

Beefing up the ENP: Towards a Modernisation and Stability Partnership

*Barbara Lippert**

Today, the European Union (EU) faces a complex set of challenges and expectations from its neighbours and struggles with its own ambitions as a provider of stability and prosperity. On the part of the EU and its key actors, the 2004 enlargement was motivated by considerations related to political identity, moral obligation and an interest in exporting stability to neighbouring regions.¹ The newcomers of 2004 responded positively to this strategy of pervasive modernisation and reform, shaped in accordance with the Union's *acquis*. Thus, the EU in principle resolved the inclusion/exclusion dilemma in favour of including neighbours that were willing and able to join.²

* *Barbara Lippert* is Deputy Director of the Institut für Europäische Politik (IEP), Berlin, and lecturer at Humboldt University, Berlin. The article results from the research programme "Dialog Europa der Otto Wolff-Stiftung", conducted by the IEP.

¹ B. Lippert, "Erfolge und Grenzen der technokratischen EU-Erweiterungspolitik", in Kutter, A. and V. Trappmann (eds) *Das Erbe des Beitritts. Europäisierung in Mittel- und Osteuropa* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2006) pp. 57-74.

² This inclusion/exclusion dilemma refers to the EU's aim of exporting stability by including new members while running the risk of importing instability at the same time. Conversely, excluding European countries by denying them membership in the EU can likewise endanger stability and other goals.

The EU has hailed enlargement as its most successful foreign policy, making it difficult to argue against continued expansion of its membership. As a principal instrument of external governance, the EU has used the incentive of membership to achieve compliance with its norms and values and to promote transformation of economies and societies. Thus, it is often argued that the EU's transformative power is inextricably linked to its offer of membership.³ Yet today's understanding of enlargement policy is predominantly determined by the most recent accession of the new democracies from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in 2004. It should be noted that this fifth round of enlargement fundamentally changed the profile and logic of the traditional enlargement policy as practised by the EU since 1973. This does not refer only to the increase in the scope and depth of the *acquis* that has to be taken on by new members. The real innovation and qualitative change has come through the EU's pre-accession strategy, basically designed to comprehensively assist candidates that are still far from meeting core obligations of EU membership in qualifying for accession.⁴

With enlargement policy apparently having reached the limit of support for it among EU citizens and within member states' governments (Austria, Germany, France and the Netherlands, to name just a few) the official EU strategy that has been adopted to combat this enlargement fatigue is now called "consolidation".⁵ Nevertheless, while the EU is seeking a new balance between enlargement and its absorption capacity, it must address the demands and manage the high expectations coming from neighbouring countries.

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was introduced to do just that. The policy brought in by the European Union in 2004 to deal with the new neighbours created by the last enlargement has a large toolbox of instruments to deal with these demands. But since it was largely developed in path dependency with enlargement policy⁶ – conceived as a sort of pre-

³ H. Grabbe, *The EU's Transformative Power. Europeanization Through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe* (New York: Macmillan, 2006).

⁴ For an overview of instruments of pre-accession, see B. Lippert and G. Umbach, *The Pressure of Europeanisation. From post-communist state administrations to normal players in the EU system* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2005) pp. 39-40.

⁵ "The plan 'C' for Enlargement", speech by O. Rehn at the European Parliament, Foreign Affairs Committee, Brussels, 21 June 2005 <<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/369&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>>.

⁶ J. Kelley, "New Wine in Old Wineskins: Promoting Political Reforms through the New European Neighbourhood Policy", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 44, no. 1, 2006, pp. 29-55.

stage, copying key instruments and procedures of the pre-accession strategy while ruling out membership – it has so far fallen short of managing the neighbouring countries' expectations and also lacks political momentum on the part of the EU. It is argued in this article that path dependency and the lack of a foreign policy focus are major deficits of the current ENP.

This article presents a new framework for aligning neighbouring countries with the EU below the level of membership by proposing to develop a new type of association agreement for modernisation and stability. This general framework would be tailor-made for those Eastern European neighbours which, in principle, have the option to apply for membership. Moreover, it is argued that the EU should engage in constructing an overarching institution alongside the European Union: a Confederation of Tasks (Confed Europe) to be pursued together with countries that share a European vocation but are not EU members.

Three existing models and a new type of association

In dealing with the inclusion/exclusion dilemma after the 2004 big-bang enlargement, the EU can draw on several already existing examples. As displayed in Overview 1, they can be grouped into three models:

- Model 1: the membership model
- Model 2: the economic integration model
- Model 3: the ENP/ association model.

The *membership model* is based on Article 49 TEU. Traditionally, European countries with free trade association agreements (for example Turkey, Malta, Cyprus, Greece, the UK and other EFTA countries) or Europe Agreements (the CEEs) followed this course; presently Western Balkan countries with Stabilisation and Association Agreements (Croatia, Macedonia) adhere to this model. The road map to "realise the perspective of membership"⁷ for the Western Balkans underlines the gradual accession-determined approach.

The second model – *economic integration* – follows a different logic. It was created for those countries belonging to the EFTA that were content with participating in economic integration, namely the internal market. Therefore the EU built the European Economic Area together with willing EFTA countries.

The third, *ENP/association* model covers neighbours that either have a partnership and cooperation agreement (Russia and European post-Soviet

⁷ European Commission, 2005 *Enlargement Strategy Paper*, 561 final, Brussels, 9 November 2005, p. 9.

countries) or are offered an association agreement (Mediterranean countries). Despite these two different basic types of contractual relationships with the EU, Brussels deals with this diverse group of 16 countries (including the Palestinian Authority) in a single framework called European Neighbourhood Policy. Russia is not covered in the ENP but enjoys a special status.⁸ Interestingly, the partnership and cooperation agreements (PCAs) are the only framework with neighbours that do not establish an association between the parties. They are also very limited in scope and substance. As the first PCAs are due to terminate in 2007/08, they are not explained in detail here. In Overviews 1-3 following, the PCAs have already been replaced with the proposed new type of association which would differ yet again from the current association agreements with the Mediterranean countries.

This article focuses on the ENP model and sketches out the major elements and features of a new type of association agreement for modernisation and stability. It looks at the institutions, instruments and procedures (Overview 2) as well as the content and "logic" of the other two models, "membership" and "economic integration" (Overview 3), highlighting commonalities and differences but without going into too much detail.

Association for modernisation and stability

The partnership and cooperation agreements that will, in some cases like Ukraine and Moldova, terminate in 2008 are to be replaced by new bilateral agreements. They should represent a new type of association, based on Article 310 of the Treaty of the European Community (TEC),⁹ one designed to provide a partnership for modernisation and stability.¹⁰ The degree of

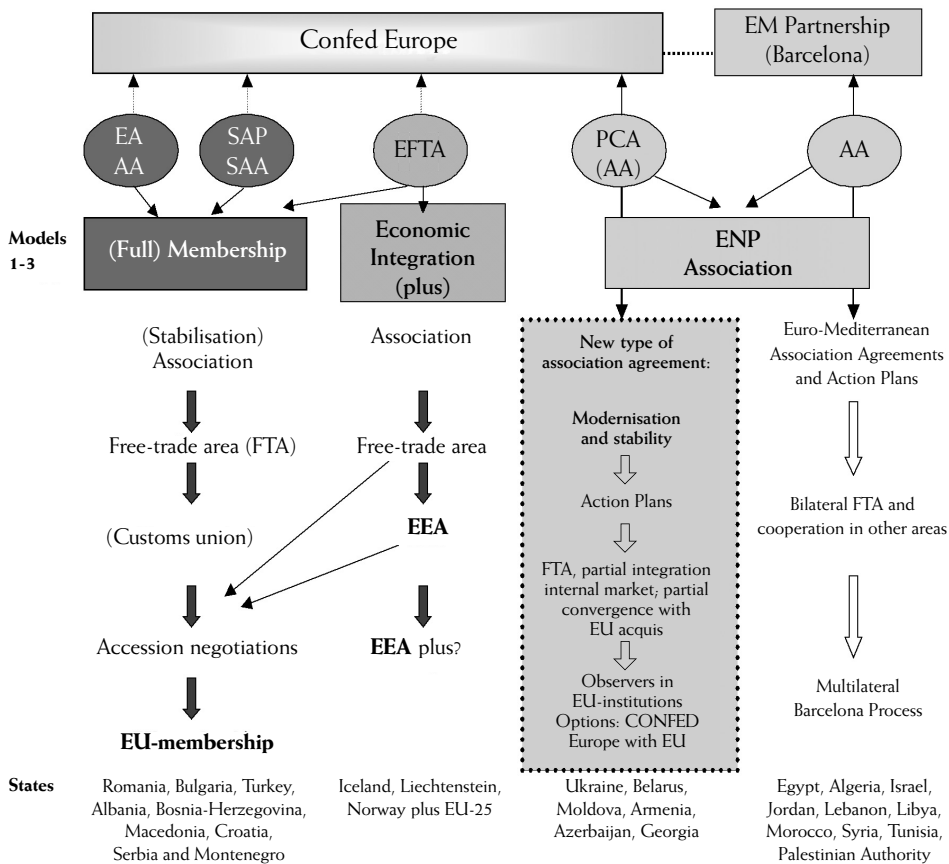
⁸ The EU and Russia are to negotiate a new contractual framework along the lines of the four Common Spaces to replace the PCA due to expire at the end of 2007.

⁹ The Partnership and Cooperation Agreements were based on Articles 133 and 308 TEC. The new chapter on neighbourhood (I-57) of the Constitutional Treaty can be interpreted as a treaty based second track of a special relationship with neighbouring countries alongside membership (I-58). Legally however, the material basis is still cooperation and association, i.e. former articles 133, 300, 308 and 310 TEC when it comes to defining the envisaged "specific agreements". This leaves us basically with options that are already on the table. The Constitution would only symbolically add political value.

¹⁰ For a first outline of this proposal, see B. Lippert, "Assoziierung plus gesamteuropäische Aufgabenkonföderation: Plädoyer für eine selbstbewusste Nachbarschaftspolitik der EU", *integration*, vol. 29, no. 2, 2006, pp. 149-57 and C. Schiltz, "Teilhabe statt Mitgliedschaft", *Die Welt*, 16 May 2006. Some elements are reflected in draft proposals from the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin and are expected to become more detailed in the course of the German presidency ("Berlin entwickelt neue Nachbarschaftspolitik", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 3 July 2006, p. 1).

convergence with the *acquis communautaire* depends on both the level of ambition and the intensity of interests of the two parties as well as the capacities of the neighbour. Contrary to the type of association with Turkey or Greece (model 1), the modernisation and stability partnership would not contain a membership perspective (not even the more modest one found in the preamble of the Europe agreements), although it could go beyond the free-trade association agreements with the Mediterranean countries.

Overview I - The EU and Greater Europe - Models of association and integration



EA = Europe Agreement; AA = Association Agreement; SAP = Stabilisation and Association Process; SAA = Stabilisation and Association Agreement; EFTA = European Free Trade Association; PCA = Partnership and Cooperation Agreement; Euromed = Euro-Mediterranean Partnership; EEA = European Economic Area; ENP = European Neighbourhood Policy; NPAA = National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis.

Major elements of this kind of association would cover economy and trade, promoting democracy and political dialogue, foreign and security dialogue and cooperation, internal security and aid.

Table I - Elements of the new type of association agreement for modernisation and stability

• **Institutions**

- Association Council, Association Committee, Parliamentary Association Committee
- Conditional observer-status in EU institutions
- Option: Participation in CONFED Europe

• **Economy and trade**

- Asymmetrical trade liberalisation, eventually to include agricultural commodities and services
- Option: the gradual establishment of a free-trade area with the EU/EEA and gradual integration into the ELI internal market
- Financial and technical aid packages for economic transformation (economic governance and good governance)
- Investment aid from the EU and private business for infrastructure projects: transport (especially rail), energy, telecommunication

• **Dialogue and cooperation in foreign and security policy**

- The possibility of association with joint positions and actions in the framework of the CFSP
- Participation in joint missions and operations
- Political dialogue: regular meetings at the ministerial level, high officials; also, as necessary: summits, informal meetings (Gymnich-type); conditional observer status in CFSP working groups. Political and Security Committee (PSC), Military Committee (EUMC)
- Topics: regional security, crisis management, non-proliferation policy, fighting international terrorism, energy security

• **Internal security**

- Fighting organised crime
- Border security

- Immigration policy

- Extradition treaties

- Visa policy

- Cooperation with authorities and EU agencies

• **Promotion of democracy, institution building and dialogue**

- Political conditionality clause

- Intensified dialogue in the framework of association institutions on the topics of good governance, rule of law, human rights, democracy

- Further topical dialogues specific to various policy fields

- Support for institution building, especially in the areas of justice and the judiciary and public administration more generally

- Expansion of TAIEX and Twinning activities

- Systematic inclusion of civil society organisations and social partners as both interlocutors and cooperation partners

- Opening EU programmes, especially mobility programmes, and simplifying the visa regime e.g. for students and continuing learners

• **Aid**

The emphasis should be placed especially on:

- the improvement of economic and good governance,

- the expansion of infrastructure

- cross-border cooperation and integration (see CEFTA),

- regional development in the states.

Modernisation

Through its focus on modernisation and stability, the association would aim at improving living conditions in the neighbouring countries and establishing reliable political relations with them. Efforts in the areas of economy and trade, democracy and institution building and (political) dialogue as well as aid would be directed towards modernisation goals set by the neighbouring countries and not automatically derived from the demands of the EU's *acquis*, hence of membership. This would give the neighbours more responsibility but also a greater scope in decision-making for their domestic reform programmes. Admittedly, the incentives for compliance would be weaker than in the pre-accession and membership context of Model 1, but the EU's intensity of interest in neighbours' full compliance would also be more limited and selective. In line with the notion of "modernisation", implementation of the association agreement would rest upon consultations and (joint) decisions between the EU and the neighbouring country to select issues, define priorities, and time and sequence the measures agreed upon. Results would not be evaluated (as in the Commission's progress reports following Model 1) with respect to convergence with the *acquis* (from CAP to competition policy) but rather with respect to improvements in good governance and economic development. Compared to candidates for membership, this would give the neighbours a far more active and self-determined role.

Stability

The component of "stability" as mirrored in the areas "foreign and security policy" and "internal security" (Table 1) in the new type of association emphasises the EU's growing interest in reducing tensions and managing or preventing regional conflicts in Eastern Europe. In some instances, such as Moldova or Georgia, this is a pre-condition for democratisation and economic development in the region.¹¹ Stability partnership also stresses the interest of the EU in involving its neighbours in the fight against terrorism, organised crime, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and engaging them in securing energy transport and cooperating on other challenges of global governance. Thus, the scope goes well beyond that of the "economic integration" model 2 and is – potentially – also broader (Overviews 2 and 3) in terms of institutional participation. The EU shall seek tailor-made

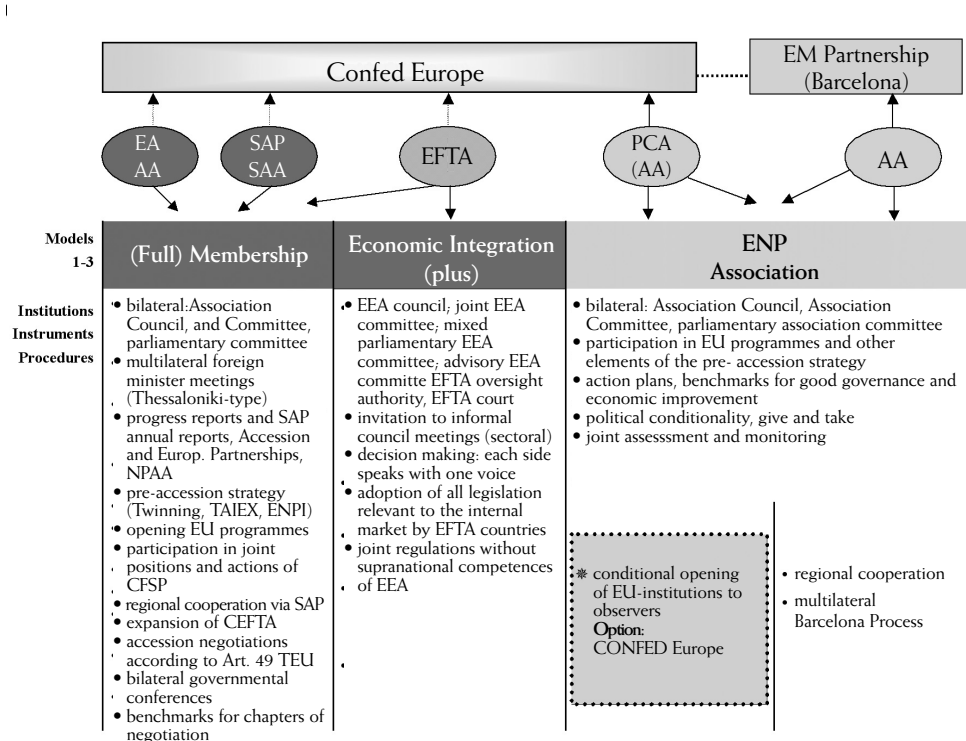
¹¹ E.-O. Czempiel, "Demokratisierung von außen. Vorhaben und Folgen", *Merkur*, no. 6, 2004, pp. 467-79, specifically p. 472.

agreements with neighbouring countries and determine the level of ambition according to mutual interests and the neighbours' capacities so that the concrete agenda of modernisation and stability will vary from country to country.

Opening of institutions

The basic logic of the modernisation and stability type of association is that "everything but institutions"¹² shall be possible (Overview 3). However, it has to be acknowledged that, for many third countries, participation and involvement in the EU's institutions and hence decision-making system is essential. This is where, ultimately, the red line is drawn between "in and

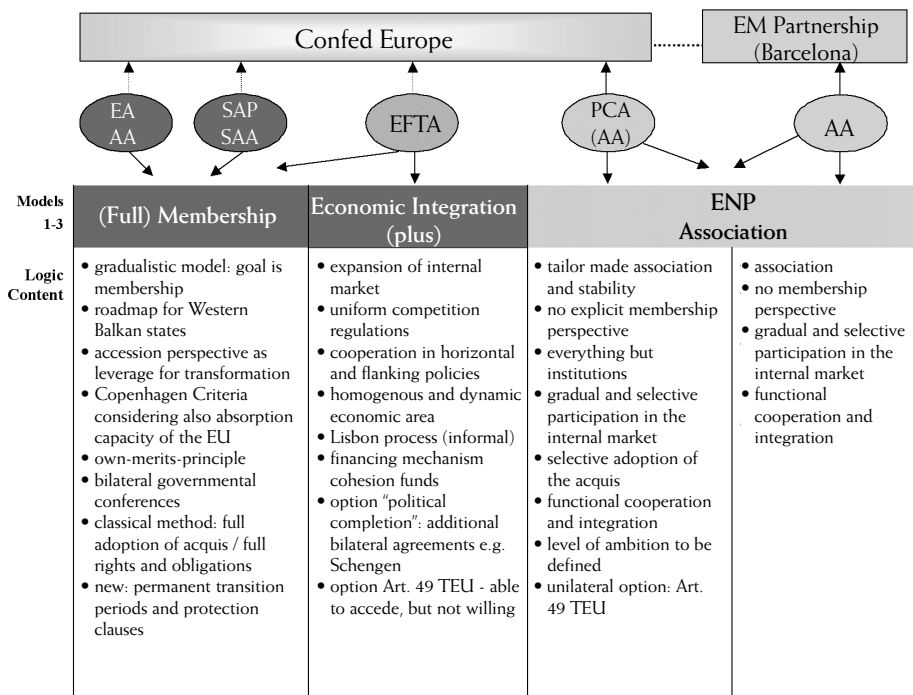
Overview 2 - The EU and Greater Europe - Models of association and integration



¹² R. Prodi, "A Wider Europe – A Proximity Policy as the key to stability". Speech at the sixth ECSA-World Conference, Jean Monnet Project, Brussels, 5-6 December, p. 5.

out". Ways of including third countries in decision-shaping (not decision-making) are already envisaged in other models, namely the economic integration model (Model 2) and also Norway's unique model, which goes beyond the European Economic Area through integration into Schengen cooperation (Overview 2). Basically, one could revise the structured dialogue that was established for the EA countries under the membership model. Elements of a substantial institutional framework for the association for modernisation and stability would be:

Overview 3 - The EU and Greater Europe - Models of association and integration



- Summits (troika meets head of state or government of neighbouring country)
- Association Council at level of ministers
- Association Committee at level of senior diplomats including subcommittees
- Association Committee of Delegates from the EP and the national parliament of the associate country
- Fora for civil society groups and representatives
- Link with Confederation of Tasks (see below)
- Status as observer (right to speak and be informed) at the stages of preparation and implementation of the EU policy cycle (see the case of the EEA countries in Model 2). The observer position shall be conditional on fulfilling specific obligations and the quality of the overall relationship.

Establishing an institutional framework for association and open institutions in the course of shaping decisions will be costly for the EU in terms of administrative workload, time and personnel needed for information and consultation with observers. The blurring of boundaries between "in and out" is thus likely to continue, certainly at the expense of the transparency of EU governance structures and procedures. However, the EU will have to pay a price, either in letting more neighbouring countries in or in investing more resources in additional arrangements with them. In the latter case, it must also pay more attention to substantial and successful use of these institutional arrangements. The EU has to learn from the near failure of the structured dialogue mid-1990s.¹³ If neighbours were to accept the focus of the new type of association for modernisation and stability and find it rewarding, they could also become more interested in this kind of second-best institutional alternative.

In promoting the new type of association, the EU would have to stress *vis-à-vis* third parties that it offers far more than the former PCA, for example in its scope which includes all three pillars, institutional arrangements, and quality and volume of assistance. At the same time it is less ambitious than the EAs in terms of the goal (membership) but also in terms of obligations (full convergence with the *acquis*) as imposed by the accession negotiations and the pre-accession strategy. In the absence of membership, relations

¹³ Cf. B. Lippert and P. Becker, "Structured dialogue revisited: The EU's politics of inclusion and exclusion", *European Foreign Affairs Review*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1998, pp. 341-356.

between the EU and the associated country are more symmetrical, selective, interest-led and based on give and take. This is also why political conditionality, which is now a general feature of the EU's contractual relations with third countries, cannot be based on the formal but maximalist Copenhagen Criteria but rather on more limited though concrete standards and benchmarks. A series of bilateral agreements, including Action Plans, political agreements, and accords based on international law would be envisaged. Monitoring and further development of the association agreement will follow benchmarks in the framework of its established institutions of the association at the level of ministers, senior officials and parliamentarians.

The EU is currently preparing an enhanced agreement with Ukraine as a successor to the partnership and cooperation agreement. It is still open whether this new "enhanced agreement" will be based on article 310 TEC and establish an association. The new agreement is important because it represents a test case in a pilot country. The proposal of this article to establish an association that would promote post-Soviet countries to a status already enjoyed by many of the Mediterranean countries does not necessarily trigger an automatic membership prospect, as some might hope or fear. On the contrary, the firm aim of the association for modernisation and stability as outlined in this article is to detach neighbourhood policy from enlargement policy through substantial and intensive association. Bluntly speaking, a successful ENP would pre-empt applications for membership.¹⁴

Moreover, in conducting this kind of modernisation and stability partnership, the EU could frame its ENP more in terms of foreign and security policy than pre-accession policy.¹⁵ This would require linking the ENP to the overall analysis of threats and strategic objectives laid down in the European Security Strategy:

Our task is to promote a ring of well governed countries to the East of

¹⁴ Whatever the EU offers, it can ultimately not hinder an eligible country from applying for membership as long as it does not amend article 49 TEU.

¹⁵ On this problem also see D. Lynch, "Die Europäische Nachbarschaftspolitik und die GASP: Ergänzung, Kohärenz, Duplizierung?", in Koopmann, M. and Lequesne, C. (eds) *Partner oder Beitrittskandidaten? Die Nachbarschaftspolitik der Europäischen Union auf dem Prüfstand* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2006) pp. 145-160. Also: R. Balfour, A. Rotta, "Beyond Enlargement. The European Neighbourhood Policy and its Tools", *The International Spectator*, vol. XL, no. 1, 2005, pp. 7-20; N. Tocci, "Does the ENP Respond to the EU's Post-Enlargement Challenges?", *The International Spectator*, vol. XL, no. 1, 2005, pp. 21-32.

the European Union and on the borders of the Mediterranean with whom we can enjoy close and cooperative relations ... We need to extend the benefits of economic and political cooperation to our neighbours in the East while tackling political problems there. We should now take a stronger and more active interest in the problems of the Southern Caucasus...¹⁶

Going beyond this declaration the EU needs to emphasise, in addition to soft security challenges, the hard security aspects with regard to these often troubled and conflict ridden countries, where statehood is still fragile. Moreover, the EU needs to acknowledge the balance of power in the region, in particular the role of Russia. In the post-Soviet region the EU must define its political and security interests and influence governments and societies towards a cooperative security regime. Thus, compared to enlargement policy, a different mix between the transformative soft power of the EU and its traditional diplomacy and "realist" foreign policy instruments and procedures is required. To establish this concept, the ENP has to be freed of its dependence on enlargement policy and must grant a greater role to the Council and the High Representative for CFSP in spelling out priorities and defining strategic objectives.

A pan-European Confederation of Tasks

Beyond the new type of association, the EU should work towards an all-European Confederation of Tasks (Confed Europe) that can underpin these partnerships for modernisation and stability. If the EU cannot or does not want to encompass all countries that are eligible to apply for membership according to Article 49 TEU, it should actively prepare a new and separate overarching framework of which the EU would also be a member. Confed Europe is a concept that would involve European countries that will not join the EU for the foreseeable future or possibly ever.

(Re-) considering order building in post-wall Europe

Similar ideas already came up in the transitional years of post-wall Europe, before the CEE states were firmly put on the accession track.¹⁷ Whatever the

¹⁶ European Council, "European Security Strategy. A Secure Europe in a Better World", Brussels, 12 December 2003 <<http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>> p. 8.

¹⁷ W. Link, *Auf dem Weg zu einem neuen Europa. Herausforderungen und Antworten* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2006) p. 51.

different reasonings and political intentions at the time, the designs of French President François Mitterrand (European confederation),¹⁸ Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis (concentric circles),¹⁹ European Commissioner Frans Andriessen (affiliation/ partial membership)²⁰ and MEP Klaus Hänsch (confederation of tasks),²¹ all had one consideration in common: the EU shall not or cannot embrace all countries that, according to conventional wisdom, belong to Europe – either because it would be dysfunctional and the EU would fall apart or because it would destroy the prospect of deeper integration and an (ever closer) political union. Considering these limitations and the strategic objective of a non-antagonistic, inclusive and cooperative Europe (whole and free), the various proposals suggested that the EU should actively structure its neighbourhood and invent new outer-tier arrangements and structures separate from membership.

Today, the enlarged EU of 25 has already projected a future Union encompassing not only the EFTA countries, but also those of the Western Balkans and probably even Turkey. Aside from whether or not this already transgresses what many believe constitutes Europe, there is no consensus inside the EU-25/27 on enlargement beyond these earmarked countries.²² Thus, it is time to reconsider order-building in Europe beyond enlargement.

¹⁸ Speech by the President of the French Republic, François Mitterrand, on the closing session of the conference on European Confederation, Prague, 14 June 1991, reprinted in *Europa-Archiv*, vol. 46, no. 15/16, 1991, pp. 390-4.

¹⁹ G. De Michelis, "Die EG als Gravitationszentrum: Für ein Europa der vier Kreise", *integration*, vol. 13, no. 4, 1990, pp. 143-9.

²⁰ EU-Commissioner F. Andriessen, "Towards a Community of twenty-four?". Proposal presented at a meeting of the European Economic and Social Committee, *Eurochambers*, Brussels, 19 April 1991.

²¹ European Parliament, "Report of the Committee on Institutional Affairs on the structure and strategy for the European Union with regard to its enlargement and the creation of a Europe-wide order", rapporteur: Klaus Hänsch, Session Document A3-189/92, 21 May 1992, points 8-12. European Parliament, "Resolution on the structure and strategy for the European Union with regard to its enlargement and the creation of a Europe-wide order", (A3-0189/92), Strassbourg, 20 January 1993, points 8-12.

²² O. Rehn, "Building a New Consensus on Enlargement: How to match the strategic interest and functioning capacity of the EU?". Speech presented at the European Policy Centre, Brussels, 19 May 2006.

An overarching framework

While the above mentioned alternatives for membership might have been wrong for Hungary or Poland at the time, their basic idea could very well be appropriate for the neighbourhood countries of the enlarged EU today, 15 years later. Taking up suggestions from the report by MEP Hänsch, the EU should work towards an overarching pan-European Confederation of Tasks based on functional and sectoral cooperation. Similar to the formula for the European Conference,²³ the envisaged Confed Europe could, besides the EU, include countries with a European vocation, namely those post-Soviet countries that are associated with the EU and perform well in implementing modernisation and stability goals. In addition to the EU as one collective member and the candidates already earmarked for entry, the six associated Eastern European/Southern Caucasus countries (Moldova, Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan), the EFTA countries and even Russia could potentially seek entry.²⁴ Confed Europe should have lightweight institutions with decision-making procedures of its own. Like the CSCE in its formative years, Confed Europe is to be understood as a process as far as its agenda or activities are concerned. Starting as a political forum it would have to develop its ambition of forming something like a security or political community.²⁵

At the centre of the pan-European Confederation of Tasks would be three dimensions and eight policy spaces:

- The political and humanitarian dimension
 - * rule of law, democracy, human rights (building on membership in the Council of Europe)
 - * education, culture, science (taking up, for example, the Bologna

²³ The conference was launched by the Luxembourg European Council in December 1997 on the basis of a French initiative presented in October 1997 as a multilateral forum for political consultation bringing together the EU member states with European countries that share a European vocation. It last met under the French Presidency in late 2000.

²⁴ See also R. Dannreuther, "Developing the Alternative to Enlargement: The European Neighbourhood Policy", *European Foreign Affairs Review*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2006, pp. 183-201.

²⁵ On the model of a pluralistic security community, see K. W. Deutsch, *et. al.*, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957) pp. 66. The principle conditions of this include the compatibility of basic values, responsiveness to the actions of the partner and the mutual predictability of behaviour. In the context of the OECD world, see D. Senghaas, "Friedenszonen", in Kaiser, K. and H.-P. Schwarz (eds) *Die neue Weltpolitik*, Bd. 334 (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1995) pp. 337-46.

Process and opening up and/or extending EU programmes like Erasmus mundus)

- The economic dimension
 - * economic space (trade and internal market regulations)
 - * monetary and macroeconomic space (Euro and macroeconomic policies)
 - * economic infrastructure/trans-European networks (transport, telecommunications, energy, environment)
- The security dimension
 - * justice and home affairs (with the prospect of determining visa regulations and opening labour markets)
 - * security policy, including frozen conflicts
 - * interlocking different regional cooperation processes like the Barcelona Process or Black Sea Cooperation.

Over time, the Confederation of Tasks could develop more solid structures so that it would become part of and respond to the not yet completed re-ordering of post-1989 Europe. Because of its composition of members and tasks, it would differ from NATO and the OSCE, while its membership could be identical to that of the Council of Europe, though its scope and the nature of its tasks would differ. The confederation would seek cooperation with these institutions and also with other forms of multilateral regional cooperation such as the Barcelona Process and Black Sea Cooperation. Confed Europe would thus form a part of the EU's ambition to strengthen effective multilateralism.

The outlook

The idea of a Confed Europe is not to establish a third status between membership and neighbourhood.²⁶ The idea is to create, together with other affiliated countries, an overarching confederation of European states. The EU would enter collectively into intensive and strong relationships in order to generate a common purpose. Association between the EU and its neighbours plus a confederation of European states would not be a transition

²⁶ European Parliament, "Report on the Commission's 2005 enlargement strategy paper", rapporteur: Elmar Brok (final A6-0025/2006), Strasbourg, February 2006, point 10 on a "multilateral framework as an intermediate step towards full membership" < <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/omk/sipade3? PUBREF=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A6-2006-0025+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&L=EN& LEVEL=0&NAV=S&LSTDOC=Y>>.

step towards membership but rather a functional and hopefully functioning "security community" in its own right.

The advantages for the EU are clear: a modernisation and stability partnership in a Confed Europe could temporarily or permanently establish an alternative to membership for Eastern Europe and Russia as well as the Southern Caucasus. It might reduce their fears of being excluded from "Europe". The EU would also win time for consolidation and reform and at the same time open a new strategic perspective for a Europe that is bigger than the EU.