

**Conference: “Contributing to Lasting Stability:  
the European Union’s Role in South East Europe”  
September 15, 2006**

***Presentation Abstracts***

**Kjell Engelbrekt**

***Unfinished Business:  
Bulgaria’s EU Accession and the Issue of Accountability***

On 17 May 2006 the European Commission, acting on advice from the Enlargement Directorate-General and backed by the European Parliament, reaffirmed 2007 as the year of Bulgaria’s and Romania’s accession, but demanded that efforts be redoubled in a number of areas to meet the membership conditions until the year’s end.

In Bulgaria’s case, the main source of concern raised by the Commission relates to the judiciary and enforcement deficiencies. An official press release said the country should “demonstrate clear evidence of results in the fight against corruption, in terms of investigations and judicial proceedings,” and further urged the government to “reform the judiciary, in particular to reinforce its transparency, efficiency and impartiality.”

With regard to these final hurdles on the path toward full EU membership, this paper will look briefly at three issue areas linked to EU criticisms against Bulgaria, namely cabinet-level corruption, judicial independence and the establishment of a public procurement system compatible with Union regulations.

A common denominator in each of the three cases appears to be a reluctance to create a robust normative and institutional framework for evaluating and ‘individualizing’ accountability. The analysis goes on to consider the ‘accountability culture’ reflected in the country’s judicial and administrative system.

**Tom Gallagher**

***The EU and Romania since 2000:  
Stimulating Recovery or Consolidating Backwardness?***

Romania’s fragile democracy was strengthened by the EU’s decision to offer it the chance of membership in 1999. It is due to join in 2007 or 2008 as a full member. But its economy remains uncompetitive, its politics are oligarchic and corrupt, and the state remains an underperforming one in key respects.

If blame is to be assigned, perhaps most belongs to the EU. It has failed to adopt an accession strategy able to address Romania’s specific problems, ones stemming from a hardline communist regime that devastated the country followed by a decade of lost reform characterized by runaway kleptocracy. The EU’s pre-accession instruments – Phare, Ispa and Sapard – have not succeeded in stimulating profound or even a medium level of modernization. Much pre-accession funding has been wasted or stolen, or else will be returned to Brussels because low-grade sectors of the bureaucracy cannot devise suitable projects.

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The EU became over-reliant on the post-communists of the [former Social Democratic government] PSD even when it became clear that they were only paying lip-service to the EU’s reform agenda. It failed to engage with Romanian society as a whole, even with the most energetic pro-European sectors. The PSD succeeded in persuading key European players that Romania should be accepted on informal criteria with promises of reform to be carried out in the future. Democracy in 2004 was arguably weaker than it was in 1999 when the EU first became a decisive player in Romanian affairs and a change of government only occurred with difficulty in the face of demonstrable electoral fraud.

The EU failed to use the leverage which could have enabled the Romanians to be enjoying the benefits of membership in their everyday lives by 2006. Romania’s peripheral status is likely to deepen inside the EU. EU protectionism ensures that Romania will not enjoy tangible benefits from membership long into the future. Meanwhile nascent small and medium-sized enterprises which emerged despite official obstructionism will be forced to close in huge numbers because of tough EU regulations and superior EU competition. Such conditions are unlikely to reinforce democracy and, unless the EU decides to have a radical re-think (not an instinct it is renowned for), the evidence points to Romania’s backwardness being reinforced rather than towards a recovery stimulated owing to the EU engagement with the country.

**Lavinia Stan**

***Romania’s EU Integration:  
Between Political Will and Political Capacity***

January 2007 will mark Romania’s belated acceptance as a member of the European Union. The ruling Truth and Justice Alliance, the opposition Social Democrats and most of the electorate will celebrate the anticipated event.

This was a long journey, marked by manifold inconsistencies, unwelcome detours, constant self-introspection and renewed hopes for a better future. Romania made it to the finish line later than the Central European or Baltic states, but it made it, nevertheless. To date, most studies on the EU’s eastern enlargement have tended to focus on the continuous bargaining that has taken place between the Union and the candidate states, with particular focus on the nature of the accession conditions imposed by Brussels, and the degree to which the candidates managed to fulfill them (or not) by the established deadlines.

Much emphasis has been placed on the political will of the candidate states to inch their way closer to the EU, with the assumption being that whenever progress was not recorded, the cause was a reluctance on the part of the local political class to become more transparent and accountable, stem out high-level political corruption, reform the judiciary, streamline the government or adopt the cumbersome *acquis communautaire*.

By contrast, this presentation shifts the lens from what a candidate state like Romania has been willing to do to what it has been able to do to guarantee the success of its bid for EU membership. Indeed, its EU accession has stayed under the signs of both political will and political capacity. As I argue, even when political will was present, the

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country’s political capacity was reduced, seriously restricting the manoeuvring space of the political class and placing the country at a disadvantage compared with its Central European neighbours.

**Elena Lazarou**

***How Europe Matters to Turkey:  
Europeanization at Work in the Case of Turkey***

How European is Turkey? The time following the decision to list Turkey as a candidate to join European Union (EU) in 1999 has been marked by intense exploration by scholars to determine how such a membership would impact Turkish politics and, more frequently, how such a membership would impact the EU.

This paper disputes the widely held notion that Turkey is necessarily unfit to develop a European identity. Instead, it posits a counter-intuitive hypothesis: that Europeanization, made popular in the mid-1990s in the study of the European Union, is already at work in the effects and the mechanisms and processes of the Euro-Turkish relationship.

The paper is divided into three main sections. The first section seeks to elucidate the history of Euro-Turkish relations laying out the basic assumptions underpinning the analysis. Based on these assumptions the following section explains how Europeanization might be applied in reference to Turkish foreign policy. In the concluding section, the concept of Europeanization is used to explain foreign policy decisions made by the Turkish government throughout the years 2002-2005 with regards to the critical regions of the Middle East and the Balkans. It is suggested that a “Europeanization” shift in Turkish strategic behavior is already discernible.

**Serif O. Bahcecik & Emre Uckardesler**

***Multiple Positions of Domestic Actors towards the EU: Inconsistency or Inevitability?***

Turkey and the EU have a long history marked by both compromises and quarrels. This history, however, cannot be sufficiently grasped by merely looking at high politics of diplomacy and public administration. Socio-political forces, in both Turkey and Europe, play significant roles in structuring the relationship. Mutual expectations, economic interests, historically and conjecturally shape perceptions and determine the outcomes. Leaving the European dimension aside, this paper examines the multiple positions of Turkish socio-political actors regarding the EU. These multiplicities, rather than being caused by any perplexity, stem from 1) the economic, cultural and political commitments of relevant parties; 2) the gains and losses EU accession entails *vis a vis* these commitments. Along three issue-areas, human rights, civil-military relations, and labor market regulation, we demonstrate that the attitudes of political parties, the army, unions, and civic associations towards the exigencies of the accession have been selective and issue-based, rather than an outright acceptance or rejection of the EU. Thus, the accession process has led the actors to adopt seemingly contradictory stances towards the EU.

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**Lenard Cohen**

***The Europeanization of Western Balkan Political Culture:  
Pre-Accession Challenges to Democratic Consolidation***

The EU has clearly been a stabilizing factor in Southeastern Europe, but whether the region has achieved the kind of self-sustaining democratic institutions and values necessary for admission to the EU remains an open question. The paper will explore the uneven process of political development and institutionalization of European Union values within the countries of the Western Balkans. Although troubled by post-conflict legacies and internal strains, the countries of the region have manifested important changes in their political cultures that can facilitate the process of their EU accession.

At the same time, some of the Western Balkan regimes have faced special difficulties and constraints on their process of political transformation, and consequently on their eligibility for rapid EU entry. Comparatively surveying the trends in the Western Balkans, the analysis will devote particular attention to the reasons for the lag in, and continued obstacles to democratic development by the countries in the region, as well as their future potential to meet EU membership/absorption criteria.

**Vladimir Gligorov**

***Economic Prospects and Challenges in South East Europe***

The paper deals with the political developments in the Balkans and their consequences for the sustainable economic growth and development of this region. Key political decisions will have to be made in the next few months that will address the fundamental constitutional issues and the process of EU integration. Those may have positive consequences for the sustainability of the generally encouraging economic developments.

The resolution of the constitutional issues should contribute to regional stability while the start of the EU Balkan enlargement with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania at the beginning of 2007, together with the signing of contractual relations with all the transition countries in Southeast Europe, should decrease risks of investing in this region. The paper assesses the risks of political mishaps and the prospects of economic developments in the near future and in the next few years.

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**Robert Austin**

***Albania Finally Turns the Corner***

Albania has endured one of the most painful on again off again transitions in the region. Political polarization and infighting meant that Albania lost important time in fulfilling its ambition to join NATO and the European Union. Moreover, the country's image, as primarily a haven for criminal activity and corruption, has been hard to shake. However, with the elections of 2005, Albania has finally made some important steps and the country may well finally be on its way forward. It remains to be seen, however, if Albanian political life has matured enough so that politicians can work together in implementing the policies that will be required to keep the momentum.

**David Law**

***The EU and Security Sector Reform in South East Europe***

This paper gives a brief overview of the thinking behind security sector reform, and the role it has played in the efforts of South East European countries to integrate into the EU and other regional organizations. It explains how the EU's own approach to the security sector reform has evolved, paying particular attention to the recently completed concepts of the EU Commission and Council, and the overarching EU SSR framework which they have spawned. The paper discusses the challenges ahead for both the EU and regional actors as the SSR agenda comes to occupy an increasingly central place in programs for enlargement and partnership.

**Charles Pentland**

***From Petersberg to Pristina:  
ESDP Operations in South East Europe***

In the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) the EU has completed two operations in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). It is currently engaged in four more in South East Europe – two in Bosnia-Herzegovina, one in the FYROM, and one on the margins of the region, the border between Moldova and Ukraine.

These operations range from fairly modest exercises in police-training and support for the rule of law, on the one hand, to the major commitment represented by the 7,000 troops of EUFOR, the successor of NATO's SFOR in Bosnia, on the other.

Although the experience of ESDP in South East Europe is not long, the region accounts for seven of the seventeen operations so far undertaken – surely a measure of the region's relative importance among the EU's security priorities, as well as an indication of the new division of labour between the EU and the US.

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It is not too early for a preliminary assessment of these operations, given the likelihood that, in the event of an agreement on the future status of Kosovo, the EU will take charge of a crisis management and security mission there.

Accordingly, this paper examines the record of ESDP operations in South East Europe to date and what lessons it might hold for the various forms of mission that might be undertaken in a post-UNMIK Kosovo.

**Franz-Lothar Altmann**

***EU Commitments and Future Prospects in South East Europe***

Since the mid-90s the EU has become more and more engaged in South East European issues, having been mainly a kind of junior partner of the USA in the beginning years of the Balkan conflicts. Now, the Union is also increasingly taking over commitments in the security sectors, like the transformation of SFOR into EUFOR or the NATO military mission into the EU military mission “Concordia”.

In the civil sector the EU is exercising protectorate tasks, here also as a take-over from what was originally an international engagement: UNSR to EUSR in Bosnia & Herzegovina (BiH) and the intended transfer of UNMIK competencies to the EU in the framework of the future international presence in a new Kosovo. In the latter the EU will, in addition to its already existing responsibilities in economics, also accept a leading role in the areas of police and justice. In BiH the EU has taken over the police mission from IPTF as EUPM, in Macedonia it proved its capabilities by performing the EU Police Mission “Proxima” and the follow-up Police Advisory Team “EUPAT”.

However, for the sustainable stabilization and development of the region, the EU’s offer at the Thessaloniki Summit 2003 of a membership perspective for the Western Balkans is much more important. But exactly this has recently become more and more doubtful since in the EU member states are engaged in an unpleasant discussion started on the basis of an increasing enlargement fatigue. There is now a clear rift between the EU Commission, which is firmly advocating the unchanged willingness of the EU to stay to its promises, and between many politicians in the member states but also in the European Parliament, who seem to concede more and more to the voice of the people expressed by critical responses in the Eurobarometer. In this context a new tendency of discussion is coming up, namely the quest for alternatives to the present enlargement path: junior membership, concentric circles and similar ideas are experiencing a rebirth.

Nevertheless it remains clear that the EU is not reflecting on an exit strategy regarding its engagement in the region. The number of personnel will be reduced in order to bring more ownership back into the region (example: Stability Pact transformation) but on the technical level the EU has decided on tightening links with the region as evidence of the recently concluded Treaty on the Energy Community as well as the inclusion of the region into the European Common Aviation Area.

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**Alexandre Berlin**

***The South-Eastern Europe Stability Pact with Special Reference to Health Issues***

This paper discusses the history and selected activities of the South-Eastern Europe (SEE) Stability Pact since 1999, including its geographic coverage, key statistical socio-economic and health indicators, its present structure, and current discussions concerning future prospects (beyond 2007). The paper particularly focuses on the history of the SEE Health Network from its beginnings in the 2001 Dubrovnik health ministerial meeting, with the European Office of the World Health Organization and the Council of Europe as the driving forces, to the 2005 second health ministerial meeting. The author examines the structure of the network, and the importance of regional cooperation and of recognizing the key contribution of health to economic development. He also discusses the main projects of the health network and the impact of specific projects in the region and their relationship to the European Union integration process. Specifically, the paper addresses the issues of blood safety and tobacco control. Finally the author touches on the impact of the SEE Stability Pact and its Health Network – growing practical cooperation and self-confidence, cooperation with the neighboring countries, in particular Greece and Slovenia. The last section of the paper raises questions for the future. Is the concept of a Regional Cooperation Council, on the Nordic Council model, with regional ownership, a viable concept in the short term? What impact will this proposed change have on the SEE Health Network? In the health field will the Regional Cooperation Council have the benefit of raising the visibility of the region internationally, for example in such for arenas as the World Health Assembly?