrate new member states.[26] In their Enlargement Strategies from 2006 and 2007, the EU's institutions linked further enlargement directly with the capacity to integrate new members, ie, with the Union's integration capacity. Subsequently it was extended so that besides the EU's capacity to maintain the momentum of integration and the candidates fulfilling accession criteria it also included better communication. Even though communication became an essential part of the Enlargement Strategy already in 2005, it still needed to be specified. Besides its own commitment to communication, the Commission underlined repeatedly that the member states had to take the lead in that respect. In 2006, Commissioner Rehn concluded in a speech: 'So far, both the Commission and the European leaders have been better at doing enlargement than at communicating it!'.[27] In the Enlargement Strategy of 2006, the Commission confirmed the

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[20] European Commission (2005), COM(2004) 494.
[21] Rehn (2007), Speech.
[22] Rehn (2006a), Speech.
[23] Rehn (2005), EPC.
[24] Rehn (2006b), Speech.
[25] Any country seeking EU membership must conform to the conditions set out in Art. 49 and the principles laid out in Art. 6(1) of the Treaty on European Union. Relevant criteria were established by the Copenhagen European Council in 1993 and strengthened by the Madrid European Council in 1995. To join the EU, a new member state must meet three criteria: (1) political –stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities–; (2) economic –existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the EU–; and (3) acceptance of the Community *acquis* –ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union–.
[26] The COM defines the term integration capacity in the following way: 'The EU's capacity to integrate new members is determined by two factors: 1. maintaining the momentum to reinforce and deepen European integration by ensuring the EU's capacity to function; 2. ensuring that candidate countries are ready to take on the obligations of membership when they join by fulfilling the rigorous conditions set (...) It is essential to ensure public support for enlargement. Maintaining rigour in the process and strict conditionality is essential to safeguard this support'; Enlargement SP 2006-2007, p. 15, 16.
[27] Rehn (2006a), Speech.

fundamental role of member states in communicating enlargement, but left the scope of actual implementation open for interpretation. In the 2007 Strategy paper it went a step further and invited the member states to draw up concrete communication plans in order to explain and defend enlargement. Thereby the general claim for better communication in the previous Strategy was given actual content. The increasing importance given to communication was a clear measure to respond to the public's hesitance regarding further enlargement and the consequently rising enlargement fatigue. In the first Enlargement Strategy (2005) the capacity to integrate was not yet directly connected to communication. This new and very strong condition for further enlargements shows that for the EU Commission democratic legitimacy became indispensable to ensure public support, not only for the EU's Enlargement Strategy but also for the European integration concept as a whole. The Commission was aware of the decreasing acceptance of future enlargements and that the European public could no longer be disregarded.

In 2006, the European Parliament issued –for the first time– a special report on the EU's capacity to integrate new member states. Besides communication, the EU's capacity to function was especially important as regards integration. For the EU's institutions the need for institutional reform by the time of the next enlargement has gained importance. The European Parliament agreed with the Commission that an institutional reform was necessary and that the Treaty of Nice[28] was an inappropriate basis for further EU enlargement, underlining that the EU had to carry out far-reaching reforms if it was to retain its ability to take action and function properly in the face of future enlargement.[29] Members of the European Parliament repeatedly underlined on different occasion that with the accession of Bulgaria and Rumania and the countries of the Western Balkans the EU would, for the time being, have reached its limits.[30] The Parliament also pointed out in its enlargement resolution that the Commission had failed to provide 'sufficiently in-depth analysis of the issues which need to be resolved before the Union can proceed with further enlargements'.[31] The same idea was taken u again in the European Parliament's most recent enlargement resolution (2008), that pointed out that 'the success of the enlargement process (and thus the success of the EU political integration process) can only be ensured if there is clear and long-lasting support for the EU membership of each candidate country'. In addition, the Parliament urged a more effective communication policy on enlargement, and reminded 'the governments and parliaments of the Member States that it is their responsibility adequately to inform public opinion about the positive achievements of former enlargement'.[32]

From 2006 onwards, it can be observed that the wording in EU documents is generally cautious and far less positive about further enlargement compared with the positive wording used for describing the fifth enlargement round. The Director General of the European Commission's General Directorate for External Relations, Eneko Landáburu, for instance said in his speech in 2006 'that in some MS (Member States) the pace and scale of enlargement is approaching the limits of what public opinion will accept'.[33] Even the 2006-07 Strategy paper considered the possibility of suspending negotiations and made provision for the assessment of the impact of accession on key political areas. Full attention was paid to the EU's integration capacity. The European Parliament has especially underlined since 2006 that lessons have to be learnt from past enlargements, that every country should be judged on its own merits and that setting too early dates for final accession should be avoided.[34] In public discourse claims have been made that no concessions should be

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[28] The Treaty of Nice reformed the institutional structure of the EU to withstand eastward expansion. It amended the Maastricht Treaty and the Treaty of Rome. It was signed by European leaders on 26 February 2001 and came into force on 1 February 2003.
[29] European Parliament (2006), Committee on Foreign Affairs, November 2006.
[30] European Parliament (2006), Debates, CRE 15/03/2006 - 9.
[31] European Parliament (2006b), par 6.
[32] European Parliament (2008).
[33] Landáburu (2006), Speech, p. 1.
[34] European Parliament (2006b), par 2, par 18.

made any longer and that the existing criteria had to be fulfilled without exception. Certain Position papers of political groups inside the European Parliament have even gone further and explicitly demanded that in future enlargement processes criteria should be fully met before any treaties are signed.[35] The overall political attitude towards enlargement has become stricter and less compromising and shows clear signs of enlargement fatigue.

The most striking evidence of enlargement fatigue among member states is the growing discussion about possible national referendums on enlargement. Although the EU experienced a major setback with the French and Dutch rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005, the EU's institutions acknowledge the need for more intense engagement with their citizens in order to strengthen the latter's input in policy-making.[36] The French government and stakeholders in Austria are planning to hold referendums on the accession of new member states.[37] These novelties mean that further enlargements will need more and more direct approval from the EU's citizens. The reactions to the rejection by the Irish of the Lisbon Reform Treaty[38] on 12 June 2008 were a further reminder of the spread of enlargement fatigue. In addition to the French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, and the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel,[39] the President of the European Parliament, Hans Gert Pöttering,[40] also supported a halt to further enlargement. After the 'No' in the Irish referendum, the EU was divided into member states and stakeholders who threatened to block further enlargement unless the Lisbon Reform Treaty was ratified and those who considered that enlargement should not be the victim of an internal EU problem such as the Union's institutional consolidation. Some political groups in the European Parliament debated openly whether the outcome of the referendum in Ireland should have a reflection in the most recent resolution on enlargement. This position was opposed not only by most new member states in the Council, such as Rumania and Slovenia, but also by other important political players and was finally not included in the Parliament's document.

Due to rising enlargement fatigue after the fifth enlargement round, no specific timetables for further enlargement have been provided in either official EU documents or in statements by member states. Analysing the previous enlargement processes it can be seen that the setting of a specific accession date has always been part of enlargement policy and been seen as an accelerating factor for reform in the countries concerned. The absence of a precise timetable in the EU's current approach to enlargement is a significant shift[41] in enlargement policy and shows a clear ambiguity in a process which has so far been referred to as a very successful foreign policy instrument. Even though countries covered by the Enlargement Strategy have privileges, benefiting from significant financial support and a formalised process with a clear membership objective, in the absence of a specific timetable their weight and political significance decreases.

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[35] Position Paper by SPD Members of the European Parliament on Enlargement, 7 March 2006.

[36] Ferrero-Waldner (2005), Speech/05/797.

[37] On 21 July 2008 France introduced reforms to its constitution to allow the country to hold a referendum to approve EU membership for any new states. The requirement could be waived on a case-by-case basis by a three-fifths majority vote in parliament. With the new reforms the French people will be asked to give their assent to Turkey's accession to the EU.

[38] The Lisbon Reform Treaty amends the current EU Treaties, but does not replace them. Its official name is the Treaty amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community. The stated purpose of the Lisbon Reform Treaty is to enhance 'the efficiency and democratic legitimacy of the Union' and to improve its coherence.

[39] *Financial Times Deutschland*, 'Merkel und Sarkozy spalten Europa', June 2008; *EU Observer*, 'Further EU-Enlargement not possible without Lisbon Treaty, says Sarkozy', 23 June 2008.

[40] *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 'Nach dem Nein der Iren im EU-Referendum, Rätseln um die Zukunft Europas', 17 June 2008; *Welt Online*, 'Nach dem Referendum, Steinmeier empfiehlt Irland Ausstieg aus der EU', 14 June 2008.

[41] The accession timetable 2007 for Bulgaria and Romania had been set in 2000. Zornitza Venkova, First Secretary of the Bulgarian mission to the EU, in an interview, 'EU Accession as an encouragement', published 15 August 2006. In June 2001, the EU leaders reaffirmed a timetable for the fifth enlargement: conclusion of negotiations with 10 of the 12 candidates for membership by the end of 2002, provided those countries are ready, with a view to their accession in 2004.

Having considered the reality of a certain enlargement fatigue, the EU's institutions started to seek methods to fight against further fatigue and mistrust in the EU's integration project. At the same time, the EU did not want to dampen the expectations of its Eastern European neighbours or create new dividing lines. It therefore conceptualised a new policy: the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

EU Enlargement and the EU's New Neighbourhood: A Divorced Couple

Historical Overview: The Genesis of the European Neighbourhood Policy
Each successive enlargement of the EU has resulted in the acquisition of new neighbours. In the past, many of the EU's neighbours ended up becoming candidates for accession themselves and consequently joined the EU as new member states. The accomplishment of the most recent enlargement round in 2004 and 2007 –the largest so far– presented the EU and its institutions, its member states and its citizens with new opportunities and challenges: 12 new member states joined the EU, gave it a new global dimension and imposed new responsibilities. The political map of the European continent was redrawn, overcoming its post-war division. This fifth enlargement not only affected the EU's internal dimension but also its role in the world, giving it a greater weight on the international scene. Since then, the EU is surrounded by new neighbours[42] and has longer borders with its old neighbours,[43] both European and non-European.

Since 2002, the EU –and particularly the European Commission– has tried to anticipate the external implications of the fifth enlargement on its geopolitical situation by constructive means and therefore developed the so-called European Neighbourhood Policy in 2003. The first Commission paper dealing with the EU's neighbours ('Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours', was published in March 2003.[44] The paper was devoted to the EU's new neighbour states and coined the term European Neighbourhood Policy. The concept of the ENP is that of a common, uniform EU instrument for structuring relations between the EU and the states bordering it in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. It was meant to provide the EU with a common approach to all its neighbours, while also being flexible enough to allow for different situations and relations. Today, it presents a specific form of integration between foreign policy, which traditionally focuses on neighbours, and EU integration. Since it was first conceived, the geographical scope of the neighbourhood policy has been further developed by the EU. Being uncertain at the beginning whether to include Russia in the ENP or not, and clearly excluding the Southern Caucasus in 2004,[45] for the time being 16 countries are included in the ENP: three Eastern European countries, the three Southern Caucasus states and eight southern neighbours.[46]

The ENP was meant to provide an opportunity for close, privileged relations, especially in political and economic terms with a degree of integration going beyond normal cooperation with third countries. The ENP was allocated to the Commissioner for External Policies and explicitly included in the name of this post. The European Commission put forward four items for the ENP: a Strategy paper, specific Country Reports, bilateral Action Plans and a new ENP Instrument. The main focus of the ENP was the creation of an area around the EU that would be characterised by mutual cooperation and would increase prosperity, stability and security in the EU and its neighbouring

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[42] Belarus, Moldova and the Ukraine.
[43] The EU's border with Russia have almost doubled in length. The EU currently has the following neighbours: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, the six Western Balkan states, the candidate country Turkey, the strategic partner Russia and the 16 ENP countries.
[44] European Commission (2003a), COM (2003) 104.
[45] Verheugen (2004), Speech 04/141, p. 7.
[46] East: Belarus, Moldova and the Ukraine; South Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia; South: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Palestinian Territory and Libya.

countries: a ring of friends[47] sharing the EU's basic values, including the rule of law, democracy, human and minority rights and common interests. It also envisaged contractual commitments designed to anchor the neighbouring countries politically into the enlarged EU.

The need for an ENP was mainly born from the idea of developing a policy that would allow the EU to seize the opportunity and address the challenges after the fifth enlargement in its relations with its neighbours. The EU's enlargement to the East triggered the creation of the ENP, with one of the initial objectives being to meet –for the time being– the unfeasible accession wishes of Eastern European states with complementary proposals, thereby relieving the pressure on the EU to enlarge. However, both the 'Wider Europe Strategy' paper and the Commission's 'Paving the Way for a New Neighbourhood Instrument' (2003) have largely been considered an alternative approach to dealing with neighbouring countries that are not being offered the prospect of EU membership. The declared goal of the ENP was not to exclude the new neighbouring countries, but to bind them to the EU. The ENP intended to achieve stability and prosperity around the EU without using the hitherto preferred and successful instrument of enlargement. At the same time –as the establishment of new external EU borders (mainly to the East) involved the risk of the European continent being divided anew– the concept of the ENP tried to thwart the general danger of creating new dividing lines in Europe by integrating neighbouring countries into the EU as member states and excluding other neighbouring ones. The general necessity of the ENP was underlined by the former Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen in 2003, pointing out that 'an area of stability and prosperity in Europe could be only sustainable if this area would also be extended to the neighbours of the EU'.[48] A special ring of friends around the EU was necessary as the enlarged EU had borders with less politically and economically stable countries in its neighbourhood than the EU-15 had. With the establishment of the ENP, relations with neighbouring countries have become one of the EU's main external priorities. Since the Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner[49] took over the portfolio of External Relations in 2004, the ENP clearly became one of her key priorities. Finally, the need for an ENP also derives from the desire to avoid leaving an empty space for countries that were not part of the Enlargement Strategy, as membership was not a certainty for them beyond the already existing commitments.

As referred to in the title of this second part, the two policy fields, EU enlargement and ENP can be compared to a divorced couple. The two policies are not formally related and therefore act separately for the time being, but are actually closely linked to each other as they are based on very similar principles and promote comparable values and interests. The 'divorce' is particularly challenging for the EU.

The Difference between Candidates and Neighbours: A Challenge for the EU
The EU's interest in its neighbourhood automatically raises the question of the ENP's relationship with the enlargement process. In accordance with the intentions of its founders and the wishes of most of the EU's dominant actors, the ENP was explicitly conceptualised not as an accession instrument[50] and is therefore considered distinct from the Enlargement Strategy. However, the distinction seems to have limits in theory as well as in practice.

The distinction between the two policies had already begun long before the first Strategy papers on ENP were published. On 6 December 2002, the Commission's former President Romano Prodi firmly reiterated that concerning the future neighbourhood policy –after the fifth enlargement– the prospect of 'participation in the Union with the exception of the institutions' should be

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[47] Prodi (2002), Speech/02/619, p. 4.
[48] Verheugen (2003), Speech.
[49] Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy.
[50] The ENP 'responds to our neighbours' desire for closer relations with the EU, without offering a perspective of membership', Ferrero-Waldner (2005), Speech/05/797, p. 5.

established.[51] So did former Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen in a speech in December 2003. Verheugen clearly pointed out that the Union's neighbourhood policy was distinct from the issue of possible further enlargements and said that this policy concerns countries for which accession was 'not on the agenda'.[52] In 2004 he confirmed his assessment again and stated that the neighbourhood policy 'neither prepares for Enlargement, nor rules it out at some future point. For the time being the accession of these countries is not on our agenda'.[53] Nevertheless, in the same speeches he pointed out that the neighbourhood policy should not close the door to the European aspirations of any country. In this way, the neighbourhood policy could be regarded as an alternative way of participating in European integration for countries which have no prospects of accession, either at present (eg, the Ukraine) or at any other time (eg, Morocco).[54] Indeed, in its conceptualisation, the neighbourhood policy excludes the question of EU membership, but must nevertheless –in accordance with Art. 49 TEU–[55] leave it open concerning Eastern Europe. It cannot be denied in the case of some ENP countries that they are European and could therefore have prospects of becoming members. It can be assumed that, by adopting the new neighbourhood policy, the EU has defined –virtually through the back door– which countries it wants to leave outside the EU. The need for more time to consolidate the institutional reform of the EU and to find a new consensus on enlargement was the main reason why in parallel to enlargement another field in the Common Foreign and Security Policy –ie, ENP– was developed.

Specifically, the distinction between enlargement and ENP was introduced through an institutional separation of the two fields. After the EU enlargement of 2004, the portfolio of the Enlargement Commissioner, Olli Rehn, involved candidate countries and countries with EU membership prospects.[56] The ENP, in contrast, was allocated to the Commissioner for External Relations, Benita Ferrero-Waldner. By having two different Directorates within the European Commission, one for External Policies and another for Enlargement, the Commission clearly distinguished its approach towards candidate countries and countries with EU membership prospects on the one hand and 'just' neighbours on the other. By this means, the Commission institutionalised the distinction between candidates and neighbours. This approach was approved in the Commission's Strategy papers on enlargement and ENP and taken up in most public documents and speeches.

The Reasons for Distinguishing Between Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy
One of the main explanations for disconnecting the Enlargement Strategy and ENP and conceptualising them as two separate policy fields is related to the observed reluctance of Europe's citizens. As outlined above, growing enlargement fatigue was one reason for establishing an official strategy for enlargement based on documents and giving this policy field a strategic dimension with the necessary visibility. The EU's institutions realised that an overly ambitious enlargement plan in the short or medium term could to some extent 'strain' public support for enlargement.[57] In parallel, the ENP was also given a strategic dimension. Thus, there were two strategic approaches – Enlargement Strategy and ENP– to fight against enlargement fatigue. They tried to offer a way to

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[51] Prodi (2002), Speech/02/619, p. 5.

[52] Verheugen (2003), Speech, p. 7.

[53] Verheugen (2004), Speech 04/141.

[54] In 1987, for example, Morocco's application to join the EU was rejected by the European Council, reasoning that Morocco is not a European country and therefore not eligible to join the EU.

[55] Art. 49 TEU (Treaty of the European Union) reads: 'Any European state which respects the principles set out in Article 6(1) may apply to become a member of the Union. It shall address its application to the Council, which shall act unanimously after consulting the Commission and after receiving the assent of the European Parliament, which shall act by an absolute majority of its component members. The conditions of admission and the adjustments to the Treaties on which the Union is founded which such admission entails shall be the subject of an agreement between the Member States and the applicant state. This agreement shall be submitted for ratification by all the contracting States in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements'.

[56] Candidate countries such as Bulgaria and Rumania until their accession in 2007, Croatia and Turkey, FYROM and the Western Balkans.

[57] 'To overstretch, rather than consolidate, the Union would be detrimental not only for us by also our partners', Landabru (2006), p.1.

secure public support for future enlargements and at the same time anticipate any additional factors that could increase enlargement fatigue. The conceptualisation of the ENP was a welcome opportunity to reduce the pressure on the EU for future enlargement. The ENP provided the means to give enlargement better visibility and a more positive, not too ambitious dimension, based on public acceptance. It was a possibility for showing the public that no other countries were knocking on the EU's doors too loudly. Indeed, the Eurobarometer 2006 on the ENP shows that a majority of EU citizens have a positive perception of the ENP (68%) and that the awareness of the ENP is rising within the Union. They believe that the ENP contributes to prosperity and find it very important to cooperate with neighbouring countries. A majority believe (61%) that this cooperation will generate mutual benefits for the EU and its neighbours. Public interest in the ENP grew rapidly, as confirmed by the number of conferences and debates and the increasing publicity being given to this topic.[58] These results indicate that the ENP began to provide the basis for the narration of a new success story. This was confirmed by Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner when qualifying the ENP clearly as a 'win-win policy' in 2007[59] and explicitly stating in spring 2008 that the EU's 'neighbourhood policy is a success story'.[60] It can be acknowledged that the narration shifted from the success story of enlargement to the success story of the ENP.[61]

Analysing the existing concepts of enlargement and ENP, it is striking that the geopolitical scope of ENP remains very vague. From a purely geographical viewpoint, the natural border of the Mediterranean Sea is a clear geographical boundary with the southern states neighbouring the EU. In contrast to the southern states, the geographical question remains unanswered as far as the Union's eastern neighbours are concerned. However, the geopolitical scope of the Enlargement Strategy derives from the fact that only European countries, and only if they respect the Union's basic principles –democracy, human rights and basic freedoms, as well as the rule of law (Art. 6(1) TEU)– have the right to submit an application for EU membership (Art. 49 TEU). Therefore, not just any country can join the EU: it has to be European.[62] The question that arises here is whether the membership of European countries such as the Ukraine or Moldova, which have already expressed their desire to join, can be denied access. The Treaties give legal boundaries and impose to a certain extent a geographical dimension to enlargement and subsequently as well to the Enlargement Strategy. Consequently, enlargement is limited to a certain number of European countries. Taking into account that a major factor influencing the growing enlargement fatigue is the citizens' concern about enlargement *ad infinitum*, the often raised statements that enlargement could be undefined or stretched continuously are therefore misleading. Both strategies, enlargement and ENP, have to some extent a geopolitical limitation. On the one hand, countries that are targeted by the Enlargement Strategy have to be European –as laid down in the European Treaties–. On the other hand, countries targeted by the ENP *can* but do not *have* to be European, they just have to be EU neighbours. So, both the Enlargement Strategy and the ENP include European countries. The eligibility of countries for one of the policy fields or neither remains unclear and imprecise, and therefore lacks coherence. European states which are theoretically eligible to become members one day are being selectively excluded from the ENP. Since the EU has clearly declared its commitment to the Western Balkan states and given them European membership prospects[63] and approved Turkey as a candidate, neither of them fall within the ENP's terms of reference. They can officially knock on the EU'ss door and are eligible for the Enlargement Strategy. But, as mentioned above,

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[58] European Commission (2005c), 1521.
[59] Ferrero-Waldner (2007), Brussels, 30 August 2007, IP/07/1264.
[60] Ferrero-Waldner (2008), Brussels, 3 April 2008, IP/08/509.
[61] Eurobarometer (2006), Special Eurobarometer 259; Eurobarometer (2007), Special Eurobarometer 285.
[62] See footnote 54 on Morocco's application to join the EU.
[63] The Thessaloniki agenda for the Western Balkans (2003): 'The Copenhagen European Council in December 2002 confirmed the European perspective of the countries of the Western Balkans, as potential candidates, and underlined its determination to support their efforts to move closer to the European Union. The European Council in March 2003 reiterated that the future of the Western Balkans is within the European Union and pledged the Union's full support to the endeavours of the countries of the region to consolidate democracy, stability and to promote economic development'.

the absence of a specific accession timetable leads to a certain undermining of their status as candidate countries within the scope of the Enlargement Strategy. Therefore, the inclusion of the Western Balkans in the ENP would have had its legitimacy as well, and at present would even be more coherent. On the other hand, concerning the ENP countries whose European status cannot be denied, one could question the legitimacy of this institutionalised exclusion and wonder why they are not included in the Enlargement Strategy. Belarus, Moldova and the Ukraine are geographically European neighbours of the EU, but their eligibility for the Enlargement Directorate General's portfolio is not approved officially, which seems –for the time being– politically motivated. Furthermore, there are other EU neighbours –impeccably European–, such as Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Liechtenstein and even Russia,[64] that do not belong to any of the two strategies but are indisputably –from a historical-geographical point of view– European neighbours. The common justification for their exclusion from the ENP of the Western Balkans and Turkey (A), Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein (B) and Russia (C) is that the relations with the first group of countries (A) are tackled in the Enlargement Strategy; relations with the second group in the existing European Economic Area (B); and Russia (C) is covered by the EU-Russia Strategic Partnership and cooperation Agreement.

The Enlargement Strategy follows the clear objective of proposing membership to European candidate countries; the ENP, on the contrary, does not offer EU membership but can neither completely exclude membership. Nevertheless, the idea of a membership prospect remains in both strategies. This creates conflict and frustration not only in member states but also in the ENP or enlargement countries. Some member states want the clear exclusion of the EU membership prospect from the ENP; others don't. At the same time, some neighbouring countries have a clear vision of becoming EU members one day. As the EU did not want to definitively close the door to these aspirants, the ENP was a useful mean of binding them to the EU without offering membership, which is nevertheless limited to the long term.

It is not only difficult to disconnect the two policy fields completely in political and geographical terms, but also because closely related objectives and very similar instruments and measures are used in both fields. The idea of taking methods and instruments of the enlargement process and to transform or adjust them for the ENP –as they can have similar effects as a stimulus for reform– was already admitted by the former President of the Commission, Romano Prodi, back in 2002: 'Many of the elements (...) are taken from the enlargement process'.[65] One parallelism between the two policy fields is the basic principle of conditioning, or tying the EU's commitments towards third countries to specific conditions, used in the Enlargement Strategy but also in the ENP. Regarding the Enlargement Strategy, the EU ties the possible accession of a new member state to the fulfilment of the so called Copenhagen Criteria, also involving integration capacity as a lead principle. Neighbourly commitments, especially in the form of the ENP instrument, are conditioned to the implementation of political and economic reforms of the countries concerned.[66] Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner pointed out that the ENP has 'the same kind of positive conditionality underpinning the enlargement process'.[67] Another parallelism between the two policy fields, which proves that complete disconnection is only possible in theory, is the fact that they both contain references to a performance-related approach. Each candidate country and each ENP state should be judged on its 'own merits', ie by its achievements and progress. This 'own merit'

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[64] The partnership and cooperation agreement with Russia should not be regarded as a preliminary stage to EU membership, especially due to the fact that Russia has never expressed its wish to join the EU.

[65] Prodi (2002), Speech/02/619.

[66] In most areas of cooperation within the ENP there is a great need for modernisation in the neighbouring states and a whole range of desired reforms on the part of the EU. Only if the agreed reforms are implemented rigorously and a clear commitment is made to common values will the EU be prepared to grant financial assistance.

[67] Ferrero-Waldner (2006c), Speech /06/149, p. 3.

approach seems to be inherited form the lessons learned from past enlargements.[68] These parallelisms highlight the difficulty in differentiating the two strategies.

From an institutional viewpoint, enlargement and ENP have been clearly disconnected from each other. However, analysing the two strategies and taking into consideration their development over the past five years, a complete disconnection does not bear scrutiny. The clear distinction has also shifted in the public discourse concerning these policies. The shift towards vaguer lines of separation between the two strategies has mainly been promoted under the pressure from new member states. Poland, Rumania and Hungary, in particular, are in favour of a far more flexible idea of the ENP, advocating quite firmly, for instance, future EU membership for the Ukraine and Moldova.[69] The ambiguity inherent in the 'divorce' has becomes increasingly marked and the possibility of merging them is now more reasonable.

Mixing Candidates and Neighbours: Finding Alternatives to Enlargement and ENP
As shown above, after the fifth enlargement, the EU needed, in addition to its Enlargement Strategy, a new approach towards its neighbours. This is where the ENP originated. On the one hand, the initial complete distinction between the two policies lacks a clear coherence ('divorcing'); on the other, for the time being, the fusion of the two policies ('marrying'), or the abolition of one, is unrealistic. Therefore different dynamics have arisen to find supplementary and/or alternative approaches and consequently to fill up the empty space between and within these two policies.

The initial idea of ENP is a constructive and satisfactory approach as far as the overall treatment of the EU's new neighbours is concerned. A more or less coherent framework for heterogeneous countries with very different characteristics, ambitions and problems was necessary. In particular, the Action Plans for each ENP partner country are a very successful approach within the ENP. It can nevertheless be asserted that the ENP has not yet matured and has certain weaknesses with which the EU will have to deal.[70] Especially, the practical exclusion of EU membership from the concept of ENP prospects has created confusion and frustration not only in EU member states but also in ENP partner countries, since, to a certain extent, the topic of enlargement cannot be totally differentiated from the ENP. The ultimately unclear ENP involves the risk that, thanks to the emergence of this separate category of states, a Europe of EU insiders and outsiders will become entrenched, leading in turn to new dividing lines, which is precisely what the ENP should prevent. The ambiguity of the ENP with regard to EU membership raises the fundamental question of where the EU's geopolitical limits lie and reveals the unfinished and inconclusive nature of the overall EU integration project.

For the time being, it is unrealistic to drop either of the two strategies as initially conceptualised and institutionalised. Analysing the available documents it can be seen that neither the institutional side nor the member states want to do this. The possibility of fully merging the Enlargement Strategy into the ENP might be discussed in the future, but for the moment the idea is premature. Since merging the two strategies is not possible, new proposals are being launched as complements or alternatives. So far, several initiatives for new regional cooperation forms have been proposed: the Barcelona Process, the Union for the Mediterranean, the Eastern Partnership and the Union of the Black Sea.

The Many 'Unions': The 'Divorced Couple's' Progeny

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[68] As for the enlargement in 2004, the principle of a 'block-accession' of the former communist states was still valid, while the attitude towards possible further block-enlargements has changed. Today it is no longer conceivable that countries join the EU as a block just because of a historical necessity or to give an important political signal. Each country is evaluated and judged on its own merits and achievements.
[69] Poland's Foreign Minister Sikorski underlined this in May 2008; see Radio Free Europe Documents and Publications, 'EU: Poland, Sweden Breathe New Life into Eastern Neighbourhood', 26 May 2008.
[70] A study of the strengths and weaknesses of the ENP is not within the scope of this analysis.

The progeny of Enlargement and ENP, ie, the result of their cooperation, is something in between the two policies, with elements from both and covering countries that are part of both policies, such as the Union for the Mediterranean, the Eastern Partnership or the possible Union of the Black Sea. Never have there been so many initiatives in the field of EU foreign policy in such a short time, involving new forms of cooperation between the EU and its neighbourhood.

The Establishment of New Unions: From the Mediterranean to the Black Sea
The establishment of new regional cooperation forms within the EU's policies are mostly driven by interest groups who aim for closer cooperation in specific geographic or political fields. In matters relating to the ENP, as in the areas of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) or European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and essentially in the whole field of EU foreign policy, the national interests of member states are often to the fore. The impact of national interests on the EU's foreign policy is mostly driven by geographical, historical, cultural and/or political links of the countries concerned. Hence, the more southerly EU states (eg, France and Spain) vigorously promote the interests of the states bordering the EU on the Mediterranean, whereas the Central and Eastern European states (eg, Germany and Poland) lobby more strongly for the Eastern neighbours.[71] As long as the viewpoints of the EU and its individual member states regarding their Eastern and Southern neighbours remain so different and uncoordinated, it will continue to be difficult to formulate a common foreign policy in this regard. The ENP has been used to combine the individual interests of member states in the European neighbourhood constructively into one European framework. It was therefore an important challenge for the Common Foreign and Security Policy to jointly develop a European position on how to handle its approach towards the very heterogeneous neighbours to the EU's East and South. One of the driving forces for the proposal of new regional partnerships such as the Union for the Mediterranean or the recently proposed Eastern Partnership is the different national interests of the member states.

Some of the new member states have taken the opportunity presented by the EU's Eastern enlargement to profit from their long experience and existing relationships and, on this basis, to structure an efficient own neighbourhood policy and to promote new regional partnerships. When conceptualising the ENP and placing it in relation and/or confrontation with the Enlargement Strategy, the old member states failed to take sufficiently into account the possible new spheres of interest of the new member states and their impact on shaping the ENP. They did not adequately anticipate the strong lobbying in favour of the Ukraine by the new Eastern EU member states like Poland. At the time the ENP was conceptualised, the countries of Eastern European were not yet members and the strong cultural and historical links with the Ukraine were not visible. Therefore, the discussion about whether the Ukraine should be included in the enlargement strategy was not put on the agenda.

Since the accession of the former EU neighbour states Bulgaria and Rumania in January 2007, the EU has become an integral part of the Black Sea region. Therefore, the EU now has an interest in security and stability around the Black Sea. The EU's cooperation with the Black Sea states in the framework of the Black Sea Synergy[72] is a concrete example promoting regionalisation as one of

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[71] 'The new member states in central and eastern Europe have a close relationship through history, culture and language with eastern Europe and part of the western Balkans. Just as Spain and Portugal pressed for closer relations with Latin America, so the new member states are pressing the case of their neighbours in the east and south', Hübner (2006), Speech /06/58, p. 3.
[72] The countries involved in the Black Sea Synergy are: Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and Moldova in the west, Ukraine and Russia in the north, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in the east and Turkey in the south. Although Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Greece are not littoral states, history, proximity and close ties make them natural regional actors; the Synergy was achieved under the German Presidency of the EU Council in 2007. Cooperation between the countries, for example in areas such as security of energy supply, the securing of borders, transport, environmental protection and water management, should continue to be promoted above and beyond this. The primary objective is to strengthen mutual trust in the regions so that the regional conflicts around the Black Sea can be solved (eg, South

the basic principles of the ENP.[73] In this way the ENP, as proposed by the Commission, is following its principle of regionalisation. As a complement to the bilateral projects already initiated by the ENP in the form of Action Plans or specific Country Strategies, the Black Sea Synergy promotes stability in the countries around the Black Sea. In the chain of regional cooperation agreements with the EU's neighbours, this synergy is just one more link among many others –eg, the EU-Mediterranean partnership and the Nordic dimension–.[74]

Another regional cooperation in the framework of the ENP is the Mediterranean Union proposed by the French President Nicolas Sarkozy in the summer of 2007.[75] Since then the initial launch date has passed and President Sarkozy's idea of including only the EU member states bordering the Mediterranean has been completely re-oriented. Following the 2008 Spring Summit[76] and the Commission's communication of 20 May 2008,[77] the so-called 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean' was formally founded on 13 July 2008 in Paris. It includes all EU-27 member states, the southern ENP countries, the Western Balkans bordering the Mediterranean, and Turkey.[78]

After having approved a re-launch of the Barcelona Process establishing the Union for the Mediterranean in the South, immediately two initiatives for the East and the South-east followed. First, the EU Foreign Ministers adopted the proposal handed in by Poland and Sweden concerning the so called Eastern Partnership in May 2008. In June 2008, the Council called on the Commission to prepare a proposal for the modalities of this new partnership, as done before for the Union for the Mediterranean. On 3 December 2008, the Commission published its Communication on the Eastern Partnership, involving Belarus, Moldova and the Ukraine in the East and Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in the South-east.[79] Under the Czech Presidency, a formal inauguration summit of the Eastern Partnership is to take place in May 2009 in Prague. Secondly, the already existing idea of the Black Sea Synergy received a new impetus. In July 2008, just after the Paris summit, the European Parliament declared itself in favour of the future establishment of a so called Union of the Black Sea, which would have the Union for the Mediterranean as a model and be a concrete follow up of the Black Sea Synergy paper, from November 2007.[80]

Ossetia, Nagorny Karabakh and Transdnistria).

[73] The three principles of ENP are differentiation, regionalisation and conditioning.

[74] The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, also called Barcelona Process was launched by Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers in November 1995 and formed an innovative alliance based on the principles of joint ownership, dialogue and co-operation. It brings together the EU-27 and 12 Southern Mediterranean states. The Northern dimension is an initiative regarding the cross-border and external policies covering the Baltic States and Russia. It aims to strengthen dialogue and cooperation between the EU and its member states, the northern countries associated with the EU under the European Economic Area (Norway and Iceland) and Russia. The Northern Dimension is implemented within the framework of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Russia.

[75] The name of this initiative has changed twice since the initial launch before it was finally labelled 'Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean'.

[76] The annual Spring European Council, or 'Spring Summit', assembles Heads of State and Government of the EU member states and is an occasion for European leaders to discuss the current state of the EU's economy as well as its future prospects.

[77] European Commission (2008b), COM (2008) 319.

[78] The members of the Union for the Mediterranean are: EU-27, Albania, Algeria, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Palestinian Occupied Territories, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey.

[79] The Commission proposed a new partnership based on the existing ENP framework and its principles – differentiation, regionalisation and conditioning–, developing it along two main axes: (1) an enhanced bilateral cooperation between the EU and its partners; and (2) a renewed multilateral cooperation; see Commission (2008d), Communication, Eastern Partnership, 823/4; Devrim & Schulz (2009), 'The Eastern Partnership: An Interim Step towards Enlargement?', ARI nr 22/2009, Real Instituto Elcano.

[80] In April 2008, the members of the European Parliament of the Socialist Group (PSE) Hannes Swoboda and Jan Marinus Wiersma published a common appeal in favour of a Union of the Black Sea. This was also adopted by the EP's enlargement resolution 2008.

The emergence of these three initiatives shows that other types of regional cooperation than the exclusive framework of Enlargement or ENP in the EU's neighbourhood are being searched for. The current framework and activities within the ENP do not meet all EU member states' expectations –even though regionalisation is a principle of the ENP–. Neighbours and member states have interests in closer and more exclusive cooperation forms which show up the deficits of enlargement and ENP.

A More Diverse Neighbourhood: Disadvantaging Enlargement?
The promotion by certain member states or political groups of the Union for the Mediterranean and possible other partnerships in the European neighbourhood or even beyond show that there is a search for other opportunities of political cooperation besides the existing structures in the EU frameworks (eg, Enlargement, ENP, Strategic Partnerships). References in EU documents to these types of Unions or their inclusion in official strategies or political activities become more and more evident and numerous.[81] These initiatives present complementary initiatives to existing EU policies, but could be also interpreted as intermediate steps or alternatives to the Enlargement Strategy. The initial motivation for the French President Nicolas Sarkozy to launch the Union for the Mediterranean, for example, was undoubtedly read as a proposal to find alternatives to enlargement, especially regarding Turkey.[82] The intention could have been understood as a proposal for new possibilities to join other Unions as a substitute to the EU accession process. Currently, the Union for the Mediterranean involves all EU-27 member states, the Western Balkans countries that border the Mediterranean, Turkey and additional southern ENP countries. The inclusion of all these different types of countries under one framework –the Union for the Mediterranean– is proof of the misleading conception of a clear division between enlargement and ENP. It could be asked why Turkey and the Western Balkans are explicitly excluded from the ENP but now participate in new initiatives such as the Union for the Mediterranean in the framework of the ENP. Also, in a possible future Union of the Black Sea there would be EU member states, candidate countries, ENP countries and Russia, a Strategic Partner of the EU. By these means, all sorts of distinguishing criteria concerning EU Member States, enlargement and ENP –such as eligibility for membership– become questionable.

In addition, it is remarkable that these types of new regional partnerships are actually called Unions. The EU itself needed a long time to find its current name and to call itself a Union.[83] Considering that the term Union suggests a deep political integration (as in the case of the EU), naming other very loose forms of cooperation 'Unions' is misleading, causing confusion among the EU's citizens, who in future will have to support and/or understand the functioning and need of other Unions besides the actual EU.[84] In addition, it could be assumed that the strong tendency to establish other political bodies in the form of Unions –besides the EU itself– would question the EU's role as an international player. Hence, the EU would directly compete with other political formations acting as regional, or even international, political players with a very similar geographical scope. Besides this, the political impact of cooperating or even participating with –or in– the EU could lose its strategic meaning for third countries. It could be asked why a partner country, which already cooperates very closely with the EU and is member in a range of different regional cooperation forms (such as the Union for the Mediterranean or the Union of the Black Sea), should still have the determination to join the EU. Especially, communicating the added value of joining the EU to the citizens of the third country would be an extra challenge and could undermine the EU's political attractiveness to third countries. On the other hand, as the establishment of these new Unions is so strongly supported by the EU itself, the interpretation of

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[81] European Commission (2008b), COM(2008) 319; EP enlargement resolution (2008); Paris Summit, July 2008.
[82] The candidate country Turkey was confronted by this idea and initially showed a very hesitant attitude until just before the Summit where the Union for the Mediterranean was founded (13 July 2008, Paris).
[83] The European Economic Community changed its name to European Union only with the Maastricht Treaty in 1992.
[84] Even though renaming the Barcelona Process as the Union for the Mediterranean has increased the visibility of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, it is running the risk of dissipating the actual meaning of this term.

the Unions being alternatives to EU membership is evident. Third countries with strong EU membership aspirations could understand this tendency as a substitution for their political objective of joining the EU one day. Furthermore, the strategic purpose of these new partnerships remains unclear and very vague. It leaves enough place for interpretation –from the EU's institutional side as well as from the EU member states and neighbouring countries also–. The question whether the Unions are conceptualised to give alternatives to full EU membership in the future and therefore might offer the possibility of membership in a different Union than the EU to candidate countries or countries with recognised EU membership prospects remains unanswered.

From the member states' perspective, the motivations for promoting these Unions are of a different nature. Whereas the French President's initial motivation for the Union for the Mediterranean was to keep Turkey out of the EU by offering it alternatives to EU membership, Poland's motivation regarding the Eastern Partnership was the opposite. The Polish Foreign Minister, Radosław Sikorski, commented correctly that the Eastern Partnership had 'no official tie-in to enlargement policy', but that it would make future accession 'natural, once EU enlargement fatigue passes'.[85] Through the proposal of the Eastern Partnership, Poland is attempting to strengthen the relations with the eastern neighbours in a kind of privileged partnership, to give European ENP countries a clear membership prospect and to speed up the possible transformation of EU neighbours into EU members (eg, Moldova and the Ukraine). This attitude was further reinforced when Sikorski underlined: 'We in Poland make a distinction between the Southern dimension and the Eastern dimension of the ENP and it consists in this: to the south, we have neighbours of Europe, to the east we have European neighbours. These are countries –Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova– whose entire territories lie in Europe, and by the provisions of the EU's founding Treaty of Rome they all have the right one day to apply, to fulfil the criteria for EU membership, and, perhaps, to become members'.[86]

The intention of disadvantaging enlargement or finding alternatives by creating a more diversified neighbourhood is proved when analysing the 2008 resolution of the European Parliament on the EU's Enlargement Strategy. Historically, the European Parliament (EP) has shown a relatively optimistic and positive attitude towards EU enlargements, being an advocate foe expansion within the EU's institutions.[87] To the contrary, the EP's recent enlargement resolution (2008) represents a shift in that regard by offering a relatively negative discourse on future EU enlargement. In its formulations the resolution remains rather unclear, treating topics of the European Neighbourhood Policy in a report that should deal with enlargement and therefore undermining the core idea of the Enlargement Strategy and mingling it with the ENP. For example, the proposals of the above mentioned three new Unions were included in the EP's latest enlargement resolution that was adopted in July 2008.[88]

The resolution underlined that Turkey could play an important role by participating in both the Union for the Mediterranean and the Union of the Black Sea. Proposing these new roles to candidate countries in an enlargement resolution diminishes their political status as candidate countries, lumping them together in a Union with any other ENP partner or –in the case of Russia– not even an ENP partner. The EP resolution states that 'more substantive policies are needed to bridge the gap between the Union's neighbourhood and enlargement policies'.[89] It argues that there is a conceptual and legal gap between the ENP and the Union's enlargement policy, which needs to

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[85] Unian, 'Poland's "Eastern Partnership" set for summit approval', 17 June 2008.
[86] Radio Free Europe Documents and Publications, 'EU: Poland, Sweden Breathe New Life into Eastern Neighbourhood', 26 May 2008.
[87] On its website (in November 2002) the EP considers itself 'a promotor of Enlargement amongst the European Institutions' and underlines its intention to 'clearly profile the success story of the negotiations' (*http://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/nov2002/default_en.htm*, 19 July 2008).
[88] European Parliament (2008), par. 19, 20, 21.
[89] European Parliament (2008), par. 18.

be bridged. It therefore claims that the EU should 'establish an area based on common policies' related to democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The rapporteur of the resolution[90] commented that 'a consolidation phase has to take place now in the EU after almost doubling the number of its Member States. The Enlargement Strategy has therefore to be reconsidered and provided with new instruments. Enlargement must not become an automatism. Thus we ask the Commission to prepare a solution between Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy in terms of a European Economic Area Plus'.[91] This demand to find new solutions between enlargement and ENP shows that the EP has observed the need to fill the gap between the two policies. Placing this proposition in the enlargement resolution, instead of the upcoming ENP resolution, proves a clear tendency towards dissolving the Enlargement Strategy. Analysing the European Parliament's resolution one can observe a very striking link to the fading away of the initial idea to separate enlargement policies and ENP. The EP claims that the 'Enlargement Strategy should be flanked by a more diversified range of external contractual frameworks and that these frameworks could be structured as mutually permeable concentric circles'.[92] The Parliament's rapporteur on the Enlargement Strategy interprets these types of relations as a layout which would offer the EU's 'partners the opportunity (…) to move from one status to another [candidate or not candidate status –added by the authors–]'.[93] The wordings make clear that these concentric circles should provide alternatives for countries with a European perspective rather than allowing ENP countries to move towards enlargement. The creation of new regional frameworks gives a useful basis for these 'permeable concentric circles'. However, it remains open for interpretation whether and in which direction these concentric circles should develop and whether they should be an inclusive part of the Enlargement Strategy or the ENP. In comparison, the EP's enlargement resolution of 2006 referred only minimally to ENP.[94] This resolution focused mainly on the implications of enlargement and integration capacity, lessons to be learnt and a stronger use of criteria, not making a clear link with ENP topics. Therefore, a shift can be seen between the EP's resolutions on the Commission's Enlargement Strategy of 2006 and of 2008. While the enlargement resolution in 2006 actually focused –as the title itself indicates– on enlargement, in 2008 the EP favoured intermediate steps and alternative forms of regional cooperation and raised the possibility of introducing different modes of cooperation that mix enlargement policies and ENP (the Union for the Mediterranean, Eastern Partnership and Union of the Black Sea).[95]

The European Parliament has recently shown itself more critical towards enlargement than the Commission. Enlargement Commissioner Rehn reacted to the EP's enlargement resolution by reminding the members of the European Parliament that 'for the Western Balkans and Turkey that have a clear membership perspective, the EU must not impose new intermediate stages before candidacy or accession. This would create doubts about the EU's commitment, thus weakening the necessary incentive for reform'.[96] Overall, it is striking that Croatia and Turkey –currently negotiating EU membership–, as well as FYROM, are almost absent in the text of the EP resolution. Turkey is being cited only in the context of establishing a Union of the Black Sea whereas ongoing accession negotiations are not even mentioned. The inclusion of new regional initiatives in the EP's enlargement resolution of 2008 –which by definition belong to the field of the EU's external relations, specifically the ENP– shows the growing scepticism in this traditionally pro enlargement institution.

The EU's institutions are confronted not only with a political but also with an institutional challenge in having to deal with enlargement and ENP in parallel. They must also accomplish this

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[90] Elmar Brok, MEP, European Peoples Party (EPP), Germany. EP Rapporteur for Enlargement Strategy since 2005.
[91] AB Haber, 10 July 2008.
[92] European Parliament (2008), par. 17.
[93] Elmar Brok, in *Parliament Magazine*, 'Enlargement Fatigue', 26 May 2008, p. 17-18.
[94] European Parliament (2006b), par 41.
[95] European Parliament (2006b), par 6.
[96] Rehn (2008), Speech/08/383.

without giving rise to a sense of frustration in third countries or jeopardising the interests of the individual member states, while also maintaining the impetus for institutional reform and countering the increasing enlargement fatigue in the EU itself.

Outlook

No Enlargement without Integration Capacity: The Need for an Institutional Consolidation and Communication to the Public
The EU's institutions and its member states are increasingly drawing attention to the obstacles in the way of future enlargement than actively promoting it. The EU's integration capacity, which includes regaining public support through better communication, has become one of the critical factors to making future enlargements possible. Besides the necessity of reforming EU institutions before accepting any new members, an extraordinary effort should be made to present enlargements as a success story. Positive attitudes in the member states and among its citizens are becoming increasingly important for the positive outcome of the enlargement process. Members of the European Parliament often underline that while the addition of 10 new countries in 2004 was a success, not all citizens see it that way.[97] The EU's citizens are now being considered potential veto players in the enlargement process, as shown by the debates in France and Austria on the possibility of holding referendums. Besides the hesitant attitude of member states, the EU's institutions are also being more cautious and are avoiding new commitments to candidate states or clear timetables for further accessions. In the absence of an overall positive assessment of enlargement, it is likely that it will not be an issue in the forthcoming European elections in 2009.

In the European elections of 2004 enlargement was an important issue on the agenda. First, because the elections took place just after the conclusion of the large May 2004 enlargement. Secondly, because enlargement was still considered a European success story –reunifying the European continent and achieving a historical triumph–. And thirdly, campaigning for future enlargement (the Western Balkans and Turkey) gave the political parties the possibility of continuing a discourse of enlargement as a success story, presenting themselves as contributors, and to differentiate their political programmes from each other. This was especially the case with the Greens, Liberals and Socialists. This changed after the setback of the French and Dutch 'No' to the Constitutional Treaty in 2005. For the European elections of 2009 it can be expected that enlargement fatigue and the widespread mistrust in the EU and its political project in general (as seen in the slow ratification progress of the Lisbon Reform Treaty) will prompt political parties to refrain from the sensitive issue of enlargement in their campaigns.[98] The election programmes will probably focus to a greater extent on the European political project in general and the need for institutional consolidation. Politicians in the old member states in particular will still have to explain the need for the fifth enlargement round.

The Irish 'No' to the Lisbon Reform Treaty in June 2008 was a further opportunity for questioning the concept of enlargement. Concerns regarding future enlargement are often expressed by political leaders.[99] Even though pro-enlargement parties generally acknowledge that the commitments to candidate countries should be honoured and enlargement continued, the EU's need to consolidate before further expansion is now more frequently highlighted. Some MEP's even warn that if the Lisbon Reform Treaty is not ratified they will not vote in favour of any further enlargement.[100] They stress the danger of the EU ending up without any political clout if no institutional reform is undertaken prior to further expansion. There are voices that claim that if the 'No' vote in Ireland is not taken sufficiently seriously, this might have a negative impact on the electorate in the forthcoming 2009 elections. Calls for the consolidation of the EU before further enlargement had

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[97] Eg, Jan Marinus Wiersma, MEP (PSE), 15 March 2006 EP.
[98] At the time of writing the election programmes of the EU political parties were not available.
[99] Minutes Horizontal Working Group A, PSE, 1 July 2008, p. 2, PSE.
[100] Helmut Kuhne, MEP, PSE, Germany; Thijs Berrman, MEP, PSE, Netherlands.

also been made in the past, but the problem now it that they might actually lead to referendums on the issue.

In the 2009 elections, probably only marginalised or extremist political parties will use enlargement as a campaign subject, however not to promote enlargement as such, but to underline the negative effects of former or future processes, while using the issue to highlight its negative consequences in the EU. The possible added value for political parties generally in favour of enlargement will be very limited, so they might decide not to place enlargement on the agenda but rather focus on other European issues. There appears to be a common desire among the big political parties not to tackle enlargement.

As the rather slow ratification process of the Lisbon Reform Treaty by the EU Member States and the Irish 'No' proof, the EU institutions and the main political actors have to show extra efforts to better communicate and dialogue with the EU citizens. Communication to and with the public is today the most important factor to ensure the EU's capacity to act and to move forward in its political integration project. Only if the EU can act efficiently will it have the capacity to integrate new Members to the EU. While communicating enlargement it will be important to underline, that Enlargement has to be seen as a process in a time perspective. Therefore, any direct causalities concluding in 'No treaty – no Enlargement' are misleading. Internal political problems of the EU, such as the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005 or the non-ratification of the Lisbon Reform Treaty in 2008, should not punish the efforts candidate countries are undertaking on their way towards EU membership. The institutional reforms of the EU and the enlargement process can be realized in parallel and do not exclude each other.

In the upcoming months and years the EU is confronted with one main challenge: before any other big political project –including the Lisbon Reform Treaty and any further enlargement– can be concluded, the EU must regain its citizens' support.

Conclusions

The EU declared its fifth enlargement round one of the most important and successful instruments of its Common Foreign and Security Policy. Up to its fifth enlargement the EU had failed to seek a direct dialogue with its citizens, since the political and historical necessity of enlargement was so fundamental that it was deemed unnecessary. After this last enlargement round, however, the overall agreement on expansion being an unquestionable necessity has broken down. Besides clearly underlining the benefits and the success of enlargement, there is a growing trend towards highlighting its shortcomings and admitting that lessons have to be learned. Ever since, the EU has suffered from a lack of consensus. Aware of the decreasing acceptance of future enlargements, the EU's institutions and member states have realised that the public cannot be ignored any longer. However, they have reacted differently to the rising enlargement fatigue. Whereas the EU's institutions have based their strategy on three principles, namely consolidation, conditionality and better communication with the public, the most striking evidence of enlargement fatigue in the member states is the increasing debate about possible national referendums on the issue.

One very important measure by the EU's institutions to confront this rising fatigue was the preparation of two strategic approaches: the EU's Enlargement Strategy and the ENP. Both strategies were developed more or less simultaneously, in parallel with the big enlargement round in 2004. The Enlargement Strategy seeks to provide enlargement guidelines for candidate countries, to highlight the common benefits of enlargement and to explain and communicate the enlargement process and its objectives to the public. The ENP was mainly aimed at appeasing the unfeasible accession wishes of Eastern European states with complementary proposals –establishing a 'ring of friends' around the EU, with common objectives–. Thus, the ENP was to relieve the pressure on the EU to enlarge beyond the already existing commitments and avoid the creation of an empty space for countries who were not part of the Enlargement Strategy. Both policies, Enlargement and ENP,

tried to secure public support for future enlargements and at the same time to provide no additional impetus for to a growing enlargement fatigue. Moreover, the need for additional time to consolidate the EU's institutional reform was one of the reasons why in parallel to enlargement another foreign policy field –ENP– was developed.

The EU has institutionally established a clear distinction between its Enlargement Policy and the ENP. The Enlargement Strategy follows the clear objective of proposing EU membership to European countries; the ENP, on the contrary, does not offer membership but neither does it completely exclude membership. The ENP was explicitly conceptualised not as an accession instrument and is therefore considered distinct from the Enlargement Strategy. Analysing the two strategies and taking into account their development over the past five years, a complete disconnection does not stand the test either. The lack of coherence of the eligibility of countries to one or the other of the two policy fields poses is an obstacle to a comprehensive separation. As there are countries in the ENP whose European status cannot be denied (eg, Moldova and the Ukraine), the legitimacy of the distinction can be questioned. Especially the Eastern ENP countries interpret the ENP simply as an intermediate step towards their EU accession and would prefer to be placed in the scope of the Enlargement Strategy rather than in the ENP. Therefore, a shift towards a vaguer line of separation between the two strategies was mainly put forward under the pressure of the new member states, who have historical, economic, geographical and cultural ties with their eastern neighbours.

For now, a fusion of both policies, or the abolition of one, is not realistic and is desired neither by the official institutional side nor by the member states. Therefore, various new proposals –such as the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean, the Eastern Partnership and the Union of the Black Sea– have arisen to find alternative approaches and to fill the empty space between and within these two policies. Being launched as complements and/or alternatives, these proposals for regional cooperation forms that include neighbouring as well as candidate countries show that the initial disconnection between enlargement and ENP is fading away. The attitudes of EU member states towards the promotion of possible new regional partnerships as well as references in EU documents show that there is a search for opportunities to present more and more alternatives or intermediate steps outside enlargement itself.

Compared to enlargement, the ENP is perceived as a more positive initiative. It is more acceptable to the EU's citizens and seems to provide a basis for a new success story in the EU, with the narrative shifting from the success story of enlargement to the success story of the ENP. Although the ENP has been described in the most enticing terms for those involved, it has created frustration in some countries. The EU's indecisiveness as regards the relation between enlargement and ENP, including the accession issue, can have a positive impact by allowing the EU's neighbours to hope for membership and thus function as an incentive to carry out the reforms prescribed by the EU, achieving an accelerated process of 'Europeanisation'. Nevertheless, such an option can be maintained only for a limited period of time. In the medium term, the EU member states must reach an agreement on this point, in particular concerning the idea of clearly distinguishing between enlargement and ENP. Given the proposal of the Eastern Partnership, it seems likely that the Ukraine will not wait for another decade before handing in its EU membership application. It is both right and important that the states participating in the ENP are informed frankly about who has no prospects of accession and who might possibly accede at a later date in return for fulfilling the existing criteria. If not, the EU runs the risk, on the one hand, of diluting its own Enlargement Strategy and creating confusions among its member states and its citizens but especially among the candidate countries or future candidate countries, and, on the other hand, of allowing the creation of a range of other political bodies, such as the Union of the Black Sea or the Union for the Mediterranean, undermining its own political position and strategic role on the European continent. Consequently, both strategies –enlargement and ENP– would lose their strategic meaning and

become 'just' a framework for short or mid-term operational projects under the auspices of the EU. The focus would then only be on a project-based approach without a real common political impetus.

The future development of the EU and its policies, including the establishment of the new 'Unions', depends to a large extent on the adoption of the Lisbon Reform Treaty. Therefore, it is very difficult to predict in which direction the enlargement policy, the ENP and the new Unions will progress. Even though the enlargement policy and the ENP have been conceptualised as distinct policy fields and have been set apart even before they can actually work efficiently together, they have many similarities and the two policies act in the framework of the EU's policies as a 'divorced couple'. However, the 'divorced couple' has mixed on different occasions, giving rise to its progeny: the new 'Unions'. So far, the 'marriage' enlargement and ENP is not on the agenda so the future of this family of European Policies remains anybody's guess. Will the 'divorced couple' end in marriage? How many new 'Unions' will be born? How long will they live?

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