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INSTITUTE NOTE

The enlarged EU and its new neighbours: new security challenges

Paris, 5-6 June 2003

The Conference was conceived as a first occasion to assess the impact of enlargement on CFSP - now that ten candidates are about to accede to the EU – in terms not only of foreign policy interests but also neighbourhood issues, stretching from the Baltic to the Adriatic, from the Aegean to the Mediterranean Sea. Accordingly, the list of participants included many invitees from the acceding countries, and the programme was conceived also in order to encourage them to take the floor on an equal footing with invitees from the current member states. The former Estonian Foreign Minister Toomas Hendrik Ilves gave a much-appreciated keynote speech.

I. Between stabilisation and integration

The *first session* was expected to set the general framework for the discussion by stressing a) the evolution of the approach of the EC/EU to its (ever-changing) neighbourhood, whereby direct integration has gradually won the day as both a security policy “by other means” and a way to stabilise the immediate proximity of the Community/Union; and b) the varying and multi-faceted nature of the new neighbourhood(s) of the enlarged Union, which may or may not require more differentiated policies – differentiated by area and/or by country.

In this respect, many distinct neighbourhoods (or rather proximities) were taken into consideration: 1) an ‘Eastern dimension’, whose peculiarity is that it involves Russia as a ‘third’ party in dealing with Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova; 2) the Western Balkans, where the main issue is whether the prospect of EU membership will explicitly become the policy framework for bilateral relations; 3) Turkey proper, whose candidacy represents a major policy challenge on both sides; 4) the Mediterranean region, for which membership is not at stake (especially after the accession of Malta and Cyprus), but

within which more differentiation may be necessary; 5) a wider cultural/economic 'proximity', mainly of a post-colonial nature (ACP countries, trade and aid flows), which explains why East Timor and Congo are within the range of CFSP interests; and, of course, 6) the special 'proximity' represented by the United States of America, for historical, ethnic, economic and strategic reasons.

Many questions were raised in the discussion: for instance, is the EU becoming a prisoner of its own promises re enlargement? Has it become a "reluctant magnet", as someone pointed out? Is it better to say "no, never" to some countries right away and then start re-launching bilateral relations on a new basis, or is it more convenient to keep all options open and try and exercise as much conditionality as possible for as long as possible? It was underlined that there are no intra-EU constituencies pro-Turkey or pro-Ukraine comparable to those that have supported the currently acceding countries over the past years – which may strengthen the general feeling of enlargement "fatigue" across the Union and impinge upon those options.

Moreover: what are the similarities between, say, Belarus and Israel as EU 'neighbours' – and what conditionality can be applied to relations with them? What is to be done, in other words, if a given 'neighbour' does not want to "play ball", given that conditionality as linked to membership negotiations has been so far the most successful foreign (and coercive) policy tool in the EU's hands? Perhaps, as someone pointed out, it could be useful to set the *acquis* aside and try and find new ways and tools to accommodate and influence the Union's neighbours with a view to establishing a "circle of friends" around the new borders – borders that, in turn, should be at the same time "clear, tough and friendly".

II. Eastern dimensions

The *second session* addressed the new 'Eastern Dimension' of the enlarged EU. The discussion was framed by the central question that has troubled the EU in dealing with Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus since the early 1990s: how to create a zone of stability and prosperity on the Union's borders without offering the prospect of membership to states as incentive?

Since the early 1990s, the EU response to this question has been to reach Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA) with these states. The PCA method created a number of institutions linking the Union with these states and added an element of political dialogue and enhanced economic/trade cooperation to their relations. In 2003, however, it is evident that so far the PCA method has not resolved the central question. Relations with Belarus remain frozen, and EU negative pressure has failed to compel change in this state. Moldova has become Europe's poorest country, and run by a Communist leadership. Ukraine shows increasingly troubling signs about its democratic consolidation. All three countries are deeply impoverished, de-industrialised and disenchanting. The EU is not to blame, but it has done little to help.

The discussion then turned to the Commission Communication on *Wider Europe – Neighbourhood* of March 2003. This Communication puts forward a number of innovative ideas, in particular the promise of joint action plans with these states as well as an enhanced political role in the region. At the same time, the Wider Europe

Communication fails to resolve the central question once again of how the Union will support the transformation of these states without the offer of accession. In this respect, the focus of the document struck many as being far too technocratic and trade-related. While these are vitally important areas, the promise of ‘proximity’ can be attained only by enhanced EU *presence* in these states, especially at the political and security level. Their constant clamour for a ‘signal’ from Brussels would be assuaged if the Union developed a greater political profile, which, in itself, would constitute a daily signal of proximity.

There is nothing inevitable about the transformation of these states on the EU model, or their democratic consolidation. Their stability is precarious and their future orientations remain unclear. Until now, the EU has failed to develop a strategy on this region that might offset these uncertainties. EU energies have been expended elsewhere, quite naturally, throughout the 1990s, and the Union has only looked at the region through the dichotomy of inclusion/exclusion. A new approach is required, one that does not offer accession but commitment. The question should not be one of membership but responsibility.

III. *Balkan doubts*

The *third session* tackled the Balkan region. Though not part of the Wider Europe Communication, because the countries of the Western Balkans are considered potential candidates for EU membership, the road to accession of these countries is not clear-cut given the reticence of the EU Fifteen to give them a clear perspective for membership. It was generally agreed that the Western Balkans face two stark alternatives: either they become integrated into the EU or they do not.

Though Croatia’s application has been favourably received and the country could probably join the Union at the same time as Bulgaria and Romania, FYROM’s imminent application this autumn is unlikely to get the same welcome because it is not considered anywhere near the stabilisation expected from any EU candidate. Of the remaining countries of the Western Balkans (Serbia-Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina) only Serbia-Montenegro stands a chance to receive candidate status at a future date on the proviso that it resolves the Kosovo conundrum. Under these conditions, the Thessaloniki summit and beyond will probably reaffirm that the countries of the Western Balkans belong to “Europe” but that their accession to the Union is a long way off.

The second alternative for the countries of the Western Balkans is that their accession to the EU could be blocked irrevocably as a consequence of the current ‘big bang’ enlargement: in fact, one of its possible effects could be a hardening of the Union’s external borders to the South and South-East, as most of the threats to European security may come from there. Given the need to keep stabilising the Balkans and the slow progress made by the countries of the region towards EU membership, the Union could become more willing to intervene militarily, if need be, rather than stress the virtues of integration as it has to date. This needs to be put in the context of the developing EU strategic doctrine, which will stress the necessity to stabilise the region’s ‘dangerous periphery’ (including the Balkans) while also tackling the root causes of instability.

IV. Turkish dilemmas

Turkey's position as both a candidate for accession and a key and sizable geostrategic player on the Eurasian continent implies that its road toward the EU is complicated on both sides. A wide set of questions was debated – Is Turkey ready for the EU? Does Turkey really want to join the EU? Does the EU really want Turkey to join? What role the strategic dimension in EU-Turkish relations? – as were the possible options for the EU: a) proceed steadfast with its accession strategy; b) start a serious debate in terms of the strategic pros and cons of Turkey as a member, c) reconsider strategy and find common ground based on strategic partnership.

This *fourth session* showed two things: first, there were divergent positions between officials and non-officials at the meeting. While many of the officials present stressed that the eventual accession of Turkey to the EU is a done deal (irrespective of the length of the process), non-officials suggested that options other than accession (such as strategic or associate partnership) need to be considered. Secondly, Turkey is at a crossroads with regard to its “Europeanisation” process with an internal tug-of-war between its traditional ‘Kemalist’, secular, western-oriented elites and the country’s democratisation forces, as showed by the overwhelming parliamentary majority recently won by an “Islamist” party. As long as the democratic process is not firmly entrenched, Turkey’s road towards EU accession or convergence risks being long and bumpy. However, the wish was expressed that Turkey’s relevance would in the end depend more on *what* the country is (and is becoming) than on *where* it is.

V. Mediterranean cleavages

There are at least three main differences – it was said in the *fifth session* - between the Mediterranean region and other regions bordering an enlarged European Union. Firstly, it is a huge space (from Gibraltar to the Black Sea and to the Suez Canal) with many different subregions and *problématiques*. Secondly, the region represents perfectly the fracture line between North and South, in economic, social and cultural terms. And thirdly, the EU’s policies towards Central and Eastern Europe have been inspired so far by the idea of stabilisation aimed at later integration, whereas in the Mediterranean region stabilisation will lead to a special relationship or partnership, but not membership.

In this session, the debate dwelt on two different issues: the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and its possible reform, and the role of the EU in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Although the EMP (or Barcelona process) is largely viewed as a positive initiative for the region, some aspects must be rethought and possibly reformed. The current interlocutors in the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue will be less than 12 following the accession of Cyprus and Malta to the EU and the beginning of negotiations with Turkey, but future inclusions of Libya, on the one hand, and Bulgaria, Romania and countries from the Western Balkans, on the other, cannot be excluded, which would change the configuration of the dialogue. Many participants pointed out that the EU should take seriously its commitment to democracy and human rights in the Mediterranean (as indicated in the Commission’s Communication ‘Reinvigorating EU actions on human rights and democratisation with Mediterranean partners’, 21 May 2003).

The EMP's economic and financial basket was thoroughly discussed in the seminar, too, since the scarcity of the EU's financial package for the region and the fact that the EU had failed to open its borders to exports of agricultural products from Mediterranean countries were widely criticised. However, it was acknowledged that it will be very difficult to allocate more money to this region owing to the need to finance the current enlargement process. Some European countries may argue that more attention should be paid to the Mediterranean partners in order to avoid possible sources of instability and insecurity, but the majority of EU members and candidate countries will rather prefer to focus on continental Europe. In any case, there was consensus on the need to promote South-South intraregional exchanges. On the other hand, one of the priorities of the future Italian presidency will be relations between the EU and its Mediterranean partners: some enhancement of the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue, particularly in such areas as political dialogue and ESDP, is therefore to be expected in the coming months.

While the EU has a global vision for the region and is pursuing a multilateral dialogue, as well as bilateral relations, with its Mediterranean partners, its role in crisis management vis-à-vis the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since summer 2000 was the object of mixed assessments during the seminar. Indeed, the EU has maintained a coherent position on the solution of the crisis, has expressed strong condemnation of violence, and has consistently requested the parties to resume negotiations. At the same time, the presence of the High Representative and his Special Envoy has resulted in greater visibility of the EU and has permitted direct participation in multilateral frameworks, such as the Quartet that produced the road map. However, the EU's mediation and good offices have not been very effective, lacking US engagement. It is obvious that joint action by the United States and the European Union is the best guarantee for a peaceful solution of the conflict. In any case, the Union should be willing to play a more determined role in the area.

VI. *Interests and identities, conditionality and engagement*

In the *concluding session* it was noted that, despite evidence of enlargement "fatigue" among the existing member states, the EU continues to exert a powerful attraction for its neighbours. The EU has, after all, been a success story, and others want to share in it. If, therefore, the EU is to continue to develop a credible role in support of reforms in the neighbouring countries, it is vital that the current enlargement does not dilute the achievements so far. The current enlargement is likely to strengthen the EU's commitment to the Eastern and South-Eastern neighbours as a result of the strong interest in new member states such as Poland and Hungary in contributing towards more effective, sustained and coherent policies towards them. The recent experiences of the newcomers will be an invaluable resource for the EU to mobilise in implementing such policies. Even so, however, enlargement will not radically alter the balance of the EU's priorities in the security field, which have already been identified as lying primarily in the Balkans, the Middle East, and the fight against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction – which does not relate primarily to the east of the Union. The EU's emerging new *Ostpolitik* will not displace these priorities within ESDP. Yet it will call for new initiatives under the 'third pillar' to work with the eastern neighbours to tackle organised crime and its potential links with terrorism. This further strengthens the case for an EU equivalent of the FBI. On the other hand, the 'hard' dimension of ESDP may also have to be developed

further, thus creating a potential tension with the ‘softer’ ones. In this respect, the relationship (collective as well as bilateral) with the US will play a crucial role.

A further point of discussion was the link between the effectiveness of EU conditionality and the quest for ‘identity’ among partners and neighbours. Conditionality worked with the Central and East Europeans not just when they were offered firm prospects of EU accession, but rather, the EU’s current member states were persuaded of the case for offering accession by the evident determination of the candidate countries’ political elites, backed by a wide consensus in their societies, to carry out political and economic reforms. The prospect of EU accession thus supported a quite deep-rooted consensus on ‘returning to Europe’, rather than creating it. Moreover, public opinion in the member states remained sympathetic to the political and historical imperatives of enlargement to key Central European countries, despite economic misgivings. The case is somewhat different with respect to both Ukraine and Turkey, neither of which yet enjoys a settled consensus on where the State belongs nor the support of dedicated “constituencies” inside the Union. But the EU needs to be sensitive to the evolving identification with ‘Europe’ in both cases. In so far as the EU has an identity of its own, it rests less on cultural than on political values, which are liberal and universalistic. If the EU can promote the entrenchment of those values in the structures and practices of those states and economies, it would be hard to resist their claims to eventual membership. At present, however, this is a distant and uncertain prospect. Moreover, public opinion in the existing member states remains to be convinced of their eligibility.

Meanwhile, the EU needs to develop a more attractive, flexible alternative to membership – someone mentioned the possibility of “quasi-membership”, namely everything but the institutions – to demonstrate serious commitment to its neighbours. In the Western Balkans, it has already been recognised that the prospect of eventual EU membership is a crucial component of stabilisation and successful transformation of their politics, administrations and economies. For others, it was said, the Union might have to move away from the fixation on conditionality linked to membership as its only foreign policy tool and, instead of “you will be with us”, tell at least some neighbours “we will be with you”.

However, throughout this region, as throughout most of the EU’s entire neighbourhood and beyond, the key problem is the *weakness* and/or *volatility* of states. This needs to be given central focus in the Union’s security policies, implying that alongside the development of appropriate military and civilian crisis prevention and peacekeeping capacities, the EU will have to further develop complementary strategies of long-term economic and social assistance, and new instruments specifically geared towards promoting democratisation and building political and administrative capacities.



Paris, 5th June 2003

PROGRAMME

CONFERENCE ON

The Enlarged EU and its new neighbours: new security challenges

Paris, 5th and 6th June 2003

DAY 1 — Thursday, 5th June

14:00 **Welcome and opening comments**

Nicole GNESOTTO, Director of the EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris

14:15 **SESSION I: The EU's neighbourhood policy: past, present, future**

CHAIR Nicole GNESOTTO

Paper by Antonio MISSIROLI (EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris)

Discussants ■ Wim VAN MEURS (CAP, Munich)
■ Vladimir BILCIK (Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Bratislava)

Open discussion

15:15 **SESSION II: The new Eastern Dimension of the enlarged EU**

CHAIR Heather GRABBE (CER, London)

Paper by Dov LYNCH (EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris)

Discussants ■ Leszek JESIEN (Krakow European University, Cracow)
■ Hanna OJANEN (The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Helsinki)

Open discussion

16:15 – 16:45 ***Coffee break***

16:45 **SESSION III: The Balkan region between stabilisation and membership**

CHAIR Monika WOHLFELD (OSCE, Vienna)

Paper by Dimitrios TRIANTAPHYLLOU (EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris)

Discussants ■ Misha GLENNY (Writer, Brighton)

Open discussion

19:30 ***Reception on the Terrace Iéna, CFCE, Place d'Iéna, Paris, 16ème***

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Toomas Hendrik ILVES (MP, Tallinn)

DAY 2 — Friday, 6th June

08:45 *Welcoming coffee*

09:00 **SESSION IV: The 13th candidate: Turkey**

CHAIR Nicole GNESOTTO

Papers by Dimitrios TRIANTAPHYLLOU (EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris) and
Soli ÖZEL (Istanbul University)

Discussant ■ Alessandro MISSIR DI LUSIGNANO (DG Enlargement, European Commission,
Brussels)

Open discussion

10:45 – 11:00 *Coffee break*

11:00 **SESSION V: The new Mediterranean dimension**

CHAIR Simon FRASER (FCO, London)

Paper by Martin ORTEGA (EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris)

Discussants ■ Ersèbet N. RÓZSA (Teleki László Institute, Budapest)
■ Alvaro VASCONCELOS (IEEI, Lisbon)

12:30 – 14:00 *Buffet lunch ‘chez Gérard’*

14:00 **SESSION VI: Implications for CFSP/ESDP and coherence with other EU policies**

*Concluding
remarks* Nicole GNESOTTO

Comments ■ Judy BATT (EU Institute for Security Studies)
■ Kai-Olaf LANG (SWP, Berlin)

16:00 *End of the Conference*



Paris, 05.06.2003

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
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CONFÉRENCE

L'UE élargie et ses nouveaux voisins :
les nouveaux défis de sécurité

Paris, 5 et 6 juin 2003

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