

ŠTÚDIE, ANALÝZY

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Enlargement of the European Union – the Tasks and Challenges Ahead

2004 will be remembered in the history books as the year of the European Union's biggest single enlargement. Ten countries joined and two others finished their accession talks.

But this is not a one-off event. In its half-century of existence, the Union expanded five times, and this process will continue. In the following I will

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look at the work-programme that lies ahead of the European Union during the mandate of the Barroso Commission.

I will first describe in more detail the conclusion of the 5th enlargement round with Bulgaria and Romania aiming to join in 2007; secondly I will refer to the state of play with regard to Croatia and Turkey; and thirdly, I will outline what we have in mind with the other countries in the Western Balkans. As of now, there are no plans on the EU side to prepare other countries in our neighbourhood for accession in a short or in a medium term. Finally, I will refer to the challenges that enlargements may bring to the future EU.

The 2007 Enlargement – a Foregone Conclusion?

Accession negotiations with Bulgaria and Romania were concluded in December 2004 and we expect that the Accession Treaty will be signed on 25 April 2005. The preparations for accession in both countries are, however, not completed by signing the Accession Treaty. Negotiations have been concluded on the basis of numerous commitments assumed by the countries to implement certain measures in accordance with an agreed timetable in a period between the conclusion of the negotiations and the accession itself. As compared to the last enlargement, this period is now 24 (or, as the case may be, 36) months, as compared to the 16 months last time around. Both countries are consequently busy fulfilling commitments assumed in the accession negotiations, thus completing their preparations for membership. The Commission will, taking the lessons learned of the last enlargement by 10 countries into consideration, very closely monitor how Bulgaria and Romania are meeting the commitments agreed in the negotiations.

As compared to the last enlargement, this monitoring will be even more intense and thorough for the following reason. Accession negotiations with Bulgaria and Romania could not be closed together with the other 10 countries in December 2002 as it took both countries somewhat longer to build up the full momentum for the reform process; therefore valuable time was lost. The full and timely implementation of the commitments made in the accession negotiations by Bulgaria and Romania therefore clearly requires political will on their side. It is important for the Commission to closely follow these events and point to any shortcomings at a very early stage. We are paying particular attention to

- the reform of the Bulgarian and Romanian public administrations, especially the reform of the judiciary;
- measures and actions taken in the fight against corruption;
- setting up structures to prosecute organised crime;
- measures to improve the situation of vulnerable groups and to combat trafficking of people in both countries;
- the continuous need to restructure the economy, together with full application of the internal market rules, including competition and state aids.

The Bulgarian and Romanian governments have to deal with a very heavy and demanding agenda in the months to come – in addition to the above-mentioned tasks, a number of other commitments in the chapter *Justice and Home Affairs* need to be met; the same holds for commitments undertaken in the chapter *Environment*.

Until the date of accession, the Commission will closely monitor the fulfilment of all commitments made by Bulgaria and Romania during the negotiations under the various chapters. Should this monitoring exercise show that important commitments or requirements are not met, I would not hesitate to recommend to the Council to invoke safeguard measures, including the postponement of accession by one year.

The EU recently grew from 15 to 25 Member States; this enlargement has been successful, because it has been carefully prepared with a great deal of effort. It nevertheless is hardly surprising that the EU needs some time to absorb and to digest an enlargement of these proportions. At this delicate stage of development the EU certainly needs to make sure that any new member state is sufficiently prepared to meet its commitments. That is why I am committed to supporting fully the reform efforts in Romania and Bulgaria including the financial support: We should not overlook the fact that an unprecedented solidarity effort vis-à-vis Bulgaria and Romania is being made – until accession Bulgaria will receive over € 400 million and Romania around € 1 billion per year in EU funding.

To sum up: The challenges with regard to the 2007 enlargement lie with Bulgaria and Romania and to a lesser extent with the European Union. We have all our instruments dealing with Bulgaria and Romania in place; if we use them appropriately and if both acceding countries continue and – in certain areas – accelerate their accession preparations, the 5th enlargement round should be successfully concluded.

Croatia

Since the year 2000, various European Councils have confirmed the European perspective of the countries of the Western Balkans participating in the *Stabilisation and Association Process* and defined them as potential candidates. Croatia's progress shows that the Union is serious about this pledge.

Croatia was the first country of the region applying for the EU membership in February 2003. In April 2004, the European Commission issued a positive opinion (avis) on this application and recommended an opening of accession negotiations; this recommendation was endorsed by the June 2004 European Council. The December 2004 European Council requested the Council to agree on a negotiating framework with a view to opening the accession negotiations with Croatia on 17 March 2005 provided that there is full co-operation with *International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia* (ICTY).

When analysing Croatia's bid for the EU-membership, the Commission used the same criteria (*Copenhagen criteria*) as used for the previous candidate countries. However, within the political criteria, the Commission also took account of certain specific elements of the *Stabilisation and Association Process* which stem from the armed conflicts in the 1990s. One key aspect is the co-operation with the ICTY. The European Council has stated clearly that the remaining indictee must be located and transferred to The Hague as soon as possible. Full co-operation with ICTY is a pre-condition for opening accession negotiations. A second specific issue is refugee return. Ongoing work needs to be continued in order to meet the commitment, taken by Croatia, together with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro, to solve all outstanding issues related to refugee return by the end of 2006. This is a clear example of an objective which can only be attained by regional co-operation.

With regard to the economic criteria, the Commission concluded in its opinion that Croatia can be regarded as a functioning market economy. A competitive tourism industry is the backbone of the economy. Other sectors, such as shipbuilding and agriculture, still need to be modernised to be able to operate in a competitive environment. More generally, further structural reforms and a reformed judiciary and land registry system are needed to achieve higher investment and growth.

Concerning the transposition of the acquis, Croatia has already started important legislative work. The main challenge will be to ensure pro-

per application and enforcement of the new legislation, notably by strengthening considerably the relevant administrative and judicial capacities. A satisfactory track record will be crucial for the speed of future accession negotiations.

The framework for the negotiations with Croatia will be largely based on the Commission proposals of 6 October 2004 – in particular the *Strategy Paper* – as well as on the Conclusions of the European Council of December 2004. A draft text proposed by the Commission is presently discussed in the Council. It is very similar to previous frameworks for negotiations. Drawing on the experience of the 5th enlargement, it introduces the notion of benchmarks to be laid down for the provisional closure of negotiations in particular areas (chapters) and, as appropriate, for the opening of chapters; furthermore, accession negotiations with Croatia can be suspended “in the case of a serious and persistent breach of the principles of liberty, democracy, respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law on which the Union is founded”.

A lot of hard work remains ahead for Croatia to prepare its economy, its legislation, and its administrative and judicial system for the EU membership. However, the example of Croatia also shows that decisive reforms bring a country closer to the Union. This should be an encouragement to the other Western Balkan countries to engage decisively in the necessary political and economic reforms.

Turkey

After Turkey's formal application for membership in the EU in April 1987, the decision of the European Council in December 2004 to open accession negotiations with Turkey on 3 October 2005 constitutes undoubtedly a landmark in the EU-Turkey relations. To be precise: Turkey still has to sign the Protocol regarding the adaptation of the Ankara Agreement, taking account of the enlarged EU.

This decision of the European Council enables those forces in Turkey – most parts of the political and economic establishment and probably a clear majority of the population – who see their future as being firmly embedded in European structures, to continue striving for the modernisation of their country and their society, and adopting, step by step, the values for which the EU and its member states stand.

What does the immediate future in EU-Turkey relations hold? Following the Commission's recommendation of 6 October 2004 we will start implementing our strategy based on three pillars:

- Supporting the reform process in Turkey; the Commission will continue the regular monitoring of the political criteria across the board. Instruments available for this pre-accession exercise have proven to be extremely useful in previous enlargements – the next Regular Report on Turkey due in October/November 2005 will in detail evaluate the progress and the shortcomings in all areas covered by the Copenhagen criteria; a revised Accession Partnership will spell out priorities in order to guide further reforms in Turkey. In 2005 the EU will provide Turkey with some € 300 million to support the reforms and to assist with preparations for EU membership.
- Proposing a draft negotiating framework to be submitted to the Council on the basis of the Commission's recommendations of 6 October 2004 and the December 2004 European Council Conclusions; when drafting this proposal, we will of course take the lessons learned from the past enlargements into consideration.
- Strengthening the political and cultural dialogue with Turkey; based on our experiences with the 10 new Member States, such a dialogue will primarily involve civil society both in Turkey and in the EU. This is an important element in the preparation for accession as misconceptions on both sides are widespread – the perception of a future EU membership of Turkey very much varies among the populations concerned and unwarranted fears or unrealistic expectations are commonplace. We would hope that such a widespread dialogue could help to see the process for what it is: while recognising the risks and challenges that need to be addressed, it presents a great opportunity for the European Union.

With regard to the conduct of accession negotiations with Turkey, the European Council has – mostly based on the Commission proposals of 6 October 2004 – attached a number of conditions: (1) In case of serious and persistent breach of political principles on which the EU is founded, accession negotiations can be suspended – the same principle will be valid in the case of Croatia. (2) The “irreversibility of the political reform process and its full, effective and comprehensive implementation” must be ensured. (3) Benchmarks for opening (where appropriate) and provisional closure of negotiating chapters will be foreseen, furthermore “long

transitional periods, derogations, specific arrangements or permanent safeguard clauses ... may be considered”.

It is no secret that an accession of Turkey would have substantial financial implications for the EU. The European Council has therefore endorsed the Commission proposal that accession negotiations with Turkey “can only be concluded after establishment of the financial framework for the period from 2014...”

Undoubtedly a lot of work lies ahead but we have clearly seen that the opening of accession negotiations with Turkey now being a realistic scenario has encouraged Turkey to seriously follow the process of political reforms. An open discussion about human rights or about the situation of the Kurds would have been quite unthinkable only four or five years ago. Clearly, a lot still needs to be achieved but the progress in Turkey in this field in the last two or three years has been remarkable. The accession process will be essential in guiding Turkey on its way to further reforms. At the end of the day, this will not only be advantageous to Turkey, but will at the same time contribute to consolidating the values which should be shared by the entire European continent.

Successful Stabilisation and Association Process Should Allow for Candidate Status

While accession negotiations with Croatia and Turkey are scheduled to open in 2005, the preparation for accession of the other countries of the Western Balkans – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, including Kosovo (Kosovo as defined by UN Security Council Resolution 1244) – will continue. They all have the same EU perspective. They too will become EU members when they are ready and fulfil the necessary criteria. These criteria are the same as those that Slovakia and its neighbours had to fulfil: the political, economic and ‘acquis’ criteria agreed by the European Council in Copenhagen in 1993, including a few criteria of particular relevance to this region, such as regional co-operation and full co-operation with the *International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia* (ICTY). These are the formal criteria for accession. To win the acceptance of the European public and governments, each country must also have a European vocation, as measured by the will of its own people to join. A prospective EU member must respect European values, particularly the

rule of law, and be able to live up to them. It must also live up to its international obligations.

The countries of the Western Balkans have a difficult past. While some of the challenges facing these countries are the same as those which Slovakia and other countries had to cope with, there are also differences. Parts of this region were torn apart in the 1990s by a war that left their infrastructure and economies in ruins. Large parts of their populations displaced and in poverty. Anyone who has visited the region recently knows that the situation is different today. Through hard work on the part of the countries themselves, along with financial assistance and advice by the EU and other donors, the countries have come a long way with their recovery and transition. But above all, it is the perspective of future EU membership that has inspired change and turned the countries around, just as the prospects of membership triggered a substantial transformation of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

The effectiveness of our strategy is indisputable. Enlargement is perhaps the EU's most successful foreign policy to date. It is important that we now spread the zone of peace, solidarity and prosperity also to our neighbours in the south-eastern part of Europe. This is what the countries want and need – and it is in the EU's interest as well. Our policy for the Western Balkans – the *Stabilisation and Association Process* – actually is a pre-accession strategy. Stabilising this region would constitute an important milestone in European history, a major victory in spreading peace, stability and prosperity to the Western Balkans.

Our agenda for the Western Balkans is ambitious. Although the onus is on the countries themselves to implement the necessary reforms, it also means that, amongst the international actors, the EU has to be in the lead. We are working closely with other partners and international actors, such as the US and the international financial institutions which are providing invaluable support to our strategy to bring the countries into the EU. But the Union has to assume the prime responsibility to help the countries progress. The *Stabilisation and Association Process* therefore brings to bear a number of instruments to help the countries build functioning institutions, to boost economic development and to draw them closer to the EU. Amongst the most important are the *European Partnerships* which guide the reform process by identifying priorities, trade measures which give preference to products from the region and generous financial assistance which is adjusted to the needs of each of the individual countries.

We also provide technical advice and have opened up the possibility for the countries to participate in Community programmes in order to familiarise them with the EU's policies and working methods. Croatia's successful transition, which enabled the EU to give it candidate status in June 2004, proves that our policy is effective and it should be an incentive and offer encouragement for the other countries of the region.

We take stock of developments on a regular basis and it is clear that, overall, progress is impressive. Nevertheless, there is no room for complacency. Reforms need to be properly implemented and the capacity of state institutions needs to be strengthened. Stronger and more determined efforts are needed to root out corruption and organised crime. Full cooperation with the ICTY is an outstanding issue in some countries. Economic revitalisation is one of the major challenges and perhaps the most difficult one. Living standards are, by European standards, still low and unemployment is high. The countries need to create a climate conducive to investment, including foreign direct investment. This entails, among other things, reasonable regulatory frameworks, that property rights are clear and protected and that the justice systems are reliable and functioning.

Regional co-operation is at the heart of our policy. For the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, this was important. For the countries of the Western Balkans, it is a necessity. Good neighbourly relations are a prerequisite for political stability and security as instability in one country could affect the whole region. It is also indispensable in achieving sustainable economic recovery. The markets in the region are small and fragmented. In areas like trade, infrastructure, energy and transport, the size of the individual countries leaves no other alternative than regional co-operation as the only sustainable way forward. Much progress has been made in these areas, however, and the ultimate goal now is to reconnect the countries of the Western Balkans with the EU member states and candidate countries.

There is a need to rebuild trust in the region. Regional co-operation has to be one of the prime elements underpinning the reconciliation process. Moreover, regional co-operation is about the very essence of the European Union. The countries of the Western Balkans need to co-operate as if they were members of the EU.

Slovakia – as well as other new Member States – has an important role to play in this respect. By using its knowledge of the region, by sharing its

own experiences and lessons learned, and by maintaining close contacts with leaders and civil society in these countries, Slovakia could play a key role in fostering regional co-operation and reconciliation, and thus in implementing the EU's foreign policy.

The Possible Impact of Enlargement on the EU: Pros and Cons

We cannot at this stage – after only 10 months – definitively evaluate the impact of the latest wave of accessions. But we can clearly say that the EU has continued to function fully from 1 May 2004 onwards. In the EU of 25, just to give a few examples, the *Constitutional Treaty* has been signed in Rome, accession negotiations with Bulgaria and Romania have been concluded, and the European Council of December 2004 could agree on the opening of accession negotiations with Turkey. Those who expected that the EU 25 would be paralysed and incapable of making decisions within a reasonable time frame have been clearly proven wrong. The challenge of keeping the EU fully functioning has been met, at least for the time being.

As far as the economy is concerned, we can say that these dynamic and fast-expanding economies with growth rates of 4 % and more are certainly a welcome addition to the European Union, struggling with average growth rates below the 2 % rate. With regard to the foreign or trade policy, it goes without saying that a Union with 25 Member States has more impact on the world stage and in international organisation like the United Nations, OSCE or WTO than an EU of 15.

When addressing the possible impact of future enlargements on the EU itself, we always need to keep in mind what has been formulated at the 1993 European Council in Copenhagen: “The Union's capacity to absorb new members, while maintaining the momentum of European integration, is also an important consideration in the general interest of both the Union and the candidate countries.”

Starting with Bulgaria and Romania, we can say that the impact of their accession on the EU will not be fundamentally different from the previous enlargement. After all, they are part of the 5th enlargement round. Both countries are already closely linked to the EU by *Europe Agreements*, pre-accession strategy activities, including pre-accession assistance, continuous reviews and monitoring, etc. Some 30 million new EU citizens will soon join, following the 70 million that joined on 1 May 2004; an increase from

25 to 27 Member States would also have less impact on the institutional arrangements as compared to the recently acceding 10 countries. The same can be said for Croatia with a population of some 4,5 million people. For an EU of close to 500 million inhabitants towards the end of this decade, it is unlikely that an additional 4,5 million citizens would constitute a serious absorption problem.

The major challenges for the EU with regard to enlargement therefore clearly lie – for the time being – with the accession of Turkey and such an accession would certainly be challenging for both parties. If well managed, it would, however, offer important opportunities for Turkey and for the Union. The necessary preparations for Turkey will last well into the next decade. The EU will evolve over this period and the changes in Turkey are likely to be even more radical. While the *acquis* will develop further and respond to the needs of an EU of 27 or more, the development of this *acquis* may also anticipate the challenges and opportunities of Turkey's accession.

In its working document *Issues Arising from Turkey's Membership Perspective* of 6 October 2004 the Commission identified the following main issues in this context for the coming years:

- Turkey's accession would be different from previous enlargements because of the combined impact of Turkey's population, size, geographical location, economic, security and military potential, as well as its cultural and religious characteristics. Expectations regarding the EU policies towards the regions neighbouring Turkey will grow, taking Turkey's existing political and economic links with its neighbours into account. It very much depends whether the EU itself will succeed in becoming a fully fledged foreign policy player in regions traditionally characterised by instability and tensions, including the Middle East and the Caucasus.
- The economic impact of Turkey's accession for the EU would be positive but relatively small in view of the size of the Turkish economy and the already high degree of economic integration with the EU. Turkey's GDP, however, is expected to grow more rapidly than the EU average – a circumstance which could also be observed in the context of the 5th enlargement round (see above).
- The accession of Turkey would increase regional economic disparities in the enlarged EU in a way similar to the most recent enlargement. This would represent another major challenge for the cohesion policy

of the EU, as a number of regions in the present Member States benefiting from structural funds support could lose their eligibility on the basis of present rules.

- With over 3 million Turks legally residing in the EU of today, and expected additional migration following Turkey's accession – estimates about the extent, however, vary – measures could be considered to avoid serious disturbances on the EU labour market. At the same time, the population dynamics of Turkey could make a contribution to offsetting the ageing EU societies.
- As far as agriculture is concerned, under the present EU policies, Turkey would be eligible for substantial support. It is not possible to quantify this support, as the Common Agricultural Policy of today will probably differ considerably from such an EU-policy at the time of Turkey's accession.
- Turkey's accession could help to establish better energy supply routes for the EU.
- The management of EU's long external borders would constitute an important challenge and require significant investment. Managing migration and asylum as well as fighting organised crime, terrorism, trafficking of human beings, drugs and arms smuggling would require close co-operation both before and after accession.
- The budgetary impact of Turkish membership can only be fully assessed once the parameters for the financial negotiations with Turkey have been defined in the context of the financial perspectives from 2014 onwards. On the basis of present policies, however, the budgetary impact would be substantial.
- As to the institutions, Turkey's accession would significantly affect the allocation of seats in the European Parliament. In the Council Turkey would have an important voice in the decision making process, based on its population share.

All above mentioned points depend on the future evolution of the EU policies, the possible creation of new policies and the degree of further deepening of the EU integration process. Other uncertainties are the economic and structural developments in Turkey and in the EU during the next decade; further possible factors are the development of energy prices and the international economic environment at large. In short: While a large number of challenges with regard to the accession of Turkey exist, it is, at this stage, not possible fully to evaluate or quantify them.

Conclusion

The deepening and widening of the EU go hand in hand. Experience shows that an EU enlargement has often given an impetus for new developments like the *Single Market*, the *Maastricht Treaty* or the drafting of the *European Constitution*. There is, however, no guarantee that this will also be the case with future enlargements. We therefore need constantly to re-evaluate our performance in the enlarged EU and – based on a thorough and honest assessment – carefully consider the options for a further enlargement. After all, it is the EU citizen who needs to be able to fully understand, accept and support such decisions. The perceptions and the often high expectations of citizens in future candidate countries also need to be taken into account. The EU should not be a closed club. Developments beyond our borders can not be ignored.

I hope that by the end of my term as an Enlargement Commissioner in 2009, many other countries in this region will have moved closer to the European Union. My goal is that in 2009 the EU will have about 27 members, with the Western Balkan countries well on their way to the European Union, as well as Turkey on track, through rigorous reforms.

Resumé

Olli Rehn: *Ďalšie rozširovanie EÚ – výzvy a úlohy pred nami*

Olli Rehn, člen Európskej komisie zodpovedný za ďalšie rozšírenie Európskej únie, sa v príspevku sústreďuje na tri hlavné oblasti záujmu politiky rozširovania únie. Zameriava sa na výsledky piateho kola rozširovania EÚ o Bulharsko a Rumunsko, na vzťah a stav rokovaní medzi EÚ a Chorvátskom a Tureckom, a napokon načrtáva svoj pohľad na pristúpenie krajín západného Balkánu do Európskeho spoločenstva. Okrem toho sa na záver príspevku snaží pomenovať a zhodnotiť výzvy, ktoré rozšírenie môže priniesť pre Európsku úniu.

V prvej časti autor definuje oblasti, na ktoré sa musí Rumunsko a Bulharsko sústrediť, aby včas splnilo požiadavky EÚ. Tento proces bude podrobený monitoringu oboch krajín. Miera a prísnosť monitoringu bude v tejto situácii závisieť najmä od politickej vôle Bulharska a Rumunska splniť požiadavky EÚ. Práve nedostatok politickej vôle zamedzil obom krajinám vstup do spoločenstva počas nedávnej vlny rozširovania. Medzi hlavné oblasti monitoringu zahŕňa Olli Rehn reformu verejnej adminis-

trativy (predovšetkým súdnictva), boj proti korupcii, vytváranie štruktúr na trestanie organizovaného zločinu, boj proti prevádzacstvu, reštrukturalizáciu ekonomiky atď.

Pri zistení neuspokojivého pokroku jednej z krajín v spomínaných oblastiach nebude únia váhať s oneskorením prístupových rokovaní, pričom táto hrozba nie je iba obrazná.

V prípade Chorvátska boli podmienky na začatie rokovaní o jeho vstupe do únie o niečo špecifickejšie, a to vzhľadom na ozbrojené konflikty počas 90. rokov 20. storočia. Jednou z nich je popri splnení kodanských kritérií spolupráca s *Medzinárodným trestným tribunálom pre bývalú Juhosláviu* (ICTY). Okrem tejto ústrednej požiadavky vyžaduje EÚ od Chorvátska pokrok v štrukturálnych reformách súdnictva, progres v adaptácii *acquis* a podobne.

Začatie prístupových rokovaní s Tureckom v októbri minulého roka bolo podľa O. Rehna jedným z najzlomovejších rozhodnutí EÚ a najrevolučnejším momentom vo vzťahu únie k tejto krajine. Toto rozhodnutie podporuje tie skupiny tureckej populácie (podľa autora väčšinu) a politické i ekonomické zoskupenia, ktoré vidia budúcnosť Turecka v štruktúrach EÚ, v presadzovaní intenzívnejšej modernizácie a v zavádzaní jednotlivých hodnôt, za ktorými stoja štáty európskeho zoskupenia. Okrem dlhodobých perspektív si O. Rehn všima i blízku budúcnosť vzťahov medzi EÚ a Tureckom, pričom zdôrazňuje okolnosti, za ktorých môže dojsť k zhoršeniu, ba až k zmrazeniu tejto jedinečnej kooperácie. V októbri 2004 definovala Európska komisia niekoľko okolností, ktoré by viedli k suspendovaniu rokovaní s Tureckom. Medzi ne patrí najmä závažné porušenie základných princípov EÚ, zvrátenie procesu politických reforiem alebo neschopnosť ich plného, komplexného a efektívneho zavedenia do praxe.

Napriek tomu, že Turecko v spojitosti s prijatím za riadneho člena EÚ bude musieť vynaložiť ešte veľa úsilia, autor poukazuje na to, aký dobrý vplyv mali reálne vyhliadky tejto krajiny na členstvo v EÚ na proces politických reforiem. Napríklad pred piatimi rokmi boli pre Turecko nemysliteľné diskusie o ľudských právach či o situácii Kurdov, ktoré sa dnes stávajú bežnými. Od problematiky Turecka sa autor dostáva k podmienkam, ktoré musia krajiny západného Balkánu nevyhnutne splniť, aby mohla EÚ začať s nimi prístupové rokovania. Od tejto skupiny krajín požaduje únia splnenie podobných podmienok ako od Chorvátska. Olli Rehn však zdôrazňuje, že už samotný prísľub prístupových rokovaní mal nezvratný vplyv na pokrok v tomto regióne. Usudzuje teda, že politika rozširovania

EÚ je nepopierateľne efektívna a stala sa najúspešnejšou formou zahraničnej politiky, akú doteraz únia viedla. Okrem systematickej motivácie jednotlivých krajín s perspektívou vstupu do Európskeho spoločenstva je dôležité, aby EÚ podporovala regionálnu spoluprácu v oblasti západného Balkánu. Podpora vzťahov s najbližšími susedmi sa v prípade krajín strednej a východnej Európy ukázala byť veľmi dôležitá, ale pre skupinu balkánskych štátov je do budúcnosti nevyhnutná.

V závere článku sa autor zameriava na hlavné ciele a výzvy EÚ v oblasti jej rozširovania počas najbližších rokov. Medzi ne zaraduje najmä udeľenie plného členstva Turecku. Túto tému uzatvára zhrnutím problémov, s ktorými si bude musieť poradiť tak Turecko, ako i EÚ, pokiaľ dôjde ku konečnému podpísaniu prístupovej zmluvy.

Nakoniec autor príspevku prichádza k záveru, že prehlbovanie EÚ ide ruka v ruku s jej rozširovaním. Jednotný trh i európska ústava boli výsledkom rozširovania spoločenstva, takže tento proces mal na existenciu a vývoj únie doposiaľ pozitívny vplyv. Avšak podľa komisára Rehna nie je isté, aký efekt bude mať budúce rozšírenie na stav únie, a preto treba ďalšie kroky rozšírenia podrobne preštudovať a zvážiť.