

THE FEDERAL TRUST
for education & research

Enlightening the Debate on Good Governance

**Contributions by the
Ambassadors of
EU Accession Countries
to mark EU Enlargement
in 2004**

with additional comments by
Philip Bushill-Matthews MEP, Richard Inglewood MEP,
Bill Newton Dunn MEP, Mel Read MEP
and Mark Watts MEP



European Essay No.29

A Definition of Federalism

Federalism is defined as 'a system of government in which central and regional authorities are linked in an interdependent political relationship, in which powers and functions are distributed to achieve a substantial degree of autonomy and integrity in the regional units. In theory, a federal system seeks to maintain a balance such that neither level of government becomes sufficiently dominant to dictate the decision of the other, unlike in a unitary system, in which the central authorities hold primacy to the extent even of redesigning or abolishing regional and local units of government at will.'

(*New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*)

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Introduction: Marking the occasion

Enlargement of the European Union is legally done and dusted. All ten Accession states have approved the treaties and the existing fifteen member states have also ratified the texts. The date is fixed: May 2004, just a month before the next European Elections in which all twenty-five states will now take part.

Enlargement marks the culmination of a process that began with the original six founding member states in 1957, grew with the accession of Britain, Denmark and Ireland in 1973, with Greece in 1981, with Spain and Portugal in 1986 and with Sweden, Austria and Finland in 1995. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 accelerated the process and opened the way for the next wave of accession states from Central and Eastern Europe. Now they – along with Cyprus and Malta – are on the point of joining the Union.

To raise awareness of EU Enlargement the Federal Trust organised a number of events across the country during the past twelve months. A 'European Question Time' was held in Leicester, London, Cambridge, Birmingham, Manchester and Canterbury. Ambassadors of the accession states in the UK took part alongside British MEPs and MPs as well as media figures, bringing the reality of Enlargement to a variety of audiences in universities and town halls. The presentations and replies to questions from the audience went far beyond what could be reproduced in this *European Essay*, but several of the Ambassadors have put pen to paper to outline the specific reasons why their countries are so strongly committed to this Enlargement of the European Union. With the counterpoint of statements by five of the MEPs who took part in these events, they form the core of this pamphlet, giving readers both a succinct overview and a number of personal perspectives on the historic event through which we, along with 500 million other Europeans, are now living.

Dr. Martyn Bond

Adviser on EU Enlargement, The Federal Trust





The importance of EU accession to Poland

H.E. the Ambassador Dr Stanislaw Komorowski

Paradoxically EU membership will not affect Poland just from 1 May 2004 on. Integration with the EU does not happen overnight. It is preceded by a long process of adjustments and harmonization in the economic, political, legal and social fields. And it also refers to a dramatic psychological change in political elites and citizens' thinking about the role and position of Poland in the enlarged Union.

Thinking about the importance of the EU accession to my country I would name four main areas on which it will have the strongest impact: first, the Institutions; second, Politics; third, the Economy and fourth, Foreign Policy and Security.

Let me start with the institutional aspect. As a member of the EU, my country will be represented in all the European institutions. The ongoing negotiations within the IGC will hopefully end in December this year. We still do not know the exact shape of the EU's architecture, but we can presume that the position of Poland as one of the larger Member States will not be changed. It means that the Polish voice in the Union will be clearly heard. But it will not only concern the Polish voice in the Council or European Parliament but also Polish *officials* in different European institutions. On the other hand, at home, we will have to put in practice the institutional arrangements which will enable day-by-day co-operation with the European institutions.

The institutional aspect of the enlargement is directly connected with a political one. Being a member of the EU, represented in all its institutions, will mean that Poland will have her strong voice at the European level. My country will be directly involved in the decision-making process in different areas and will be an equal and important partner in 'making voting coalitions', in initiating activities of the Union, in implementing EU policies. This will also constitute a new dimension in the political culture of my country. Poland will have to learn how to co-operate within an intergovernmental institution such as the Council of the EU and a supranational one such as the European Commission. The Polish Prime Minister will meet his or her EU counterparts at the European Council summits and will co-decide about crucial EU policies.

As a part of the Single Market, Poland will experience all the advantages of being its member. The general principles of the Single Market – the four freedoms of capital, services, goods and persons, which we already partly enjoy – will be binding for Poland sooner or later, offering opportunities for Polish citizens to live, to work or establish their business without any constraints all over the European Union. Moreover, it is a two-way process which will offer the same opportunities for EU citizens in Poland. EU accession also means that Poland will be a subject to common EU policies such as CAP or structural aid policy and will have to contribute to the EU budget.

A further concrete result of our membership to the EU will be that our national competencies in the field of trade will be transferred to the European Commission. This institution will be the key actor to negotiate international trade agreements on our behalf. Moreover, I am convinced that the follow-up of the Lisbon Agenda – which Poland strongly supports – will have a real impact on my country, since its aim is to deliver more jobs, more innovation and research, more competition and liberalization of markets.

Another important impact of Polish membership of the EU will be joining the EMU. Poland intends to become a member of the European Monetary Union in a few years after accession to the EU. In the Polish case it is not a question of 'whether' but a question of 'when'. The outcome will be clear for all to see: Poland will become a member of the 'Eurozone' where transaction costs and exchange rate uncertainty on trade are reduced, where there is increased competition which will hopefully deliver efficiency, productivity and reduced prices. But there will be another advantage of Polish membership of EMU. My country will be a member of the 'elite' club – a driving force of Europe, involved in the decision-making process on most important issues concerning European economic policy.

Polish membership in the EU will influence our foreign policy as well. Poland will be a subject to the Common Foreign and Security Policy as well as Common European Defence and Security Policy. My country has already been a very active partner in this field and proved the compatibility of its foreign policy with the EU's one. As a Member State, Poland will put all necessary efforts into ensuring that the EU 'speaks with a single and a strong voice' but also that this voice does not weaken transatlantic relations. Prospects for Schengen membership will be an incentive to do our best to ensure a proper functioning of the Eastern border of Poland which at the same time will be the EU's new external frontier.

There is another psychological and cultural factor making EU accession even more important for my country. It is a widespread feeling among the Poles that their country is now officially back within the union of nations to which it has always spiritually belonged, despite – for a half of a century – being pushed away by history to the edge of free and democratic Europe.

Hungary and the European Union

H.E. the Ambassador Béla Szombati

Ever since the democratic transition and the first free elections in Hungary in 1990, it has been the first and foremost priority of successive Hungarian governments to join the European Union. The outstanding importance of the European project for us can be explained on three grounds.

Culturally, Hungarians have always considered themselves a part of Europe, and we share the values the Union is based on. Accession for us is a reflection of these common values and culture, and also a return to mainstream European history after having left it, some will say decades, others will say almost a century, and yet others will say almost five centuries ago.

Politically, accession means becoming part of a secure, peaceful and stable environment providing a positive and reliable general framework conducive to economic and social development. It also means becoming one of the twenty-five actors in the decisions taken at the European level which will in any case strongly influence a country as integrated into Europe as Hungary already is. 75 per cent of our exports already go to, and 65 per cent of our imports come from the present member states.

Economically, joining the Union means unhindered access to the single European market, a further improvement on the current, in most respects highly liberalised state of our trade with EU member countries, offering more opportunities for growth. It also means additional tools for the ongoing, well-advanced modernisation of our country in the form of structural and cohesion funds.

This project of ours, the greatest in several centuries, is well worth the tremendous efforts it required in transforming our economy, approximating and harmonising our laws, and improving our administration. The benefits are evident for both sides as Hungary as a new member is willing and able to play by the rules of the club, willing and able to contribute to building a stronger, more efficient Europe, willing and able to contribute to the common wealth through its economy, which has been growing at an average yearly rate of 4 per cent over the last six years.

2004, the year of enlargement, will be a historic year for us and for current members, ending the long political and social division of Europe. And it will be a good year for all of the Union, whose members will be able to look back on it ten years on as one that changed the European equation to everyone's benefit. Ever since the democratic transition and the first free elections in Hungary in 1990, it has been the first and foremost priority of successive Hungarian governments to join the European Union. The outstanding importance of the European project for us can be explained on three grounds.

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An Ever Evolving Union

Bill Newton-Dunn MEP (Liberal Democrat) for the East Midlands

Having been a Member of the European Parliament for four terms since 1979, I have watched the EU grow from 12 to 15 members. I am proud to be involved in the preparations to bring this number to 25, and later to 28. I have watched the European Economic Community evolve into the European Community and now into the European Union – not just changes of name but changes of purpose and being.

The European Union has evolved from an economic entity, with a view to creating peace, stability and prosperity through building strong trade ties, into a union of peoples, working together to achieve much broader common aims.

It is true that the economic reasons for enlargement must be in place – both for the acceding countries and for the current Member States. Greater competition and the addition of over 100 million people is set to boost all our economies. The Commission has estimated that the GDP of acceding states could increase by between 1.3 per cent and 2.1 per cent and of current Member States by 0.7 per cent as an immediate result. A greater flow of workers will help combat shortages in workforces as our birth rates decline, and new opportunities will open up for work and travel in the new member countries.

Quality of life is also set to improve. Problems that pay no heed to national boundaries need to be tackled consistently across borders. The accession countries have adopted our EU environmental laws, for example. They have begun the process of repairing the environmental damage done by industry under Communism and preventing further pollution and destruction of our shared environment.

The greater area of freedom of movement that enlargement will create, however, will not only benefit ordinary citizens but criminals too. I recently attended the first European conference looking at developing public-private partnerships to combat organised Crime. This growing problem, which reaches deep into all our lives either

directly or through its knock-on effects, is a menace that can only be tackled multilaterally. We are so much stronger acting together than acting alone. The more actors we have, the stronger and more effective we will be.

And let us not forget the history from which the Union emerges. It was not so long that we were a continent torn apart by war. We have come a long way over the last sixty years to a position where war between us is not just impractical but unthinkable. Enlargement will be the final seal on the fall of the Iron Curtain. Former Communist countries are now stable democracies. Reforms to improve standards of human rights and the rule of law have been spurred on by the desire to meet the European Union's 'Copenhagen criteria' – political standards that must be met by acceding states, as decided by the European Council. The EU has been a driving force in creating an area of freedoms, rights and tolerance. Jean Monnet's and Robert Schuman's project has grown bigger than they can ever have dreamed.

The benefits of Enlargement go even further. The beauty of bringing more countries into the Union is bringing together peoples of different cultures, languages, backgrounds and histories. We are all fundamentally similar and have much to learn from one another. Nothing rivals the feeling of sitting in a committee room, or in the plenary chamber, surrounded by colleagues and friends from a multitude of countries, engaged in direct discussion on how to tackle our shared problems. The European Union is much richer than the sum of its parts. With Enlargement to Eastern and Central Europe, this richness takes on a powerful new dimension.

The Czech Republic returning to Europe

H.E. the Ambassador Stefan Füle

In the evening hours of 14 June 2003 when it became clear that the Czechs had given an overwhelming 'YES' to the country's accession to the European Union, I realised rather nostalgically that a certain chapter of history was closing. That chapter opened with the 'Back to Europe' motto of the 1989 revolution, continued via our official application to join the EU, years of negotiations, tons of papers and loads of energy put into preparations. And it will finally close on 1 May 2004 when the Czech Republic, together with nine other countries, becomes a full-fledged member of the European Union.

A complex mix of political, economic, security and even psychological reasons have underlain the long-standing ambition of the Czech Republic and other Central and Eastern European countries to join the Euro-Atlantic institutions.

First and foremost, these institutions have been considered a bulwark against any return to communism and resurgent nationalism. And the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Balkans' descent into war in the early 1990s only confirmed the goal of joining NATO and the EU as an urgent priority.

Furthermore, the prospect of EU membership has played a key role in re-orientating our foreign policy and demonstrating that we have left the Soviet empire behind for good. The accession process then became an important mechanism for locking in reforms and sustaining liberalisation efforts, despite changes of government. It has also been a means of integrating our economy firmly into that of Europe.

And as regards the psychological dimension, many Czechs felt they had lost their European identity during the Cold War and, therefore, the Czech Republic needed to 'return to Europe' to regain it. By the end of the 20th century, 'Europe' was epitomised by the EU, even though it only covered the western side of the continent. Joining the Union has become a central strategy to satisfy this desire for inclusion and belonging.

So the June referendum was a truly historic step for my country and its people. We took the final decision about the Czech Republic's place in Europe, about belonging to the common area of security, the rule of law, justice, prosperity and good neighbourly relations. We did so with confidence and dignity, fully aware of the fact that our ancestors were long denied such choice.

On 1 May 2004, an old chapter will close and a new one will begin. Over the past decade, the Czech Republic has proved that it fully subscribes to the common values of the European Union, to freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, to the rule of law. There is a firm conviction that the interests of the Czech Republic and its citizens will be best safeguarded in a European community of nations sharing these values and integrated in the EU. In other words, my country is ready to assume the rights and obligations stemming from EU membership. And I am confident it will be a reliable and constructive member of the EU that will actively contribute to the shaping of its future face; a face that will continue to reflect the majority will and interests of the EU's citizens.

Enlargement is a step in the right direction. While there are fears about the impact of this wave, however, many studies have shown that an enlarged EU will actually boost European stability, security, trade, jobs and prosperity. The Central European economies are currently small, but most are growing faster than mature EU markets. Moreover, in the longer term, the EU economy will benefit from the dynamic effects of economic integration. Enlargement is also unlikely to cause disruption to particular sectors or regions – industrial trade is already essentially liberalised, and sensitive sectors in the EU have not suffered significantly from greater competition.

Enlargement will not be expensive for the EU. There will be few financial transfers to the new members, in comparison with the money granted to Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain when they joined the EU. This enlargement will be carried out at low cost to the public purse, for better or for worse. The applicants' economies have been developing without much in the way of public subsidies, and the prospect of an EU cash handout is not the principal motivation for joining. In the longer term, however, the accession countries will need EU funds in order to supplement private investment, to ensure that they can meet EU standards, especially in the area of environment and transport. The new EU budget due in 2007 will have to establish new policies to deal with the real needs of a more diverse Union.

Enlargement will not lead to mass migration. A small number of workers are likely to migrate to the EU-15 after accession, but they will not cause long-term disruption to labour markets. Full free movement of labour is likely to cause a small inflow over the next 30 years, stabilising at the point where Central Europeans in the current EU members will account – according to some studies – for 1.1 per cent of the total population. It will

be a trickle, not a flood. And I am sure it will be a process in two directions and to the benefit of all.

Accession will itself help control migration: full access to the single market will provide opportunities that will keep central European workers employed in their own countries. Likewise, wage competition would not be reduced if eastward enlargement were postponed. Business is already exposed to global competition, and not only to cost differentials across Europe. EU businesses can sustain profitability by selling into the region's growing markets, thereby helping to maintain jobs in Western Europe.

All of us have come a long way since 1989. We have learnt a great deal and we have accomplished a lot - in no small measure thanks to the guidance and support of friends and allies such as the United Kingdom. But much remains to be done - by the EU collectively and the member countries individually - in order to ensure that this enlargement is the success we all want it to be. Personally, I am looking forward to embarking on this difficult but exciting journey as the first Ambassador of the Czech Republic as an EU member country to the United Kingdom.



Slovakia's Accession to the EU

H.E. the Ambassador Frantisek Dlhopolcek

This autumn has brought along three events of significant importance to Slovakia's upcoming EU accession. Each of them is of different character but together they put our membership of the Union into a three-dimensional perspective.

Since 1990, Slovaks and Czechs have commemorated the 17th of November as the Day of the Fight for Freedom and Democracy. In the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall, people throughout the eastern part of Europe, frustrated with their totalitarian governments, requested a profound change. The membership of the European Union and NATO undoubtedly offered the best solution. Thus, the 17th of November 1989 – the beginning of the Velvet Revolution in former Czechoslovakia – became the day when we chose freedom and democracy instead of the false security of a caged life guarded by an authoritarian regime. This date marks the start of our journey towards the reunification of Europe.

From then on, Slovakia, along with the other EU candidate countries, has toiled for over a decade to free itself from the burdens of the communist legacy and to adopt the standards of 'the free world'. Year by year, autumn was signified by the publishing of the Commission's Regular Report, which assessed the fulfilment of the Copenhagen accession criteria. We have been through ups and downs but today we can say that we have managed to complete the political and economic transformation. This year's last Commission report concludes that the 10 acceding countries are making constant progress and are capable of EU membership by next May. Thus, one Slovak and one British vision, which were previously considered overly ambitious, proved to be realistic and attainable: Slovakia is just about to meet its long-term strategic goal to join the Union by 2004. At the same time, Prime Minister Blair's call for enlargement before the 2004 European Parliament elections, voiced in Warsaw in 2000, will materialise.

After the signing of the Accession Treaty this April by all the member states and acceding countries, the British Parliament started its ratification. In his statement before the House of Commons, the Foreign Secretary Jack Straw introduced this treaty as 'one

of the most important agreements in the EU's history' since 'enlargement sets the seal on the end of the Cold War division of Europe'. The British Government Accessions Bill not only extends the number of EU members from 15 to 25, but, unlike most EU countries, grants our nationals the same rights to work in the UK as to the existing members. On 11 November 2003, when the bill completed its passage through Parliament, the British citizens opened the door for Slovak citizens and invited them in as their equals. Slovakia appreciates the UK's true commitment to both EU enlargement and the economic dynamism, which took shape with this Accessions Act.

EU membership is within our reach. The question arises: What should be Slovakia's role within this structure? Our answer is linked to the main purpose of the Union – delivering security, prosperity and freedom. Already in his famous speech in Zurich in 1946, Winston Churchill proposed 'the recreation of the European family' as the 'sovereign remedy' for the devastated continent. Peace, safety and freedom were the structure indispensable for it. This statement has relevance also in respect to the second wave of European re-unification. Once we become part of the Union we do not want to forget what it required to prove that we also cherish these core values. Therefore, the responsibility of all EU members is to spread these values beyond EU's borders. Bearing this in mind, Slovakia views its membership as an obligation to further the European project and assist countries, which strive to take part in it, in their accession process. Further enlargement is instrumental in making sure that another Iron Curtain will not be lowered on Union's new eastern and southern borders.

Accession and the Free Movement of Labour

Mark Watts MEP (Labour) for the South East

May 1 2004 will see the enlargement of the European Union from 15 member states to 25. It marks the culmination of a historic process that started with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe.

But predictably, instead of celebrating the widening of the European family that will bring assured peace and prosperity to ten more European countries, we in Britain have seen a number of scare stories about citizens from the new member states moving to the UK to take advantage of our benefits system.

Looking back, when Spain and Portugal joined the EU in 1986, transitional restrictions on workers were imposed, until they were lifted by the former Tory government because fears of mass migration proved to be unfounded.

After enlargement, citizens from the new member states will be free to travel, live, study and work in the UK. Our Labour government has decided not to impose any restrictions on workers, because we will be able to attract the workers we need in a range of key sectors, including hospitality, catering and agriculture, and across the board in London and the South East. Both the CBI and the TUC support this decision.

In the event of some unexpected threat to a region or occupational sector, our Government has the right to apply safeguards up to 2011.

The latest research confirms that there are likely to be relatively small migration flows into the UK after EU enlargement. The recent accession of Spain, Portugal and France proved that migrant workers tend to return to their home countries after those countries have joined the EU, as prospects and standards of living improve.

We should not have any fears for UK jobs as a result of enlargement. Migrants have little or no adverse effect on the employment levels of the existing population. Nor do they have an adverse effect on wages.

Here in Britain, migration has always been an important source of labour and skills and has contributed to productivity and cultural diversity. British employers wouldn't engage in costly overseas recruitment if it weren't necessary.

Importantly, research and experience show that migrants contribute more than they use. Rather than competing with the existing population for jobs, they expand sectors and create opportunities. Home Office research confirms that in 1999/2000, migrants contributed £2.5 billion more in taxes than they consumed in public services.

Only those citizens who work in the UK and contribute to UK tax and National Insurance will have access to UK benefits. EU visitors who are not working will not receive social security benefits.

Next year's enlargement is part of the solution to illegal immigration, not the problem. The availability of legal migration routes within the EU will virtually eliminate the flows of illegal migrants from those countries.

We need the new member states inside the EU, meeting EU standards on border controls and working with us to fight illegal immigration.

Labour migration is just one of the key issues which really represent opportunities rather than risks for all the member states. Together we shall have a stronger voice in world affairs, be able to do more to help developing countries, offer a more coherent reply to environmental challenges and act more strongly to combat international crime and terrorism. A European Union of 25 states – for all the adjustments we have to make to decision-making and our internal organisation – will be a much stronger force for good for all our citizens.

Latvia is coming home to Europe

H.E. the Ambassador Janis Dripe

This is a time when the European Union approaches and establishes Europe's natural geographical borders, confirming again the simple truth that geography and history play a very important role in politics. The EU attains a geographical unity and abolishes historic injustice. For Latvians, it is a return to Europe where we always have belonged historically, geographically and mentally. For all of us, it will be an end to those ambiguities that arose around the Cold War. As never before Europe will become an extended area of stability, prosperity and development.

On 18 November 2003 Latvia celebrated the 85th anniversary of its statehood. It is a bitter realisation that only 34 years of this time were truly ours, the remaining 51 years we had to live under foreign regimes. Today, we can contemplate the future with more confidence than ever before since we have returned to Europe and we are protected by NATO's shield of security. The gloomy pages of history have been turned over once and for all, and we are creating a new era.

One might ask what Latvia expects from Europe. Within the fold of the European Union, Latvians see the opportunity to irreversibly reinforce their sovereignty, and to maintain their identity, culture and language. The European Union is a large family of European democratic nations,†where the interests of each and every nation are respected, and where solidarity is the cornerstone of co-operation. Latvia as a part of the new European community perceives itself as a Northern European country – a Baltic Sea country in a region where the Baltic States and the Scandinavian countries contribute pragmatically to develop a dynamic regional economy with high quality services and a friendly environment. A common mentality and common cultural traditions unite us.

The people of Latvia see security and stability as the pillars of their development. Hand in hand with other European Union countries, we will be able to combat more effectively such threats as organised crime, corruption, the smuggling of goods and the trafficking of drugs. Latvia will be responsible for securing part of the external borders

of the EU, and this is a task of particular importance. We appreciate the participation of the European Union in this field, which will help us to improve the collection of duties and taxes and to combat smuggling more effectively. We will also be in a better position to act according to our interests with regard to third countries.

After Enlargement the EU will become the biggest single market in the world. Already now the biggest share of Latvia's foreign trade is with the EU. In recent years Latvia has become one of the European countries with the most rapid growth rates.

The new European Union is a unique possibility and responsibility for Latvia and we fully recognise and value it.

Lithuania and EU

H.E. the Ambassador Aurimas Taurantas

We live at a turning point in history. For Lithuania, together with nine other EU candidates, one stage is already over. Our country succeeded in catching up with the leaders of the accession negotiations. Now Lithuania has successfully overcome the most difficult specific barriers of the current EU enlargement – the issues of decommissioning the Ignalina nuclear power plant and arranging for transit from the Kaliningrad region.

What does Lithuania expect from the EU?

Lithuania has never striven for EU membership solely to solve its own problems. A whole-hearted conviction that we can end the political and economic divisions of Europe only by a joint effort has always accompanied us on our path of integration. We already have a clear vision of Lithuania as an effective and responsible member, acting in harmony with the other nations of the European family. Membership in the European Union will equip us with new, powerful tools for the promotion and realisation of our national interests.

Presently, our special focus is participation at the Intergovernmental Conference, which deliberates upon the Constitution of Europe. The work of the Convention has clearly demonstrated that the Union of 25 is capable of efficient action and reaching agreements on complicated issues. The draft Constitutional Agreement offers a balance between democracy and efficiency as well as a vision of the EU role in the global arena.

The major challenge for the IGC is reaching an agreement on reform of the Union's institutional framework. Being absent for historical reasons at the time of the creation of EU institutional architecture, we in Lithuania have the advantage of putting forward ideas for the EU's future without any preconceived notions. While modelling the future, we have to take into account and preserve those basic elements that have been at the core of the EU's success so far: institutional balance, rotating Presidency, Community

method. The key principle of Lithuania's position also is the preservation of equality of all Member States, and finding a proper balance between equality and effectiveness in an enlarged Union.

We admit that the EU has been and continues to be a very important factor in building prosperity in Lithuania. Our immediate task is to reduce differences in the economic development among European countries. The sooner new members catch up with the present EU fifteen, the more competitive and stronger Europe will be. Solidarity and cohesion should remain the fundamental principles and the driving force of well-being and political unity in an enlarged Union. They have served this purpose in the past, and we should not step aside from them in the future. The greatest mistake would be to allow the formation of a European core and peripheries, which could appear with the growing distance between Brussels and the EU's outlying regions.

Adherence to the Schengen agreement and membership of the eurozone are two of our short-term priorities. The same could be said about competitiveness and infrastructure development – cornerstones of Lithuania's approach to the Lisbon agenda. Transport and energy links in the Baltic Sea region, energy dependency and the future of nuclear policy will also be on our immediate agenda for some time.

Lithuania supports the establishment of transparent and simple principles of the EU budgeting. We will strive to ensure that the new financial perspective take into consideration our specific needs. These are the decommissioning costs of the Ignalina nuclear power plant, funding for the protection of the EU's external borders, the connection of energy and transport networks, and modernisation of the agricultural sector.

We should make the best use of all advantages offered by the EU's single market. However, we will not be able to use it fully unless we connect the energy, transport and telecommunications infrastructure networks of the new and the old Europe. Lithuania is at the crossroads between the East and the West, the North and the South. Therefore development of infrastructure links is among our first priorities.

What does Lithuania bring to the European Union?

Lithuania is among the most swiftly growing economies now entering the EU. Despite the global economic crisis, last year our GDP growth was 6.7 per cent. The first three quarters of the current year show even more amazing growth of 8.1 per cent. According to the opinion of major financial institutions, annual economic growth of Lithuania in 2003-2006 will be on average 6.0–6.5 per cent. Other economic indicators for 2003 are equally optimistic.

Another important source of long-term economic growth in Lithuania is its economic potential, which is still used below its full capacity. Wise use of EU structural assistance

will have a positive impact on the promotion of business, numbers in employment, and improving the quality of jobs. According to the experts of Swedish banks, which are dominant in the Baltic banking market, the economies of the Baltic States should reach the level of the EU in 8 to 10 years.

Lithuania is at the geographical centre of Europe. Two European transport corridors run across its territory. Due to its geographical position, Lithuania seeks and is able to serve as a gateway between the East and the West. In this capacity, Lithuania can offer its well-developed transport infrastructure and its ports.

Impact of membership on Lithuania's relations with other countries.

In terms of foreign policy for the first time in the modern history of Lithuania, European integration provides us with excellent opportunity to create and implement our vision of development and stability in the Baltic region. We also have a unique opportunity to share with the Union our long-term experience of relations with the East. One fifth of the EU's border in the East will be the border of Lithuania. Our relations with the Kaliningrad region, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova or the Southern Caucasus are already becoming the current agenda of the Wider Europe. Our efforts in tackling the challenges of the future EU external border are now being recognised by the Member States.

To summarize, no one but we ourselves can make a better life in Lithuania and in Europe. In future, EU membership will demand from us many efforts and the readiness to share responsibilities and duties with our new partners. Nevertheless, our determination is clear – we had friends in Europe in the past and now we are going to be one of its family members.



Ten New Members of an Enlarged European Union

Philip Bushill-Matthews MEP (Conservative) for the West Midlands

Ten more countries will join the EU in mid-2004. Europe is but a few months away from massive change.

Politically, enlargement should be wonderful news. Our continent has been racked by wars for centuries, and many European countries have glowered at each other dangerously even during the intervening peace. Now the Iron Curtain has gone and the Berlin Wall is down. We have the chance to make the continent whole, and make sure such barriers are consigned to history for ever. All new entrants will be so very welcome.

Just after the referendum vote in Hungary I met a local businesswoman who described movingly how she cried and cried for joy and relief when the 'Yes' vote was confirmed. Until the announcement she had always feared that past divisions might yet resurface. With EU membership assured, at last she and her people could finally feel they have a future that will be secure and free. It is a sign of that new future that she was Director of Tesco Hungary.

Commercially it should be good too - in the end. The current Single Market of fifteen Member States has 370 million people, which makes it the largest 'domestic' trading block in the world. Enlargement will bring the numbers up to 500 million: the opportunities for increased trade are considerable.

But there are huge challenges ahead. Earlier EU enlargements brought in some richer countries. This time, without exception, all the new entrants are poorer. They will all need financial help to catch up. Infrastructure needs attention: their water treatment is decades behind ours; their roads are generally poor. And, although their wages are lower, their farmers in particular cannot compete with the subsidised farmers of the west.

There are presently more farmers in Poland alone than in the whole of the rest of the EU put together. Their farms are small and inefficient compared with ours. They will

require their fair share of Common Agricultural Policy subsidies. The difficulty is that there is not enough money to go round.

The real solution is to radically reform the CAP. This currently consumes around half the total EU budget. French farmers get the largest share; British farms, which tend to be larger and more efficient, are effectively penalised in order to pay for it. France has now done a deal with Germany to try and keep the status quo. This is an outrageous deal that has to be resisted.

Until the CAP is reformed, the question remains: who should pay for enlargement? The French, as always, have the answer. The headline in the *Figaro* newspaper in late October 2002 was 'Chirac wants Britain to pay'. If he has his way, the British rebate, negotiated by Margaret Thatcher and reducing our contribution by £2 billion a year ever since, would go back into the collective pot. France would continue to be a net recipient of EU funds. One has to admire the Gallic cheek!

Other reforms must follow as a result of Enlargement, and the major reform should be one of political culture within the EU Institutions. With 25 countries of such different sizes, different economic and social challenges and different political heritage, the old EU one-size-fits-all *dirigiste* approach will become self-evidently absurd. The ten new countries will – hopefully – bring a much needed breath of fresh air into the stale corridors of Brussels, providing a sharper light on what should be the real focus: freer markets, flexible businesses, more jobs and greater prosperity for all.

Meanwhile one other consequence of Enlargement is that existing Member States will have fewer MEPs at the 2004 elections to the European Parliament. The UK will have 78 instead of 87. My own region of the West Midlands will have seven instead of eight: constituents will see even less of us than they do now. I hope they will not consider this to be the best news of all!

Cyprus and the European Union

H.E. the High Commissioner Myrna Y. Kleopas

This Enlargement of the European Union undoubtedly constitutes one of the most important developments in its history. It confirms the Union's commitment to the common European values and ideals of democracy, human rights, sustainable development and the rule of law that we all share and espouse, and is indispensable for the successful integration of Europe.

Through this Enlargement, the European Union will become a leading actor on the international stage, since the completion of this process of re-unification and integration will create a stronger, more stable and more prosperous Europe.

Effectively, enlargement offers countries like Cyprus the opportunity to be part of the new, wider Europe and thus enjoy the stability and prosperity that characterises the Union, for the benefit of its entire population. It will also guarantee our active participation in the decision-making processes of the Union, as well as our involvement in the European integration and deepening process.

Despite the fact that the economic benefits from accession will be considerable, bearing in mind the small size of the Cypriot economy and the challenges of globalization, the main drive of our accession course was the desire to create conditions of security, confidence and well being that would be conducive to our efforts for the achievement of a just, viable and functional solution of the Cyprus problem.

We believe that Cyprus' accession will bring benefits and create new prospects, which will in turn provide additional incentives for both Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots to work towards ending the division of the island, brought on by the invasion and occupation by Turkey of almost half of the island. Membership to a Union of which the basic principles are democracy and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms will satisfy the security concerns of all Cypriots. We hope and believe that the desire of the people of Cyprus to live together in peace and enjoy the benefits which will ensue from accession will be a driving force for reaching a settlement of the Cyprus problem.

The proposals of the UN Secretary General form the basis for negotiations towards this aim. The principles on which the EU is founded and the *acquis communautaire* are additional guarantees for a solution, which is just and viable and guarantees the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Cypriots. Such a solution would also guarantee one international identity for Cyprus, and state structures that would allow the country to effectively participate in the decision-making process of the European Union.

Apart from the benefits that Cyprus stands to gain from EU membership, it also has a lot to offer towards the achievement of some of the Union's goals and aspirations, especially in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. Traditionally, Cyprus has maintained excellent relations with the Arab world and Israel and could thus be used as a bridge between the European Union and that region. This is necessary in the quest for understanding, tolerance, and stability in the region.

By joining the EU, Cyprus will become the Union's southern-most border and could act as a shield against the illegal trafficking of persons, money laundering, illegal immigration, drug trafficking and organised crime and will, therefore, contribute to the creation of an expanded area of effective security, prosperity and safety for European citizens.

Finally, accession will increase Cyprus' role as an active member of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, thereby furthering political, commercial, social and cultural interaction in the Mediterranean basin.

Cyprus' vision for the future is one of a strong, stable, secure, democratic and prosperous Europe that is able to contribute to the maintenance of world peace and security; a Union that through the rich diversity of nationalities, languages, cultures and ideas encourages the creation of a common European identity, the sense of belonging to the same European family and to a community of shared moral and political values, while at the same time maintaining the national, cultural and linguistic identities that make up modern Europe.

Cyprus intends to contribute actively and constructively towards the achievement of these aims and looks forward to working closely with all its European partners to ensure the achievement of these common objectives.

Malta joins the European Union

H.E. the High Commissioner Dr. George Bonello DuPuis

Malta, popularly known as the George Cross Island, will be the smallest nation to join the Union, both in terms of territory and of population – 300 square kilometres in area and 400,000 souls.

Its geographical position at the centre of the Mediterranean has been both a blessing and a curse. A curse because our Islands were easy prey to those who criss-crossed the Mediterranean seeking easy pickings from sparsely populated lands, and a blessing because strong overlords provided protection and employment. That was notably the case in the Roman/Byzantine period from 218 BC up to 870 AD; then with the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, Rhodes and Malta from 1530 to 1798; and after that with the British from 1800 to 1979.

From this short history one can realise that European influence has permeated Maltese history and culture particularly with the advent of the Knights and their retinues who came from as far afield as Portugal, Spain, Bavaria, France, Germany, Italy and Austria. Their arrival, their settling and mixing with the indigenous population made us a truly European nation in the broadest sense of the word.

Our credentials as a European nation need no further proof and as such we are entitled to join a Union of European Nations to which we hope and pray to bring a Mediterranean dimension that we are busily bringing forward by hopefully hosting the Euro Med Foundation.

Our top priority is naturally to form part of a block of free, democratic and like-minded nations who believe in democracy, justice and the rule of law and who can provide the protection that we, standing alone, can never guarantee to our citizens.

We seek wider horizons for our youth, who have proven down the centuries that, when liberated from the constraints of an enclosed island and a restricted world, are more than a match for the equals outside. And they are well prepared by a famous University whose history goes back more than 400 years.

We seek to obtain wider access for inward investment and a bigger market for our industries and particularly for our financial services, vital to a nation bereft of natural resources except for the God-given gift of intelligence and the ambition to progress and succeed.

As a nation we enjoy the democracy, the rule of law and justice that we have been accustomed to throughout the centuries which we cannot afford to lose and which we want to keep. By joining the European Union we will guarantee them for the future.

Enlargement: One Stage of a Historic Process

Mel Read MEP (Labour) for the East Midlands

I won't be standing for re-election to the European Parliament next year. After fifteen years, I've decided to move on.

And so, with a sense of timing that leaves much to be desired, I'll miss out on arguably the most radical change to the EU yet, as a scarcely believable ten new countries join - they would argue return to - the European family.

Of course there have been new countries joining the European Union before - indeed I campaigned for the UK's own membership over 25 years ago, and was a member of the parliament when the last group of countries - Austria, Finland and Sweden - came in. Yet this new stage is unlike any other.

It's less than 15 years since Poland, the Czech Republic and other accession states were under Soviet rule. The Baltic States were even part of the old Soviet Union. 15 years - a blink of the eyelid in the overall history of nations, but light years away in so many other ways. Who could have predicted the fall of that old tyranny, followed so swiftly by the free democratic vote to join in another quite different union?

We are already in danger of forgetting what it was like for people living under that shadow. Not just the obvious realities of an overbearing state and often fear-filled lives, but the economic hardships, the grinding daily round.

And now these peoples are targeting a new life with its economic dimension of prosperity, and its political dimension of peace.

My colleague Phillip Whitehead MEP was formerly a Member of the UK Parliament, and also an award winning TV producer. His own memories of parts of Eastern Europe bear repeating.

'In my TV days I had film crews thrown out of Estonia for interviewing the courageous national resistance. I was there when the human chain linked the three Baltic nations in their uprising against Soviet rule. We were filming again when Soviet Interior ministry troops shot up the demonstrators in 1991.'

I myself was in Berlin when the wall came down – I still have a piece of the monstrous concrete. It was only a year after my own election to the Strasbourg Parliament; already the winds of change were blowing.

But what does Enlargement mean for the people I represent here in the East Midlands? Among grumbles that structural funds will disappear eastwards, there is a practical pragmatic approach. Businesses see opportunities for new markets, schools see chances of new partnerships, people generally welcome the fact of Europe once again coming together. Various organisations in the East Midlands – the Councils, the universities, business networks, coming together under the aegis of **emda**, the regional development agency – are planning events for next May to make a real occasion of welcoming our new partners.

And then, in July, the European Parliament – the first, and so far only, fully elected, multi-national, multi-lingual assembly in the world – will welcome its new MEPs. A few will replace people like me who have decided not to stand, or those who suffered at the hands of the electorate and were not re-elected. But the largest group by far will be those from the ten new member states. A time for celebration indeed!

Slovenia in Britain and in the European Union

H.E. the Ambassador Dr Marjan Senjur

As an ambassador I frequently have an opportunity to speak in public. Of course, I normally speak about Slovenia. But in recent times I speak more and more often about Slovenia in relation to the European Union.

In June 2003 I visited a girls school in Edinburgh. The topic of my speech was to be 'A New Europe for a New Generation'. Such a title is rather enigmatic. Is Slovenia part of 'new' Europe and Britain part of 'old' Europe? Are pupils of the school a 'new' generation and I, an ambassador in my late fifties, part of an 'old' generation? If you answer 'Yes' to these questions, you would miss the point completely. Slovenia as a nation is part of old Europe as well; and I, an older man, do not feel about myself as part of an older generation, if I use the term figuratively. Slovenia and Britain are building the new Europe together; younger and older people transform themselves into a new generation in this task. Yes, older people have to turn themselves into a new generation if they do not want to be pushed aside to the edge of a vibrant, young society. Old nations have to build a New World here in Europe if they do not want to be left behind.

Slovenia is on the threshold of accession to the EU. In one sense this is not so very important any more, because the key decisions have been taken already, but it is useful to remind ourselves all the time why we are acceding to the EU.

First, the accession of Slovenia to the EU is important from an economic point of view. Slovenia needs a larger internal market. Being a small country in terms of territory and population she can grow economically. Slovenia can become economically larger, stronger, more developed and richer. This is possible by being inside the EU. We know, however, that this is not assured. We will have to rely on our own resources and our own efforts, but we expect that the EU will provide a dynamic economic environment.

Second, Slovenia needs a larger living space. For a contemporary Slovenian, well educated broadminded and ambitious, Slovenia as a territory is too small. Slovenia has to be open. The EU will broaden this territory. People will move freely across the whole of Europe. There will be more free air for breathing in the sphere of culture, science and

politics as well. We hope that the EU will develop in this direction to make all this possible, and that it will not become a stuffy institution with numerous restraining regulations, and hierarchical decision making.

Third, the accession of Slovenia into the EU means its return to Europe, to its home as far as culture and civilisation is concerned. Slovenians will not be foreigners in Europe any more as they used to be since 1945. Slovenia will be more recognisable as well.

A note as short as this one is not the place to go into reasoning about what the EU actually is. But it is interesting to follow the metaphors being used to describe the essence of the EU. Sometimes I hear or read the image that the EU is like a house, a European House. Sometimes EU is described as a family, a European family. Neither of these two metaphors appeals to me much.

Let us take the metaphor of the European family. It is touching to talk about the EU as being a family. However, we should be aware that the family has parents and children, it may have a big brother and younger sisters. Which member country of the EU will play the role of parents? Will France be a father, and Germany a mother, and Britain an auntie? Will Slovenia play the role of an adolescent adopted daughter? Who will have in this family the right to talk, and who will have to listen and who keep silent? No, I am not sure that I would wish that the family structure like this should be a basis for relations inside the EU.

Or let us take a look at the metaphor of the EU as a European house. Slovenia is acceding to the EU; it is not knocking on the door of the European house and begging to enter. We are not homeless; we have our own house, our own home. We do not wish to settle in another's house. We want to connect our house with houses of other European states into a common village, a European village, in order to enhance the common good. A European village might be a better metaphor for the EU, though doubtless it is not a perfect one either.

The EU is a voluntary union of independent states. Into such a union Slovenia is acceding. A reporter asked me recently in an interview for a magazine how I imagine Slovenia in the EU after 20 years. My answer was that Slovenia would catch up in economic development with the more developed part of Europe in that time. Slovenians will maintain their identity, their language and their culture, and that they will still have an independent sovereign state of Slovenia. The Constitutional treaty about which discussion is taking place right now should provide for such an EU as I am indirectly describing in this text.

We all know that the view on the EU from Britain is somewhat singular and even peculiar. Yet there are similarities to the view from Slovenia, although for different reasons which spring from a different historical experience.

From Europe's Past to Europe's Future

Richard Inglewood MEP (Conservative) for the North West

The first time I appreciated what the 'Iron Curtain' really was, was when as a 16 year old schoolboy I passed through the Friedrichstrasse Station in Berlin to visit East Berlin. I was on an 'exchange' and for obvious reasons my hosts could not go with me. I shall never forget the sight of an East German soldier standing in one of the girders of the roof with a machine gun in his hand which he could well have used to shoot me.

Of course this tyranny was imposed across much of Eastern Europe by the War which Hitler launched in 1939, and it was only the Velvet Revolution of 1989-90 which brought that chapter of history to its end.

For all decent-minded people the Soviet Empire and the regime it imposed on itself and its satellites was abhorrent, but quite apart from that it placed a very significant economic and political burden on all the countries to their West, who needed to defend the free part of our continent against it. Western European countries reconfigured the relationships between themselves in an increasingly economic and socially interdependent world, with inter alia the development of the European Union, which in turn gave the lie to the communist claim that the capitalist West was economically and socially divisive, authoritarian and illiberal.

Once the Iron Curtain fell, the logic of the ex-Soviet countries moving back into the Western world whence they had been stolen forty years earlier was obvious. That now involves membership of the European Union, which from a British perspective does not always in the same way appear to have been the guarantor of political freedom and the engine of economic growth it was considered to be in the East.

As ever, though, the devil is in the detail. On top of the problems the European Union now faces in an increasingly changing and globalised World, the addition of ten more members poses further financial, political and institutional problems. Where do we go from here? In a world where resurgent economic development in Asia, political problems in the Middle East and Africa, and tensions with the United States dominate global news, the case for the European countries finding a framework to retain their

distinct identities in a wider context of regional political and economic stability makes good sense for all of us. It is not going to be simple and it is going to cost the richer countries money, but it looks the right way forward.

And of course, getting the future right has always been vital but never been easy.

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