

# Europe Twenty Years after the End of the Cold War

The New Europe, New Europes?

## L'Europe vingt ans après la fin de la guerre froide

Nouvelle Europe, nouvelles Europes ?

Bruno Arcidiacono, Katrin Milzow,  
Axel Marion & Pierre-Étienne Bourneuf  
(eds./dir.)



P.I.E. Peter Lang



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How has Europe evolved since the end of the Cold War? Has this period really led to the emergence of a new political space? How has the European Union changed with the integration of new members from Central and Eastern Europe? And to what degree has Europe changed in the eyes of Europeans as a consequence of these events? These are some of the important questions addressed in this work, which takes a deep and incisive look at Europe's transformation over the last two decades. The book follows the proceedings of a conference of the same name, organised in October 2010 by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies and the Pierre du Bois Foundation for Current History.

Comment l'Europe a-t-elle évolué depuis la fin de la guerre froide ? Cette période a-t-elle été véritablement fondatrice d'un espace politique nouveau ? En quoi l'Union européenne s'est-elle transformée suite à l'intégration des pays d'Europe centrale et orientale ? Et dans quelle mesure l'Europe a-t-elle changé aux yeux des Européens à la suite de ces événements ? Telles sont quelques-unes des questions traitées dans cet ouvrage, qui porte un regard riche et diversifié sur les transformations de l'Europe durant les deux dernières décennies.

Cet ouvrage collectif fait suite à une conférence homonyme organisée en octobre 2010 à Genève par l'Institut de hautes études internationales et du développement ainsi que par la Fondation Pierre du Bois pour l'histoire du temps présent.

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À la mémoire du professeur Pierre du Bois

Les éditeurs adressent leurs remerciements à Mme Irina du Bois, présidente de la Fondation Pierre du Bois pour l'histoire du temps présent, pour son aide constante, ainsi qu'au Fonds national suisse de la recherche scientifique pour son soutien financier.



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Éditions scientifiques internationales

Brussels / Bruxelles, 2012

1 avenue Maurice, B-1050 Brussels / Bruxelles, Belgium / Belgique

pie@peterlang.com ; www.peterlang.com

ISSN 0944-2294

ISBN 978-90-5201-819-5

D/2012/5678/31

Printed in Germany / Imprimé en Allemagne

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Europe twenty years after the end of the cold war : the new Europe, new Europes? = L'Europe vingt ans après la fin de la guerre froide : nouvelle Europe, nouvelles Europes? / Bruno Arcidiacono ... [et al.] eds./dir. p. cm. -- (Euroclio, ISSN 0944-2294 ; no.65)

Papers originally presented at a conference organised in Geneva in October 2010 hosted by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, in partnership with the Pierre du Bois Foundation for Current History. Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-90-5201-819-5 (alk. paper)

1. European Union--Congresses. 2. European Union countries--Politics and government--Congresses. 3. Europe--Politics and government--1989---Congresses. 4. European Union countries--Foreign relations--Congresses. 5. Europe--Foreign relations--Congresses. 6. European Union countries--Military policy--Congresses. 7. Europe--Military policy--Congresses. I. Arcidiacono, Bruno. II. Title: Europe vingt ans après la fin de la guerre froide.

JN40.E228 2012 341.242'2--dc23 2012012242

*CIP available from the British Library, GB.*

"Die Deutsche National Bibliothek" lists this publication in the "Deutsche Nationalbibliografie"; detailed bibliographic data is available on the Internet at <<http://dnb.de>>.

« Die Deutsche National bibliothek » répertorie cette publication dans la « Deutsche Nationalbi-bliografie » ; les données bibliographiques détaillées sont disponibles sur le site <http://dnb.de>.

ISBN 978-3-0352-6177-6 (eBook)



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## Préface

Ce livre recueille les contributions à un colloque organisé en octobre 2010 à Genève par l'Institut de hautes études internationales et du développement (IHEID), en partenariat avec la Fondation Pierre du Bois pour l'histoire du temps présent et avec l'appui financier du Fonds national suisse de la recherche scientifique (qu'il en soit ici chaleureusement remercié).

Créée en 2008, la Fondation qui entretient le souvenir de Pierre du Bois, historien et professeur à l'IHEID prématurément disparu en 2007, organise chaque année un colloque sur un sujet choisi de sorte à favoriser la rencontre entre les deux passions intellectuelles de celui dont elle porte le nom, l'intérêt pour l'actualité internationale et le goût pour le métier d'historien. L'intégration de l'Europe ayant sans doute été le domaine de prédilection de Pierre du Bois, et un de ceux qui démontrent le mieux la nécessité d'évoquer le passé pour éclairer le présent, il parut naturel aux organisateurs de consacrer le deuxième colloque de la Fondation – qui s'est tenu en 2010 mais a été conçu en 2009 – à un regard rétrospectif sur l'entreprise associative européenne dans les vingt années écoulées depuis la chute du mur de Berlin en 1989.

Cet événement hautement emblématique, dont les images resteront gravées dans la mémoire collective comme une des principales représentations visuelles du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, symbolise ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler « la fin de la guerre froide » ou, plus exactement, la fin du système international bipolarisé qui avait coupé pendant une quarantaine d'années l'Europe en deux parties politiquement et militairement rivales, intégrées l'une dans un bloc euro-atlantique, l'autre dans un bloc euro-asiatique, et dominées respectivement par Washington et Moscou. C'est à l'endroit où le processus de formation des deux camps opposés avait commencé, dans la seconde moitié de 1945, c'est-à-dire en Allemagne et en Europe centrale et sud-orientale, que la fin du bipolarisme a eu son impact le plus spectaculaire. Cet impact s'est matérialisé en effet, en 2004 et 2007, dans les deux extensions de l'Union européenne couramment dites « *Eastern Enlargements* » ou « élargissements vers l'Est » (même si des villes comme Prague et Ljubljana sont situées largement à l'ouest de Vienne). Le nombre des membres de l'UE est ainsi passé de quinze à vingt-sept, et dix des douze nouveaux associés (dix et demi, si l'on compte la République démocratique allemande englobée dans la République fédérale) venaient de l'ancien « bloc

oriental » – six d’entre eux appartenaient à la zone d’influence de l’ex-URSS, trois à l’URSS elle-même, un à l’ex-Yougoslavie.

Tel a été donc le thème du colloque : jusqu’où et de quelle manière l’Union (à la fois l’objet et l’image qu’on en a) s’est-elle transformée à la suite de ces grandes mutations intervenues, au cours des deux dernières décennies, en son propre sein et dans son environnement continental et mondial ? Ce thème, les participants ont été invités à l’aborder selon quatre axes. En les définissant *a priori*, les organisateurs visaient à donner au colloque un minimum de structure, mais ils étaient conscients que pareille classification s’avérerait, en partie, artificielle, et que certaines contributions ressortiraient de plusieurs catégories différentes et supporteraient mal d’être rangées dans l’une plutôt que dans l’autre. Ce qui fut effectivement le cas. En dépit de cet inconvénient, inhérent d’ailleurs à tout classement, le livre qui résulte du colloque en a conservé l’articulation, et comporte quatre sections. Dans la première, le projecteur est dirigé sur le fonctionnement interne de l’Union : comment les élargissements qui en ont presque doublé les membres ont-ils affecté ses institutions, ses pratiques et ses composantes ? La deuxième section s’attache aux effets des élargissements sur l’élaboration et la conduite des relations extérieures de l’UE et de sa politique de défense. La troisième déplace le regard sur l’espace politique continental extérieur à l’Union, son « *near abroad* », et sur la résonance qu’y ont eu les grands changements de l’Europe et du monde. La quatrième, enfin, s’intéresse aux visions que les Européens eux-mêmes ont du nouveau stade de l’aventure dans laquelle ils se trouvent embarqués, avec des sentiments divers dont (pour employer une litote) la déception et le scepticisme ne sont pas les moindres.

La problématique commune aux quatre parties est celle, propre à l’historien, des permanences et des ruptures, de la continuité et des discontinuités – plusieurs contributeurs nous montrent que le premier élément du couple est au moins aussi important que le second. Mais la démarche intellectuelle des auteurs n’est pas nécessairement celle de l’histoire traditionnelle : certaines communications, le lecteur le constatera, relèvent plutôt de la science politique, entendue *lato sensu*. C’est là une pluralité méthodologique que Pierre du Bois, avec son rejet des cloisons étanches entre les disciplines et les hommes, aurait sûrement appréciée, comme il aurait goûté le mélange de jeunes chercheurs et de personnalités académiques confirmées que les organisateurs du colloque ont essayé d’assurer.

*Les directeurs de publication*

## Preface

This volume consists of papers presented at a conference organised in Geneva in October 2010 by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, in partnership with the Pierre du Bois Foundation for Current History and with financial support from the Swiss National Science Foundation, which we gratefully acknowledge.

Established in 2008, the Foundation was founded to preserve the memory of Pierre du Bois, a historian and professor at the Graduate Institute, who passed away prematurely in 2007. Each year, the Foundation organises a conference on a subject chosen to reunite two intellectual passions of its namesake: an interest in international current affairs and a passion for the profession of historian. Since European integration was probably the field closest to Pierre du Bois's heart, as well as an area which very clearly illustrates the need to evoke the past in order to understand the present, it seemed a natural step to devote the Foundation's second conference – which was held in 2010 but planned in 2009 – to a retrospective look back at the European project over the twenty years since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

This highly symbolic event, whose images remain engraved in the collective consciousness as some of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most enduring icons, symbolises what has become known as “the end of the Cold War” or, more precisely, the end of the bipolar international system which, for some forty years, divided Europe into two military and political rivals, one integrated into a Euro-Atlantic bloc, the other into a Euro-Asiatic bloc, dominated by Washington and Moscow respectively. And it was in the very place where, in the second half of 1945, this division into two opposing camps had its origins – i.e. Germany and Central and South-Eastern Europe – that the impact of the disappearance of the bipolar system has been most spectacular. Most tangible were the two extensions of the European Union in 2004 and 2007, known as the “Eastern enlargements” (even if cities like Prague and Ljubljana are located somewhat to the West of Vienna). The number of EU members has thus risen from 15 to 27; 10 of the 12 new members (10.5 if you include the German Democratic Republic, which had already been swallowed into Federal Republic) were from the former “Eastern bloc”, six of them belonged to the former USSR's zone of influence, three to the USSR itself, and one to the former Yugoslavia.

This then was the theme of the conference: how and to what degree has the Union – and the image we have of it – been transformed over the last two decades in the aftermath of these radical transformations, both

within itself and in its European and global context? This theme, participants were invited to address across four axes. By defining these in advance, we sought to provide the conference with a certain structure; at the same time, however, we were well aware that any such classification runs the risk of being artificial. Some contributions are liable to straddle multiple categories, fitting uncomfortably under one heading rather than another, and this proved to be the case here. However, despite this drawback – which is indeed inherent in any classification – the volume produced from the conference retains this four-part structure. In the first section, the focus is on the Union's internal operation: how have the enlargements, which have almost doubled its membership, affected its institutions, practices, and constituent organs? The second section is devoted to the effects of the enlargements on the development and execution of EU external relations and defence policy. The third relates to the European political space outside the Union, its “near abroad”, and the resonance in these regions of the changes which have taken place in Europe and the world. Finally, the fourth section concerns the visions Europeans themselves have of this new stage in the adventure upon which they have embarked, as well as their sometimes mixed feelings, not least of which are disappointment and scepticism.

What the four sections have in common is a focus on the issues, fundamental to the historian, of permanence and transformation, continuity and discontinuity; and several contributors have even suggested that the first element of the pair is at least as important as the second. However, the approach taken by the contributors is not necessarily that of the traditional historian: as the reader will remark, some chapters are as much a product of political science, understood in the broadest sense. And this is a methodological heterogeneity which Pierre du Bois would surely have appreciated, with his rejection of strict barriers between academic disciplines as much as those between people. He would also, we hope, have valued the mix of young researchers and established academics which we, as its organisers, have tried to bring to the conference.

*The Editors*



## **PART I**

### **ENLARGEMENT AND THE INTERNAL FUNCTIONING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

#### **PREMIÈRE PARTIE**

#### **L'ÉLARGISSEMENT ET LE FONCTIONNEMENT INTERNE DE L'UNION EUROPÉENNE**



# **The Impact of Eastern Enlargement on the Internal Functioning of the European Union Why So Much Continuity?**

Dirk LEUFFEN

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## **Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

In early August 2010 the Slovak National Council rejected a bill on bilateral loans for Greece, inciting Commissioner Olli Rehn to speak of a “breach of solidarity within the Eurozone”. In 2009, the ratification of the Lisbon treaty was slowed down by the Presidents of the Czech Republic and Poland, creating uncertainty about the institutional development of the Union. Events such as these seem to suggest that decision-making in the European Union (EU) has become more problematic after the accession of ten new member states in 2004, followed by two more in 2007. In fact, before enlargement, numerous practitioners, citizens and academics feared that Eastern enlargement might damage the EU’s capacity to act. Would EU decision-making become more cumbersome after enlargement and would the EU, even more than in the past, become prone to gridlocks and joint-decision-making traps?<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, in contrast to theoretical predictions, the integration of the new member states to date has not severely harmed existing practices of decision-making. Most observers agree today that enlargement has

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<sup>1</sup> The data used in this chapter was collected in the context of a research project on EU policy-making after enlargement by Robin Hertz, Thomas Jensen, Manuel Schmitz and the author. The support by the Swiss National Science Foundation as well as the generosity of the Brussels experts to participate in our interviews is greatly acknowledged. In addition, I thank Stefanie Bailer, Jeffrey Lewis and the participants of the Graduate Institute/Pierre du Bois Foundation conference “Europe Twenty Years after the End of the Cold War: The New Europe, New Europes” for helpful comments.

<sup>2</sup> Scharpf, F., “The Joint Decision Trap Revisited”, in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 4, 2006, p. 845-864.

generally functioned rather smoothly, and there is hardly any evidence of increased gridlock in the EU. From a perspective of decision-making theories this is puzzling, since good arguments were formulated in the past for expecting decision-making to become more cumbersome after enlargement. In this chapter I therefore echo Tullock and take up the challenge of exploring why we observe so much continuity in the enlarged EU.<sup>3</sup> Were the (pessimistic) theories simply been wrong altogether, have certain conditions they assumed not been met or have other mechanisms of EU decision-making been neglected in past theorizing?

The chapter is structured as follows. I first briefly review some theoretical expectations about enlargement effects formulated by political scientists. Then I report the results of a first empirical assessment of EU decision-making after enlargement in which I detect a gap between theoretical expectations and empirical observations. This is the puzzle the subsequent analysis will address. It is divided into two parts. First I report qualitative assessments on Eastern enlargement collected in open interviews with member state representatives in Brussels and Commission officials. These experts most often refer to institutions, norms, behaviour and preferences in order to explain the continuity. I then focus on the issue of preferences by analysing a new dataset on post-enlargement EU decision-making. This dataset was collected for the research project “Does Group Size Matter? European Governance after Enlargement” and mirrors an earlier data collection presented by Thomson *et al.*<sup>4</sup> In my empirical analysis, I investigate the structure of member state preferences after enlargement. Have the preferences in the EU become more heterogeneous with the accession of twelve new member states? And do the preferences of the new member states really make decision-making more difficult?

Against the backdrop of theoretical expectations, a scenario of continuity represents more than merely a negative finding. Methodologically and theoretically, analysing continuity is demanding. If no changes in the dependent variable, here EU decision-making, are recorded, how can one identify causal mechanisms? If the theories give us good grounds to expect change, we have to ask which expectations did not hold and why. Were the theories wrong – and if yes, in which respect – were our measurements faulty or do other mechanisms counteract the expectations? I propose that various factors together account for the functioning of the EU’s political system. Mono-causal explanations are too simplis-

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<sup>3</sup> Tullock, G., “Why so much stability”, in *Public Choice*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 1981, p. 189-202.

<sup>4</sup> Thomson, R. *et al.*, *The European Union Decides*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

tic to fully explain the development of the complex macro structure that we observe in EU post-enlargement decision-making.

## Literature Review

Starting from a European Community of six in the 1950s, the community project has since grown to comprise 27 member states. Eastern enlargement in particular has raised many concerns among practitioners and academics alike with regard to the EU's continuing capacity to act. In political science, the clearest expectations about the consequences of enlargement were formulated by rationalist decision-making analysts. For instance, it was argued that the inclusion of a large number of new and rather diverse member states would lead to an increase in transaction costs.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, from the perspective of club theory, enlargement was expected to increase crowding cost.<sup>6</sup> The production of collective goods was expected to become more problematic since one could expect an increased possibility to free-ride.<sup>7</sup> Since most of the new member states can be considered comparatively poor countries, enlargement was furthermore expected to entail distributive conflicts between old recipients and new demanders and between net-contributors and net-receivers.<sup>8</sup> Others expected that passing of legislation was likely to become more difficult due to a growth of heterogeneity.<sup>9</sup> This expectation is based on a spatial logic as contained in veto player theory.<sup>10</sup> For instance, Tsebelis and Yatağan suggest that "policy stability in Europe is likely to increase significantly as a result of enlargement and of the Nice treaty".<sup>11</sup> A-priori voting power theory – although based on a different logic – similarly expects policy stability to rise after enlarge-

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<sup>5</sup> See Scharpf, *op. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> See Schimmelfennig, F., *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe. Rules and Rhetoric*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 21-27.

<sup>7</sup> Koremenos, B., Lipson C., Snidal, D., "The Rational Design of International Institutions", in *International Organization*, Vol. 55, No. 4, 2001, p. 761-799.

<sup>8</sup> Zimmer, C., Schneider, G., Dobbins, M., "The Contested Council: Conflict Dimensions of an Intergovernmental EU Institution", in *Political Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 2, 2005, p. 403-422.

<sup>9</sup> König, T., Bräuninger, T., "Accession and Reform of the European Union: A Game-Theoretical Analysis of Eastern Enlargement and the Constitutional Reform", in *European Union Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 2004, p. 419-439; Kerremans, B., "The Political and Institutional Consequences of Widening: Capacity and Control in an Enlarged Council", in Laurent, P.H., Maresceau, M. (eds.), *The State of the European Union. Deepening and Widening*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 1998.

<sup>10</sup> Tsebelis, G., *Veto Players*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2002.

<sup>11</sup> Tsebelis, G., Yatağan, Y., "Veto Players and Decision-making in the EU After Nice", in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 2, 2002, p. 283-307.

ment due to a reduced passage probability.<sup>12</sup> Thus with very few exceptions – notably Steunenberg did not predict large changes in areas of qualified majority voting – there was a general agreement that Eastern enlargement should make EU decision-making more difficult.<sup>13</sup>

Interestingly, most empirical research on the effects of enlargement, however, suggests a far less pessimist reading.<sup>14</sup> As to the Council, little evidence of changing decision-making behaviour has been presented so far. Studies on voting behaviour by Hagemann, Hagemann and De Clerck-Sachsse and Mattila show that the amount of negative voting has not increased after enlargement.<sup>15</sup> On the basis of a spatial roll call model, Mattila presents some evidence that after enlargement a new East-West pattern of voting behaviour might have emerged, in addition to the well-known North-South cleavage.<sup>16</sup> Such a pattern is also confirmed by network data presented by Naurin and Lindahl.<sup>17</sup> Thomson, too, analyses actor alignments in the enlarged EU, using information on the positions of all member states with the help of an extended version of the decision-making in the EU dataset.<sup>18</sup> He finds that the new mem-

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<sup>12</sup> Baldwin, R. *et al.*, “The Costs and Benefits of Eastern Enlargement: The Impact on the EU and Central Europe”, in *Economic Policy*, Vol. 12, No. 24, 1997, p. 125-176.

<sup>13</sup> Steunenberg, B., “An Even Wider Union. The Effects of Enlargement on EU Decision-Making”, in Steunenberg, B. (ed.), *Widening the European Union: the Politics of Institutional Change and Reform*, London, Routledge, 2002.

<sup>14</sup> See Dehousse, R., Deloche-Gaudez, F., Duhamel, O., *Élargissement: comment l'Europe s'adapte*, Paris, Presses de Science Po, 2006; Best, E., Christiansen, T., Settembri, P., *The Institutions of the Enlarged European Union. Continuity and Change*, Cheltenham, Elgar, 2008; Bailer, S., Hertz, R., Leuffen, D., “Oligarchization, Formalization, Adaptation? Linking Sociological Theory and EU Enlargement Research”, in *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2009, p. 162-74; Pollack, M., “Europe United? The Impact of the EU’s Eastern Enlargement, five years on”, in *European View*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2009, p. 239-254.

<sup>15</sup> Hagemann, S., “Voting, Statements and Coalition-Building in the Council from 1999 to 2006”, in Naurin, D., Wallace, H. (eds.), *Unveiling the Council of the European Union. Games Governments Play in Brussels*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008; Hagemann, S., De Clerck-Sachsse, J., “Old Rules, New Game. Decision-making in the Council of Ministers after the 2004 Enlargement”, in *Centre for Economic Policy Studies. Special Report*, 2007; Mattila, M., “Roll call analysis of voting in the European Union Council of Ministers after the 2004 enlargement”, in *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 48, No. 6, 2009, p. 840-857.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Naurin, D., Lindahl, R., “East-North-South: Coalition-Building in the Council before and after Enlargement”, in Naurin, D., Wallace, H. (eds.), *Unveiling the Council of the European Union. Games Governments Play in Brussels*, Houndmills, Palgrave, 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Thomson, R., “Actor alignments in the European Union before and after enlargement”, in *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 48, No. 6, 2009, p. 756-781.

ber states are rather in favour of national autonomy on issues related to harmonization. At the same time, new member states more strongly support redistributive policies as compared to the old member states. In fact, they seem to align with the old Southern member states in such policies against the Northern member states. In a quantitative analysis of legislative output in the European Union, Robin Hertz and I, however, find that if at all, only the number of directives shrinks with a growing number of member states in the EU.<sup>19</sup> In a different contribution we show that the performance of formal models of decision-making does not substantively change after enlargement.<sup>20</sup> Similar patterns of continuity are found for the European Parliament by Hix and Noury and for the Commission by Peterson and Birdsall.<sup>21</sup> The findings on the effects of group size and decision-making speed to date are rather inconclusive.<sup>22</sup> Finally, Sedelmeier shows that the compliance records of the new member states are very positive.<sup>23</sup>

The empirical findings on enlargement effects thus are more modest than many of the theoretical expectations. To date there is little evidence of substantively increased gridlock in the enlarged EU. Against this backdrop, I will in the following address the issue of why we observe so much continuity after enlargement. I will first report assessments of practitioners in Brussels before analysing a new dataset on post-enlargement EU-decision-making.

## Expert Interview Data

From January to May 2009, a research group from ETH Zurich conducted 55 interviews with member state representatives and Commission officials in Brussels. The interviews were divided into two parts. First we presented a structured questionnaire to our respondents, closely

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<sup>19</sup> Hertz, R., Leuffen, D., “Gridlock after Enlargement? An Analysis of Legislative Output in the European Union”, in *Paper presented at EUSA conference 2009 (Los Angeles April 23-25/2009)*, 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Hertz, R., Leuffen, D., “Comparing European Union Decision-Making before and after Eastern Enlargement”, in *MPSA Political Science Conference 2010*, 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Hix, S., Noury, A., “After Enlargement: Voting Patterns in the Sixth European Parliament”, in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 2, 2009, p. 159-174; Peterson, J., Birdsall, A., “The European Commission: Enlargement as Reinvention”, in Best, Christiansen and Settambri (eds.), *op. cit.*

<sup>22</sup> See König, T., “Analysing the Process of EU Legislative Decision-Making: To Make a Long Story Short”, in *European Union Politics*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2008, p. 145-165; Golub, J., “The Study of Decision-Making Speed in the European Union: Methods, Data and Theory”, in *European Union Politics*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2008, p. 167-179.

<sup>23</sup> Sedelmeier, U., “After conditionality: post-accession compliance with EU law in East Central Europe”, in *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 15, No. 6, 2008, p. 806-825.

modelled on the methodology introduced by Thomson *et al.*<sup>24</sup> Secondly, we then more directly questioned the experts on their perspective of Eastern enlargement consequences.

For the first, structured part of the interviews, we identified controversial proposals with the help of secondary sources, such as *Agence Europe*. In order to test decision-making models, it is necessary to analyse controversial proposals; if all actors agree one cannot trace conflict resolution. At the same time this implies that the cases selected are not necessarily representative. We selected cases that were proposed after the 2004 enlargement and that were formally passed in 2008. We thus intended to minimize the time between our interviews and the negotiations in the Council in order to maximize the validity of our measurements. We first asked our respondents to identify the controversial issues in the selected policy proposals. A controversial issue is, for instance, the question whether customs representation should be liberalized (an example relating to the Community's Customs Code) or how many hectares of vineyards should be grubbed up in the Common Wine Market. We thus collected information on day-to-day issues decided in Brussels. The positions on these issues were normalized to range from 0 and 100. 0 and 100 are thus the most extreme positions, and 0 mostly reflects the policy status quo. The respondents were then asked to locate the positions of all member states, the European Parliament and the Commission, as well as the reversion point (the fallback option is generally the status quo) and the policy output on this scale. We conducted 55 interviews on 19 proposals. In total 48 issues were identified as controversial in our interviews. Our respondents were selected from different new and old member states, and our sample is rather balanced. There is a slight bias towards experts from those countries that held the Council presidency in the concerned period since we assumed that the Council president is usually well informed about the positions of the different member states. More detailed introductions to this methodology can be found in Thomson *et al.* and Thomson.<sup>25</sup>

In the following I will first report qualitative assessments of our interview partners before turning to the analysis of the quantitative data.

## **Assessment of Enlargement Effects by Administrative Experts**

Our experts generally underlined in the interviews that enlargement had not greatly modified the substance of EU decision-making. A large majority found that enlargement had not negatively affected the EU's

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<sup>24</sup> Thomson *et al.*, *op. cit.*

<sup>25</sup> Thomson *et al.*, *op. cit.*; Thomson, *op. cit.*



capacity to act and they very rarely remembered examples in their areas of policy expertise where the new member states had negatively affected the flow of policy production. Their assessments of post-enlargement decision-making were generally balanced and often they, too, expressed surprise about how smoothly the integration of the new member states had been. In their explanations they most often referred to three categories of factors: institutions, norms and learning, as well as actor preferences.

### *Institutions and Organisation*

In line with expectations already formulated by early sociological theories on group size,<sup>26</sup> the accession of new member states triggered institutional reactions inside the EU. The treaty reforms of Amsterdam and Nice constitute the most visible institutional adjustments but the modified Council Rules of Procedure enacted after the Seville summit have also entailed practical implications for the work in the Council. Annex IV of this document details the “working methods for an enlarged Council”.<sup>27</sup> They cover the preparation and conduct of meetings and stress the need of maintaining efficiency in an enlarged Council.<sup>28</sup> In line with these working methods, our respondents confirmed that the full table rounds – the so-called *tours de table* – have generally ended after enlargement. The member states today coordinate their positions more closely before Council meetings. They also – in principal – are reported to widely follow working method No. 13: “Delegations shall avoid repeating points made by previous speakers. Their interventions will be brief, substantive and to the point.” In fact, most interventions are restricted to two minutes. While such measures promote efficiency by reducing transaction costs, most debates today are shifted into informal arenas. Some respondents also mentioned that they had the impression that there was more informal coordination going on between the member states and the Commission after enlargement. Also, the number of trilogues – uniting Council, European Parliament and Commission experts in an early stage of the co-decision procedure – has increased in the past years. This all highlights that institutional and organisational

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<sup>26</sup> Simmel, G., *Soziologie Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung*, Leipzig, Duncker & Humblot, 1908; Weber, M., *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, Tübingen, Mohr, 1921.

<sup>27</sup> Council of EU, *Adopting the Council's Rules of Procedure*, 338, Brussels, 22 March 2004.

<sup>28</sup> Note that claims for such reforms can already be found in a co-authored letter of German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and British Prime Minister Tony Blair addressed on 25 February 2002 to José Maria Aznar, representing the Spanish Council presidency.

adjustments have opened new avenues for coordinating EU decision-making.

### ***Norms and Learning***

Sociological institutionalists have often underlined the importance of informal norms in everyday EU decision-making.<sup>29</sup> Against this backdrop, we were interested to know whether the new member states had adapted existing norms of EU decision-making. Initial research on post-enlargement voting behaviour does not indicate a change of voting behaviour: consensual decision-making is still the rule and the new member states do not cast negative votes in the Council more often than the old member states.<sup>30</sup> Most respondents from the new member states had the impression that the novices acted rather carefully or less actively than the experienced member states. This might point towards the role of social influence mechanisms as highlighted by Johnston.<sup>31</sup> The new member states in this logic want to adapt to existing practices, and they observe and copy the behaviour of the old member states. When they cared strongly about issues, they are however reported to have raised their voice. A member of the Swedish Permanent Representation, for instance, found that Poland initially pushed very hard for its positions. This respondent had the impression that the Polish representatives had initially not completely understood the meaning of qualified majority voting. Other respondents found that the novices interacted more often with the Commission – possibly because they trusted this organ’s expertise – and that they accordingly more often followed its positions.

Holding the Council presidency in particular was described by various Slovak respondents as an important learning experience. They claimed to have discovered the true working mechanisms of the Union during this period. One respondent of the Slovak Permanent Representation expressed his positive surprise that he was regularly contacted by big member state representatives. He enjoyed finally being recognized by his French colleagues: “The presidency for us was the best experience. You really get the insights and inlook from the backup machinery. [...] And it gives you a weight as well.” This underlines that understanding how the game is actually played in Brussels can take

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<sup>29</sup> See Heisenberg, D., “The institution of ‘consensus’ in the European Union: Formal versus informal decision-making in the Council”, in *European Journal of Political Research*, 44, 2005, p. 65-90; Lewis, J., “How institutional environments facilitate co-operative negotiation styles in EU decision-making”, in *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 17, No. 5, 2010, p. 648-664.

<sup>30</sup> Hagemann, *op. cit.*; Mattila, *op. cit.*

<sup>31</sup> Johnston, A., “Treating International Institutions as Social Environments”, in *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 45, No. 4, 2001, p. 487-515.

time. At the same time, adaptation of behaviour has occurred rather fast after enlargement. In general, the new member state representatives are described as willing to learn and accept the community norms by old member state representatives.

## *Preferences*

In a rationalist perspective, preferences – and institutions – are key components of policy-making.<sup>32</sup> In the literature, there is an ongoing debate on how best to explain the preferences of EU member states. What drives states to hold specific positions and how can we explain the (unstable) alignment of actors across issues?<sup>33</sup> Different dimensions have been identified in the literature, for instance, integration versus independence,<sup>34</sup> left versus right,<sup>35</sup> or North versus South.<sup>36</sup> Before enlargement it was unclear how the new member states would align themselves to the existing patterns. While the selection criteria and the accession process possibly guaranteed some correspondence between the preferences of new and old member states,<sup>37</sup> one could also imagine that the new member states should clearly differ from the old member states, given their different historical, cultural, political and economic backgrounds.

The issue of preferences was often raised in our interviews. For instance, national experts for the common fisheries policy maintain that in this sector the split is rather between landlocked and non-landlocked

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<sup>32</sup> Plott, C., “Will Economics become an Experimental Science”, in *Southern Economic Journal*, Vol. 57, 1991, p. 901-920.

<sup>33</sup> Aspinwall, M., “Government Preferences on European Integration: An Empirical Test of Five Theories”, in *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 37, No. 1, 2007, p. 89-114; Thomson, R., Boerefijn, J., Stokman, F., “Actor alignments in European Union decision making”, in *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 43, No. 2, 2004, p. 237-261; Moravcsik, A., *The Choice for Europe. Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht*, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1998.

<sup>34</sup> Garrett, G., “International Cooperation and Institutional Choice: The European Community’s Internal Market”, in *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 2, 1992, p. 533-560; Crombez, C., “Legislative Procedures in the European Community”, in *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1996, p. 199-228.

<sup>35</sup> Hix, S., Noury, A., Roland, G., *Democratic politics in the European parliament*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007; Hix, S., “Towards a partisan theory of EU politics”, in *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 15, No. 8, 2008, p. 1254-1265.

<sup>36</sup> Naurin and Lindal, *op. cit.*; Thomson, Boerefijn and Stockman, *op. cit.*; Mattila, *op. cit.*

<sup>37</sup> Plümper, T., Schneider, C., Troeger, V., “The Politics of EU Eastern Enlargement: Evidence from a Heckman Selection Model”, in *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 36, No. 1, 2005, p. 17-38.

countries than between new and old member states. Only because there are now more landlocked countries in the EU, does Eastern enlargement make a small difference. For instance, one respondent observed a stronger focus on aquaculture. Commission experts mentioned in our interviews that they had the impression that the new member states often appeared to be less protectionist than the old member states.

In order to get a more systematic picture of the EU preference space after enlargement, I will in the following turn to the quantitative data collected in our interviews. The focus of the analysis is on the comparison between old and new member states. Do the new member states act as outliers in terms of their preferences? How do the novices relate to the old member states? How is the heterogeneity of preferences in the Council affected by the accession of twelve new member states?

### ***Analysis of Preference Data***

Our dataset allows a detailed analysis of preferences that member states hold on controversial issues after enlargement. I will in the following provide some descriptive statistics in order to compare the preferences of old and new member states. A good starting point is to compare how far the positions of the twelve new and the fifteen old member states diverge from the reversion point, as the fall back option in case of no agreement. The reversion point in most cases is equivalent to the status quo. I use the distance of a position to the reference point as a measure of policy stability.<sup>38</sup> I assume that the closer an actor aligns to the status quo, the less reform-friendly that actor is. Given that the new member states already had to enact numerous reforms in order to meet the requirements of the *acquis communautaire*, one could expect those member states to display a certain reform fatigue after accession to the EU. Accordingly they should on average position themselves closer to the reference point than the old member states. However, when comparing the positions over the 48 issues contained in our dataset, this cannot be confirmed. Over all issues, the new member states in our dataset have an average distance to the reference point of 44 scale points as compared to 46 for the old member states. This should not be considered a substantial difference.

The average distance between the positions of the new and old member states on individual issues is 12 scale points, with a standard deviation of 10. Only for two of the 48 issues is the average new member state more than 30 scale points away from the average old member state. Commission proposal COM (2004) 835 relates to the setting up of the visa information system (VIS) and the particular issue concerns the

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<sup>38</sup> See Tsebelis, *op. cit.*

rollout of the VIS. Since the new member states expect higher costs associated with a complete and immediate implementation – many new member states have borders with non-EU states – they are in favour of a successive implementation. This is thus a cost-related issue. The second issue (COM (2006) 636) concerns the scope of the ban on metallic mercury. This is a technical issue with economic impacts. It does not represent an issue that seems closely related to an integration dimension.

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics of dataset –  
Numbers relate to the scale 0 to 100**

	Scale Points
Av. distance to reference point EU15	46
Av. distance to reference point new MS	44
Average distance new vs. old MS	12
Average distance new MS vs. EC6	16
Average distance new MS vs. UK	24
Av. Standard Deviation EU27	24
Av. Standard Deviation EU15	26

In discussions of policy stability after enlargement, group heterogeneity is usually seen as an important factor. While some authors have used the range to measure heterogeneity, I find that using the standard deviation is more appropriate measure since it is less driven by single outliers.<sup>39</sup> How does heterogeneity change after enlargement? Surprisingly, when comparing the standard deviations over all issues for the EU27 with those for the subset of the EU15, I find that the average standard deviation is smaller for the EU27. That means that the average heterogeneity has not increased by adding the twelve new member states. This is an important finding for the question on the observed continuity, since an increase of heterogeneity is usually linked to an increase of policy stability.<sup>40</sup> If preference heterogeneity is not substantively increased, there is no direct reason to expect more policy gridlock.

What can be said about the location of the new member states vis-à-vis other member states? In the accession negotiations the UK supported

<sup>39</sup> König, T., “Divergence or Convergence? From Ever-Growing to Ever-Slowing European Legislative Decision-Making”, in *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 2007, p. 417-444.

<sup>40</sup> Tsebelis, *op. cit.*

the accession of the Eastern European member states.<sup>41</sup> Given their often presumed liberal orientation one could expect that the new member states align more closely with the UK than with the founding members of the European Community, i.e. the EC6. Again, this is not confirmed by our data. On average the new member states are 24 points away from the UK, as compared to 16 points from the EC6. There is thus no evidence of a particularly close relation between the UK and the new member states.

In order to get a better understanding of how the different countries' positions relate to one another, I have calculated the correlation coefficients of country positions over all issues of our dataset.<sup>42</sup> I find that there are countries that are highly correlated with other countries and countries that are less highly correlated with other countries. Notably France and Hungary, but also Spain, Portugal, Italy and Germany are only weakly correlated to most other states. The three Baltic countries are strongly correlated with each other and they seem in line with most Northern European states as well as with most other new member states. Luxembourg, Denmark, Sweden, Ireland, Finland and Romania display a medium to high level of correlation with other countries.

Since the interpretation of such information is difficult, in the following I apply a technique called multidimensional scaling. This method represents measurements of similarity (or dissimilarity) among pairs of objects as distances between points of a low-dimensional multidimensional space.<sup>43</sup> An often cited illustrative example is the problem of generating a map from distance data between cities.<sup>44</sup> A map visually displays the geometric configuration in a two-dimensional space. Similarly, in the EU literature multidimensional scaling is used for visualizing alignments between actors' positions and voting behaviour.<sup>45</sup> While multidimensional scaling allows us to visualize a "hidden structure" of a data – provided such a structure exists – it is often more difficult to interpret the substantive meaning behind the dimensions. The scales as

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<sup>41</sup> See Schimmelfennig, F. "The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action, and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union", in *International Organization*, Vol. 55, No. 1, 2001, p. 47-80.

<sup>42</sup> The results are not presented in this publication; however, they are available upon request from the author.

<sup>43</sup> Borg, I., Groenen, P., *Modern Multidimensional Scaling: Theory and Applications*, New York, Springer, 2005, p. 3.

<sup>44</sup> See Kruskal, J., Wish, M., *Multidimensional Scaling*, Newbury Park, Sage, 1978.

<sup>45</sup> Thomson, Boerefijn and Stokman, *op. cit.*; Thomson, *op. cit.*; Mattila, M., Lane, J., "Why Unanimity in the Council?: A Roll Call Analysis of Council Voting", in *European Union Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2001, p. 31-52.

such do not convey a specific meaning and demand interpretation by the analyst.

I use classical metric multidimensional scaling for generating the following plot. So-called city-block distances are computed that simply sum up the absolute differences in the attributes. In this case, city-block distances increase the fit of the model as compared to Euclidian distances. In order to evaluate how well multidimensional scaling represents the distances in this data, I use “stress”,<sup>46</sup> a numerical measure of the badness-of-fit. I first tried a reduction to two dimensions. However, with a stress value of 0.28, two dimensions do not seem to adequately represent the data in the matrix. Adding a third dimension improves the stress value to 0.16 which is satisfactory and underlines that three dimension should be preferred to two.<sup>47</sup> Figure 1 is a visualization of the first and second dimensions.

Figure 1 shows that the new member states broadly fall into a triangle formed by the UK and Sweden, France and the Southern member states of Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece. Cyprus and Malta tend more closely towards the cluster of Southern nations. Poland slightly tends towards France. The Commission and the European Parliament lie apart from all member states. The plot highlights that the new member states do not form a distinct new block outside the old member states on the issues contained in our dataset. Since our case selection is based on controversial cases, it seems fair to assume that the finding might hold more generally. The accession of the new member states has not stretched the EU member states’ preference space. However, I so far have not disaggregated this data into different policy areas or types of issues. Thomson, using a slightly larger dataset on post-enlargement policy making, finds some new alliances between old Southern and the new Eastern member states on issues relating to financial subsidies.<sup>48</sup> However, in accordance with my findings, he does not generally provide evidence for the new member states acting as outliers.

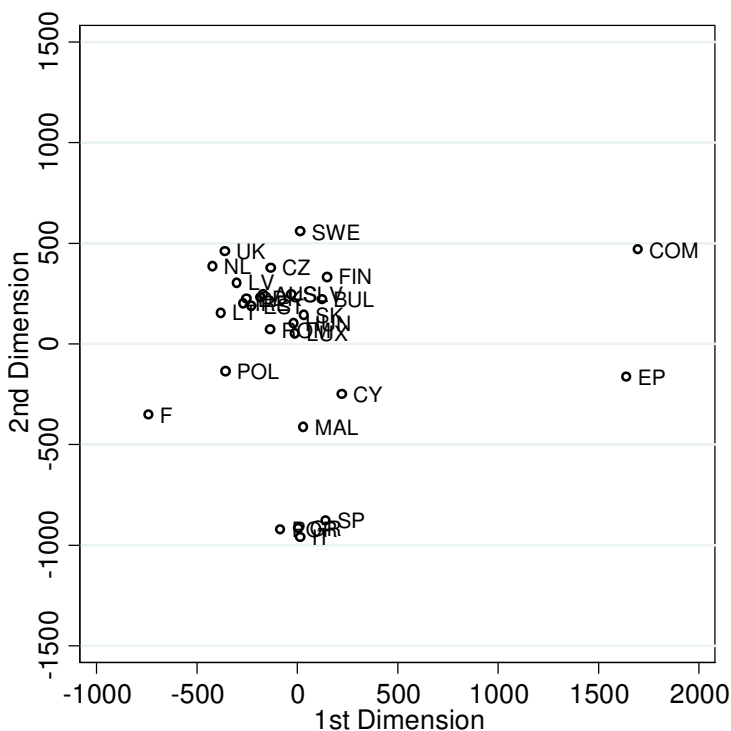
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<sup>46</sup> See Kruskal and Wish, *op. cit.*

<sup>47</sup> The Shepard diagram additionally confirms that the distances between the points correspond to the proximities rather well.

<sup>48</sup> Thomson, *op. cit.*

**Figure 1. Classical metric multidimensional scaling  
of member states (2 of 3 dimensions visualized; Stress 0.16)**



As to their voting behaviour, the new member states do not behave differently than the old member states with regard to the proposals of our dataset. There are hardly any negative votes; if at all Malta is an outlier with negative votes on two proposals. Denmark once votes negative – on COM (2007) 372 on the common organisation of the market in wine, mostly for ideational reasons. The UK, Finland, Austria, Italy and Estonia abstain once. This finding confirms the high degree of consensus detected in the literature.<sup>49</sup> Our data thus provides no evidence for different voting behaviour after enlargement. The new member states broadly seem to adhere to the consensus norm.<sup>50</sup> This is all the more surprising since we selected such proposals that initially were identified as controversial.

<sup>49</sup> Mattila, *op. cit.*; Mattila, Lane, *op. cit.*; Hagemann, *op. cit.*

<sup>50</sup> See Lewis, J. "The Janus Face of Brussels: Socialization and Everyday Decision-Making in the European Union", in *International Organization*, Vol. 59, No. 4, 2005, p. 937-971; Heisenberg, *op. cit.*



## Conclusion

In this paper I analyse the internal functioning of the European Union after Eastern enlargement. Starting from the puzzling observation that Eastern enlargement went more smoothly than initially expected by most practitioners and analysts, I here combine qualitative and quantitative information on post enlargement EU decision-making. I find that answering the complex question of continuity after enlargement demands more than a mono-causal theory. In fact, more factors seem to contribute to enabling the EU to act after enlargement.

First, institutional adjustments can allow decision-making processes to function even if a group grows in size. While the results of the Amsterdam and Nice intergovernmental conferences were often described as lagging behind the expectations and goals set out beforehand, other formal and informal adjustments after enlargement have allowed the coordination of policy positions in the Council preparatory groups. More informal meetings of experts allow continued policy coordination. The *tour de table* has been abolished and bundled positions are presented in the Council and in Coreper. There is also more informal coordination between the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission. While enlargement might have led to higher transaction costs,<sup>51</sup> actors find new channels for coordinating policies, allowing effective decision-making.

Second, the new member states have generally adapted to the modes of behaviour of the old EU15. Through the long accession negotiations they have become familiar with the practices of EU decision-making. For instance, they too adhere to the consensus norm and voting behaviour has not significantly changed after enlargement. The new member states are often described as pragmatic and solution-oriented. In the first years after enlargement they were willing to learn and to accept standard practices of EU decision-making. In our interviews the formative experience of holding the Council presidency was often underlined in particular by Slovak respondents.

Third, the analysis of member state preferences reveals that the new member states do not form a new block that generally increases the heterogeneity of the Council. This may come as a surprise given the different economic and cultural backgrounds of these countries. At the same time, it again highlights the difficulties of understanding preferences in EU policy-making. If heterogeneity is not substantively increased through enlargement, there is no reason to expect an enormous

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<sup>51</sup> Coase, R., "The Problem of Social Cost", in *The Journal of Law and Economics*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1960, p. 15.

increase of policy stability. Whether the Commission anticipates conflicts between member states and whether the EU orchestra today plays simpler tunes than before – to take up a metaphor by Downs and Locke – so far, however, open questions remain.<sup>52</sup> For instance, one Commission official has argued: “But maybe an explanation is that certain proposals are either not put on the table, or are put on the table in a different form, taking out controversial aspects because the Commission expects that otherwise they will not get through.”

In my analysis, I have not disaggregated our data to different policy areas given the still relatively small number of issues. However, the analysis of Thomson shows that this is potentially the way forward.<sup>53</sup> Perhaps some issue areas might have become more problematic after enlargement. I have focused here on the aggregate level. Another caveat concerning future potential conflicts might lie in the transitional discriminatory measures the new member states had to accept concerning the free movement of workers, as well as agricultural and structural funds.<sup>54</sup> Once this discriminatory membership ends, more conflict between new and old member states might erupt.

My general assessment of enlargement highlights that the accession of twelve new member states has not led to increasing gridlock in the EU. Against this backdrop, I would argue that in the perspective of future enlargements, it is important to maintain the high standards of accession criteria. The Copenhagen criteria and the adoption of the *acquis communautaire* still form a good basis for enabling successful cooperation with and integration of new EU member states.

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<sup>52</sup> Downs, G., Locke, D., Barsboom, P., “Is the Good News about Compliance Good News about Cooperation”, in *International Organization*, Vol. 50, No. 3, 1996, p. 379-406.

<sup>53</sup> Thomson, *op. cit.*

<sup>54</sup> Schneider, C., *Conflict, negotiation and European Union enlargement*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009.