



REMARKS REGARDING EASTWARD ENLARGEMENT.

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Remarks regarding Eastward enlargement.

The paper provides a comprehensive assessment of social, political, and economic dimensions of the Eastward enlargement. The author adopts a similar approach to discuss a new formation established in result of the enlargement, namely the new European Union of 25 member states. This should facilitate the analysis and attempt to define the nature of the process described as the 'Eastward Enlargement'.

The enlargement of the European Union has become a fact. Eight out of ten new comers are former 'eastern block' countries of poor economic development, young and unstable democracy, and confused, tired of rapid changes societies. The enlargement is the largest of all previous enlargements and at the same time the 'poorest' one. What can new members states bring to the Common Europe? Is it only their territories and populations, with the main objective to turn the EU into the largest and the most globally competitive market? Or is there anything else, something we are not able to name and foresee?

The European Union of 25 is a multi-level community of diverse speed of development. It consists of states of well-established democracy and markets based on Euro, as well as countries that are lagging behind where still several years are needed to meet the conditions for introducing the common currency. In every respect the New EU is less cohesive, and faces extreme differences ranging from poles of luxury to areas of poverty or from active citizens to excluded individuals. We have to deal with tensions that can not always be easily recognised. Very often the 'Old Europe' does not seem to notice social and political consequences of changes which took place on the continent after 1989. In the majority of new member states, it is not recognized that there is a very close relationship between their communist heritage and what they bring to the European Union. Moreover, it is not recognized that the first stage of introducing democracy and market economy in 1989-2004 had an impact of on the current situation in those countries and their societies. With the current economic growth in the new post-communist member states, which is two or three times higher than the EU average, convergence can be reached after about 30 years. Are societies of those countries prepared for a further long and burdensome period of reforms?

Shortly speaking, countries such as Poland, Lithuania, Latvia or Slovakia are still perceived as situated somewhere "close to Siberia", or - to the contrary - as the same like the rest EU member states, that is only "slightly lagging behind". In either case the superficial approach and misunderstanding of new member states is striking. However, true benefits of the Eastward Enlargement can only be derived by getting into the heart of the conditions related to it. Therefore, the question asked by author is much serious, namely: What is the European Union of today and what are the most important tasks ahead of it in the years to come?

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For Poland the past 15 years have been very complex. The country witnessed huge successes and unprecedented problems related to the change of the system. During that time we joined NATO and the European Union. We have become a safer country than during previous 250 years. Poland, at least potentially, has become more influential than ever. For the first time in our history, our relations with our immediate neighbours are free from conflicts. Also for the first time our geopolitical location between Germany and Russia does not pose any threat for the existence of the state.¹

On the other hand, the national economy has just started showing initial signs of upswing after a deep recession. The internal policy is still based on post-communist partisan relations and regularly disturbed by further crisis and scandals. Our society will have to wait long before they feel any improvement in their material status, whereas in the sphere of mentality it is still a subject of political game. Despite a long way to go, according to a general opinion, numerous difficulties are yet to come. And there is no simple relationship between achievements of our foreign policy and the gross national product.

The transformation in Poland has lost its initial impetus and at the moment our further integration with the west is the guarantee that reforms are completed. Since reforms have not been completed, Poland encountered an 'accession shock' in various fields, due to the requirement of adjusting to new standards in virtually all spheres of social, political, economic, cultural, and individual life. Thus, we have to ask ourselves and our partners where we are and where are we heading to.

The Eastward Enlargement of the EU has become a fact. The enlargement of the European Union has become a fact. Eight out of ten new comers are former 'eastern block'

¹ Compare: J. Reiter, *Awans do roli partnera (Promotion to a partner position)*, Rzeczpospolita, 5.11.2004.

countries of poor economic development, young and unstable democracy, and confused, tired of rapid changes societies. The enlargement is the largest of all previous enlargements and at the same time the 'poorest' one. What can new member states bring to the Common Europe? Is it only their territories and populations, with the main objective to turn the EU into the largest and the most globally competitive economy? Or is there anything else, something we are not able to name and foresee? Finally, consequences will have to be faced by the new European Union?

Very often the 'Old Europe' does not seem to recognise social and political consequences of changes which took place on the continent after 1989. Moreover, the majority of new member states, refuse to recognise that there is a very close relationship between their communist heritage and what they actually bring to the European Union. Moreover, it is not recognized that the first stage of introducing democracy and market economy in 1989-2004 had an impact on the current situation in those countries and their societies, even though statistical data alone are very telling. After accepting 10 new states, including Poland, on 1 May 2004 the population of the EU increased by 74 million people, that is nearly 20%, but at the same time the EU budget increased by only 5%.² With the current economic growth in the new post-communist member states, which is two or three times higher than the EU average, convergence can be reached after about 30 years. On the other hand, the system transformation has been implemented in those countries for 15 years now and the process is a considerable burden for the societies. All together we are talking about 45 years of huge effort, which is a mere continuation of everyday struggle against the communist system in 1945-1989. Are societies of those countries prepared for a further long and burdensome period of reforms?

We can ask the following question: What the 'Eastward Enlargement' is for old and new member states of the European Union?

The process of European integration started immediately after WW II with the aim of eliminating conditions that led to the war itself. France and Germany, former perpetual enemies and the main driving force of the integration, started (together with their immediate neighbours) the project of economic integration from heavy industry and steel sector, that is two areas on which armament was based. Shortly after, they started dealing with nuclear power, or the most serious threat from a military point of view. It was the time in Europe

² B. Robinson, *Początek „cudu ekonomicznego” w nowych państwach UE*, The Independent of Sunday, 14.11.2004, za: Redakcja Euro PAP, 16.11.2004, www.europap.com.pl

when the economy – considered by the author as a base – shaped awareness. The European integration started as an integration of economies.

The economic ‘Project Europe’ was successfully implemented during further stages of adjusting industries, economies, trade, and finally introduction of a common currency. It contributed to building peace based on prosperity of the western part of the continent. For decades, step by step, enjoying freedom, free market and democracy, western societies built all institutions of a modern democratic state. All processes were implemented in the national political space, with nations and nation states gradually and for a long time could naturally consider which elements they can give up for a common good. On this foundation the European Communities built their success.

At the same time, on the other side of the iron curtain, last traces of democracy, civic activity, enterprise, freedom of speech and freedom to act were eradicated. In the name of a communist experiment economy, democracy and social tissue were destroyed. Contrary to fascism it was a total destruction, since in the East such institutions as rule of law, pluralism, freedom of speech, self-governance, and private ownership could not exist at all, since they posed a threat to the foundations of the Soviet system.³ What was interesting, even in the Third Reich the national German capital could thrive, and, as one student from Sicily has told me, who heard it from her grand mother: in fascist Italy you could leave your house open for a night, because there was order and the rule of law, and it does not matter what kind of law it was.

The first conclusion that can be drawn is that democratic transformation in Western Europe started with the end of WW II, and particular elements typical for contemporary states had existed there much earlier, which made the restoration of democratic, free market based substance much easier. Countries, which as a result of the Yalta Agreement got under the influence of the USSR did not have such a chance, and they started rebuilding their sovereignty only after 1989 in fundamentally different social, political and economic context. If we add that these countries lagged behind Western Europe still before the war, we should be talking about a 50 year distance dividing the two parts of the continent. The consequences of a delay by several decades regarding access to modern technologies in the middle of the 20th century are clear. And one should remember that this was mere economic dimension of the civilisation development.

³ Latest history of Europe including the development in its eastern part is discussed by Norman Davies in his book entitled *Europe*. Kraków 1998. First issue: N. Davies, *Europe. A History*, 1996.

After 1989, when communism collapsed, and to be more precise after 1990, Eastern Europe started rebuilding what was destroyed in the post-war period. The process started from shaping nation states. Naturally, they resorted to own patterns developed in the period before the 'Russian experiment', namely to the 20 year period between the wars, or even earlier. Thus, Poland and other countries rebuilt structures of the state, political and administrative systems, pluralism, etc. The countries naturally resorted to their own traditions and political cultures. However, it was a step backward if compared with what happened in the West. The differences were very clear regarding the quality of democracy its constituent parts, such as civic activity (not mentioning civil society, establishment of which will still take long in those countries), political culture, including, among others, the quality of political elites. Therefore, we can conclude that social and political consequences of the recent development in Central and Eastern Europe contributed to the fact that, despite commencing the system transformation in 1990, the countries relatively moved backward if compared to the western part of the continent, although the pace of the regress is much slower.

It is very interesting to compare nationally oriented, even romantic political cultures in countries which escaped the domination of the Soviet Union and pragmatic, liberal political cultures created still in the 1950s, political culture of Almond, Powell and Verby. Just regained culture, tradition, independence, sovereignty, and national awareness taste differently after 15 years of having an independent country than after several decades or centuries. There are also different consequences in social, political and economic spheres.

Not only this comparison highlights the clash between the abundance of capital in the West and virtually no own capital in new member states of the EU, which translates into the ease which citizens of the Old Europe reach for privatised national assets in Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and other new member states. Weaknesses of political elites and economies in those countries automatically give rise to fraud and scandals which shake the appropriation process. However, the perception of an average citizen is that foreign capital also participates in the 'plundering'. This justifies the strong position of populist political factions in those countries and their influence on social, political and economic dimensions of the integration process.

The development of western economies took place in completely different conditions. Initially the economies developed in their national sovereign contexts of free market, additional support from the Marshall's Aid, and than they combined the best elements in process of integration. The reconstruction of economies in post-communist states has been implemented in different conditions and has not been completed. The national capital there

has to withstand free market competition with the West, a competition strengthened due to the integration process. Very often the competitor is the European Union itself.

In Poland and other countries of the former eastern block reconstruction of the national space started in 1989. This should contribute to establishing independent states with their own social, political and economic spheres. The problem is that the changes are forced in a short time instead of their incremental implementation as a natural evolution. Considering that the 'deadline' was the accession of more or less rebuilt eastern states to the EU on 1 May 2004, the countries had only 14-15 years for the process. Is it possible, in such a short time, to build modern and stable states having sound economic basis? Therefore, the third conclusion is the following: after the Round Table Debate in Poland and the collapse of the Berlin wall we had too little time to build such modern and stable states with sound economic basis. What took decades and centuries for the Old Europe to implement through natural and gradual evolution cannot be achieved over night in the East. It is important that considering the scale of transformation we do not have any previous experience and possible lessons learned. The term 'reform' itself is by far insufficient to describe processes which occur in the new democratic states.

The European Union of 15 was an elitist club. For each new member the accession is another stage of difficult democratic and market reforms. It means a serious effort, since it involves not only getting rid of an inefficient socio-political system and its remains, but also making a difficult step forward towards a civilisation advancement. The reform of a centrally controlled economy, an archaic economy which has been functioning in an irrational system dominated by the Soviet Union and its superpower ambitions, and converting it into a modern, liberal and development driven entity, incurred considerable cost. Similarly, considerable cost has been incurred in the area of awareness and mentality due to post-soviet social and political transformations⁴. Still the transformations have not been completed and become a source of various internal conflicts. It was not possible to convert a human being taught to obey into an active player of a democratic game. Similarly, in the economic sector it was difficult to teach a farmer from a collapsed state-owned agricultural enterprise (PGR), or a miner from a closed mine, how to be entrepreneurial and creative on the labour market. The reconstruction process in the former states of the Eastern Block has been implemented for 14-15 years. These have been years of sacrifices, loss of stability and sense of security, years of shocks and crisis. Societies in those countries are tired of their previous situation.

⁴ Read more: M. Belka and others, *The Polish Transformation from the Perspective of European Integration. EU – Monitoring*, by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Warszawa 1997.

Conditions of membership in the EU have not covered uncountable factors, which have serious consequences for the continuation of reforms. We may suspect that the factors may have impact in the situation in the whole European Union, and they are even more dangerous since still remain unknown.

Thus, yet another conclusion is the following: we had to little time for comprehensive reforms introducing liberalism, democracy and market rules into our reality, and at the moment we have to go through further sacrifices and difficult moments. The current social environment is very ambivalent. We are over sensitive when it comes to criticism addressed to us. Does it mean that the role of old democracies, countries playing a leading role on the international arena, as well as in the process of European integration, should not provide enter into partnership based on support, cooperation and solidarity? Sometimes one may have an impression that the main role in relations between Old and New Europe is played by simple competition and taking advantage of weaknesses of the rival.

Accepting 10 new member states involves minor increase in expenditures from the EU budget, enlargement of the internal market, increase in figures pertaining to the global competition and it seems that nothing else. No one makes any effort to consider what those countries have already brought and what will bring to the Community. What can be rejected, what is worth accepting, and what has to be accepted, despite one's own resistance, since something is important for new partners?

In the meantime the EU moves from an 'economic project' to a 'political project'⁵. While proposing to countries of Central and Eastern Europe a given model of integration their whole previous output and heritage is completely ignored. According to the Old Europe, the eastward enlargement should proceed as former enlargements, even though they were implemented in a uniform socio-economic system and former enlargements were not that burdensome. It is expected that the enlargement will be similar to the unification of Germany, ignoring previous output and heritage, but at the same time without comparable financial transfers. New member states are deprived of their past achievements, something they highly value. What is more they are given neither a relevant training, nor time to do their homework. They are requested to copy ready made, however inadequate for their reality, solutions and assessments are made too eagerly usually based on misunderstanding. Let me put it this way: our teacher is a bad educator, who uses a stick more eagerly than a carrot.

⁵ See: J. Bielecki, *Narodziny politycznej Europy (The birth of political Europe)*, Rzeczpospolita, 29.10.2004.

The example of Eastern Germany refers to actually a single experience of the West regarding system transformation in countries of the former Eastern Block. The experience shows helplessness of the European Union regarding processes that occur in those countries. In the past 15 years the former German Democratic Republic received nearly 1.5 trillion euros in subsidies, and in the same time Poland receive only 5 billion (three hundred times less)⁶. There has been, however, no activities motivating the society of Eastern Germany, and mistakes made by the federal economic and financial policies led to the deep crisis in eastern federal states. Despite huge transfers, eastern Germany have not managed to achieve even a part of what has been achieved in the rest of the Eastern Block. The neglected aspect of social reform played a decisive role. Citizens were not involved in the transformation process and due to the action undertaken eastern Germans unlearned how to be independent, active and take one's own initiative. It turned out that one of main EU member states, a leading global economic powers, aspiring to govern the overall policy of the Community, was not capable to foresee fairly obvious consequences of the process and made several serious mistakes.

Perhaps we should ask some fundamental questions that does not only refer to whether the European Union had prepared relevant conditions for the eastward enlargement. The questions are the following: Can the European Union, so much self-centred, recognise a partner in the New Europe? What is the meaning of partnership and solidarity in the common Europe? The previous six months experience of new member states is rather negative. The lesson learned by Poland leads to surprising conclusions. The largest shock for traditionally Francophile Polish intellectual elite was (and still is) the attitude of France, a country of Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet. Withdrawing from provisions of the Treaty of Niece, proceedings of the Convention, debate over the text of the European Constitution, increase in the meaning of ideology together with its emotional, doctrine-like treatment, disregarding the opinion of other nations, mechanism to workout 'compromises' based on an imposed position, and finally behaviour and pronouncements discrediting new member states made Polish politicians revalue their political statements⁷.

The conflict regarding the preamble to the European Constitution revealed radicalism and dogmatism of those who were in favour of a lay character of the European Union. Today, when undoubtedly Europe is laicised, the approach observed can lead to strange associations,

⁶ *Polityka wzięła górę nad ekonomią (Policy prevailed over the economy)*, an interview with G. Busch, director in the section of Economic Analysis at the European Commission, Rzeczpospolita. *Ekonomia i rynek*, 10-11.11.2004. *Poland reduced the distance by half*, ibidem.

⁷ R. Carter, *Chirac: no 'Europe within Europe'*, EUObserver, 24.02.2004, <http://www.euobserver.com/?aid=14586>

for instance with the Inquisition... Regarding the preamble, no topic-focused discussion was allowed. The leftist Polish Premier, Marek Belka, once said ‘We bounced against a wall in this matter. I don’t understand. Why a reference to Christian traditions or to religious values is unacceptable? I am astonished.’⁸ This provokes a question: aren’t rights of religious people violated in so much secularised Europe? Once again, rejecting a reference to Christian sources of inspiration for Europe shows how much the Old Member States neglect the experience of New Comers. An independent Polish political commentator, Piotr Semka, once wrote in *Rzeczpospolita*, a nationwide daily ‘Neither the French, nor Western Germans, who dominate German elites do not recognise how much Catholicism allowed Central European nations to survive the communist oppression. They do not understand the role played by Cardinal Wyszyński in Poland or protestant priests for the dissident movement in Eastern Germany. They do not understand or do not want to understand.’⁹

The clash of main values, which was revealed in the EU during the constitutional debate was not dissolved once the wording of the constitution was adopted. Yet another manifestation of the conflict was the crisis related to establishing the new European Commission. During the conflict about the Italian candidate for a commissioner Rocco Buttiglione, once again proved antidemocratic methods had to be used. The position of MEPs was ignored, and a new President of the Commission tried to impose the composition of the Commission directly in particular member state capitals. I believe that similar consequences can be expected regarding the crisis on recognising autonomy and tolerance between Islamic cultures and western world. The conflict could be clearly seen in the case of recent developments in the Netherlands which held the leading role in the EU regarding tolerance.

Some EU countries which do not agree with the current wording of the Constitutional Treaty ignored the meaning of the document (with detriment to its main idea), and its rejection was left for referenda to be organised in the future. However, again France and Germany are preparing for further actions aimed at ignoring the will of states and their societies. The recurrent idea of a hard European nucleus is contradictory to principles of equal partnership and solidarity, which until recently have been developed by the European Communities. First of all, it has been an antidemocratic and authoritarian position of a group of countries which put themselves above societies and other states¹⁰.

⁸ P. Semka, *Nowa Unia, czyli demokracja bezalternatywna (New Union, no-alternative democracy)*, *Rzeczpospolita*, 25.06.2004.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ *Discussion about European Constitution*, Arguments of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, <http://www.msz.gov.pl/start.php?page=1130100000%20>

The action undertaken by France, Germany and a few other countries regarding the preamble to the Constitution contributed to additional mess on the Polish political stage and heated up political disputes. In a natural manner, this idea has become a food for Eurosceptic leaders and populist groups. Germans, the other of the two main 'European locomotives', played a political role below their actual economic capacity for a long time. Today they are the hostage of the concept of French-German partnership in the EU and unjustly look for their legitimisation of their role in Europe in this particular area. Both countries seriously distanced themselves from the Russian experience of the countries which have just escaped the domination of the USSR. This arrogant attitude refers to past behaviour of both countries towards our eastern neighbour and dangerously resembles historical examples of clearly unfavourable experiences of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

The contemporary political culture, as described by G.A. Almond and G.B. Powell, clearly distinguishes pragmatic and commercial orientation of developed, democratic political culture of Great Britain and United States and poorly developed political culture referring to the ideology typical for French or Italian elites. In their book *'Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach'* they wrote 'Formation of a pragmatic and empirical orientations is one of constituent parts of the process of secularisation. Another feature of the process is a shift from the general orientation to focus on particular aspects*'. In a traditional or primitive political culture, political roles are not separated from other social functions. (...) Both attitudes towards roles, as well as the roles themselves are diverse. Political cultures having a comprehensive character of roles overlap with those cultures which are described as 'parochial' (...).'¹¹ In the case of a rigid position of France towards the rejected wording on Christian roots of Europe, the internal conflict in this country between lay foundations of the country and doctrine-like treatment of secularisation seem to be very interesting. Although the rejection of the wording may be treated as a manifestation of secularisation, an ideologically motivated attitude of those who are in favour of laicism confirmed the opposite.¹²

* Almond and Powell adopted the terminology used by Parsons from famous *pattern variables*, where it is possible to describe any behaviour and social attitude. See *Elementy teorii socjologicznych. Materiały do dziejów współczesnej socjologii zachodniej (Elements of sociological theories. Materials for history of contemporary western sociology)*, selection: W. Derczyński, A. Jasińska-Kania, J. Szacki, Warszawa 1975, p. 584.

¹¹ G.A. Almond, G.B. Powell, *Political Culture*, in: *Elements of sociological theories. Materials for history of contemporary western sociology*, ibidem, p. 583-584, translation from: G.A. Almond, G.B. Powell, Jr., *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach*, Boston 1966, p. 50-72.

¹² See: ibidem, p. 585-586.

Whether countries which have recently joined the EU will be able to accept such superficial, instrumental treatment is a question beyond certain standard of cooperation within the European Union, but also from beyond mutual relations from democratic countries. We do not need good relations with France and Germany to be liked, but because we want to have an equal participation in the discussion on what is good for all of us. We cannot reject one's position because it is not in line with ours. The European Union must be a forum for consulting positions and creating common strategies even with critical assessment on the position of a partner, which can be determined by different interests or opinions.

Transformations in Central and Eastern Europe have one common denominator, namely democratisation which we perceive as centrality of citizens. Karl R. Popper described the process as building an open society in reaction to totalitarianism of the 20th century. He wrote 'There is a common belief that truly scientific and philosophical approach to policy and deeper understanding of social life as a whole must be based on analysing and interpreting the history of humanity. (...) A philosopher or a sociologist is required to examine these matters from a higher point of view. Such a person treats an individual as a pawn, a minor tool in the general development of humanity. He concludes that the main actors on the history stage are either Great Nations and their Great Leaders, or Great Classes or Great Ideas.'¹³ This approach to historicism reflects the attitude of Germany, France, and others towards new member states of the EU. The superficial treatment of partners or societies is the core of this approach. This is confirmed by a phenomena, so clearly visible in the EU, of deficits of democracy and unsuccessful attempts of overcoming them.

Instead of actual work solving particular problems, empty gestures and sulky attitudes are presented. The current great leader of a great nation delegates his predecessor, an equally great leader, to work on the most important document for the Community. Therefore, two great leaders of a great nation should find their perpetual place in great history. On the other hand, another great leader of another great nation organised the great event of signing the great document to be present on historical photographs, however time and place speak for a different state and other people. No need to add anything! This seems to be the current policy of the European Union.

¹³ K.R. Popper, *Społeczeństwo otwarte i jego wrogowie (The Open Society and Its Enemies). Volume 1 - Plato*, Warszawa 1993, p. 29. First edition: *The Open Society and Its Enemies. Vol. I. The Spell of Plato*, 1962.

Disparities between Old and New Europe only confirm the structural contradiction of today's Europe¹⁴. The contradiction cannot be eliminated because of particular interests, egoism and lack of visions for future Europe. This accusation is addressed mainly to the 'Old Europe', since we can expect support and a form of a 'pilotage' provided by a more experienced partner along the common route. Unfortunately, the eastward enlargement of the EU is not understood as a strategic goal, it actually occurs only in passing on the way to implement the Lisbon Strategy and plans regarding future Great Europe – even though the concepts are not realistic and should already be revised. The awareness in the political project called 'Europe' tries to shape the existence. Unfortunately, the Common Europe is short of thoughts, visions, and politicians of a calibre of the founding fathers, in other words New Fathers of New Europe.

The European Union of 25 is a community of various levels and speeds. It consists of mature democracies and developed market economies using a common currency and underdeveloped countries which may achieve conditions for introducing a common currency not earlier than in ten years. In its new shape the EU is less cohesive from every respect, and its poles of luxury and poverty, or active citizenship and alienated individuals, reach nearly extreme positions. We have to deal with tensions that are not visible.

In the new European Union the division dictated by France and Germany can be easily seen, the distinction between Old and New Europe. Shortly speaking, countries such as Poland, Lithuania, Latvia or Slovakia are still perceived as situated somewhere 'close to Siberia', or – to the contrary – as the same like the rest EU member states, that is only 'slightly lagging behind'. In either case the superficial approach and misunderstanding of new member states is striking. However, true benefits of the Eastward Enlargement can only be derived by getting into the heart of the conditions related to it. Therefore, the question asked by author is much serious, namely: What is the European Union of today and what are the most important tasks ahead of it in the years to come?

What will the New Europe be like? In Poland we can perhaps, just like Monty Pythons, say 'May God help us'.

¹⁴ Read more in: K. Bachmann, the *European Convention*, Reports and Analyses, Center for International Relations, nr 1, 2003, www.csm.org.pl/pl/files/raporty/2003/rap_i_an_0103.pdf.