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## **The Benefits and Limitations of European Union Membership as a Security Mechanism**

**Carmen Stoian**

### **Abstract**

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of the post-1945 'pax Sovietica' led not to the 'end of history' (Fukuyama, 1992), but rather to an 'awakening of history' (Hyde-Price, 1991:49). The wider Europe that emerged in 1989 is facing changing security concerns, which affect both the new democracies and the European Union (EU). Internal security has become increasingly important and has been affected by external security concerns. In particular, threats other than military ones have emerged, leading to the rethinking of the institutional framework entrusted with the safeguarding of security in Europe. EU membership appears to be an effective tool of ensuring European security. This paper highlights the new internal and external political and economic security concerns in transition economies in order to evaluate the benefits and limitations of EU enlargement as a way of addressing these changing security concerns. Several countries, particularly Poland and Romania, are used to exemplify the EU's role in enhancing security in the applicant countries. We conclude with policy recommendations for dealing with the limitations of EU membership, and for using the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) as a tool of ensuring security beyond the EU enlargement.

**Key words:** European security; Poland; Romania; European integration; EU enlargement, European Neighbourhood Policy.

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## **Introduction**

The history of the European Union (EU) so far has seen the widening of the organisation, as well as the deepening of integration, with the creation of a three pillar EU through the *Treaty on the European Union* of 1993. These three pillars are the *Economic and Monetary Union*, the *Common Foreign and Security Policy* (CFSP) and the *Justice and Home Affairs* Pillar. The creation of CFSP was meant to give the EU a stronger role in international affairs (Moens, 1996:166) in a changing international system in which, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the post-1945 'pax Sovietica' led not to the 'end of history' (Fukuyama, 1992), but rather to an 'awakening of history' (Hyde-Price, 1991:49). This deepening of the EU coincided with pressure for the EU's widening to include the Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) which found themselves in a 'security vacuum' with the dismantlement of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation.

Whilst setting out on a multiple transition process of democratisation, marketisation and 'return to Europe', the CEECs have faced changing security concerns both internally and externally. To return to Europe and fill the security vacuum, the CEECs had to choose between competing and complementing organisations such as the Western European Union (WEU), the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the European Union (EU) (Smoke, 1996:99; Vukadinovic, 2000:4). However, there are several limitations to these institutions (Krupnick, 1996:161). The OSCE does not have enforcement power, the WEU is in a process of redefinition, NATO caters mainly for military and political security (Croft et al, 1999:5), whilst the EU is redefining itself as a 'security mechanism' (Tiersky, 1999). Whilst the *Constitutional Treaty* has proposed increased integration regarding the defence of the Union, the 'No'-votes in the ratifying process may lead to a reconsideration of these propositions. Furthermore, the lack of a common position on Iraq, as well as the location of the mass destruction installations in selected European countries will possibly hinder the development of a common European defence policy (Polish News Bulletin (PNB), 8 September 2005).

The EU may continue to remain a ‘civilian power’ (Lofthouse and Long, 1996:188) rather than a military one. Whilst the EU seems to offer numerous security guarantees, there are also several limitations to the EU’s capacity to enhance security in the candidate countries or in the new member states. Recent debate has focused on security as an ‘engine’ of the EU’s Eastern enlargement (Baldwin et al, 1997; Saryusz-Wolski, 1997; Gower and Redmond, 2000), whilst policy makers and researchers have repeatedly discussed the increased security that EU enlargement can bring to Europe (Grabbe and Hughes, 1999; Prodi, 1999; Cimoszewicz, 2002). It can be seen, therefore, that an analysis of the limitations of EU membership as a tool of providing security in the CEECs is long overdue and this paper aims to fill this gap in the literature. The findings can then be applied to remaining applicant countries such as Croatia and Macedonia.

This study analyses the ways in which the prospect of EU membership for the CEECs has addressed their changing security concerns and discusses, with examples, the EU’s limitations in providing security for the candidate countries, ten of which joined in May 2004 and January 2007 respectively. Finally, the study makes policy recommendations to address these limitations, and to provide security beyond membership through institutional settings such as the *European Neighbourhood Policy* (ENP). To set the stage, security concerns are exemplified mainly for Poland and Romania, the two largest countries that joined in 2004 and 2007. Other countries are used as examples throughout the study. The interest in the EU stems from the EU’s complex nature and the importance attached to the EU’s enlargement by both the Union and the candidate countries. Furthermore, with the present stalemate in the ratification of the *Constitutional Treaty* and by the disagreement over the EU budget reforms, it is important that clear signals are given to the remaining candidates. A discussion on the security benefits of EU enlargement may thus contribute towards maintaining interest in the EU enlargement process at a time when some voices warn of enlargement ‘fatigue’ (Agence France Press (AFP), 30 May 2005). Moreover, as EU membership cannot be offered to all Eastern or South-East European neighbours, it is important to note how the EU can provide security beyond EU membership.

We use both primary and secondary data for the period 1990 to 2006, including interviews with policy makers and academics, a broad selection of newspapers and journals in English and Romanian language, and articles written by Romanian and Polish policy makers or academics. This variety of sources enhances the contribution made by this paper to the general debate. The study is organised as follows. It first provides an overview of the changing internal and external security concerns that post-communist countries such as Poland and Romania have faced since 1989. Secondly, it analyses the main ways in which the prospect of EU membership addresses these security concerns, while equally noting several limitations. Finally, policy recommendations are presented with regard to ways in which these limitations can be addressed, including the role of the ENP in ensuring security beyond EU membership.

### **Changing Security Concerns in the Post-Cold War Era**

In the post-Cold War era, the military threat gave way to diversified threats (Hyde-Price, 1991:100; Koff, 2005:397). Internal security became increasingly important (Hettne, 2002:334) and a distinction between internal and external security concerns was more difficult to make (European Security Strategy, 2003:2). The highest security concern for the CEECs became the continuous economic and political crises to which these countries were subjected in the early 1990s (Dorman and Treacher, 1995:139; Kahl, 1996:158; Taracova et al, 1996:11). The main political security concerns were related to the success of the democratisation process (Kaldor and Vejvoda, 1999:61). Democratisation represents the process of becoming democratic, while democracy is, at its most crude, 'popular or majority rule' (Herring, 1994:88). Based on Doyle's famous assumption that 'democracies do not go to war with each other', the promise was that democratic states would provide 'a key building bloc for a less militarised and more co-operative security structure in Europe' (Doyle, 1986:151-169; Hyde-Price, 1991:105). Internally, democracy would ensure security at individual level through inclusive citizenship, rule of law, respect of human and political rights, freedom of expression and alternative sources of information, separation of powers, elected power-holders, free and fair elections, associational autonomy and civilian control over the security forces (Kaldor and Vejvoda, 1999:63). Any abatement from democratic behaviour was

perceived as a potential security concern. This included threats to the system of government and its ideology by returning to totalitarianism, as well as secessionist or nationalist movements. Protests and frequent changes of government were also seen as sources of internal insecurity. Finally, political fragmentation would constitute a threat by affecting the continuity of policies and hence economic development.

The CEECs faced external security concerns as a result of two conditions. Firstly, high power politics continued to affect perceptions of security. Although the Federal Republic of Germany became a power committed to preserving Central Europe's *status quo* rather than revising it (Ullman, 1991:138), Polish authorities, for example, feared too much political and economic influence from Germany as a continuation of the previous *Drag Nach Osten* policy (Taracova et al, 1996:46; Sanford, 1999:96). However, Russia continued to constitute the main threat for the CEECs due to its great nuclear power, its resources, size, economic and political potential as well as geographical proximity. Indeed, Russia's influence on Poland and Romania has been strong during the 1990s. The fall of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) contributed to the transitional recession in the early 1990s, enhancing the economic and political insecurity of former CMEA members. The negative impact was higher in Poland, whose trade was greatly dependent on the organisation (Sanford, 1999:12). On the positive side, Poland's strong need for new trade partners speeded up its integration with the EU. In 1998, Russia's financial crisis in 1998 affected foreign direct investment (FDI) in Poland and Romania, albeit only to a small extent.

A politically and economically unstable or undemocratic Russia was feared to constitute a threat to the CEECs through renewed neo-imperialism, or threats such as drugs, arms or human trafficking (Smoke, 1996:58; Haerpfer et al, 1999:996; Cottey, 2001:5). Indeed, after a brief, 'romantic', pro-Westernism between 1991 and 1993 (Bukkvoll, 2003:1143), the ambiguity of Russia's idea of 'near abroad' and its disguised reluctance to recognise the independence of Ukraine made Poland fear imperialistic tendencies over the former Warsaw Treaty Organisation member states (Stefanowicz, 1996:111). Moscow has installed a system of economic, political and military treaties which reintegrate

vertically the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and which, along with weak CIS governments, make Russia the post-communist regional hegemonic power (Trautmann, 1997:201). Between 1991 and 1994 Russia maintained a veto power over NATO's enlargement (Smoke, 1996:101) and president Boris Yeltsin even warned of a 'cold peace', should Poland join NATO (Stefanowicz, 1996:115). Furthermore, Russia interpreted NATO's expansion and intervention in Yugoslavia as threats to its security (Park and Rees, 1998:178). However, in 1994, the Russian authorities declared that Russia would permit a NATO enlargement, on condition that it be done 'discretely' and 'without isolating Russia' (Stefanowicz, 1996:111). Russian foreign policy was re-directed towards co-operation with the West (Trautmann, 1997:212) and included the establishment of a Joint Council between Russia and NATO (Park and Rees, 1998:178). Bilateral relations between Poland and Russia have focused on Poland's role as a 'bridge' to the East and on the Europeanisation of Russia (Sanford, 1999:97). The Kosovo crisis and the *War on Terror* necessitated co-operation between NATO and Russia, and showed that a viable security arrangement has to consider Russia's participation (Rusi, 2001:122). Poland's accession to NATO in 1999 appears to have eliminated Polish military security concerns regarding Russia's proximity, shifting the focus of Poland's foreign policy (PNB, 19 May 2005). Nevertheless, it is likely that conflicts of interests with Russia over Belarus, Ukraine or EU-Russia relations will continue (PNB, 19 May 2005). The fear of Russia has also diminished for Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Romania which joined NATO in 1997 or in 2004.

However, Russia remained a security concern for Romania for longer than other CEECs, affecting Romania's return to Europe (Linden and Pohlman, 2003:324). Romania seemed to remain under Russian influence until 1994, having signed (yet not ratified) in 1990 a co-operation treaty with Russia which included a Soviet veto for Romania's participation in a security agreement (Severin, 1997:31). The delay in signing a new treaty with Russia was amongst the reasons for Romania not being invited in 1997 to join NATO (Pop, 1997:12), despite a shift of foreign policy from East to West (Severin, 1997:31). The resuming of the negotiations for the bilateral treaty contributed to Romania joining NATO in 2004, within the larger context of the Russia-NATO co-operation in the *War on Terror*. Romania's accession to NATO

in 2004 gave Romania a more equal footing in dealing with Russia to the extent that the President Traian Băsescu declared in 2005: 'I would like to become one of Putin's European friends who can phone him at any time. And the Russian president could phone me' (Current Digest of Post-Soviet Press, 4 January 2005). This shows that Romania is building a political, economic and (potentially) military partnership with Russia, and that the EU must make best use of this new partnership.

Secondly, recognition of the existing borders (European Commission, 2005b:1) and respect of minority rights became a strong security key issue for the CEECs. This is because Central Europe and South-Eastern Europe have historically been a 'buffer zone' between different empires with the population comprising different ethnic groups with different languages and distinct identities (Haerpfer et al, 1999:995-996). Furthermore, European security has become 'indivisible' (Latawski, 1994:86; European Security Strategy, 2003:10) rather than 'divisible' (Ullman, 1991:28; Park and Rees, 1998). In other words, European security depends on the security of its component regions. The Yugoslav wars have shown that nationalist threats may affect the whole Europe through increased migration, economic embargoes or fear of spread of conflict and that the EU cannot always count on the NATO to interfere militarily in European crises. Moreover, the 1999 Kosovo crisis showed that insecurity in South-Eastern Europe was a threat to the whole continent. This resulted in the EU's renewed assurance of membership for Bulgaria and Romania which were invited at the 1999 *Helsinki European Council* to open accession negotiations with the EU, alongside other initially 'second wave' candidates. Furthermore, Turkey – which had first applied to join the EU in 1959 – was considered a 'candidate', thus potentially providing it with the security benefits of the prospect of EU membership (Economist, 17 September 2005). Romano Prodi (1999), the President of the European Commission at the time, admitted then that: 'Peace and stability across Europe are not yet a matter of fact. They must be maintained in some areas and achieved in others. This is the situation in which the Commission has chosen to act as initiator and guardian. [...] Enlargement is the most effective means we have of upholding our shared values across Europe'. So, to what extent is EU membership the most effective way to provide security in the CEECs?



### **How Effective is EU Membership as a Tool of Providing Security in the Candidate Countries?**

This paper argues that EU membership is the best way to provide 'soft security' for the CEECs in conjunction with the 'hard security' guarantees provided by NATO membership. The EU's civilian role is particularly important given the marginal role of the CFSP in the crises in former Yugoslavia (Moens, 1996:172) and the divisions within Europe over the crisis in Iraq. Furthermore, a cost-benefit analysis of NATO's capabilities, as compared to any autonomous European security and defence mechanisms, would suggest that there is more to gain from an association with the US (Krupnick, 1996:156) in a world where nuclear weapons may again become relevant to European security. According to Duchene and Hill (cited in Lofthouse and Long, 1996:181-182), the civilian model of the EU focuses on 'quiet diplomacy, economic interdependence and multilateral connections and exchange'. Building on this, we develop a model in which the EU exercises on the candidate or applicant countries a motivational power - by providing the accession criteria and the prospect of membership; an economic power -by offering funds and enhancing trade and investment; and finally, an institutional power through different institutional arrangements. Both benefits and limitations of joining the EU are evaluated and exemplified. We are, however, aware that EU membership cannot be offered to all Eastern and South Eastern European countries; hence, we evaluate shortly the role of the ENP in providing security beyond EU membership.

#### ***The Benefits of the EU as a Security Mechanism***

##### **The EU's Normative and Motivational Power**

By offering the 'carrot' of membership and establishing accession criteria, the EU has imposed certain standards of democratisation and marketisation (Murphy, 1994:33) aimed at minimising the danger of a return to authoritarian regimes and centrally planned economies. Furthermore, by assessing, through the 'Avis' and regular reports, the candidates' progress in line with the Copenhagen criteria the EU has contributed towards maintaining support for democratic and market economy values by both élites and the population throughout the CEECs (Interview 1). The EU's motivational power was especially

acknowledged in the aftermath of the Kosovo crisis when the European Commission invited the previously 'second wave' candidates to start accession negotiations (Interviews 1 and 2): 'We risk losing some countries along the way by depriving their reforms of a tangible, credible objective and as the political consequences of such an exclusion cannot be measured, no risk should be taken' (Prodi, 1999).

The increased protection of minority rights (European Commission, 1997:18) led Poland to improved relations with Germany and Lithuania, thus diffusing some initial security concerns. The participation of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) in the coalition government of 1996 led to considerable improvements in the observation of minority rights in Romania (Partos, 2003:100). Furthermore, the Romanian authorities have managed to solve through diplomacy certain differences of opinion with the Hungarian government regarding their proposed 'Law on Hungarian Status' of 2001 (Adevărul, 1 December 2002).

Because of Poland's strong commitment to joining the EU since the early 1990s the return to power of post-communists in 1993 was not seen as a threat by the international community (Agh, 1998:55). Poland's commitment to the EU also led to changes in the Polish constitution which diminished President Lech Wałęsa's ability to exercise his authoritarian tendencies (Agh, 1998:64). To avoid the negative effects of political fragmentation, in Poland, the opposition parties formed a large block for the 1997 election. This led to the victory of Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) which formed a coalition government with the Freedom Union (UW) (Agh, 1998:63). Similarly, Romania's renewed effort to join the EU contributed to the 1996 electoral victory of the Romanian Democratic Convention. This removed the post-communists from power and eliminated the threat of a possible return to a totalitarian regime. In Hungary, the political consolidation and the prospect of EU membership also led, in 1998, to the establishment of a coalition government between the Hungarian Civic Party and the Independent Smallholders' Party (FKGP), leaving the post-communists in opposition (BBC, 11 June 1998).

The prospect of EU membership has also contributed to a relative homogenisation of political parties. Through conditionality, the EU has ensured that democracy and the market economy have been pursued regardless of the ideological stand of the parties in power (Kahl, 1996:165; Ștefan, 2001). The

return of post-communists to power in Romania and Poland through the 2000 and 2001 elections respectively was not seen as a threat (FT (FT), 12 December, 2000; Financial Times (FT), 10 October, 2001). Instead, the return of the socialists to power in Hungary in 2006 was considered a sign of ‘maturing politics’ (Economist, 27 April 2006). Furthermore, some internal accusations over the slightly authoritarian manner of the Năstase government of Romania did not constitute serious concerns externally at the time (Economist, 22 May 2002). On the contrary, it was considered that the government was very determined to conduct economic reforms, with positive effects on Romania’s perceptions of security.

The prospect of EU membership also led to the impact of extremist parties on the political arena being minimised. The extremist Greater Romania Party (PRM) was marginalised after the 2000 elections, despite obtaining 20 per cent of the seats in parliament (Adevărul, 12 May 2001). The same happened with the League of Polish Families (LPR) and the Self Defence of the Polish Republic (S) after the 2001 Polish parliamentary election (Warsaw Voice (WV), 2 April 2002), and with the Hungarian Justice and Life Party after the 2002 election in Hungary (FT, 22 October 2002). Furthermore, the 2006 Hungarian parliamentary elections have seen a fall in the votes for the far right (Economist, 27 April 2006), showing that EU membership can still have a strong motivational and normative power.

Through the imposition of economic criteria, governments in the CEECs were encouraged to promote reforms for transition to a market economy (Kahl, 1996:166; Cameron, 2000:251). This was especially important given the large cost borne by population and the political élite. The criteria included important conditions for attracting FDI, completing privatisation, enhancing economic growth and prosperity. The post-1996 Ciorbea government of Romania followed closely the EU’s requirements (Interview 1), and so did the medium term strategies of Poland (Interview 3) and Romania (Interview 4). Furthermore, the recommendations made through the regular reports were taken on board by most governments of the candidate countries, including the Polish (Interview 3) and Romanian governments (Phinnemore, 2000:7). The EU’s renewed commitment to Romania’s accession given at the 1999 *Helsinki European Council* led to faster pace of reform after the 2000 election (Interview 1). This effect was also visible in Lithuania, Latvia, and Slovakia, countries initially in the ‘second wave’ of accession

that joined in 2004 (Economist, 3 June 2006). Furthermore, the invitation addressed to Turkey to start accession negotiations with the EU has spurred internal reforms (Economist, 6 May 2006).

The EU's motivational power also impacted upon the external security concerns of the CEECs. By making Euro-Atlantic integration dependant on good neighbourly relations through the 'Balladur Pact', the EU has helped to diffuse the initial threats posed by recognition of borders (Chilton, 1996:227). Thus, Poland had signed bilateral agreements with its neighbours by 1992 (Michta and Prizel, 1992:70), creating positive perceptions of security. Furthermore, Poland's determination to become an EU member transformed the threat posed initially by Germany into an opportunity by seeking its support in the accession process (Cimoszewicz, 2002; Interview 5). Also, Romania's increased commitment for Euro-Atlantic integration has made it distance itself from Russia since 1994.

### **The EU's Economic Power**

By providing funds, liberalising trade and encouraging FDI, the EU has contributed to the economic development of the CEECs (Baldwin et al, 1997; Mattli and Plümper, 2002), thus potentially minimising political and economic instability and increasing internal security. Funds directed towards building civil society enhance democratisation, thus eliminating the threat of a return to authoritarian regimes (Sakwa, 2002:142). By ensuring safety nets for those most affected by transition, some of the pre-accession funds have contributed to the reduction of political instability. Furthermore, funds provided by the European Union have encouraged institutional building, a necessary condition for political and economic stability. Finally, funds allocated to agriculture or to infrastructure by the EU or by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development have enhanced the economic reforms, leading potentially to economic prosperity and internal security (Stoian, 2005).

By providing export markets and FDI, the EU has enhanced economic growth and economic security (Stoian, 2005). At present, more than two thirds of the CEECs' exports are to the EU market (Stoian, 2005). Furthermore, in 2004, EU investment represented 70.1% (PAIiIZ, 2005:5) of total FDI in Poland and 63% in Romania (Stoian, 2005). FDI and competition from imports originating from the EU

have accelerated economic reforms in the CEECs (Stoian, 2005). These have accelerated EU integration, with its promised increased welfare and economic security. The initial liberalisation of trade between individual CEECs and the EU has also led to the setting up of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA). The EU has also encouraged trade and FDI into South-Eastern Europe by setting up the free trade agreement originating from the *Stability Pact in South-Eastern Europe* (EurObserver, 22 May 2003). This aimed to enhance security in the area by generating economic co-operation and growth. Increased trade and FDI from the EU has also decreased the potential economic influence of Russia. Indeed, MOL Rt of Hungary and PKN Orlen SA of Poland have refused in the past offers of mergers or acquisitions by Russian oil companies (Daily Deal, 5 January 2006). Foreign investment has also contributed towards better standards of living in the area, thus reducing the risk of protest and strikes, and therefore improved internal security (Stoian, 2005:32). FDI has led to enhanced employment opportunities, higher wages, improved skills, and greater consumer choice. Finally, foreign direct investment in the area was seen externally as a sign of a country's commitment to reforms, thus improving perceptions of security (Stoian, 2005:32).

### **The EU's Institutional Power**

Through its various institutional arrangements the EU is addressing the CEECs' external threats. Firstly, by extending the area of prosperity eastwards, the EU complements NATO in filling the security vacuum resulting from the dismantling of the USSR and of the 'Soviet empire'. By contributing to the CEECs' internal reforms, the EU minimises the political influence that Russia can exert through economic or political means on the area as a result of its 'near abroad' policy or of its accommodation with the West as a means to legitimise its imperialistic tendencies. Today, Russia represents an important partner for the EU, 'more than a neighbour' (Patten, 2003:9). EU–Russia relations are based on an 'ambitious, comprehensive, bilateral agenda' including a structured and intensive CFSP dialogue (Patten, 2003:9), cross-border co-operation, border management, transport and energy corridors, tackling Black Sea pollution and fighting against drug trafficking and other types of organised crime (Verheugen, 2003:2).

The EU's support is conditional on Russia's commitment to individual rights and the rule of law, at least on a rhetorical level (Patten, 2000:3). The EU's co-operation with Russia and financial support under the *Partnership and Co-operation Agreement* are likely to enhance Russia's own democratisation and marketisation, thus potentially reducing the risks of future instability or imperialist policies in the 'near abroad'.

Secondly, by contributing to securing Poland's and Romania's eastern borders as preparations for membership of the *Schengen Agreement*, the EU can minimise the inflow of migrants, drugs, arms and human trafficking, which have constituted an important security concern for Poland, Romania and the EU itself. The EU is also likely to enhance the external security of both countries through its *European Neighbourhood Policy* and its impact on Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine whose slow reforms may lead to political and economic instability and 'export' of threats such as crime, terrorism, illegal immigration and environment challenges (Prodi, 2003:3; European Commission, 2005a:2; Missiroli, 2003:8). The ENP features not only co-operation, but also closer political links, an element of economic integration, as well as assistance with reforms to encourage economic and social development. This partnership is conditional on commitments to strengthen the rule of law, democracy and respect for human rights, to promote market economy reforms, enhance employment and social cohesion and to co-operate on key foreign policy objectives such as counter-terrorism and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (European Commission, 200a5:1). While this policy 'does not start with the promise of membership', it does 'not exclude eventual membership', and it is based on 'sharing everything but the institutions' (Prodi, 2003:3). This means countries are offered 'a single market, free trade, open investment regime, approximation of legislation, interconnection of networks and the use of Euro as a reserve and reference currency in bilateral transactions' (Prodi, 2003:3). By attaching conditionality to this support, the EU is likely to diminish the external security concerns of countries such as Poland and Romania.

Finally, the *Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe* initiated by the EU in 1999 was also aimed at improving the security of Romania, Bulgaria and of the Balkans by enhancing regional co-operation and by committing the international community to the economic development and security of the area. By not

excluding membership for countries in the South-Eastern Europe the EU enhances stability in the area (Economist, 8 October 2005). However, it is still early to assess the effects of this endeavour. EU membership is likely to benefit from and enhance Romania and Bulgaria's role as poles of stability in South-Eastern Europe (Severin, 1997:18). However, there are several limitations to the EU's role in enhancing security in the CEECs and these are discussed below.

### ***Limitations of the EU as a Security Mechanism***

#### **Limitations of the EU's Motivational Power**

Certain limitations of the EU's motivational power refer to the impact of the Copenhagen criteria on enhancing security in the CEECs. In Romania, human rights observation led to disputes over the interpretation and the limitations of such rights. The *1201 Recommendation* of the Council of Europe regarding collective minority rights created an intense debate between the government and the UDMR (Severin, 1997:36). A similar debate was provoked in Romania and Slovakia by the *Law on Hungarian Status* proposed by the Hungarian government in an attempt to ensure the prosperity of its nationals outside Hungary (Partoş, 2003:100; FT, 27 November 2002). Presidents Lech Wałęsa of Poland (Agh, 1998:64) and Ion Iliescu of Romania (Tismăneanu, 1993:15), were at times accused of authoritarian tendencies. In Turkey, despite the conditionality attached to the EU accession process, human rights record still appeared poor in 2005, just before the opening of accession negotiations with the EU (Economist, 17 September 2005). Also, in 2006, the Turkish government appeared to limit free speech through a proposed anti-terror bill (Economist, 6 May 2006). Furthermore, the 'carrot' of EU membership was not able to stop the emergence of extremist parties and their election in parliaments across the CEECs. Disillusioned with some of the results of economic and political transition, voters turned in 2000 to the extremist PRM (Washington Times, 1 December 2004), and in 2001 to the League of Polish Families (LPR) and to the Self Defence of the Polish Republic (S) (FT, 10 October 2001). In Hungary, the Hungarian Life and Justice Party, a far right party, gained 4.37 per cent in the 2002 elections (Elections around the World, 2006). These results point towards a certain 'fatigue' with transition and the need to

maintain external support for democratic consolidation in the CEECs. The 2004 European parliamentary election in Poland and the 2005 parliamentary and presidential elections brought the same warning signal of the rising popularity of the extremist parties Samoobrona and the Civil Platform (WV, 18 May, 2005). In Romania, the far-right opposition party PRM came in third with 13.65 per cent in the 2004 legislative elections (AFP, 2 December 2004). In Turkey, by 2006, the ruling Justice and Development (AK) party was leaning towards a more openly Islamist foreign policy while the Kurdish separatists had been dealt with relatively heavily handed (Economist, 6 May 2006). Furthermore, as a result of the resignation of PM Leszek Miller, political instability and fragmentation has even dogged Poland since 1 May 2004, when it joined the EU. Similarly, due to a prolonged pre-accession process the motivation for reforms in Turkey has diminished since the beginning of the accession negotiations and the political stability of the Erdogan government appeared to be vulnerable in 2006 (Economist, 1 April 2006).

The assessment of progress towards EU membership using the economic criteria also had several negative effects. Market economy is associated with greater risk, making it is difficult to dissociate it from economic insecurity. The closing down of sensitive sectors such as mining led to important protests in Poland (Associated Press, 26 September 2003) and Romania, for fear of increased unemployment (Adevărul Economic, 29 February 2000; Associated Press, 24 February 2004). The prospect of implementation of the *Common Agricultural Policy* upon accession to the EU has also led to frequent protests by the Polish farmers ahead of the closing of accession negotiations on agriculture. The rapid transposition and implementation of the *acquis communautaire* required an enormous financial, human and administrative effort, thus using resources that could have been used in more productive areas of economic reforms (Bevan et al, 2004). Moreover, the privatisation process has led to an increasing gap between rich and poor (WV, 12 December 2002; Adevărul, 13 June, 2004), another potential source of political instability. Additionally, over-reliance on the EU's documents was briefly seen as a threat to Romania's sovereignty during the Ciorbea government (Interview 1).

### **Limitations of the EU's Economic Power**



There are also several limitations to EU's economic power. Firstly, suspicions over the misuse of some of the pre-accession funds led to increased perceptions of corruption and internal insecurity in Poland and Romania (AFP, 13 June 2003; Adevărul Economic, 7-13 April 2004). Despite significant institutional building, bureaucracy still acts as a deterrent to foreign investors (World Bank, 2005). Furthermore, trade liberalisation has increased to a certain extent the dependence on the EU market (WIIW, 2005). Moreover, for most of the 1990s, access to the EU markets did not incorporate areas such as steel, textiles and agriculture in which Romania, Bulgaria and Poland have a comparative advantage over the EU (Gross and Steinherr, 1995:449). This diminished the contribution that trade liberalisation might have made in enhancing economic growth and economic security. Increased trade and the poor competitiveness of the CEECs also led to increased balance of payments deficits and hence economic insecurity in countries such as Poland and Romania (WV, 19 September 1999; Adevărul Economic, 7-13 April 2004). Furthermore, concerns of German economic domination over Poland have increased as a result of significant trade and FDI by German businesses (FT, 10 March 1999). Finally, FDI sometimes led to closures of plants, hence increased unemployment and economic insecurity (WV, 12 March 2004; Adevărul Economic, 24-30 March 2004).

### **Limitations of the EU's Institutional Power**

The EU's institutional power also has several limitations. Regardless of external institutional settings, internal reforms remain crucial for increased welfare and internal security (Interview 1). Moreover, EU membership brings fears as well. EU membership implies surrendering sovereignty, thus replacing the former Soviet influence with a European one (Buzan et al, 1990:153). While this is partially true, the Europeanization process has been a voluntary project of the CEECs. Furthermore, in a world of high economic interdependence, total sovereignty has become an obsolete concept. The sovereignty issue has been particularly debated in Poland (Henderson, 2004:159).

Secondly, the threat of Russian economic and political influence has not been eliminated entirely. Russia has become an important investor in Poland, Romania or Latvia (PaIiIz, 2005; WIIW, 2005; LIAA,

2005) while dependence on Russian oil is still a sensitive issue for many CEECs, including Poland and Romania. According to some analysts, under Putin, Russia has increasingly become a threat for Central and Eastern Europe while the Russian polity has become increasingly authoritarian (PNB, 29 December 2005; Gill, 2006). Although a joint approach to Russia was supposed to be a centrepiece of the EU's CFSP, in practice self-interest and disunity have limited these efforts. Germany and France are pursuing independent Russia-friendly policies, which include Germany's agreement to a gas pipeline under the Baltic Sea from Russia. The Polish Sejm sees this agreement as a threat to Poland's security and independence, a 'latter-day replica of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact' (Current Digest of the Soviet Press, 6 March 2005). Nevertheless, France has rejected Russia's participation in the EU's defence policy (PNB, 19 May 2005), partially reassuring the CEECs that there are limits to Russia's influence in the area.

Despite its ENP, EU membership is likely to create new division lines in Europe replacing the *Iron Curtain* with a so called *Paper Curtain* (Sakwa, 2002:132). The accession of Poland and Romania will enhance discussions over the likelihood of membership of Ukraine and Moldova (Wolczuk and Wolczuk, 2003:12). Increased security measures on the Polish and Romanian eastern borders have limited, or will possibly limit, the freedom of movement of citizens from Belarus, Kaliningrad and Ukraine, thus potentially creating a new sense of exclusion. Furthermore, by including in the ENP countries without European aspirations such as Morocco, this institutional framework appeared 'humiliating' to Ukraine which considers itself 'as European as France' (Economist, 1 April 2006).

Finally, in terms of ensuring military security, the CFSP still has considerable limitations (Rusi, 2001:119). While the Yugoslav wars in the early 1990s demonstrated the need for an independent EU crisis management capability, the 1999 Kosovo crisis has revealed the need for better co-operation between the EU, NATO and Russia (Smith, 2003; Rusi, 2001). The need for co-operation with NATO is also shown by the establishment of EU-NATO permanent arrangements in 2002 (Solana, 2002). Additionally, the recent War in Iraq has shown that the EU is not prepared to act with a single voice and there can be disagreements among NATO members (Associated Press, November 2004). While the EU is

likely to eliminate the security concerns between its members, it still appears to lack the military capability of ensuring full guarantees against outside threats.

### ***Candidate or EU Member: Does It Matter?***

The EU's motivational, economic and institutional powers differ between candidates and EU members, and the enlargement 'fatigue' both within the EU and the candidate countries may affect the EU's effectiveness as a security mechanism (Economist, 14 January 2006). Indeed, since joining the EU, the motivational power has faded in Poland. Poland has become more critical of economic reforms and has started reassessing its role in the EU and evaluating different models for the EU's future. Poland participated in the negotiations over the EU budget, building alliances to pursue its own national interest. By receiving cohesion and structural funds rather than pre-accession funding, by totally liberalising its trade with the EU and continuing to receive FDI, Poland has benefited even more from the EU's economic power. In terms of the EU's institutional power, by becoming an EU member Poland was a strong initiator of the ENP and was able to directly influence the democratisation process in Ukraine when the 2004 elections were rigged (Current Digest of Post-Soviet Press, 4 January 2005). However, dependence on Russian energy has limited to some extent the institutional power of the EU.

By having its EU membership delayed until 2007, Romania benefited for longer from the EU's motivational power, although to a decreasing degree, given a certain 'fatigue' with reforms and accession. Despite having received comparatively less funding from the EU, Romania benefited from increasing FDI motivated by lower costs resulting from non-membership, thus still gaining from the EU's economic power. As an EU outsider for longer, Romania's ability to influence the ENP and its priorities has been reduced. Furthermore, in 2005 Romania's president expressed an interest in 'forging a close and trusting relationship with Russia' (The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, 4 January 2005). Also, the Russian Federation has exercised its economic power on Romania by offering advantageous economic projects provided that Romania does not intervene in the conflict between Moldova and the Dnestr region. This

was a result of Romania's delayed EU membership. It remains to be seen how these powers manifest themselves since Romania joined the EU in 2007.

Still a candidate for the EU enlargement, Turkey still benefits from some of the effects of the prospect of EU membership. However, the timetable for the beginning of the accession negotiations had to be strictly adhered to in order to maintain the support for EU accession within the Turkish political élite (Economist, 3 September 2005) and to address the criticisms of the EU's worry about accepting a large Muslim country as a new member (Economist, 17 September 2005). Some fears were expressed within Turkey regarding the possible loss of support for EU enlargement in Austria or Germany, whilst the EU was concerned with cuts in individual freedoms in Turkey (Economist, 8 October 2005) and with the feeble stability of the Erdogan government (Economist, 1 April 2006). Indeed, any sudden change in the EU's strategy towards Turkey may lead to a loss in the effectiveness of EU's motivational, economic and institutional powers on Turkey with potential negative consequences on European security. Turkey is a large country with a large population of the Muslim faith whose acceptance into the EU would test whether 'the EU, and the West as a whole, has any role in encouraging moderate and democratic Islam'. According to some analysts, rejecting Turkey would be taken by some Arab countries as hypocrisy or even racism by the West (Economist, 17 September 2005) with a potentially negative impact on European security. This is why the EU enlargement process should not be blamed for the internal problems of the Union and should keep up its momentum, whilst taking into account the 'absorptive capacity' of the EU (Economist, 1 April 2006). There is a fear that, as a result of enlargement 'fatigue' both within the EU and the candidate or applicant countries, the EU's motivational, economic and institutional powers will fade in the new candidate countries such as Croatia, or in countries such as Serbia and Bosnia who have begun the preliminary stage that could lead to accession talks (Economist, 14 January 2006). Indeed, the EU enlargement and the ENP need to address the limitations of EU membership as a security mechanism, and to provide security beyond EU membership.

## **Conclusion and Policy Recommendations**

Although the CFSP was meant to empower the EU in defence matters, the EU's role in enhancing European security remains largely that of a 'civilian actor' (Lofthouse and Long, 1996:188) that needs to be complemented by the military power of NATO. EU membership appears to be an effective way of providing security in the candidate countries, despite several limitations. Moreover, these limitations can be addressed through various policies, including post-membership tools such as the ENP as discussed below.

To minimise the risk of return to totalitarian regimes and of public unrest, financial assistance should be directed towards the continuous development of civil society, of inter-ethnic co-operation and towards providing safety nets for the 'disadvantaged of transition'. Building a strong and vocal civil society has proved successful in the case of the Ukrainian revolution (Current Digest of Post-Soviet Press, 4 January 2005). Financial assistance should also support the implementation of the *acquis communautaire*, thus allowing domestic resources to be channelled towards the necessary economic reforms. International financial organisations and private capital should be also encouraged (Cimosziewicz, 2002:3). Infrastructure and implementation of legislation within a transparent legislative system should also be supported in order to improve the business climate in the applicant and in the neighbouring countries, potentially leading to further trade and investment with the EU. This would potentially lessen the economic influence of Russia in the area and diminish external security concerns. Funding for the *Stability Pact in South-Eastern Europe* should be maintained and should observe the recommendations above. The timing and the scope of liberalisation of different sectors for future members have to take into consideration their competitive advantages so that benefits from liberalisation are maximised.

Given that there is a certain 'fatigue' with the EU enlargement, the ENP should be given a high priority in the EU agenda and the new EU member states or remaining candidates should be encouraged to take part in shaping its agenda. The EU cannot afford to turn its back to Ukraine which could foster stronger relations with Russia in the absence of a strong EU commitment (Economist, 1 April 2006).

Poland should take initiatives to further contribute to the security and prosperity of its neighbouring countries (PNB, 8 September 2005).

Although the EU's support is important for security in the neighbouring countries, the engine of change should, however, be the countries themselves (European Commission, 2005b:2). Whilst conditionality is important, withdrawing assistance for countries that do not meet their commitments may strengthen a vicious circle of non-compliance, hence defeating the initial objectives of the policy. This is why Belarus should be closely monitored and supported as well as motivated in its efforts to reform. Promises that cannot be kept (such as full EU membership) should not be made to countries such as Belarus in order to avoid backlashes of public opinion. The pace and scope of the EU enlargement has to take into account the 'absorptive capacity' of the EU (Economist, 1 April 2006). Élités and the public should be made aware of the advantages of being outside the EU, not only of the costs of non-membership. The ENP should be seen not as a 'second best to enlargement', but rather 'a highly desirable step-change in the EU's relations with the area, offering substantive benefits to all involved' (European Commission, 2005b:2).

Improving relations between Poland or Romania and their neighbouring countries should not be seen to happen at the expense of Russia. An increasingly economically strong Russia may become an ever more difficult partner for the EU. The increasingly powerful gas lobby within Russia and its important impact on foreign policy should not be underestimated. The EU should continue to observe conditionality in its relations with Russia whilst building a strong partnership similar to the one between Russia and the US. A unified approach is likely to be more successful in order to avoid disagreements as in the *War on Terror* (PNB, 23 December 2004). Poland could be an arbiter of the EU's relations with Russia by making sure that conditionality attached to the relationship is respected, and that Russia's imperialistic attitude towards the 'near abroad' is kept in check. Romania can use its changing relations with Russia to further the EU-Russia partnership. However, to avoid over-dependence on Russia in economic terms, further economic integration between countries such as Romania or the remaining candidate countries and the EU should be pursued. All in all, the 'soft security' power of the EU is likely to prevail in its objective of

increasing the security of the continent. For military guarantees, the EU should continue to employ both its own forces and the capabilities developed by NATO.

This paper has examined the benefits and limitations of EU membership as a security mechanism. We have developed a model in which the EU exercises on the candidate countries a motivational power by providing the accession criteria and the prospect of membership, an economic power by offering funds and enhancing trade and investment, and finally an institutional power through different institutional arrangements. The limitations of EU membership as a tool of providing security in the candidate countries can be addressed by specific policies, including targeted financial assistance. Beyond EU membership, we have seen that the ENP is a useful tool in providing security that can be shaped by new EU members or candidates. Furthermore, as the prospect of EU membership is not explicitly excluded for participants in the ENP, they can benefit to some extent by the motivational power of the EU. Further research will investigate the scope for the EU in ensuring the military security of the continent in comparison with NATO.

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