

Introduction

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The Fifth enlargement is now closer than ever. At the Copenhagen European Council Summit, 12-13 December 2002, ten of the thirteen candidate countries from Central, Eastern and the Mediterranean Europe concluded their formal accession negotiations and thus cleared their way to becoming members of the European Union. The talks to close the final chapters with the candidates became an intense affair, lasting well into the early morning hours of the final day of the European Council, and were until last minute marked by frustrating micro-bargains (financial packages, agriculture etc.). The suspense was thus in the air at the Bella Conference Centre in Copenhagen, until the Danish prime minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, was finally able to announce that a deal had been concluded. With the negotiations finalised, the signing of the Accession Treaties is scheduled to take place at a joint ceremony hosted by the Greek EU Presidency in Athens 16 April 2003, after which a period of national ratifications will begin¹. Finally, the incorporation of the new member states is due to take place 1 May 2004, just in time before the 2004 European Parliament elections.

Of the candidate states that for now will remain outside the European Union, Bulgaria and Romania were disappointed to find that the Copenhagen European Council upheld the Commission's Regular Report from October 2002, which deemed that these two Balkan countries were not yet prepared for EU membership. The European leaders gathered in the Danish capital tried, however, to mitigate the blow by setting a new approximate date for accession of these two countries in 2007, and by offering a strengthened pre-accession strategy and more financial support. Turkey, the thirteenth candidate state, would also leave Copenhagen frustrated. The Turkish delegation present at the Summit, headed by the Justice and Development Party's leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan, had hoped that the European Council would commit itself to setting a firm date for when accession negotiations could be opened with

Ankara. Nevertheless, the Turkish government would instead have to settle for the rather ambiguous promise that if the European Council in December 2004 considered Turkey ready to begin negotiations, it would do so without delay.

Notwithstanding the dissatisfaction of those left out for the moment, the Copenhagen Summit was to become historic for many reasons. The Fifth enlargement is the largest expansion, and the most ambitious, which the European Union has undertaken since its first institutions were established more than fifty years ago. The Eastern enlargement will not only increase the Union's territory by a quarter, but also add another 75 million new citizens which will bring the total up to a 435 million inhabitants. Moreover, the impending enlargement will also satisfy the grand historic visions of Jean Monnet and Robert Schumann, who envisaged peace between European nations and the end to the division of the continent. The 2004 incorporation of the new EU members in this sense marks the culmination of a decade's hard work to overcome the lingering legacy of the Second World War and the Yalta partition of Europe, by finally granting the Central and Eastern European countries the 'return to Europe' which they have striven for ever since the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The Danish EU Presidency thus successfully managed to bring about the difficult task to close the circle of 'Copenhagen to Copenhagen' as it had set out to do in its Presidency Programme, concluding one of the most challenging chapters of European integration history. However, if the past decade's fusion of East and West has been a monumental task, one might infer that even greater challenges for the European construction lie ahead of the EU as the accession becomes reality. The 2004 enlargement opens up the European Union to a new stage filled of uncertainties and question marks. Will the EU be able to consolidate the intake of its new members, while at the same time successfully reform itself (CIG 2004) and not loose track of important issues arising beyond of its territorial borders? The task is undoubtedly titanic and the outcome far from clear; which gives rise to another set of questions: will the enlarged EU emerge as a strengthened policy actor, able and willing to make its mark as an international player? Or, will the result be an increasingly introverted,

self-consuming, inefficient Union, unable, for the short- to longer term, to exert much control over events beyond its borders? These questions and others set the backdrop for the present edited volume *Beyond enlargement: The new members and new frontiers of the enlarged European Union*.

With Europe 2004 approaching fast, this publication is not intended to re-explore the enlargement process once more. Many excellent books and articles have already been produced on the topic of the Eastern enlargement over the past decade. Rather this edited work is largely devoted to providing an approximate vision of what might lie ahead for the European Union beyond enlargement, a theme which the editors feel so far has been rather under-represented among academic publications. The accent of this work lies on the different opportunities and challenges which the Union's external action will have to face in its enlarged future, focusing especially on the EU-25 as a foreign policy actor and security provider. The objective behind the chapters composing the first part of this volume is to reflect on how the new member states will adapt to, and subsequently act to influence, four different EU areas with external impact (CFSP, ESDP, minority issues and asylum). The latter part of this publication explores the nature of the new 'frontiers' of EU-25. These frontiers are here referred to according to a dual logic. On the one hand the EU post-2004 will have to deal with issues just beyond its physical frontiers or borders, as new lines are inescapably drawn between the 'ins' and the 'outs' of Union membership (e.g., in the Baltic Sea and in the Mediterranean). On the other hand the EU will have to discover its frontiers or limits, in terms of its capacity as a global actor, meeting the challenges brought about by an ever-increasingly globalised world. In this aspect, two different geographical regions and their respective EU policies will be explored: the ACP countries (EC development cooperation policy) and, the Mercosur (commercial relations).

The enlarged EU and the new member states

While the ‘return to Europe’ was finally approved at the 2003 Copenhagen European Council, this homecoming has in no way been a smooth and uncomplicated process for the candidate states. The lofty rhetoric and ‘europhoria’ that characterised the early post-Wall years, repeatedly proclaimed Western Europe’s historic and moral debt to its post-communist neighbours in the East. These assurances were in essence well-meaning and non-committal, but would inevitably strongly nourish the hopes among the CEECs of the imminence of their joining the EC/EU. Nevertheless, once opened, the accession process soon evolved into a drawn-out and rather turbulent affair, where the EC and its member states often failed to match the expectations that they had raised among the candidate countries. The uneven road leading up to the Eastern enlargement is the topic of the first chapter in this volume. Jose Ignacio Torreblanca provides us with a survey of the accession negotiations, revealing to us the less glamorous side of the Fifth enlargement process. Relying on writings by Friis (1998), Torreblanca notes that the accession negotiations were more often than not characterised by the Fifteen’s attempts to disguise their geopolitical interests under a discourse of general interests and abstract principles. The costs of accession also became an important issue for the EU members, often to safeguard parochial interests. As result, as Torreblanca concludes, the Fifteen negotiated the distribution of costs among them and the candidates by delaying the enlargement eastwards, establishing side-payments to the most reluctant member states, and imposing some of the costs on the candidates. Diverging preferences among EU members in relation to the Eastern enlargement were dealt with by creating a normative framework encompassing principles such as the indivisibility and full applicability of the *acquis communautaire*, the non-discriminatory selection of candidates, and a strengthened political conditionality. The outdrawn Eastern accession process, in consequence, reveals a powerful dichotomy in EU relation to the candidates: between moral and normative reasons to let the candidate states in as new members, as well as at the same time some reluctance, concern and parochial interests. This ambiguity perhaps

sustains the argument by Piening that, even if the EC since its inception always had held the door open to the incorporation of other European countries, this was rather meant to entail other Western European neighbours. The Community “had never really imagined that it might one day have to expand its vision of Europe to include the... states beyond its *eastern* frontier” (italic in original) (Piening, 1997: 54).

However, with the accession negotiations now in the rear-view mirror, time is running counter-clock for the European Union to expand its vision of Europe. New members and new borders will predictably have an effect on the European integration project and its policies, as these come to reflect the enlarged Union’s altered priorities and the new EU members’ preferences. In terms of the common foreign and security policy – the topic of the second chapter in this volume, authored by Jordi Vaquer i Fanés, – enlargement gives rise to the query of how the articulation of the CFSP will be affected by the inclusion of ten new member states. Leaving aside the two Mediterranean candidate countries in his chapter, Vaquer i Fanés affirms that due to the fact that the majority of the new Central and Eastern European member states are small (with the exception of Poland) and resource poor, most CEEC members are likely to want to pass the responsibility for international politics to Brussels in the short- to medium term. Hence, as according to one of the hypothesis which Vaquer i Fanés forwards, the member states-to-be are not likely to become ‘dissenters’ in the framework of CFSP, rather one can expect the CEECs to be followers of the larger member states’ interests – at least in an initial stage. Moreover, one might infer that the Eastern enlargement will not, in contrast to earlier accessions, translate into a substantial ‘widening’ of the European Foreign Policy in terms of geopolitical horizons or policy agenda. Nevertheless, the new member states are likely to demand higher priority for existing issues on EU’s foreign policy agenda, such as those related to the Eastern border and the post-communist countries laying beyond it – Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova.

Security is, and will in the near future remain, the primary national concern for the new member states. The new member states (and those who will be within shortly, such as Bulgaria and Romania) are border countries to the infamous ‘arch of

conflict' which describes a crescent around the European Union, from the Baltic Sea in the north, passing through the Black Sea and the Balkans arriving at the Mediterranean in the south. To ensure peace and stability in and around integrated Europe, the Union will have to rely extensively on both 'soft' and military conflict prevention mechanisms. The third chapter in this volume is dedicated to the issue of the nascent European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). The chapter, by Milagros Álvarez Verdugo, focuses on the process by which the candidate states have gradually adapted to the ESDP activities and framework during the past decade, starting with their associate status in the Western European Union (WEU). The emergence since 1999 of an EU defence policy has been hailed with caution in most Central and Eastern European capitals (Cyprus and Malta are non-aligned), in that it has been seen as the source of troubles in the transatlantic relationship; a rift which many CEECs fear will lead to U.S. disengaging itself from European security. However, the CEECs cautious attitude towards the ESDP might now change as a consequence of the November 2002 membership invitation that the Atlantic Alliance extended to Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia². Having thus their primordial security concerns guaranteed, may contribute to a CEEC revaluation of the ESDP as they become members of the Union and participants in full of the European security and defence policy. However, once this fundamental obstacle is overcome, others may lay ahead. First, as Álvarez Verdugo points out to us, the continued use of unanimity-voting in EU's security and defence policy might severely difficult the functioning and use of ESDP mechanisms after 2004, as consensus among EU-25 with clearly heterogeneous interests and military traditions might be difficult to achieve. Moreover, one might infer that another significant challenge for the enlarged Union in the short- to mid-term will be to achieve a measure of interoperability as well as setting the standardisation mechanisms needed for the new member states to be able to perform together with other EU forces in ESDP-missions in for example Macedonia or Bosnia-Herzegovina (Duke, 2002: 183).

Security is also the topic of the following chapter, albeit of a different kind. The chapter by Ruth Ferrero deals with the issue of national and ethnic minorities in

the candidate states. The incorporation of Estonia, Latvia, Hungary, Slovakia, and later on Romania (to which perhaps one could add a reunified Cyprus, if the UN Peace Plan prospers) pose a latent security problem for the EU in that their respective minority problems have a potential for flare up. Although in basic compliance with the Copenhagen criteria, the chapter by Ferrero adverts us to that not all minority problems have been settled satisfactorily beyond a superficial level in the member states-to-be. In the view of Ferrero, the EU has pursued a rather 'agnostic' approach to minority issues in terms of the candidate states, mainly through other international organisations (Council of Europe, OSCE, UN), although respect for human rights and minorities are main staples of the Union's policy towards third states. The absence of an EU normative framework for how to deal with minority issues exposes the Union to the danger of institutional shortcomings if one day EU-25 will have to face a problematic situation between a member state and a minority group. The Union's actual policy of no-interference into domestic issues could potentially become a stumbling-block for the EU as an institution, as well as possibly pose a road block for further reforms toward greater cultural and territorial autonomy for different minority groups. Finally, it is worth remembering that several of the incoming member states in the 2004 accession group have important national minority groups living in neighbouring non-EU countries, or in countries which will not form part of the Eastern enlargement in its first round. The situation of these external minority groups might become even more economically and socially precarious after Europe 2004, if the EU decides to apply harsh restrictions on cross-border trade and visa regulations. Such unresolved cross-border minority grievances may have a destabilising effect in and around the enlarged EU's territory in the near to medium term future.

The chapter which concludes this section, authored by Sílvia Morgades Gil, also deals with issues related to the internal security of the enlarged EU. The increased influx of third state nationals seeking economic betterment in EU member states in the past decade, and the reverberations of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, have caused EU citizens to feel concern over social stability and civil security. As a result, the Fifteen have through different measures sought to strengthen

the norms related to the area of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA). The European efforts have been especially dedicated to setting common JHA standards. Morgades Gil outlines to us the challenges which the new member states will have to confront to settle into the EU normative regarding asylum and international standards for the protection of human rights. Although not all of the current Fifteen take part in the same way in the Justice and Home Affairs, the candidate states have, in contrast, had to accept the *acquis* inherent to the chapter that includes asylum among other related subjects in its totality, without possibility for opt-outs. From the EU point of view, one of the main purposes of negotiations has been to ensure that candidate countries would conform to the EU migration regime and that they would be able to execute the obligations established by the Community *acquis* in the future. However, in practice this has resulted in a shift of the burden of EU migration management onto the candidate states. As Morgades Gil indicates, the CEECs have in recent years experienced increasing numbers of asylum-seekers, refugees and economic migrants crossing their territory on their road to the migrants' main destination in one of the western EU countries. Re-admission agreements between EU members and candidates oblige the CEECs to accept back all illegal immigrants caught in EU territory, whereas the countries to the east of the candidate states do not have any obligation to do the same. This means that there is an annual accumulation in the applicant states of 'stranded' people with no right to residency in the Union, nor to return to their home country, and this situation might worsen over time. Hence, the strengthening of external frontiers, immigration and asylum policies must be a closely co-ordinated process among member states in the enlarged EU, otherwise it might expose the enlarged European Union to a severe internal political and security problem once the new member states adhere to Schengenland.

The enlarged EU and its new frontiers

Although the impending Fifth enlargement was the main topic on the 2002 Copenhagen European Council's agenda, very present in the minds of the European

leaders gathered in the Danish capital was also the fact that a changed and larger Union will inevitably have an impact on third states³. With the enlargement train finally coming into station in 2004, many EU's partner countries around the world are beginning to become wary of the possible consequences of the accession. The difference between being an 'in' and an 'out' of the European integration project, especially at a time when the globalised world economy is accelerating, has not been lost on the majority of EU associate and co-operation partners. There are potential negative consequences as a result of not being able to form part of the Internal Market and/or the Schengen agreement, such as for example in terms of market access, investment protection and subsidies, as well as in terms of tourism and the free circulation of persons and workers.

The unease of what is to come is perhaps greatest among the countries lining the periphery of the European Union in the east and south. The geographical proximity, and the scarcity of other viable political and economic options open to them, makes the Union a natural focal point for its neighbours. The consequences inherent in being a neighbour – but not member – of one of the world's foremost trading-blocs and donor of international development assistance, unavoidably exposes geographically near-lying countries to the pull-forces of EU's economic and political initiatives. The resulting dependency makes neighbouring non-members highly susceptible to internal changes or policy developments taking place inside the Union, such as is the case of the Fifth enlargement. In EU's periphery concerns are being voiced regarding the fear of the creation of new divisions in and around the European continent as a direct result of the Eastern enlargement, in the form of economic, political, legal and security fault-lines. The introduction of the Single Market and later the Schengen *acquis* in Central and Eastern Europe will as a consequence difficult, if not outright truncate, cross-border relations held with non-EU countries in the east. There is thus a perception beyond EU's borders that while integrated Europe is making socioeconomic progress, and despite a range of initiatives developed by EU (and NATO), EU's neighbours are suffering from economic and political stagnation. This situation, it is feared, will not improve once finalised the Eastern enlargement, in

that the EU and its member states may continue to be absorbed by internal problems in the short- to medium term, such as for example, the great socioeconomic and politico-institutional differences between the Fifteen and the candidate states, the IGC 2004, the Bulgarian/Romanian accession 2007. EU's neighbours are thus wary that a post-2004 self-consuming Union will not be in an optimal position to help resolve problems beyond its borders. This becomes a concern in that there is a desperate need for Brussels political attention (and financial aid) to promote socioeconomic development and to revitalise cross-border co-operation in several of EU's neighbouring regions.

In the past decade the European Union has developed a host of foreign policy initiatives for its 'near neighbourhood' to encourage regional integration and to help find solutions to problems which affect the European continent and beyond (Johansson, 2001). In Europe's North, the EU launched in 1997 the 'Northern Dimension', an EU's foreign policy initiative designed for the nine countries around the basin of the Baltic Sea, plus Iceland and Norway. The initiative in essence was intended to boost the regional co-operation which had begun in 1992 and to help bridge the differences between EU members, candidates and third states caused by the enlargement process. With the Fifth enlargement the future of this co-operation initiative will reach a critical stage, as the chapter of Nicola Catellani argues. With Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland joining the Union, the Baltic Sea area will almost wholly be EU territory, only leaving Iceland, Norway (EEA members) and Russia on the outside. The Eastern enlargement thus challenges the continued rationale for the Northern Dimension, in that the most active partners in the Baltic Sea co-operation will all be EU members. However, as Catellani holds, the disintegration of the initiative would be a shame in that the innovative elements inherent to the Northern Dimension could function as a valuable basis to fit into the larger puzzle of the EU ambitions of creating a shared economic and policy space in and around Europe (see proposals from the Copenhagen European Council, endnote 3). The experience from involvement of regional institutions (CBSS, BEAC) in the making of the EU's foreign policy, and the know-how gathered from the horizontality

of the issues treated in the initiative, could prove important as a model if the enlarged EU goes ahead with its plans to design a new economic and policy space in the periphery of the Union.

The perception in the Union's southern periphery is also one of apprehension of what the 2004 accession will bring for the future of the Euro-Mediterranean co-operation. The European Union's foreign policy initiative for the Mediterranean – the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership – was launched in 1995 and includes the EU, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey together with eight southern Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia) and the Palestinian Authority. The initiative was intended to become a broad forum for discussing and solving common Euro-Mediterranean problems, in the areas of politics, security, economy, financial assistance as well as social, cultural and human affairs. The Partnership has since languished, however, due to the various set-backs in the Middle East Peace Process, and the failure to find common interests between the EU and its southern Mediterranean partners by which to take the co-operation further. Paolo Prosperini's chapter invites us to a review of the topics concerning the Fifth enlargement and how it affects the Mediterranean basin. Cyprus and Malta (once Cyprus has settled its problems at home) are likely to join the 'inside-lobby' of southern European countries within the Union supporting the Barcelona Process, although the two Mediterranean islands' overall potential to influence should not be overestimated. Meanwhile, in the anticipation for a peaceful resolution to the Middle East conflict, Prosperini argues in favour of integration and closer co-operation with other subregional processes in EU's periphery, in that they may help to relaunch the Barcelona Process. A second chapter dealing with the issue of Mediterranean is authored by Rina Weltner-Puig. Taking a broad view of the issues in the Mediterranean, Weltner-Puig surveys the Mediterranean effects of the dual enlargement (EU and NATO) into Central and Eastern Europe and draws our attention to the fact that if not managed carefully these could have negative repercussions on Europe's Mediterranean neighbours. The EU/NATO enlargements are therefore contradictory in that at the same time they are seen as stabilising

elements in Europe, they could cause instabilities generated by feeling of exclusion and uncertainties some southern Mediterranean countries. The feeling of being left out and of lesser priority is dangerous in that it in turn produces hostility and/or friction in the relationship with the Union. The poor progress in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue thus contributes to a precarious situation in overall in one of the Union's most important and conflictive neighbourhoods. Weltner-Puig concludes her chapter leaving the issue of whether it is possible to draw the Mediterranean closer to the EU and other European security organisations, or not, very much open.

The Copenhagen decision regarding the EU enlargement will not only have bearings on EU's relations with its neighbours in and around the European continent. EU's partner countries in Africa, Latin America and the Pacific also view with some hesitation the possible consequences of Europe 2004. Although EU's partner countries in geographically more distant regions perhaps are not so exposed to the direct effects of the 2004 accession as EU's neighbours, the fear of an introverted 'Fortress Europe' are also present among those countries which depend on EU development assistance or commercial accords. The EU has throughout the past decade signed a host of new interregional accord with most of the regional groupings with which it has regularly collaborated since the early days of the EEC. Nevertheless, due to that many details of each accord are still to be worked out, the reverberations of the Eastern enlargement and the results of Doha world trade round are anticipated with some caution.

The chapter by Pablo Aguiar Molina takes us through the relations with lesser developed countries in general, and ACP in particular, as well as offers a host of insights into EU development policy. Aguiar Molina assesses the consequences of the Fifth enlargement on the ACP countries in general as positive in terms of trade, while potentially negative in terms of political implications. Based on trade-records from the past decade one might affirm that the ten new Central, Eastern and Mediterranean member states-to-be are not trade competitors to the ACP, as the latter centre their exports to the Union on produce such as raw material or tropical agriculture. Thus,

the Fifth enlargement should not necessarily translate into a trade-diversion for this group of developing countries. On the contrary, the new members of the Internal Market will potentially come to constitute new markets for the developing countries. However, on the down-side it has not escaped EU's partner countries that the CEECs lack historical tradition, experience and, so far one might say, interest in development co-operation issues and this is a fact which might influence the relations between the enlarged EU and developing countries in the future. The Eastern enlargement is therefore not likely to add any new impetus for development issues, such as for example, the Fourth enlargement to include Austria, Finland and Sweden did. Moreover, Aguiar Molina predicts that EU's political attention will continue to be set on the Eastern and South-eastern Europe for the short to medium term. This raises the concern among many of EU's developing partner countries that aid and technical assistance, as well as foreign direct investment will no longer be so readily forthcoming to the lesser developed world. Citing Hettne (1990:192), Aguiar Molina argues that "in the Third world there is a strong feeling of being left out in the cold, as Western Europeans are becoming more concerned about the poor cousins of the East". The Fifth enlargement will, however, demand that the EU take a close look at its development policy, in that resources are likely to be scarcer the available financial aid budget will have to be put to better use, avoiding the pitfalls of incoherence, poor coordination and waste.

The last chapter in this volume is dedicated to the issue of EU-Mercosur relations. The Mercosur is an important commercial interlocutor to the European Union in that it represents a host of important markets and acts a privileged gateway for European companies to enter the rest of Latin America. In terms of the potential impact of the Eastern enlargement, the chapter authored by Manuel Cienfuegos Mateo, coinciding largely with Aguiar Molina's findings, also foresees a potential setback in the relations between the Union and non-European geographical groupings, stemming from the perceived potential scarcity of EU financial resources as more of these are dedicated to the socioeconomic cohesion of the new EU member states. Moreover, further fuelling the fears of the Mercosur countries is the fact that the

enlarged EU's new member states will in their case be trade competitors, especially in the area of agriculture. Finally, the accession of the new member states from Central and Eastern Europe as well as the Mediterranean could translate into new trade barriers and obstacles for the Mercosur countries trying to access European markets. However, as Cienfuegos Mateo also notes that the Eastern enlargement, if managed properly, could benefit the Mercosur countries in the creation new markets and commercial opportunities. The strategic partnership elaborated under the Interregional Framework Co-operation Agreement between EU and Mercosur will thus continue to be important to overcome the potential difficulties incurred by the Eastern enlargement.

As we have seen, and as we will continue to discover all through the length of this volume, the Copenhagen decision to enlarge the European Union is far from merely an internal affair. The new, larger Union will inescapably have a greater impact on the international system than before, and therefore greater responsibility. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 made possible the vision that the whole Europe could come together under the same security umbrella, and the enlarged EU is well placed to convert itself into a pluralistic security community. However, as we will also discern by the chapters which follows in this volume, the road to peace and stability in and around the European continent will not automatically emanate from the acquisition of new members. The 2004 enlargement will not only affect the definition of the CFSP and ESDP, the accession will also mean an internalisation of problems which traditionally hitherto been managed by other international organisations (Cyprus and the UN; the issue of minorities and the Council of Europe or OSCE). The enlargement will also necessarily influence the grand strategies with which the EU relates to the world, (Baltic Sea, Mediterranean, Cotonou, MERCOSUR). *Beyond enlargement: The new members and new frontiers of the enlarged European Union* offers a good basis for reflecting on the future internal-external axis affecting the 'new' European Union's capacity as a foreign policy actor and security provider beyond 2004. Becoming a solid actor at regional as well as global level is not necessarily about

gaining power, rather, and more importantly, it is closely related with the issue of what kind of international system the EU desires for the future.

Notes

¹Approximate referendum dates in the candidate states are as following: Malta, 8 March 2003; Slovenia, 23 March 2003; Hungary, 12 April 2003; Lithuania, 11 May 2003; Slovakia, 16-17 May 2003; Poland, 8 June 2003; Czech Republic, 15-16 June 2003; Estonia, 14 September 2003; Latvia, 20 September 2003; Cyprus, if there is no agreement on reunification by 28 February 2003, the Accession Accord will be ratified by the Chamber of Representatives in mid-April 2003, however, if reunification can be agreed upon, a double-issue referendum on the reunification and EU accession will be held at a later date to be announced.

² The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are NATO members since 1999.

³ The recent Copenhagen European Council, in this sense made a special effort to assuage the fears among its neighbours, proposing the promotion of democratic and economic reform in the Union's 'near neighbourhood', fomenting sustainable development and trade, and maintaining the EU open to its neighbours in "everything but institutions" – if one is to believe the President of the Commission Romano Prodi (2002). The objective is to induce a gradually evolving framework for a common economic and political space around the Union, linking together of the areas from Murmansk to Morocco. Nevertheless, in Copenhagen there were some differences of opinion between the Fifteen whether the emphasis of the new proximity policy should be placed on the further development of bilateral ties, while others would like to see EU's relations with its closest neighbours managed increasingly by multilateral structures, inter-linked or not. However, this proposal is still much on the drawing-board level and one must wait and see how it develops, and how EU's neighbours react to this initiative.

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