The Border-making Policy of the European Union: Eastern Enlargement

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Abstract

Having no internal borders, what is a border for the European Union (EU)? Which criteria does this powerful organization pursue in its decision-making on further expansion: geographical, political, cultural, economic or all of these? What is the profit of the Union in advancing its external borders to the east? And why to the east and not the south or west across the Atlantic? Does it still mean that there is the reason for enlarging eastward based on the geographical belonging to Europe?[1].

This paper discusses the expansion of the European Union to the east with the main focus on its political and economic aspects of integration. The first part includes introduction to the concept of Europe, historic background about the formation of the united Europe in terms of geography, culture, politics and economy, juxtaposing opinions and viewpoints of different experts and political scientists on "what is Europe?" and what are the core issues of its enlargement. The second and third parts are dedicated to the advantages and disadvantages of European Integration for both parties concerned – the EU and the candidate/member state, in the case of the former having its own "demarcation policy" towards certain regions of the continent when it comes to unification. And the fourth part is about the communication and miscommunication of the informative bodies of the European Union that are responsible for public awareness on any process that goes on within the European family. The lack of information results in the ignorance of citizens of European and partner countries, which, of course, reflects on the further processes of expansion on the political level and cultural perception and mentality on the social level.

The conclusion sums up the research, and the bibliography lists the books, articles, monographs and Internet sources used in the course of the study.

Key words: border-making policy, European Union, enlargement, Eastern Partnership, Commuication.

The Concept of Enlarged Europe

The history of EU expansion is rather new, since the Union itself does not have a long history, however, the historians would argue this point bringing forward the

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[1]   Author's note, certain sources give various definitions of what is Europe. The reference proposed by Martin W. Lewis and Kären Wigen represents the Eurocentric approach "The idea of Europe as a distinct continent is of course another outcome of Eurocentric conception. Europe is also referred to as a continent in official EU documents such as the draft of the constitution" in the *Myth of Continents: A critique of Metageography,* (Lewis, Wigen, 1997) also cited by Dominic Saschenmaier in his article *Recent Trends in European History: The World Beyond Europe and Alternative Historical Spaces*, published in the "Journal of Modern European History", (2009), 7. In the same article D. Saschenmaier also states that "in many comparative projects the category of »Europe« is unfortunately often reified as historically given rather than systematically explored" (Saschenmaier 2009, p. 12).

seeds that the EU grew on and that the idea of a united Europe (or United States of Europe) had been introduced long before the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (1952, founded by Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany) and its successor The European Economic Community (1957, established by the same states pursuing the harmonization of economy of the member states).

Different disciplines have their own solution to the issue as to when the European Union was established, why it expands and what are the motives for the expansion.

The enlargement of the European Union is a rather challenging process that not only affects the Union itself but also the candidate and neighboring countries, that, for some reason, are not considered to be "enough democratized", "geographically are out of Europe" or do not meet "the European values" to become a member of the European family.

The perennial issues of "what is Europe" and "who can the EU legitimately claim to represent" inevitably arise with enlargement (Sjursen 2002, p. 491-513). And according to William Wallace, the most fundamental problem of enlargement is "finding criteria for defining what a European state is, or where Europe stops" (Wallace 1992, p. 34-51), referring to the European identity and the characteristics of the values that are defined as European.

Dominic Saschenmaier states that many scholars point out that the enthusiasm for European history is mainly concentrated on European countries such as Germany, France, and the Benelux countries, whereas in societies as the United Kingdom, for example, Euro-skepticism is still dominant. He believes that for many political and intellectual elites "European Union has been an elite-driven project devoid a concomitant force majeure", and this is the reason that the distinct European identity and a matching notion of historical consciousness are often portrayed as "potential cornerstones of a Europe-wide political culture – a culture that would create a solid frame for deepening and widening union". (Saschenmaier 2009, p. 16-17).

Different scholars point out two decisive factors as crucially necessary for European integration: 1) the reconstruction of the nation-states after World War II and recreation of the suffered economy (Gehler 2010, p.85-108), and 2) the Cold War and the polarization of the world system (Berend 2009, p.79-105). They suggest that perhaps it was the fear of the Soviet Union and the spread of communism that mobilized the integration of Western Europe, or maybe it was the direct influence of globalization and/or globalizing economy as a main driver for the integration. As Manuel Castells put it, "European integration is, at the same time, a reaction to the process of globalization and its most advanced expression" (Castells 1998, p.318).

The Westphalian system of sovereign nation-states is being challenged as national administrations lose their "gate-keeper-role" between domestic and international politics (Blatter 2008). Borders are multidimensional (Risse 2004, p.248-253). For certain world regions they are already being considered as unnatural formations, for instance, the European Union. Nevertheless, they are physical entities that determine peoples' perceptions (Yndigegn 2011, p.48-49), lives, and fates.

"Borders are spatial representations of power relations, and they become reflected in the minds of the people who live with and along the borders" (Anderson, O'Dowd 1999, p. 593-604; Delanty 2006, p. 183-202).

Borders divide people, attaching certain characteristics to them identified as belonging to this or that state and/or nation, religion, culture, being native or foreign, allies or enemies, etc. Borders are social constructions, but they construct social relations as well (Yndigegn 2011, p. 4).

Despite its unity, the EU still has differentiation between its member-states with the simple demarcation of East and West when attributing to different geographical (as well as political) parts of the Union or East and Central Europe referring to the Eastern and Central European countries with the seeming dominance of the so-called western founder states. In his Zurich speech Winston Churchill spoke of the creation of "the United States of Europe under Franco-German leadership," thus attaching the "western" superiority and referring to the Soviet Union (under the influence of which were today's eastern European member-states) as "destructive of European civilization and values" (Churchill, 19 Sept. 1946)

Later on in her speech delivered to the *College of Europe* in Bruges, Margaret Thatcher pointed out the importance of Europe's Unity to protect its borders and territory, nevertheless, she also separated Eastern and Western Europe, "We should develop the WEU [Western European Union], not as an alternative to NATO, but as a means of strengthening Europe's contribution to the common defence of the West [against Soviet forces which are constantly being modernized]. Above all, at a time of change and uncertainly in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, we must preserve Europe's unity and resolve so that whatever may happen, our defence is sure"[2].

Despite all the speeches and efforts to have a united space, single market economy, secured borders and equal rights for the candidate countries based on the common *acquis communautaire*, the EU still gives priorities to this or that country not referring to the legal criteria of integration but perhaps to the geographic and cultural proximity.

Helene Sjursen gives three different criteria to the prioritizations of the EU's enlargement policy in regards to other candidate-states in the overall enlargement process. She differentiates "utility", "values" and "rights", where "utility" refers to the Union's effort to find efficient solutions to concrete problems or dilemmas, certainly beneficial to interests and preferences in a given moment; "values" represent the "good life" of a specific community, and rights refer to a set of principles that are mutually recognized by all parties, irrespective of their particular interests, perceptions of "good life" and cultural identity (Sjursen 2002, p. 495).

Thus, why is there this prioritization and does it exist in fact? When considering the different rounds of enlargement and analyzing the profits that the European Union had, most of the factors speak for the cultural, economic as well as geographical proximity at the same time accounted for by the goods turnover and

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2   The speech delivered by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's to the College of Europe "The Bruges Speech", September 20, 1988, can be found at http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107332

market economy from which the EU members on the borderland benefited from new member states.

Wolfram Kaiser (Kaiser 2010, p.45-65) suggests focusing on particular effects of EU policies, mainly the free movement of people (which according to Francois--Xavier Laffeach leaves a strong impact on peoples' identities and preferences for "Europe") (Kaiser 2010, p. 60), abolition of border controls based on the Schengen Agreement or the hybridization of cross-national border regions with their own characteristics and identities. He places the core of the history of European integration in the intersection between EU politics and policy-making and social developments on the ground, within and across national societies. Another rather interesting opinion on the enlargement of the European Union is expressed by Jürgen Maier and Berthold Rittberger (Maier 2008, p. 244-268).

When discussing on "where to draw the line" and "what prompts the EU member-states to "shift" the EU's geographical border", J. Maier and B. Rittberger bring in the issue of the public attitude either in the EU member-states or in accession countries supporting the idea that the European integration process depends on individual attitudes towards one's nation and the level of support for vertical integration, i.e. whether the country is ready to transfer its sovereignty from national to EU level.

This gives rise to the idea of the territorial governance of the European Union as a unity and the member-states as constituent parts of the unity across national and geographic boundaries, identities, peoples. With each round of enlargement the spatial planning of the Union emerges on the agenda of the policy makers bringing up new challenges to the definition of transnational government, territoriality, institutionalization and re-spacing. Thus, the concept of a common Europe comes up to a new platform.

Every time, with the growth of the European Union the initial discourse of the notion of the "European space" based on the idea of mobility of goods and people, political integration and single economic market reshapes the form of previous knowledge giving birth to its new modes in order to restructure the EU policy agenda and European space following its recent trends and dimension in socio--political, economic and structural aspects.

Ole B. Jensen and Tim Richardson set out the idea of the nature of the "European project" and the meaning of contemporary political integration, drawing out issues for spatial policy making as well as sociological and geographical theories, which they call "a cultural sociology of space" (Jensen, Richardson 2004, p.1). The narrative that they introduce to open up perspectives on the making of European space within the policy processes and the EU institutions is the discourse of "Europe as monotopia," which captures the idea of a one-dimensional (mono) discourse of space and territory (topia/topos) (Jensen, Richardson 2004, p.3-10).

They represent the initial idea of creating a united European territory in the light of utopia (the word "utopia" in its etymological sense having literal connotation of "no place" interpreted by Thomas More (More 1561) as inaccessible or never achievable goals of humankind's dreams and ambitions at the same time bearing the association attributed by Utopian socialist thinkers in intellectual and

political currency as the best of all the places in the world – being "no place" in the "real world" (Jensen, Richardson 2004, p.1). And thus questioning as to what sort of Europe (in spatial terms) is being constructed by the integration to lie at the heart of the new spatial vision and surfaces of the policies of European integration they introduce the "space of *monotopia*".

Mutual benefits of enlargement

Thus, the expansion of the EU to the East precedes the readiness of the Union itself to enlargement and the preparedness of the candidate countries to meet the commitments of the acquis communautaire to become full members. Both players in the enlargement process pursue the main prospects of economic stability and border and national security. Nevertheless, despite the common interests, the bordering countries should be more interested in becoming a member of the Union in order to make use of the advantages given to them in joining the EU. However, having no mutual (if not even more) benefit, the Union would not start the negotiations with any of the Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC) to expand its political and economic unity. The European Commission uses the concept of "three C" – coherence, coordination and complementarity[3] in the EU development policy to register steady advance and progress in its strategic goals. In almost all of its annual reports the European Commission speaks about "benefits of enlargement" still from the prism of integration and regional cooperation. In this regard, H. Sjursen discusses the concerns of the Commission's task force to introduce a section "benefits of enlargement" in the annual report to ensure the EU's commitment to the enlargement to make it believable for the applicant states (Sjursen 2002, p. 499). Still if the enlargement was not beneficial to the EU, mainly in terms of economy, security, border policy as well as political power and labor force, it would never think of enlarging just out of mercy or for the sake of the welfare of potential candidate countries, investing enormous sums of money in their development.

In 2002, almost EUR 430 million were committed and EUR 383 million disbursed to East European and Central Asian countries "to assess the potential impact of enlargement on EU relations with east European countries, within the framework of the »Wider Europe« concept, which aims at enhancing stability and narrowing the prosperity gap on the new external borders of the EU. This will lead to increased support for activities that promote cross-border cooperation, particularly with respect to the western NIS (Newly Independent States)" (*European Commission Annual Report* 2003, p.9). Even in the 2001 edition of "Enlargement of the European Union" (Verheugen, 2001). Günter Verheugen, Member of the European Commission responsible for Enlargement said, "Enlargement is both an historic opportunity and an obligation for the European Union and so is one of our highest priorities" (Verheugen 2001, p. 3). He stated that the benefits of enlargement – political and economic – were already visible. It is interesting to note

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3   *Annual report 2003 on the European Community's development policy and the implementation of external assistance in 2002,* http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/documents/annual-reports/europeaid_annual_report_2003_en.pdf

that he points out the benefits for Europe and the candidate countries separately, in case of the former he especially stresses the following fields: a) The extension of the zone of peace, stability and prosperity in Europe will enhance the security of all its peoples; b) The addition of more than 100 million people, in rapidly growing economies, to the EU's market of 370 million will boost economic growth and create jobs in both old and new member states; c) There will be a better quality of life for citizens throughout Europe as the new members adopt EU policies for protection of the environment and the fight against crime, drugs and illegal immigration; d) Enlargement will strengthen the Union's role in world affairs – in foreign and security policy, trade policy, and the other fields of global governance.

As we see here, he not only speaks about the economic and political factors, but also the social and environmental issues in a global context attaching a rather significant importance to the adoption of the Union's policies for a quicker and better integration of the eastern and central candidates to face the global challenges together with the same objectives.

As for the benefits to Central and Eastern Europe he points out a) the emergence of stable democracies and integration of the minorities; b) economic reforms having led to high rates of economic growth and better employment prospects; and here he cannot but add that all these developments were due to the financial assistance of the EU in terms of future membership prospects, and of course, the growing trade surplus that the EU enjoyed with these countries (€17bln in 2000 [Verheugen 2001] even when these countries were not yet members).

Prioritization and delaying tactics of the EU

In fact the integration into the European Union is a slow and incremental process, which differs from country to country. Despite the complexity of the overall procedure, the European Union seems to have good experience in integrating neighboring countries into the European family. The first steps towards the eastern (fifth) enlargement were made during the meeting of the Copenhagen European Council in 1993 and with the signing of the Amsterdam Treaty (October 1997) as a result of which the accession negotiations started with six candidates in 1998. In order to enter the Union, candidate countries should fulfill the Copenhagen criteria and meet the demands of the _acquis communautaire,_ which is the accumulated body of the European Union law comprised of 35 chapters. The main condition for membership is that a candidate state fully accepts the _acquis._ Despite the fact that the criteria technically should be the same for every country wishing to access the Union, the EU depending on the case somehow reforms the existing policies, to cope with peculiarities of certain countries (not speaking about Turkey, as this is another case), nevertheless the _acquis_ practically remained unchanged. However, having the prospect of the fifth enlargement[4] (in 2004), the _European Council_ agreed on adding certain requirements - apart from the total acceptance of the _acquis_ - for

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4   Rounds of enlargement were the following: First in 1973 Britain, Denmark, Ireland; second in 1981 Greece; third in 1986 Portugal and Spain; fourth in 1995 Austria, Finland, Sweden; fifth (the biggest enlargement) in 2004 Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, which concluded with the acceptance of Romania and Bulgaria in 2007.

the Eastern and Central European countries to fulfill due to the political, economic and institutional transformation they had to meet as a result of post-communism development in order not to break the already existing institutional structure of the European Union.

There are three Copenhagen criteria for an applicant country to fulfill – **political, economic and institutional** (and **legislative** in terms of the *acquis)*:

- stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;
- the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union;
- the ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union[5].
- As Anna Michalski noted after these conditions the European Council added some more, like the good neighborly relations, adjustment of administrative structures, stable economic and monetary environment, etc. In a word, the criteria required continuous monitoring in case of the fifth enlargement, as similar things did not exist in other cases (Michalski 2006, p. 270-293). These "measures" were taken either to prevent the accession of the so-called "unwanted" members, or they were a kind of precaution against countries previously under Soviet influence. Here we can even recall the ambiguity in the economic criteria for accession – a) functioning market economies, and b) to have, by the date of accession, the capacity to cope with clash and market forces within the EU[6].

This was introduced despite the full awareness that after the collapse of the east soviet bloc, there was a huge difference in average income levels, technological standards, legal systems, institutions, economy and the overall differences in the structure under the communist regime (Sajdik 2008, p. 6).

Still, the EU seems to give priority to some states in comparison to the others both by the allocation of pre-accession aid and the accession process itself.

For this, H. Sjursen suggests two hypotheses on the EU enlargement in terms of economic benefits: 1) the EU would prioritize enlargement to those states where the gain would be higher than the cost. The gain would be defined in terms of a) economic gain; b) security gain; and 2) the EU would prioritize enlargement to those states that respect the universal principles of human rights and democracy (Sjursen 2002, p. 495).

As is known, full integration is possible only with the consensus of all the member states, however, during the history of European integration, the founding members used the *blocking or delaying* (Schimmelfennig 2001, p. 47-80) tactics several times, refusing to open negotiations with potential candidates and giving priority to other states. These tactics give birth to new associations or diplomatic tricks. In the case of Central and Eastern European countries' first demands for full membership, they were offered the chance to become part of the "European Confederation" or "Stabi-

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[5]   *Copenhagen criteria* 1993, http://ec.europa.eu/bulgaria/documents/abc/72921_en.pdf
[6]   *Copenhagen criteria* 1993, http://ec.europa.eu/bulgaria/documents/abc/72921_en.pdf

lity Pact" (Schimmelfennig 2001, p. 56) and in case of Turkey, the only association the EU could think of, was to offer the country "a privileged partnership," which still can be mutually beneficial for both sides, if the views and positions of the country's home and foreign policy and the EU's external relations policy are well defined.

On the other hand the Treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam were the first signals for the biggest enlargement. Nevertheless, the CEEC first bid resulted in joining association or "membership light" (i.e. to exclude more cost-intensive Community policy), as Frank Schimmelfennig calls it, which enables potential winners to intensify economic market integration.

The seemingly distinct policy of the European Union sometimes sheds a blurred light on the transparency of integration and the real intent of the EU, where Turkey is the brightest example. The so-called "excuses" used for CEEC accession, have taken up new force for Turkey and European Neighborhood Policy and Eastern Partnership countries. The EU always has a plan "B" behind the integration criteria, if the candidate country does not "appeal" to the Union. However, it remains unclear, why then it accepts the application and starts official talks with a potential member if the latter has no chances of integration, moreover, if the Union has not defined its criteria for "Europe".

WHERE THE BORDER ENDS: EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

Taking into account that the economic situation in some of the Central and Eastern European countries did not differ much at the time of the opening of negotiations from other post-Soviet countries in transition, the question arises why the European Union decided to close its external borders to the east stopping at Poland, Slovakia and Romania, whereas Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus (though the political regime is different here) are geographically located on the same borderline of geographical Europe, even closer, than Balkan and Scandinavian countries. And if expanding Europe not only on the border proximity of its geography, Turkey, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan could also easily fit into the concept.

Probably with this in mind, in 2008 the Eastern Partnership (EaP) was initiated (and inaugurated in 2009) to establish free trade and partnership relations with eastern neighbors of the European Union – Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus – at the same time continuously negotiating on visa liberation issues but actively avoiding the possibility of talks on future membership. Considering these post-Soviet countries of strategic importance, the EU strives to hold its grip on them, institutionalizing and developing the human rights, democracy, rule of law, market economy, sustainability, minority issues, etc.

"To address the new co-operation needs specifically linked to the Eastern Partnership, the Commission has earmarked € 600 million for the period 2010-2013, including € 350 million of fresh funds. This € 350 million top up adds to existing funds for the six Partner Countries within the framework of the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument"[7].

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[7]   _Vademecum on financing in the frame of the Eastern Partnership_ 2010, http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/ docs/eap_vademecum_en.pdf

However, the EU seems to have its favorites among the EaP states as well - Ukraine and Moldova that have the highest chances out of the six EaP states to become full members one day. Ukraine perhaps has more possibilities for membership than an official candidate Turkey, which has been running for membership for over 60 years.

Thus, the question is what are the benefits of the European Union when financing the democratization of the Eastern Partnership countries? What is the main aim of this superpower to close its official borders on the geographical Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, making these countries a bridge separating it from Russia (apart from the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad)? Does the EU fear Russia, thus considering these six countries a safety zone or it is a strategic approach of increasing the economic profit through more or less cheap import and export or cheaper labor force without formally having a single market with these countries?

COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS TOWARDS ENLARGEMENT

The process of globalization was not simply an expansion of the European continent but a new world order of domination and subordination (Geyer 1995, p.1034-1060) among different regions.

The website of the European Commission treats globalization as a positive thing for the European Union on one hand – from the prospective of liberalizing transport costs and technological processes in free trade and goods turnover among the member states, increasing the EU economic functionality, thus bringing good benefits; on the other hand challenging the Union to rise its competitiveness in order to follow the new trends of globalization (which they equalize to the rise of international economic integrity)[8].

Thus focusing on the economic globalization in general, mainly based on the transnational infrastructural and technological communication, the main system of control seemed to have been turned a blind eye to. I speak about public opinion and communication with the societies of member and candidate states in order to increase the public awareness on integration and expansion issues. Despite the fact that the European Union's Information Centers and the Commission's Eurobarometer project operate on a very high level of professionalism providing all types of information in different parts of the world, the society still lacks first-hand experience with the Union, and the main existing communication and source of information is the media.

In the year 2000, the European Commission adopted its *Communication Strategy for Enlargement* with the objective to communicate the reasons and strategies for enlargement, the challenges and impacts, and to provide information on the candidate countries trying to promote dialogue between the policy-makers and the public[9].

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[8]   http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/international/globalisation/index_en.htm
[9]   see: *the European Commission's Communication Strategy for Enlargement* adopted in May 2000, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/enlargement_process/past_enlargements/ communication_strategy/sec_737_2000_en.pdf

The *Communication Strategy* mainly emphasizes the importance of communication on the online platform based on the fact that it is more effective and cheaper, however, it does not take into account that not every citizen will go to the website of the European Commission to check the information on the enlargement process, unless he/she has a personal or professional interest in the overall procedure, consequently they depend on the information provided through media coverage, which holds true especially for those levels of political system that are perceived as "far away" (Maier, Rittberger, 2008, p. 243-267) from everyday life.

And of course, mass media also creates certain attitudes towards the enlargement process, since every media outlet in every country has its own strategy and "angle" for covering certain events on the political and international level. The same piece of news can be covered with different angles, apart from the "5 Ws" that are the core of journalism[10]. According to Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks this means that "the public opinion is constrained by political ideology, political parties and elites in domestic countries" (Hooghe, Marks 2005, p. 419-443). It is an undeniable fact that the media influences the understanding of the subject through the modes of presentation, suppression of certain details and framing of individual perception (Maier, Rittberger 2008, p. 247-248) towards a certain piece of news, object and event, thus indirectly dictating to the public on what to think about it. Increasingly over the course of the twentieth century, struggles for autonomy have turned into contestations over the terms of global integration – not over whether the world should move together but by whom and under what terms the identities of individuals, social groups and entire societies should be defined. As this point is reached and passed again and again, the former center loses particularity; the more globalization proceeds, the less any regions or society can pretend to control the struggle over the terms of integration (Geyer, Bright, 1995, p. 1058).

J. Maier and B. Rittberger analyzing the empirical data (conducted by Erik Jones and Niels van der Bijl in 2004) gathered during the study on public support for EU enlargement, came up with the results showing the citizens' support based on "trading relations between »old« member states and accession countries, the geographic proximity … and identity-related factors, such as historic relationships and cultural aspects [including religion]" (cultural background variables) (Maier, Rittberger 2008, p. 246-250).

Thus, we can state that the public attitude towards the European enlargement is more or less country-centered, based on the media evaluation irrespective of the mode of portrayal – positive, negative or even neutral, and historically, culturally and geographically driven. Because of the lack of direct contact with the EU structures, the ancient system of information circulation comes into force – spreading from "mouth to mouth." The media being considered the "fourth power" continues to form public opinion.

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[10]   Five Ws are Who? What? When? Where? Why? And How? Nevertheless the answers to the last two questions will differ, as there is the human factor – approach, attitude and bias of a journalist and media outlet.

Conclusion

Summing up it can be stated that the enlargement towards east gives more stability and security to the Union and a guarantee to avoidance of unprecedented political, economic and other external factors, good location and geographical proximity to the members, which in its turn results in economic growth, goods and labor force mobility, peace and prosperity.

The European Union due to the trends of globalization is ready to face any challenge and to change tactics dictated by the circumstances. Though there is no clear definition of the concept of "Europe" and "demarcation of external borders" the EU considers every possible solution to increase the market economy and the security of the Union. Even if it was a hard task to bring up the economies of CEEC before and after the integration, the EU, having in mind the future benefits to gain from the central and eastern neighbors, adopted various policies to keep on going the economies of the previously soviet-influenced and currently European member states. Nevertheless, inside the Union the delineation of East and West continues as a geographical and political notion, thus separating the founder states from the newly accessed ones, showing the superiority of the West over the East, which is mainly driven by economic factors. On the other hand, the integration of central and eastern countries of the European continent was more or less a smooth process accounted for by the cultural and historic similarities of the European countries.

Despite the re-bordering and de-bordering of the territories of the Union, as well as the existing or non-existing borders within the EU, these boundaries go on being social constructions underlined by collective identities, shared memories between bordering nations and different generations, which have their influence on political processes ongoing in political and geographic Europe with country--centered public attitude towards the European enlargement.

Regardless of this, the European Union's keen interest in neighboring non--European countries, mainly ENP and EaP states, whether accounted for by economic benefits, geographic security or cultural proximity, the question still remains unanswered as to where and when the Union is going to expand and what are the main criteria of choosing the potential member-state.

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