

A Hole in the Wall? Dimensionalism and the EU's “New Neighbourhood Policy”



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Contents

Introduction	1
The EU Enlargement as a Process of Inclusion and Exclusion	4
A Hole in the Wall? Dimensionalism and the EU's Quest for Stability	11
Conclusions	19

Introduction¹

The successive rounds of enlargements are a factor shaping the European Union. The previous enlargements have all resulted in the broadening of the EU's agenda, changes in the institutions and decision-making, as well as shaping the way in which the world external to the Union has perceived the European integration and its different manifestations, be they institutions or policies.² There is dialectic at work, where the “shadow of enlargement” forces the European Union and its member states to adapt its own dynamic to meet the changing circumstances. This adaptation – together with the growing geographic exposure to new neighbours and regions – in turn create an opening and a demand for further enlargements, which then start the dialectic anew.

This dialectic applies also in the EU's external relations. The point of contact where this is felt most urgently is, of course, at the current – and with the advent of the “Big Bang” enlargement in 2004 already in sight – at the future outer boundaries of the European Union.³ The countries emerging at the outskirts of the enlarging Union (the “new neighbours”) are always also potential future members. The logic of an empire is partly at work here.

¹ This Working Paper was previously presented under the same title at the “The Baltic World as a Multicultural Space”, 5th Conference on Baltic Studies in Europe, Turku, on the 5th of June 2003. I want to thank all the participants for a lively and interesting debate in the session.

² Hiski Haukkala ja Hanna Ojanen, “Ulko- ja turvallisuuspolitiikan haasteet”, in Tapio Raunio and Teija Tiilikainen, eds, *Euroopan rajat: Laajentuva Euroopan unioni* (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2002), p. 204.

³ The Copenhagen European Council in December 2002 decided on the accession of ten new members: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovak Republic, and Slovenia.

But the EU is a reluctant empire, ever aware of the dangers posed by the entry of newcomers into the club. Nevertheless the new neighbours require a response from the Union. This calls for new relationships and policies on the part of the EU. In the past they have varied from treating the new neighbours as potential EU candidates and engaging with them through the accession process, to offering different “partnerships” which have often been spiced with the element of a prospective free trade area with the European Union.

But in the future the EU’s new neighbours will increasingly fall into the category of countries that the EU cannot, or does not want to, integrate (or, as in the case of Russia, are themselves unwilling to be integrated). This is reflected in the emergence of different “dimensions” at the outer edges of EU-Europe. It is important to note, that this dimensionalism is a by-product of the successive rounds of EU enlargements. The emergence of new dimensions is in a sense an (unintended?) external manifestation of the limits of expanding what is basically an internal process of the Union. At times it seems that it is also an unwanted phenomenon for the Union. Therefore, and especially in the light of the current, fifth round of EU enlargement, it is clear that the dimensionalization is a form of exclusion. You become a partner in a given dimension if you are not entitled to become a member of the Union itself.⁴

⁴ Previously the picture has not been as clear-cut as this. The Northern Dimension departed from the notion that one of its tasks was to “facilitate EU enlargement” to the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC). After the decisions taken in Copenhagen, however, it is clear that also the Northern Dimension will lose its role as an avenue towards closer institutional association with the Union. The “southern” and the newly emerging “eastern” dimensions have of course no pretensions of offering membership to its partners.

The aim of this paper is twofold. First it analyses the limits of enlarging the Union. To put it bluntly, for its members the European integration is meaningful as a process only as long as it is built on a demarcation of the internal from the external to the project. Often this fact is put to words in the form that it is the integrity of the Community legislation, the *acquis communautaire*, and the viability of common institutions that have to be preserved, and it is because of this that the European project cannot keep on enlarging indefinitely. For the Union, the stakes are high. To quote the President of the European Commission Romano Prodi, “we cannot go on enlarging forever. We cannot water down the European political project and turn the European Union into just a free trade area on a continental scale.”⁵

But even if Mr. Prodi has it right, and the European integration has its own internal imperatives for setting the limits to its territorial enlargement, the Union cannot escape the fact that the new neighbours are subjecting Union and its policies with demands for belonging as well as for assistance and support from the Union. And therein lays another, this time an external imperative for the Union: the need to ensure stability on the wider European continent.⁶ Therefore, and as its second task, the paper takes also a look at one of the dimensions, the Northern Dimension (ND), in order to find out whether, and under what criteria, the new dimensionalism at the outskirts of the Union can be seen as an answer to the external challenges and demands that the EU will be facing in the aftermath of its “Big Bang” enlargement in

⁵ Romano Prodi, *A Wider Europe – A Proximity Policy as the key to stability*. A speech at the “Peace, Security and Stability – International Dialogue and the Role of the EU” Sixth ECSA-World Conference, Brussels, 5-6- December 2002.

⁶ Antonio Missiroli, “The EU and its Changing Neighbourhood: Stabilization, Integration and Partnership”, in Roland Dannreuther, ed., *The European Union Foreign and Security Policy: Towards a Neighbourhood Strategy* (forthcoming).

2004. Can it help the Union to preserve the stabilizing logic of enlargements even after the EU can no longer enlarge?

The EU Enlargement as a Process of Inclusion and Exclusion

The Cold War and its bipolar overlay served the western Europeans very well, for it meant that they could take the concept of “Europe” as their own property without having to bother to think about where the outer limits of European integration really lay.⁷ This changed with the end of the Cold War, as the European Union was flooded with membership applications from the central and eastern European countries (CEECs). Although the EU’s initial reaction to the sea change in Europe was positive, and it was backed up with an offer of financial assistance in the form of the PHARE programme, full membership for the CEECs was not in the cards. At the time the EU had other priorities, such as the completion of its Single Market, negotiating the Treaty on European Union as well as responding to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the violent break-up of Yugoslavia, and the Gulf War.⁸

A decade later, the European Union and its member states have still not been able to decide where the ultimate boundaries of European integration actually lie. The decision by the Helsinki European Council of December 1999 to expand the group of negotiating countries to twelve (+ Turkey waiting in line) did not reflect a true strategic choice on the future

⁷ William Wallace, “From Twelve to Twenty-Four? The Challenges to the EC Posed by the Revolutions in Eastern Europe”, in Colin Crouch and David Marquand (eds), *Towards Greater Europe? A Continent without an Iron Curtain* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), p. 34.

⁸ Graham Avery and Fraser Cameron, *The Enlargement of the European Union* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), p. 15.

composition of the European Union.⁹ Nor did the Copenhagen European Council's decision in December 2002 on the accession of ten new members in 2004 solve the problem, either. This is because many "outsiders", for example, the Balkan countries and Ukraine, are still pressing hard for eventual membership, whereas it is likely that one of the already accepted "insiders", Turkey, is not likely to become a member very soon. Although it remains to be seen what the outcome of Turkey's "rendez-vous for the rendez-vous" in 2004 will be, the recent reports about the growing tensions between the Turkish government and its military establishment do not raise any great hopes of a swift accession.¹⁰ These examples verify the argument put forward by William Wallace in 1992 that the EU does not really have any criteria determining which countries can get in and when enlargement should ultimately stop.¹¹

Enlargement, of course, does not take place in a political vacuum, since it has both direct and indirect repercussions for the unfolding of European political space and emerging new identities. Especially crucial amongst these effects is the creation of possible dividing lines between those states, which are accepted as members, and those that are left out. This is where the question of the new eastern neighbours' place in Europe and the nature of their future relations with the European Union become central.

⁹ The countries were Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic and Slovenia.

¹⁰ Cf. Jonny Dymond, "Turkey's military chief warns pro-Islamist government of possible coup", *Guardian Unlimited* 27 May 2003, available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/turkey/story/0,12700,964020,00.html>. Downloaded 28 May 2003. The term "rendez-vous for the rendez-vous" is borrowed from Missiroli, "The EU and Its Changing Neighbourhood..."

¹¹ Wallace, "From Twelve to Twenty-Four...", p. 40.

The enlargement process also carries implications for the European Union, which can be seen as having an international presence, but not a clear cut international identity which would help it formulate consistent policies and implement them in a coherent manner.¹² Far from seeking a common European interest (whatever that might be), existing member states seem to be pushing for the kind of increased “flexibility” which will allow them to evade the most difficult questions and concentrate instead on cooperation within differing coalitions of the willing and able. We are thus witnessing the emergence of a Europe in which different states are engaged in different, often overlapping networks, sometimes pooling their sovereignties, sometimes protecting them. Moreover, it appears that in this context supra- and sub-state actors are becoming increasingly relevant in Europe.¹³

In spite of these emerging post-modern characteristics, the EU endeavour is still very much a modern, territorial one. For example, the Single Market and the Schengen *acquis* reflect strict territorial delineations. Moreover, the models for further institutional reforms put forward in the aftermath of the disappointing 2000 Intergovernmental Conference exhibit strong tendencies towards some kind of a federal structure in the future. These tendencies have

¹² On EU’s presence on international arena, cf. David Allen and Michael Smith, “Western Europe’s Presence in the Contemporary International Arena”, in Martin Holland, ed., *The Future of European Political Cooperation: Essays on Theory and Practice* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991); and especially in Northern Europe see Esko Antola, “The Presence of the European Union in the North”, in Hiski Haukkala, ed., *Dynamic Aspects of the Northern Dimension* (Jean Monnet Unit Working Paper No. 4, Turku: University of Turku, 1999). The point about identity has been made by Jan Zielonka, *Explaining Euro-Paralysis: Why Europe is Unable to Act in International Politics* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998).

¹³ William Wallace, “Europe after the Cold War: Interstate Order or Post-Sovereign Regional System?”, *Review of International Studies*, 25, Special issue (1999): 201-223, p. 218.

been visible in the work of the Convention, even if the “F-word” was deleted from the draft constitution.¹⁴ The blueprints for a more federal Europe reveal that at least some of the member states are willing to engage in a process of reproducing state-like elements at the supranational level as well.

The ongoing eastern enlargement is an exercise in drawing the outer boundaries of Europe in a piecemeal fashion. Although the current state of affairs does not, however, reflect any serious pre-meditated strategy it is nevertheless part and parcel of the process of getting rid of the ambiguities concerning the form and nature of the EU, and not embracing them.

Yet the EU enlargement is not just about drawing boundaries. As Pami Aalto has argued, it is also about establishing (or imposing) an EU order to the East through the dissemination of EU norms, rules and regulations to neighbouring areas in the form of directives and standards.¹⁵ It is true, as Christiansen et al. have argued, that this leads to a certain “fuzziness” in the composition of the EU, as important parts of the EU, such as the Community legislation, the Single Market, or the Schengen *acquis* are through the EU’s pre-accession instruments and the European Economic Area (EEA)

¹⁴ This was largely due to the stiff British resistance to mentioning the word in the draft. George Parker, “UK gets the F-word off EU constitutional draft”, *Financial Times* 23 May 2003. The resistance was not only British, however, as the list of Convention members opposing the F-word shows. See *Draft Constitution, Volume I* (Conv 724/03, 26 May 2003), p. 49. The draft constitution is available at <http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/03/cv00/cv00724en03.pdf>. Downloaded 28 May 2003.

¹⁵ Pami Aalto, “Post-Soviet Geo-politics in the North of Europe”, in Marko Lehti and David J. Smith, eds, *Post-Cold War Identity Politics: Northern and Baltic Experiences* (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2003).

mechanism extended beyond the borders of the Union.¹⁶ This opens up certain avenues for the outsiders to participate in the European project. But there is also another side to the story, where the process can be seen, in fact, to be exclusionary in essence, for it seeks to lower the disparity in standards between the EU and the chosen few (the accession countries) while simultaneously erecting “normative”, or even “digital divides” against the outsiders. To be fair, the emergence of these divides cannot be attributed to a conscious process of alienation on the part of the EU; rather it is because the outsiders lack the pull of prospective membership and the resultant push of both positive and negative conditionality that is built into the accession process, that they increasingly come to lag behind.

Moving on to a more conceptual level, Ole Wæver has used a very interesting “imperial analogy” to describe the European Union and its enlargement. According to Wæver, the “EU Empire” can establish its rule in a radial manner through differing zones of order.¹⁷ Although not entirely apposite, Wæver’s imperial analogy is useful in highlighting the fact that the EU does not have to accept new members in order to be able to impose its order on others.¹⁸ Moreover, the EU has not become an empire by the

¹⁶ Thomas Christiansen, Fabio Petito and Ben Tonra, “Fuzzy Politics Around Fuzzy Borders: The European Union’s ‘Near Abroad’”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 35(4), 2000: 389-415.

¹⁷ Ole Wæver, “Imperial Metaphors: Emerging European Analogies to Pre-Nation-State Imperial Systems”, in Ola Tunander, Pavel Baev and Victoria Ingrid Einagel, eds, *Geopolitics in Post-Wall Europe: Security, Territory and Identity* (Oslo & London: PRIO & SAGE Publications, 1997), p. 64.

¹⁸ According to Teemu Palosaari, the EU is using these “grey zones” in order to control the problems that stem from neighbouring areas without having to grant them full membership and European identity. Teemu Palosaari, “Comment: Northern Dimension as a Tool for Building Grey Zones between Membership and Non-Membership”, in Hanna Ojanen, ed., *The Northern Dimension: Fuel for the EU?* (Programme on the Northern

traditional means of conquest, but rather by means of invitation.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the EU can be seen as having some empire like qualities, as each successive enlargement creates new borderlines beyond which the EU order has to be imposed if the European Union is to feel secure and be able to do business with its new neighbours. However, the factors limiting the previous empires in world history apply to expanding the “EU Empire” as well. But it seems likely that the logic of “imperial overstretch” is not entirely applicable to the EU; as a limiting factor, a more fitting notion might therefore be an “institutional overstretch” instead (see more below).²⁰

The imperial analogy also helps us to imagine the nature of the future EU outer border. This border can either be hard, like the traditional borders of nation-states, or it can be soft, porous and flexible, allowing for significant interaction and transaction with the outsiders. Wæver’s model tends to point to the latter variant. Current reality, on the other hand, is more ambiguous, for while the official EU rhetoric calls for open borders, enlargement has the potential to create a significant new dividing line in Europe. In addition to the aforementioned “normative divide”, there is a very real and hard Schengen border, which will make interaction between the European Union and its eastern neighbours more difficult in the future.

Dimension of the CFSP No. 12, Helsinki & Berlin: Finnish Institute of International Affairs and Institut für Europäische Politik, 2001).

¹⁹ To paraphrase the term coined by Geir Lundestad on the United States of America. See Geir Lundestad, *Empire by ‘Integration’: The United States and European Integration 1945-1997* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

²⁰ For more on the concept, see P. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (London: FontanaPress, 1988), p. 666.

The problems related to the Schengen *acquis* should not, however, be exaggerated, as they are of a largely technical nature and consequently fairly easy to resolve with the establishment of new EU member state consulates in the neighbouring countries and with the adoption of, for example, multiple entry visas for frequent visitors and people engaged in dealings with the EU.²¹ Therefore, the Schengen system will not inevitably result in a rupture in the well-functioning border regime between the enlarged European Union and its eastern neighbours. The currently smoothly running Finno-Russian border with over 5.6 million border crossings in 2000 alone is a case in point. The issue does, however, have a more symbolic nature to it, as the clear demarcation being drawn between the European Union and its eastern neighbours inadvertently suggests that they are indeed the exact opposite – “an area of insecurity and injustice” – the antithesis of that which is being developed with European integration. This has, in turn, negative repercussions for the neighbours’ self-image, feeding the fear of exclusion even further.²²

²¹ The different measures available for resolving the Schengen-related problems have been discussed (in the context of Kaliningrad) in Lyndelle D. Fairlie and Alexander Sergounin, *Are Borders Barriers? EU Enlargement and the Russian Region of Kaliningrad* ((Programme on the Northern Dimension of the CFSP No. 13, Helsinki & Berlin: Finnish Institute of International Affairs and Institut für Europäische Politik, 2001).

²² Hiski Haukkala, *Two Reluctant Regionalizers? The European Union and Russia in Europe’s North*. Programme on the Northern Dimension of the CFSP/UIP Working Paper 32/2001, p. 24. The paper is available at http://www.upi-fia.fi/julkaisut/UIP_WP/wp/wp32.pdf. Downloaded 28 May 2003. See also Hiski Haukkala, *Towards a Union of Dimensions: The effects of eastern enlargement on the Northern Dimension*. FIIA Report 2/2002 (Helsinki: The Finnish Institute of International Affairs). The report is available at http://www.upi-fia.fi/english/publications/upi_report/reports/fiia_report22002.pdf. Downloaded 2 June 2003.

A Hole in the Wall? Dimensionalism and the EU's Quest for Stability

As was already mentioned, the EU has two imperatives: Internally it seeks to preserve and deepen the current level of integration whilst seeking to gradually expand the geographic reach of the European project. Externally, the key word for the EU is stability. The Union acknowledges that security in Europe at the present is indivisible: the EU cannot feel secure and continue to prosper if the rest of the continent is in a downward spiral towards increased insecurity and poverty. This fact is the starting point also in the present blueprint for the EU's new neighbourhood policy. The Commission published a communication on the topic in March 2003 which spells this out very clearly by stating that "the Union's capacity to provide security, stability and sustainable development for its citizens will no longer be distinguishable from its interest in close cooperation with the neighbours" and that the EU has "a duty... also towards its present and future neighbours to ensure continuing social cohesion and economic dynamism."²³

There is of course nothing surprising in this rhetoric. In its policies, the European Union acts in a manner similar to any regional power that has a stake in preserving stability on its doorstep.²⁴ With the broad spectrums of security widely acknowledged, the emphasis on social cohesion and

²³ *Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*. COM(2003) 104 final, 11 March 2003, p. 3. The document is available at

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/we/doc/com03_104_en.pdf.

Downloaded 28 May 2003.

²⁴ Missiroli, "The EU and Its Changing Neighbourhood..."

economic dynamism is nothing new either. What makes the case of the EU interesting is that as a *sui generis* entity of regional integration it has to take into consideration not only the issues of stability and security but also the legitimacy of its very existence as well as its actions and policies. This is partly due to the Union's still largely civilian power nature, which instead of using (military) power and coercion relies on persuasion and dialogue.²⁵ Another reason is the fact that at least so far European integration has been an open-ended project with a voiced aim of keeping its membership open to "any European state" that respects the founding principles of the Union.²⁶ Enlarging the EU has been perhaps the best way for countering the oft-voiced concerns of a "Fortress Europe" and thus ensuring the legitimacy as well as stability in the EU's immediate environment. This is acknowledged by the EU itself. For example, the Commission communication on neighbourhood policy states that the enlargement has "unarguably" been the Union's most successful foreign policy instrument.²⁷

The reason for this is that the *modus operandi* of the EU external relations, political conditionality, is successful only when the carrot is enticing enough. Apart from offering membership, the EU has at least so far failed to

²⁵ Hanns W. Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", *German Politics* vol. 9(2), 2000: 1-24, p. 5. The original "Civilian Power Europe" argument was put forth in François Duchène, "The European Community and the Uncertainties of Interdependence", in Max Kohnstamm and Wolfgang Hager, *A Nation Writ Large? Foreign-Policy Problems Before the European Community* (Macmillan: London, 1973). For more about the differences between negotiation and dialogue, see K. M. Fierke, "Dialogues of Manoeuvre and Entanglement: NATO, Russia, and the CEECs", *Millennium* vol. 28(1), 1999: 27-52, pp. 27-29.

²⁶ Treaty on European Union, Article 49. Also in the Convention's Draft Constitution the wording has been kept unchanged. See *Draft Constitution...*, Article I-57.1. The principles are enumerated in the Article 6(1): liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law.

²⁷ *Wider Europe – Neighbourhood...*, p. 5.

devise carrots that would have been substantial enough. The EU's discouraging track record in conditioning, even sanctioning, Russia's policy in Chechnya is a case in point.²⁸ As a consequence, the enlargement is an indispensable tool for the Union. Therefore keeping the prospect of membership open would seem to be in the best interest of the EU itself. This is where we however run into the internal imperative and the question of the future viability of the EU's own institutions and structures. Already the current round of ten new members have spurred alarmist tones warning of a possible meltdown of EU's structures in the post-enlargement situation. It is evident that the European Union wants the enlargement soon to stop. But it is at a loss on how to go about it. The Treaty on European Union, or the so-called Copenhagen criteria, do not offer any clear guidance in the matter. The fact that Turkey has already been accepted as a candidate does not make the life any easier, either. Consequently, it seems that it is the Luxembourg 1997 decision on an added criteria, that of the readiness of the Union itself to accept new members, that is being put to the front. In the end of the day it is the danger of an "institutional overstretch" that will set the limits of EU enlargement.

But the problem is that this is not a very moral argument. It rings of double standards and reinforces the image of the European Union as a "Fortress Europe" shielding its precious *acquis* behind the Schengen border. As a consequence, by relinquishing enlargement, the European Union is in danger

²⁸ For more about EU's policy during the period of most active military campaign in the Republic, see Hiski Haukkala, "The Making of the EU's Common Strategy on Russia", in Hiski Haukkala and Sergei Medvedev, eds, *The EU Common Strategy on Russia: Learning the Grammar of the CFSP*. Programme on the Northern Dimension of the CFSP No. 11 (Helsinki and Berlin: Finnish Institute of International Affairs and Institut für Europäische Politik), esp. pp. 51-62.

of not only losing its capacity for effectively stabilizing its nearest neighbours, but it is also in danger of losing its legitimacy and justification in the eyes of them.

Antonio Missiroli has suggested that it might be in the EU's short-term interest to postpone giving a definite answer concerning the end of the enlargement. This would enable the Union to dangle the "golden carrot" before the aspirants in order to encourage them into making internal reforms.²⁹ However, and although over the short term it might produce the desired push for transformation in the neighbouring states, such a policy would be shortsighted as it would in all likelihood result in an angry backlash from the aspirants that would see their EU hopes eventually dashed by the Union.

The EU is in a genuine bind. Enlargement is increasingly perceived from the part of EU's eastern neighbours as a form of exclusion. For them it is about extending a normative and highly institutionalized wall, which will isolate them from the rest of Europe.³⁰ Therefore it is clear that the EU needs a third way; something to ease it out of the bind of having to choose between the "ins" and "outs." The Finnish initiative for the Northern Dimension of the EU's policies can be seen as an attempt to create an entirely new logic in EU

²⁹ Missiroli, "The EU and Its Changing Neighbourhood..."

³⁰ James Sherr, "Russia and Ukraine: A Geopolitical Turn?", in Ann Lewis, ed., *The EU & Ukraine: Neighbours, Friends, Partners?* (London: Federal Trust, 2002), p. 167; Iver B. Neumann, "The Geopolitics of Delineating 'Russia' and 'Europe': the Creation of 'the Other' in European and Russian Tradition", in Tom Casier and Katlijn Malfliet, eds., *Is Russia a European Power? The Position of Russia in a New Europe* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1998), pp. 43-4. Although Neumann's original argument dealt with NATO enlargement, I nevertheless find his conclusions appropriate on the EU as well.

external relations.³¹ Instead of exacerbating the exclusionary aspects of the European project, the ND is built on the assumption of growing positive interdependence in northern Europe, especially between the European Union and Russia. Although there is nothing inherently positive about interdependence *per se*, the ND's emphasis on the commonalities that actually stem from the very *differences* between the EU and Russia marks an interesting new departure.³² For example, the fact that Russia's economy is seriously lagging behind Europe's, resulting in a vast gap in living standards is seen as a phenomenon which should bind Russia more strongly to Europe instead of separating from it.

Moreover, when compared to the other external policies of the Union, the Northern Dimension is notable for having actively sought to accommodate the outsiders' view as well as that of the EU and its member states. In November 1999, for example, the Finnish EU Presidency organized a Foreign Ministers' Conference, which allowed the partners to present their views and position papers prior to the Helsinki European Council meeting. This facilitated the drawing up of guidelines for the development of an Action Plan, which was later adopted at the Feira European Council in June

³¹ For more detailed account of the genesis and content of the Northern Dimension, cf. Hanna Ojanen, ed., *The Northern Dimension: Fuel for the EU?* (Programme on the Northern Dimension of the CFSP No. 12, Helsinki & Berlin: Finnish Institute of International Affairs and Institut für Europäische Politik, 2001).

³² Hugh Miall has argued that the effects of interdependence can be either positive and foster a sense of common interests, or negative and result in a sense of vulnerability and threat, depending on the way how it is managed. Hugh Miall, "Wider Europe, Fortress Europe, Fragmented Europe?", in Hugh Miall, ed., *Redefining Europe: New Patterns of Conflict and Cooperation* (London: Pinter Publishers and The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1994), p. 5.

2000.³³ Since then, the Foreign Ministers' Conference has conveyed twice, in April 2001 and October 2002.

In a sense, the Northern Dimension can be seen as a “market-place” where the European Union and Russia can meet on more equal grounds than would perhaps otherwise be the case. But the existence of a “market place” requires that there is a gate, or a hole, in the wall that separates the two.³⁴ This logic does, however, require a shift away from traditional state-centric intergovernmental transactions. Increasingly, it seems, the EU-Russian border is losing the role ascribed to it by modern conceptions of territoriality (i.e. “a container of statehood”) and becoming a locus for cross-border cooperation in the form of dynamic, fluid, network-like regions.³⁵ What makes these developments promising is the fact that the Russian perception of cross-border cooperation is generally positive. However, at the level of central government especially, there remains an underlying fear of hostile alien infiltration or “cultural-religious, economic and demographic expansion by neighboring states to Russian territory” as Aleksandr Avdeyev, the First Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia, has put it.³⁶ In short, concerns

³³ For more about the content of the Action Plan, cf. Anaïs Marin, “La Dimension Septentrionale: une autre forme de la PESC en Europe du Nord”, in Dov Lynch, ed., *EU-Russian Security Dimensions* (EU Institute for Security Studies Occasional Paper, forthcoming).

³⁴ Ola Tunander, “Post-Cold War Europe: Synthesis of a Bipolar Friend-Foe Structure and a Hierarchic Cosmos-Chaos Structure?”, in Ola Tunander, Pavel Baev and Victoria Ingrid Einagel, eds, *Geopolitics in Post-Wall Europe: Security, Territory and Identity* (Oslo & London: PRIO & SAGE Publications, 1997), p. 27.

³⁵ Sergei Medvedev, “Across the Line: Borders in Post-Westphalian Landscapes”, in Heikki Eskelinen, Ilkka Liikanen and Jukka Oksa, eds., *Curtains of Iron and Gold. Reconstructing Borders and Scales of Interaction* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), p. 54.

³⁶ Avdeyev's comment can be interpreted as referring more to China and the Islamic “southern dimension” in general rather than to northern Europe. Aleksandr Avdeyev,

over the territorial integrity of the still fragile Federation temper Moscow's willingness to engage in cooperation with external parties at the outskirts of Russia.³⁷

Finally, the ND has the potential to offer Russia the kind of meaningful role in European affairs, which it has actively sought but has hitherto been denied. According to Christopher Browning and Pertti Joenniemi, granting also third parties with subjectivity is the central feature in dimensionalism in general and in the case of the Northern Dimension in particular. ND has provided both the EU members and non-members with a meeting ground where to discuss issues of mutual interest on equal grounds.³⁸

It is, however, debatable whether dimensionalism in its present form provides all the answers. As also Browning and Joenniemi, in a somewhat disillusioned tone, note, the ND's most ambitious features have not "fully succeeded in breaking out of the confines of the more traditional understandings." This applies especially to Russia, which has been treated "as a clear outsider" even in the ND framework.³⁹ The same observations apply also in the cases of Barcelona Process ("southern dimension") and the nascent Eastern Dimension proposed by Poland.⁴⁰

"International Economic Relations of the Russian Regions", *International Affairs* (Moscow), vol. 46(3), 2000: 164-169, p. 168.

³⁷ For more about the topic, cf. Markku Kivinen and Katri Pynnöniemi, eds, *Beyond the Garden Ring: Dimensions of Russian Regionalism* (Helsinki: Kikumora Publications, 2002).

³⁸ Christopher S. Browning and Pertti Joenniemi, *The European Union's Two Dimensions: The Northern and the Eastern* (forthcoming).

³⁹ Browning and Joenniemi, *The European Union's Two Dimensions ...*

⁴⁰ Christiansen et al., "Fuzzy Politics Around Fuzzy Borders...", p. 405; and Browning and Joenniemi, *The European Union's Two Dimensions ...*

What comes to the ability of third parties to have a meaningful role in shaping the actual content of the “partnership” in the future, things are not likely to be largely improved. This is due to the “Wider Europe”/“New Neighbourhood” concept that has been gaining prominence in the European Union during the recent months. The Commission Communication on the topic reveals that at least in the current setting the previously separate dimensions are set to become subordinate to the wider framework of the EU’s overarching neighbourhood policy.

The document departs from the notion that dimensionalism and the new neighbourhood policy is meant for countries that do not currently have the perspective of membership of the EU. Instead, the EU offers enhanced relations based on shared values between the EU and its neighbours. According to the Communication, the aim of the policy is closer integration between the EU and its neighbours. The mechanism for cooperation is simple: in return for effective implementation of reforms (including aligning national legislation with the EU *acquis*), EU will grant closer economic integration with the prospect of realizing the so-called Four Freedoms (persons, goods, services, and capital) within the “Wider Europe” that would include the southern shores of the Mediterranean, the northwestern parts of Russia, and everything in between.

What is important to note in the new concept, that at least the Commission’s blueprint does not give *any* say to the new neighbours in setting the agenda. The objectives and means are non-negotiable; the only place where the partners would be consulted is when the individual Actions Plans with clear

benchmarks and timetables are being agreed upon. Even here the EU wants to hold all the cards and in fact sounds rather condescending when the Communication states that “the Action Plans and accompanying benchmarks should be established by the Council, based on proposals from the Commission, wherever possible with prior discussion with the partner countries concerned.”⁴¹ It seems evident that in the future, the new neighbours are not likely to have a large say in matters that will have a profound effect on their future development and place in Europe.

Conclusions

With the end of the fifth round of EU enlargement in sight, the geographical limits of the European project are approaching. As a consequence, in the external relations of the Union, the exclusionary aspects of European integration are coming to the fore, while the question of how to alleviate the negative impact of relinquishing the most effective foreign policy tool at EU’s disposal is emerging. But the question of how to best approach those countries in the EU’s immediate neighbourhood that are – at least for the foreseeable future – not deemed to be prospective members is thus far unanswered.

One answer proposed is the adoption of a new EU neighbourhood policy that would facilitate the emergence of an increasingly democratic and prosperous “ring of friends” around the Union.⁴² The new policy would build on the existing experiences of developing cross-border cooperation

⁴¹ *Wider Europe – Neighbourhood ...*, pp. 16-17.

⁴² Prodi, *A Wider Europe – A Proximity Policy...*

with its immediate neighbourhood that the EU has so far acquired through the Barcelona Process and the Northern Dimension. The final aim of cooperation is, that after a gradual convergence to the EU standards, the neighbours would be allowed to share with the EU “everything but institutions.”⁴³ Although the offer sounds generous, the proposed format of increased and gradually deepening dimensionalism is far from a panacea. As the previous experience in the case of the Northern Dimension has shown, blurring the clear inside/outside division in the EU is a source of problems for the Union itself. The member states are jealous of their sovereign prerogatives and the Brussels bureaucracy does not want outsiders meddling with the internal EU policies. Nor has the sectorally organized Commission – at least so far – been willing to experiment with horizontal cooperation to the extent that would be required if dimensionalism was made to work.

It is also debatable whether blurring the lines will satisfy the new neighbours either. And even if the EU’s “new neighbourhood policy” would be financially robust enough to act as an economic carrot, dimensionalism does not answer their call for belonging in full. A case in point is Ukraine, which has repeatedly voiced her hopes of becoming a full EU member as soon as possible.⁴⁴ Moreover, one could argue that after a rather disastrous decade in the 1990s in the EU’s new neighbours, they might not opt for increased “messiness” in their immediate surroundings. In fact, the opposite could be true as after all the turbulence during the 1990s they might prefer clear

⁴³ Ibid. This would entail a pan-European common market as well as extending some Community policies and instruments to the neighbours.

⁴⁴ Cf. the writing of the Foreign Minister Anatoliy Zlenko, “Ukraine and the EU: It Takes Two to Tango”, in *The EU & Ukraine: Neighbours...*; and the remarks of the Deputy Head of the Administration of the President of Ukraine Anatoliy Orel in the “EU-Ukraine relations after the next wave of EU enlargement” seminar, Brussels, 11 March 2002.

institutional ties and mechanisms (including, of course, the financial support) that a full membership would provide them.

Alas, that is not on offer. Therefore the EU has no other option but to make dimensionalism work. This will require what Karl Deutsch called responsiveness: the new neighbours' views have to be taken into consideration by the EU. Currently this is not the case, as the analysis of the "Wider Europe" Communication revealed. The EU's tendency to dictate the terms of cooperation one-sidedly should change. The EU must ensure that in the future messages from the new neighbours, to quote Karl W. Deutsch, would not "merely be received, but would be understood, and that they would be given real weight in the process of decision-making."⁴⁵ Therefore, fostering genuine partnerships and encouraging true dialogue with its new neighbours is the best policy for the EU to ensure that the stabilizing logic of enlargement is preserved also in the future, and that the legitimacy of the European project does not succumb to the negative stereotype of "Fortress Europe."

⁴⁵ Karl W. Deutsch et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 67.



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