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ENLARGEMENT THEORY

Five Case Studies

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ABSTRACT

This study has a threefold aim: firstly, to define EU enlargement; secondly, to present an analytic model explaining EU enlargement; and thirdly, to apply this model on five countries which may become EU members in the future.

Key words: Enlargement Theory, voluntarism, solidarism, geopolitics, Cape Verde, Morocco, Israel, Iceland, Kazakhstan

This paper presents a theoretical-constructive approach on EU enlargement. Though literature on European Integration is immense, few scholars have addressed the central issue concerning the underlying reasons for EU enlargement. The main intention of this paper is to make a contribution to this topic. Firstly, the concept of enlargement will be defined and an analytic model will be presented. After that, mentioned model will be applied on five countries which are not members of the EU, but have all been linked to discourses over EU enlargement

NOTE: *The abbreviation “EU” is continuously used throughout the paper to denote the EU of today and all its preceding frameworks.*

I. EU ENLARGEMENT

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

What is meant by EU enlargement? The definition used in this paper is very plain: the full membership-based accession of new countries into the political framework known as the EU. However, it is cardinal to express what EU enlargement does not include: EU enlargement ought to be conceptually de-coupled from *European Integration*. The latter expression is best understood as the post-WWII constructions of common European deliberative and policy-making arenas. This development spans beyond the scope of the EU. The inception of the Council of Europe marks one tangible example. Moreover, inter-state frameworks like the still-existing military IGO, NATO, and now dissolved economic integrative framework of the COMECON, and lastly the military IGO of the Warsaw Pact could also be regarded as components constituting the larger historical process of European Integration. In this regard should be added that Mongolia, Cuba and Vietnam were granted membership of the COMECON.

HISTORY OF ENLARGEMENT

The initial formative moment of the process leading to what today is known as the EU took place in 1957, by the signing of the Treaties of Rome. Six states were among the founders: Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxemburg and The Netherlands. The first enlargement took place in 1973 when Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom became members. Eight years later, in 1981, Greece joined; in 1986 Spain and Portugal followed suit. What was at those times known as EC-12 became EU-15 in 1995, when three officially non-aligned countries – Austria, Finland and Sweden – joined the EU. Until then, Ireland had been the only country which was a member of the EU but not of the NATO. Finally, in 2004, 10 new countries – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Cyprus, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia – joined the EU. A majority among these had formerly been members of both the COMECON and the Warsaw Pact. For the sake of translucent historiography following enlargements labels could be used:

- a. Enlargement of 1973: *The Viking Enlargement* (UK, Ireland and Denmark were all central locations in the Viking Society)
- b. Enlargement of 1981: *The Balco-Graeco Enlargement* (At the same time as Greece joined, the Balkan Peninsula got a voice in “Brussels”)
- c. Enlargement of 1986: *The Iberian Enlargement* (Spain and Portugal together constitute the Iberian Peninsula)
- d. Enlargement of 1995: *The Non-aligned Enlargement* (Austria, Finland and Sweden are as stated above non-aligned countries and did not link their EU membership to NATO ditto; among previous members this formula was, as stated above, only adhered to by Ireland)
- e. Enlargement of 2004: *The Grand Enlargement* (This year, 10 new countries joined; that is one more than the four previous enlargements)

[All these five constitute enlargements of entire nation-states; one should add that in 1990 the EU enlarged with the länder – *neue Bundesländer* – of the former German Democratic Republic: i.e. *Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Freistaat Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt* and *Freistaat Thüringen*.]

COMING ENLARGEMENTS

It is reasonable to contend that the Grand Enlargement has not ended yet but will continue with possible Bulgarian and Romanian accession on January 1 in 2007. Concerns, however, have been raised whether these countries will be institutionally (see below) entirely fit before that date.

Especially, Romanian membership is likely to be postponed due to slow implementation of policies aiming at a more effective government administration and legal system. Countries in line to join the EU also include Croatia and FYROM.

HESITANT COUNTRIES

In addition to these countries, Norwegian governments have been seriously pondering membership at two occasions: 1972 and 1994. Both times, however, the Norwegian electorate has rejected membership of the EU, something which has indicated a sharp and long-lasting people-elite split in Norway over EU membership. Paradoxically, Norway participates within some EU frameworks; the Schengen system constitutes one of the most tangible examples herein. This kind of an *atypical membership structure* (Michalski: 2006) is furthermore reinforced by the fact that EU members like UK and Ireland have decided not to belong to the Schengen zone!

Switzerland is another country which has been about to join the EU, but in 1992 the Federal Council decided to withdraw from a membership process, following a defeat in a popular referendum over membership of the EEA.

The opposite of enlargement could be called “enshrinkement”. During EU’s history this phenomenon has occurred once: in 1985, Greenland – which forms a part of the Danish *Rigsfælleskab* (Commonwealth of the Realm) – ceased to be subject of Community jurisdiction.

EUROPE’S UNWELCOMED ASPIRATIONALS?

Turkish aspirations of joining the EU date back as far as to the 1960s. In 1963, the country became an Associate Member. Later on, in 1987 the country formally applied for full membership. The continuing development has turned out to be a lengthy process but it is rememberable that Turkey’s rapprochement with the EU has previously seen two important hallmarks: in 1999, the country gained the status of an applicant country, something which in 2005 was followed by the commencement of formal membership negotiations. In that way, it seems more to be a question of time than whether Turkey will join the EU.

Another country which has stated the intention to become an EU member is Morocco which in 1987 formally applied for membership. This application was turned down with the formulation that it is *not* a European country. It is said that Denmark’s then-Chief Diplomat explained the decision by simply pointing at a map and frankly expressed that Morocco is not in Europe. But, the question is how high validity this geographical argument really has, since the two Spanish *Ciudades Autónomas* (autonomous cities) of Ceuta and Melilla both belong to the EU.

[The issue over Moroccan EU membership is more profoundly put under scrutiny in the section *Case Studies*.]

WHO CAN JOIN?

In order for a country to become a member of the EU an applicant country must fulfil the following requirements stipulated in Art. 49 of the Treaty of Maastricht (popularly known as the “Copenhagen Criteria” since they were adopted by the 1993 Copenhagen European Council):

1. *stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities*

2. *a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union*
3. *the ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union*

In addition, the EU must be institutionally capable of admitting new members. Thus, it is relevant to speak of 4 formal criteria in terms of granting EU membership. This quartet together forms what could be termed as the *constitutive values* of the EU: a. institutional robustness; a parameter which makes sure that all citizens are protected from violence and intrusion; b. institutional effectiveness; an economic value system rooted in a neo-liberal, free-market approach in terms of mode of production; c. institutional adaptability; the design of political institutions which are able to absorb new regulatory frameworks; d. institutional flexibility; the capacity by the EU to be able to accommodate new members within reformed political structures. It is important to remember that there is no *de jure* proviso deterring a perceived non-European country not to join the EU.

Debates over EU membership are frequently linked to the definition of the very construction of “Europe”. The Morocco case of 1987 is a clear example of this. In addition to the distinction between EU enlargement and European Integration that was made at the beginning of the text, it is furthermore central to comprehend the difference between endogenously EU-driven processes and political developments presently taking place in Europe, which only have a tenuous link to the EU project as a whole (Wilson & Donnan 2004: 1). These include: democratisation of post-Soviet Eurasia, globalization of European youth, and ICT proliferation transforming political action spaces – if using a Giddensian concept – to *de-territorialize* which implies a gradual decline of geography as a power-defining denominator. Nonetheless, contemporary concepts of what Europe really implies are still to some extent defined by antediluvian geographical boundaries, something which has led to an overt issue-linkage of EU enlargement and European identity; i.e. questions like: *Is this country really European?* have occasionally been asked in debates over EU enlargement. Turkey is one tangible example of this, but there of course more.

NETWORK STATE?

If the EU, with Castellsian eye-glasses, is regarded as a “network state”, EU enlargement simply denotes the process by which new nodes – i.e. new member states – are added to an already interlinked system of old nodes. The crux is of course that links between countries can exist without an already established network; this together makes the question of why the EU really wants to enlarge more mystic. There must, therefore, be more incentives to become an EU member than

merely a stated need to belong to a network of nation-states. One could certainly invoke the argument stating that the EU constitutes a supranational framework, but the question is whether supranationality is the only independent variable explaining EU enlargement. And it should not be any bigger hush-hush that intergovernmentalism still is the main tendency when it comes to the EU since the main decisions are de facto taken by the Council. At the same time, another question must be asked: Why does the EU want to accept new members? The conclusion already must be that enlargement must be regarded as reciprocal process: at the same time as the EU grows larger by accepting new members; member states also “expand” by accepting the EU.

INTERMEZZO: *Let us now look on some explanatory frameworks which deal with processes, in various ways, linked to EU enlargement:*

MULTI-LEVEL STANDPOINT

One way to conceptualize EU enlargement is to describe it as a *composite policy* (Sedelmeier, 2005: 402). Herein, enlargement is understood as something more than merely a policy area and something less than a single issue. Characteristic for a composite policy is an alignment of macro- and meso-level policy implementations. Nonetheless this framework highlights the reciprocity of EU enlargement since the prefix *macro-* in the given context refers to a supranational EU-level, whereas *meso-* denotes political developments occurring on the Nation State-level.

AN EXCLUSIVE OR INCLUSIVE FELLOWSHIP?

By regarding the EU as a *community organization* (Schimmelfenig, 2004: 90), EU membership straight away becomes something exclusive for countries which are ready to share “[T]he constitutive values and norms that define the collective identity of the community” (ibid.). The obvious risk with this description is that it creates an institutional exclusionary framework in which a *we*-conception among old member states – i.e. “insiders” – is used to wield political might over potential members, or “outsiders”. Therefore, there is a considerable menace that such a level of significant stratification might lead to the demise of an innate reciprocity and on that way the EU might even be regarded as pursuing colonialist policies. On the other hand, the EU is a membership-based organization; therefore it is normatively assumable that the EU should adapt to the preferences of their own members. As a famous Jungian saying goes: Every time two persons meet they influence each other, just like chemical elements do. This aphorism also carries a high degree of relevancy when it comes to EU enlargement.

THE WEST AND THE REST – IN EUROPE?

It is commonly known that the EU we know today can trace its roots back to a six-member cooperative framework known as The Coal and Steel Community. Unfortunately, the fact that the EU did not begin as a larger entity has given it a *western bias*, according to which “[T]he transformation of eastern Europe raises question about the western model of integration, Europe’s boundaries and European identity” (Smith 1996; Wallace 1997; Laffan et. al. 2000: 5). The apparent risk with EU’s western bias lies in the fact that enlargement is regarded as the inclusion of *The Other* (mainly “Southern” and “Eastern” countries) into an imagined European family where the only valid political concepts must follow a superficial “Western” way of thinking.

TECHNICAL MECHANISMS OF EXCLUSION

A common way to express criticism is that the more members an organization has, the more difficult it is for it to take comprehensive measures. Mentioned approach has often been linked to a discussion on internal voting techniques and areas of competence: “[T]here is no way a community of 20 or 30 states can function without some qualified majority voting” (O’Neill 1996: 182). For those who believe that EU cooperation ought to revolve around something more than merely bickering over voting techniques, it is useless to even mention the enlargement as an obstacle to further enlargement. If a Habermasian approach towards democracy is applied on the EU, the more participants you include in the deliberative processes, the more likely you are to be provided more perspectives on problems, elevated to a political level above the traditional nation-state, something which might eventually render more considered and effective decision-making and policy-implementing techniques .

CONSTITUTIONAL PATRIOTISM AS EUROPE’S COMMON GROUND

Riddles like: *Is there a common European identity?*; *Are there common European values?* and *Can we identify a European demos?* are often penetrated in debates over EU, occasionally without an explicit problematisation over the semantic-pragmatic differentiation between the concepts of “EU” and “Europe”. Anyway, everyone is entitled to have a personal conception of the mentioned concepts.

If we need to find a more collectively capable model of definition, the official documents of the EU should be consulted; this would entail an operationalisation of another Habermasian brainchild, viz. *Verfassungspatriotismus* (Constitutional Patriotism) on a supranational level, wherein the common denominator defining EU politics would be based on European citizenship (Pettersson 2002: 17). It

would in that way be unnecessary to dress discourses over EU identity in an ethno-cultural-religious language, but rather strive to base the EU on a politico-legal-civic concept. The dictum *In Varietate Concordia* (Unity in Diversity) partially captures this ambition, according to which *unity* denotes a common EU citizenship based on shared rights and obligations, and *diversity*, which in turn could be directly linked to individual liberty and choice. If this framework is applied on EU enlargement, issues over adherence to an explicit religious, cultural or ethnic identity would be deemed unnecessary and redundant.

II. ANALYTIC MODEL

INTRODUCTION

In the publication before us three driving forces explaining *why* the EU enlarges will be defined:

- *Voluntarism*
- *Solidarism*
- *Geopolitics*

Every time an analytical scheme is presented one often tends to be asked the classical question whether the components comprising should be deemed inclusive *or* exclusive. This article will argue that an inclusive approach is the best strategy towards explaining a dependent variable like the EU enlargement. The reason is that this constitutes a very complex process where nation-states share power with a supra-national framework. In addition, EU membership entails cooperation over practically the whole spectrum of political issues. An exclusive approach would in turn lack a problematisation of the complex nature of EU membership and only be restricted to very specific issues. The purpose of this part is to define each component and also highlight the interrelationship between these.

Although the purpose here is to present a theoretical framework regarding EU enlargement it would be rather invalid to assert that this is a pure deductive approach. The main reason for this is that the concept of enlargement – as defined above – has a rather plain and simple connotation. This means that it is quite easy to get a quite solid preconception of what an enlargement process *ipso facto* entails, something which considerably facilitates the construction of an analytic model. However, it ought to be up to the reader to decide whether this methodological way of tackling the issue should be deemed more inductive than deductive.

ADDENDUM: *On the basis of this one could also argue that the deduction/induction-division should be de-dichotomized, based on the fact that it is assumable that the researcher already has a preconception of the objects the person in question investigates.*

A. VOLUNTARISM

According to *Dictionary.com* (May, 2006) the term “voluntarism” has two definitions:

1: *The use of or reliance on voluntary action to maintain an institution, carry out a policy, or achieve an end.*

2: *A theory or doctrine that regards the will as the fundamental principle of the individual or of the universe.*

It is perceivable that the concept of voluntarism is closely linked to a solid, modernist notion of collective (Definition 1) and individual liberty (Definition 2). Additionally, Definition 2 underlines a universalist feature of voluntarism. A crux is that a single polity could be described as both an individual body and a product of collective action. Another way to describe this amalgamation is by using the conceptual pair of Rousseau’s *volonté générale* (general will) and *community of needs* (Hardt-Negri 96: 2000) which focuses on citizens’ common ability to take decisions for the society as a whole. Here, the eternal political problem over the relationship between the individual and the collective emerge.

Thus, one relevant way to define a potential member state of the EU is to claim that it is an individual actor which has a predilection for limiting its manoeuvre space by hesitant internal forces stressing common national needs. This division might also highlight an elite-masses split which links voluntarism to a question over democratic legitimacy wherein the political class and the electorate constitute the most important actors. Thus, voluntarism in terms of EU enlargement could most ostensibly be linked to democratic legitimacy and a solid public support for membership. To further problematize the issue of voluntarism-drive enlargement one should ask what the reasons are why a unitary country joins a *transnational federal system* (Dahl 1989). The crux is of course why the electorate wants give up its control over the political agenda (ibid). A possible answer could be that it de facto increased its power over transnational agendas.

A good example where voluntarism has played a key role in terms of enlargement was the Swedish accession to the EU in 1995. Sweden had already in 1972 signed an agreement on Free Trade with the EU. Full membership was mainly hindered by the fact that the country adhered to an official policy of non-alignment and neutrality which was regarded by a continual parliamentary majority as

not possible to unite with EU membership; Sweden was regarded as a *Third Way* country (Falkner 234: 1996). Consequently, there was no public will articulating a determination to join the EU. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall the government initiated a process aiming at EU membership which by now was regarded as fully reconcilable with the country's policy of non-alignment and neutrality. Membership negotiations could therefore be initiated and in the same wave it was decided that a national referendum should be held about Swedish membership. Thus in November 1994 Swedes voted on this issue; the turnout was 83%. Of these 52.3% voted Yes, whereas 46.8% voted No (0.9% were blank votes). In this way, the Swedish people had formally expressed a will to join the EU. Nonetheless it should be noted that in a representative democracy it should not be seen as a stipulation that voluntarism-driven enlargement must be foregone by a referendum since parliamentarians are elected officials by the people and should therefore be seen as the societal institution constituting the very *volonté generale* of any given country espousing a system of mentioned type of democracy.

SOLIDARISM

The concept of solidarism could be said to represent the ideologization of the well-known and ubiquitous word "solidarity". This term could be further defined in several ways: "[T]he resourcing of the policy on a collective basis [...]" (Wallace 2005a: 79); Farmers who profit from both taxpayers and consumers constitute an example of *financial solidarity* (Wallace *ibid.*: 83); "There are limits to EU solidarity and to potential transfers to the east." (Laffan-Lindner 2005: 211); one scholar dichotomizes the concepts of "economy" and "solidarism" by linking the former to a free market economy and the latter to the welfare state (Leibfried 2005: 265), wherein solidarity is further defined as something implemental (Schulte 1999; cited in Leibfried 2005: 266). In addition, it should be put fourth that "solidarity" has for the first time reached EU discourse by the drafting of the Constitutional Treaty (CT), wherein Art. 1-3(3) expresses *the promotion of economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity among member states* (Cited in Allen 2005: 216). The CT also defines social policy under the label of Solidarity (Arts. II 87-90; cited in Leibfried 2005: 248).

On the basis of the definitions above it is straightforwardly deducible that the ideology of solidarity within an EU context concerns economic-commercial equalization in terms of both interregional unity and fair access to the internal market among member states. Furthermore, solidarism has – as the e.g. the CT proviso defines – also a non-economic connotation, something which could be understood as a common general will among EU members. This constitutes the spiritual component of solidarism (or even voluntaristic!). Yet another way of promoting solidarism-driven policies

could include the offer of regulatory frameworks instead of direct expenditure-programmes; by this the Commission can limit expenditure while at the same time reinforce transnational cooperation (Majone 1996: 267).

When it comes to enlargement the role of solidarism plays a considerable role for coming member states in terms of gaining financial benefits, gaining access to the internal market and participating in the policy-making regarding EU solidarity. From the perspective of old member states, solidarism could be understood as an action of trust *vis-à-vis* countries which often are socio-economically worse off, and in that way promote an image of solidarity and partnership. At the same time as the EU constitutes a community of free nations, it has to balance common solidarity with mutual competition, a fact which also could be stretched to EU's external relations (Elias, 1992).

Spain's process from an authoritarian country (Falkner 1996: 234) to EU membership in 1986 could serve as a good example of solidarism-driven enlargement. Some parts of the country have a GDP level far below EU average and the country has greatly benefited from EU policies on internal solidarity. Unambiguously, EU has acted as a *primus motor* in the process of modernisation taking place in post-Franquist Spain. It is decidedly discernible that the Spaniards have rejoiced these policies by becoming a very pro-EU country. A 2005 consultative referendum on the CT exemplifies this: an overwhelming majority of 76.6% voted in favour.

GEOPOLITICS

The third and last concept presented in this paper on enlargement theory is well-known inside as well as outside academia. Geopolitics is a term which could be defined in the following way: "An approach to politics originating in late nineteenth-century Germany that stressed the constraints imposed on foreign policy by location and environment [...]" (Jones 1996: 203), and furthermore it is stated that *geopolitics contributed to the emphasis on continuity in modern political realism* (ibid.). The definition above unequivocally links a given country's geographic position to its foreign policy *Spielraum*. The Realist perspective furthermore sheds light on the fact that the ability of a national interest formation concerning the formulation of coherent policies for a political nexus revolving around external-internal security and territorial stabilization is constrained by the amount of defence and security resources it has at its disposal, and by the consideration of the make-up of the corresponding resource battery, neighbouring countries can claim.

Geopolitically-driven enlargement is thus directly linked to concepts like reciprocal security and common defence. When it comes to the latter concept it is often assumed that the more countries that cooperate within a given framework, the more social capital will emerge among them; inter-state relations based on trust will in that way be sustained. Countries which feel an external threat, will in that way seek cooperation with others; i.e. they will strive to construct a Deutschan *Security Community*, reinforced by a shared sense of identity (Moxon-Browne 2004: 194). Concerning common defence policies, geopolitics carries a lower explanatory power since the EU in some areas competes with the NATO; formal competence between these organizations in terms of defence policy is still somewhat blurry. Member states of the Grand Enlargement have occasionally adhered to a policy of dual integration, thus linking EU *and* NATO memberships. Maintenance of peace and stability furthermore constitutes a *raison d'être* of the historical role of the EU.

Geopolitics was a vital component when Estonia joined the EU in 2004; the country became a NATO member during the same year. Until 1991, Estonia had been under Moscow rule and upon gaining independence the country has viewed membership of these organizations as important fundamentals of its contemporary idendependist reconstruction. However, extreme neo-liberal economic policies comprising far-reaching market deregulations and the introduction of a proportional income tax regime – “flat taxes” – have often gone a lot further than the EU average and thus EU membership has imposed new re-regulatory frameworks on the Estonian economy. Therefore, it is very likely that geopolitics must have played a crucial role when it comes to Estonia’s post-Soviet foreign policy building. The dual integrative-strategy linking EU with NATO membership constitutes a tangible example of this. From a Realist perspective it is therefore deducible that a small country in a post-colonial era has few other options than to join transnational frameworks in order to maintain a safe and stable security position, and influence trasnational policies on defence.

III. CASE STUDIES

Cape Verde

REPÚBLICA DE CABO VERDE

[485.355 inhabitants; calculation 2006 (World Gazetteer: A)]

VOLUNTARISM

Until 1975, Cape Verde was a Portuguese colony which after *A Revolução dos Cravos* (The Carnation Revolution) gained full independence. Cape Verde still has close ties with Portugal, and Portuguese is one of the main languages of the country. It is therefore not completely unsurprising

that in 2005 the ex-President of Portugal, Mário Soares, launched a campaign aiming at Cape Verdean membership of the EU (AFP 2005-03-17). Soares argued that the country *could act as a bridge between the United States, Latin America and the [EU]*. From a post-colonial angle, Cape Verdean membership would be a historic step since no former European colony has ever joined the EU. Geographically, Cape Verde belongs to the Macaronesian islands to which also the Azores, Madeira and the Savage Islands – all under Portuguese jurisdiction – and the Canaries, which is a Spanish *Comunidad Autónoma* (Autonomous Community), are counted. In that way, it is not reasonable to deem Cape Verde a non-European country. Cyprus, which could be regarded as geographically an Asian country, has joined the EU mainly because of its close links to Greece (and Turkey).

The crux is, however, that the country occasionally is regarded as a part of Africa. This became evident in the first years after independence when Cape Verde had prominent plans to unite with another former Portuguese colony, viz. Guinea Bissau. The 1979 *coup d'état* in the latter country, however, ditched these plans. However, Cape Verde has been a member of ECOWAS (The Economic Community of West African States) since 1976; the aim of ECOWAS is to further market integration aiming at a similitude of the internal market of the EU. However, according to the Soares initiative, Cape Verde is said to constitute Europe's Atlantic dimension. Moreover, it is a democratically very stable country, characterized by freedom of speech, rule of law and a pluralistic democracy.

The current (as of May 2006) Prime Minister of Cape Verde, José Maria Neves, is openly in favour of Cape Verdean membership of the EU. In addition he supports the introduction of the Euro in Cape Verde (AFP 2005-05-07). Already now the country has tried to harmonize its fiscal policies with the convergence criteria of the EMU. Full membership in the EU still remains an option for the country though there is an awareness of that this might take some time. In the meantime, PM Neves has spoken out in favour of a Cape Verdean partnership with the EU, something which he described as “strategic for the future of Cape Verde, but also for the future of Europe” (ibid.). In this way, he views Cape Verde's future as a European country; the question of how this could be combined with a membership of the ECOWAS remains a conundrum to be solved.

SOLIDARISM

Cape Verde's economy is mainly based on the services sector. It has no important natural resources and the role of agriculture is minor due to low levels of precipitation. Cape Verde enjoys close

economic ties with the EU, especially Portugal. Furthermore, the national economy is highly dependent on imports and has a considerable negative balance of trade. The country has, however, harmonized fiscal policies with the EU by tying the national currency, *Escudo*, to the Euro. Despite this close economic integration with the EU; Cape Verde is also a member of ECOWAS (see above).

The EU of today would probably survive the accession of a country with somewhat more than 400.00 inhabitants. Cape Verde's GDP is comparable to the member states of the Grand Enlargement. Therefore, it is reasonable to state that solidarism in terms of financial solidarity would play a minor role should Cape Verde become a member. One obvious reason for this is that the country does not have many farmers demanding economic subsidies from the EU. In addition, Cape Verde has signed the Lomé Convention something which gives the country "free and preferential entry for their exports to the EU and aid for their economic and social development" (Pinder 2001: 147). In addition, by the signing of the Lomé Convention Cape Verde automatically became grouped under the *African, Pacific and Caribbean* [ACP] countries (Smith 55: 2003). This again, complicates the question of a possible alignment of Cape Verdean and EU identity.

Concerning non-financial aspects of solidarity, the country already has close ties to the EU something which would facilitate a possible accession, but the country's African-European predicament might further complicate the issue. On the other hand, one should in this regard put fourth the question whether it is not possible to participate in more regional frameworks than one; many EU states do this already today; i.e. the Visegrád and Nordic countries exemplify this.

Historically, Cape Verde could have embarked on a different path, namely that of being an autonomous part of Portugal instead of a fully independent country, something which the ex-President Aristides Pereira uttered in a 1993 interview with a Portuguese journal (cited in AFP 2005-03-17). Another aspect herein concerns how an ex-colony and a former colonial power can cooperate within a supranational body; Cape Verde and Portugal could serve as a model for other post-colonial processes of reconciliation.

GEOPOLITICS

The Soares initiative mentions that an EU membership for Cape Verde is *in the interests of Europe* (AFP 2005-03-17; AFP 2005-05-07) and that Cape Verde is *an essential platform in relations between Europe and Africa* (ibid.). Herein, explicit geopolitical arguments are used to favour EU

membership for Cape Verde. Though the country is non-aligned, it has fostered close relationships with various transatlantic frameworks of cooperation in matters related to defence and security. It is rather difficult to predict in what ways Cape Verde – as member of the EU – would alter the geopolitical situation in Europe. Nonetheless, one has to invoke the symbolically strategic position of the country at the crossroads of Africa, America, and Europe. Macronesia gained a prominent reputation in international politics when the so-called *Meeting of the Azores* was held in 2003.

Morocco

المملكة المغربية

[30.182.038 inhabitants; calculation 2006 (World Gazetteer: B)]

VOLUNTARISM

Already in 1987 Morocco tried to become a member of the EU. But, the EU rejected its application because of the country's assumed non-Europeaness, based on its geographic position. Morocco is often defined as primarily a Maghrebian country, something which tends to exclude from a European identity (Attali 1997: 355). But the question is whether the Strait of Gibraltar forms a natural frontier between Europe and non-Europe (Delanty-Rumford 2005: 47). It is noteworthy that pre-independence Algeria de jure belonged to the EU (Hansen 2002). The EU-Morocco dilemma is furthermore reinforced by the fact that Ceuta and Melilla are parts of the EU (see above).

It is commonly known that King Hassan II once expressed that Morocco is *a tree with its roots in Africa and its branches in Europe* (Cited in Pelham 2000-04-08). There is however, an internal Moroccan clash of opinion over the definition of the country's ipso facto Europeaness: In 2000, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Mohamed Benaissa stated that reports over Moroccan aspirations of embarking on a membership process were "groundless" since he said that Morocco as an Arab, African and Moslem country could never be a member of the EU (ArabicNews.com 2000-04-08). The question is whether this should be regarded as a tangible example of a self-excluding attitude towards EU membership. The question ought to be further problematised by the fact that the country is a mix of Arabic-, Berber- and French-speakers.

The statement by Benaissa could speculatively be seen as a reaction to a statement during a visit by King Mohamed VI to France; according to which the King's spokesman Hassan Aourid said: "After the acceptance of the Turkish candidature, EU membership for Morocco is no longer taboo" (Cited in Pelham 2000-04-08). It is no coincidence that Franco-Moroccan relations in issues over Morocco's European status have been crucial. Historically, France has played a key role in the

fostering of relations between the EU and Morocco (Pinder 2001: 146), and furthermore France is said to have had the intention to maintain its post-colonial link with Morocco by the drafting of an Association Agreement (as a part of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership; see below) (Preston 1997: 164). Therefore, one could argue that a possible future EU membership for Morocco might to some extent also depend on the national will of France.

The reaction from the EU towards Moroccan membership has remained chill. Morocco is still viewed by many as a non-European country, and by using Benaissa's comments above some would find at least three arguments, one could group these as Morocco's *three non-European identities*. The question is of course how relevant these are when it comes to prospects for a membership of the EU. Why should it not be possible to be an EU citizen and an Arabic-speaker at the same time? There are EU citizens who ipso facto speak Arabic. Why cannot Morocco be a part of Europe when Ceuta and Melilla obviously are? That is a relevant question. And finally, should not religion be a private matter for citizens of the EU? In addition, Euro-Islam seems to be a valid concept in this regard. Furthermore, these questions highlight the issue whether a political entity like the EU, which contends that it supports democratic values, really could be said to have the right to exclude people based on a specific religious or non-religious observation. In addition, the statements made by the two Kings also carry considerable validity since historically Morocco has been integrated *with* Europe, especially France and Spain.

SOLIDARISM

Among EU:s many externally-oriented cooperative frameworks, Morocco has been geographically grouped under the concept of the *Southern Mediterranean* (Bengtsson 2004: 122), something which was presented by the Commission in 2003 in a document called "Wider Europe" (Bengtsson 2004: 120). The aim of this process is to create *a circle of friends* around the EU (ibid.). In addition to the Maghreb states the concept of Wider Europe also include Russian and the Middle East (Färm-Wallström 2004).

For Morocco close cooperation with the EU in terms of economic-commercial policies is crucial since the EU is Morocco's largest trading partner. It is estimated that far more than 50% of the country's exports reach EU markets. In addition, Morocco capitalizes of a huge influx of tourists from the EU. Moroccan dependence on the EU is also expressed by the remittances from Moroccan migrants in the EU and external loans. To this should be added that Morocco is the country which receives most EU aid (Mezran 2000).

In 2000, Morocco initiated a process of association aiming at the creation of a tariff-free trade area by 2012, thus further integrating Morocco with the EU. In light of this framework King Mohamed VI has expressed that he would like to see an even deeper integration including elements like free movements of goods and labour (ibid.). It is very easy to see that cooperation between Morocco and the EU in terms of trade and economy has run quite smoothly, although this process has not been linked to an overt offer of membership by the EU to Morocco. It is very likely that the process of market integration will continue no matter what. It constitutes a tangible example how a country can foster very close relations, although not being a member itself. Therefore, it is very likely that solidarism as an analytical component explaining EU enlargement has a very low explanatory power in this regard, at least if enlargement in this context is synonymous to membership.

GEOPOLITICS

In 1995, the EU launched the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Initiative – also known as the *Barcelona Process* since it was initiated at a meeting of EU Foreign Ministers in Barcelona – which had the intention to devise coherent policies in the following issue areas: i. the legal and illegal migration from Northern Africa to Southern Europe; ii. tackling political instability; iii. the risk for the proliferation of terrorism and narcotrafficking (Østergård 1998: 187). The countries who participate in this framework include – apart from Morocco: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya (observer), Israel, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. Though this framework today is an integrated part of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the label still is relevant since the Mediterranean is strongly perceived as a territorial location demanding special policy treatment.

The ex-President of the European Commission Romano Prodi has for example said the following about the contemporary strategic significance of ancient *mare nostrum*: “[W]e can contemplate the relaunch of the Mediterranean as a cultural entity and see its wider strategic potential. It is an historic opportunity with an economic, political and moral dimension that the European Union cannot let slip” (Prodi 1999: Ch. 5). Another issue which should be articulated includes whether there is a broad EU interest in the Mediterranean basin in terms of the fear of terrorism or uncontrolled immigration or whether the construction of a special Mediterranean policy only is of interest for Spain, France, Italy and Greece? (Østergård 1998: 188).

On the basis of Morocco’s geographic position it is impossible from an EU perspective to regard the country as “foreign” concerning issues related to internal security and border protection. Another

question, which must be resolved before Morocco could proceed with a membership bid, concerns the future status of the former Spanish protectorate and province of Western Sahara. It is obvious that this is an issue which the EU could assist to resolve. In addition, the EU might link a possible future Moroccan membership demanding a final solution to the issue over Western Sahara. Lastly, there is an additional issue which could be linked to a Moroccan process of EU membership; the territorial disputes the country still has with Spain. In 2002, this became obvious during the conflict of the islet Perejil/Leila. This in turn sparked new tensions between Spain and Morocco over the sovereignty of Ceuta and Melilla.

Israel

دولة إسرائيل; מדינת ישראל

[7.109.929 inhabitants; calculation 2006 (World Gazetteer: C)]

VOLUNTARISM

The prospect of an Israeli membership of the EU has been highlighted at several occasions. In 2000, it was asserted that senior Israeli politician Shimon Peres had expressed this aspiration (Gahrton 2000). The main reason why Peres wanted Israel – and also neighbouring countries – to join the EU was to stabilize the Middle East region. Peres has reiterated his remarks by saying that: "If the Palestinians, Israelis and Jordanians – *The Modern Benelux* – sign a peace agreement, they should be offered membership in the European Union, where the three countries could form a trading partnership" (CBC News 2004-02-11); he added that EU's senior diplomat Javier Solana, as well as then-German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, had reacted quite positively to his proposal. In addition, then-Palestinian Foreign Minister Nabil Shaath expressed that: "We hope that the European Union will promise Israel and Palestine membership in the European Union if a peace agreement prevails between the two countries" (ibid.). Therefore, it is obvious that a possible Israeli membership is explicitly linked to political developments in Palestine and surrounding countries. A membership process might from the side of the EU be seen as a carrot in order to stabilize the political situation in the region.

On one occasion during Silvan Shalom's tenure as Israeli Foreign Minister (2003-06) he is said to have told an Italian delegation of MEPs – that in the words of the leader of the delegation Pannella – "[He] is not excluding that [the Sharon] government will ask for full membership" (AP 2003-05-20). However, a spokesman for Shalom touched this statement by saying that: "[Firstly] [i]t doesn't mean [Shalom] is preparing the dossier for applying tomorrow", and "[Secondly] [i]n principle, the minister thinks a possibility exists for Israel to join the EU, since Israel and Europe share similar

economies and democratic values" (ibid.). Already today Israel has a foot in Europe by participation in European sports competitions and – following its membership of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) – the Eurovision song contest (Färm-Wallström 2004: 116). Another link between the EU and Israel deals with the notion of a Judaeo-Christian civilization (Ben-Ami 2001: Ch. 3; Delanty-Rumford 2005: 39). But the question is whether a constructed hybrid identity based on religion can be invoked as a convincing argument in terms of membership. Additionally, for Israel remains to decide whether it wants to form a part of the New Middle East or gravitate towards Europe and the Mediterranean (ibid.). But as was stated above the countries constituting the New Middle East might consider embarking on the EU enlargement process.

Occasionally it is said that Israel is not a European country depending on its geographical position. However, there is no formal EU decision that the country does not belong to Europe; and as the examples above have indicated, it is a country with an expressed European vocation. But the question remains whether this will ever render a full membership of the EU. There have been proposals regarding other forms of cooperative frameworks: EU commissioner on Industry, Günther Verheugen has proposed closer EU-Israeli economic ties through the creation of an extended market integration and a monetary union. Furthermore, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos has expressed that the EU and Israel should strive for a privileged partnership. The purpose of this would be to de facto give Israel full membership rights but no access to EU's internal institutional structures.

SOLIDARISM

It has been said that Europe can trace its spiritual roots to Athens, Rome *and* Jerusalem (Sklenka 2003: 190). Though maybe somewhat far-fetched, statements like this might be taken into regard concerning solidaristic links between EU and Israel. But descriptions like this again, put fourth the question about Europe's real borders and the very nature of the EU in terms of its geographical contra cultural limitations. Moreover, one has to keep in mind that Israel's official definition of its statehood is based on a Judaeo-democratic notion (Olmert 2006) at the same time as some academic scholars stretch their argumentation so far as contending that Judaism constitutes a central element of the European civilisation (Østergård 1998: 384). The question herein is what impact these types of conceptualisations could have on relations between the EU and Israel.

Concerning economic aspects of solidarism, it is difficult to discern any radically profound consequences of an Israeli membership. Israel already today has a GDP which is commensurate to

average EU levels. Furthermore economic cooperation and commercial ties have deepened since the signing of the EU-Israeli Association Agreement in 1995. The purpose of this is to integrate the Israeli economy into the internal market of the EU and consequently promote free trade between the parties (Grimwade 2002: 303). Thus, there are no overt economic benefits for Israel to join the EU. Nonetheless, an Israeli membership would give Israel a reinforced regional identity and additionally stabilize monetary policies should the Euro replace the Shekel (UPI 2003-05-21). The formal agreements also include components related to a permanent diplomatic contact, free capital flows, business liberalization as well as socio-cultural exchange.

GEOPOLITICS

The geopolitical aspect regarding a possible Israeli membership of the EU cannot be disregarded. It is commonly assumed that a membership process will require a final territorial settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Furthermore, the occupation of the West Bank, the settlement policy, the Palestinian refugee issue and the yet unresolved issue of the Jerusalem-al-Quds remain apparent obstacles in this regard. To this should be added that the human right's record of the country has occasionally been put under sharp criticism by external observers.

Relations between the EU and Israel over security and defence policy deteriorated considerably when Israeli aircraft destroyed much EU-financed infrastructure, following the definite collapse of the Oslo peace process in 2000 and the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa intifada (Wallace 2005b: 450). Furthermore, EU-Israeli relations have been further strained by Israel's erection of a security barrier or wall – or fence – on Palestinian territory, something which the International Court of Justice at The Hague, i.e. a UN body, has ruled illegal (Sweeney 2005: 414). This example per se shows how contemporary global politics is interrelated, at a time when a ruling by an international body can influence the relationship between a supranational-intergovernmental entity and a nation-state.

The EU is currently working together with the US, UN and Russia within a framework popularly known as The Quartet, with the stated aim to promote peace and stability in Israel and Palestine by undertaking efforts leading to a negotiated solution of the conflict (Wallace 2005b: 451). Though this process is not explicitly linked to the prospect of EU membership, it has led to the creation of a Road Map for Peace, whose ultimate objective is to reach a final agreement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. However, this process has also been linked to the issue over membership:

Signaling to the Israelis and the Palestinians that a peaceful resolution to their conflict could be a ticket for admission into the EU, would be more than just enticing them with economic rewards. Conditioning Israel's entry into the EU on its agreement to withdraw from the occupied territories and dismantle the Jewish settlements there, would strengthen the hands of those Israelis who envision their state not as a militarized Jewish ghetto but as a Westernized liberal community" (Hadar: 2003).

But if and when Israel does achieve a peace settlement with Syria and Lebanon and the Palestinians (it already has peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan), Israeli membership could make a great deal of sense for Israel and the EU alike. (UPI 2003-05-21)

The question which should be asked is how post-conflict Greater Middle East will define its relationship with Europe. An alternative to EU membership would be to emulate the EU by the creation of a Monnet-inspired *Communauté Proche-orientale de l'Eau et du Pétrole* (Sid-Ahmed 1998). This is an initiative which e.g. King Abdallah of Jordan has lauded support for.

Iceland

Lýðveldið Ísland

[297.072 inhabitants; calculation 2006 (World Gazetteer: D)]

VOLUNTARISM

Iceland has never applied for EU membership; however in 1992 the country signed the EEA which came into force in 1994. In addition to Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein are members of this framework. The EEA was an idea by then-Commission President Jacques Delors to expand the internal market to the members of the EFTA (Sweeney 2005: 200); it has even been argued that with the creation of the EEA, the EFTA members were absorbed into the EU (Preston 1997: 109). However, one should keep in mind that the current Icelandic-EU agreement – though it provides access to the internal market – is by no means linked to membership. Cooperation within EEA has been regarded as comparable to the relationship between the US, Canada and Mexico within NAFTA (Wallace 2005c: 500). Furthermore, Iceland belongs to the EU-sponsored Schengen cooperation which entails free movement of people and since 1999 the country has been a part of the EU's Northern Dimension; a non-institutional and non-financial network with the aim to provide regional stability, long-term security and sustainable development (Gower 2002: 332-33)

There are voices on Iceland which favours EU membership. The incumbent Prime Minister Halldór Ásgrímsson is one of them, predicting that the country will be a member of the EU by 2015 (The Economist 2006-03-02), something which even his own party, the agrarian-centrist *Framsóknarflokkurinn*, formally opposes. Also the senior party of the Icelandic government, the liberal-conservative party *Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn* under the leadership of Foreign Minister Geir

Haarde, opposes Icelandic membership of the EU (ibid.). On the other hand, the leading opposition party, the centre-left *Samfylkingin*, is in favour of negotiations followed by a referendum on the issue. However, Ásgrímsson has been more hesitant to the idea of a referendum since he believes that it would be a wiser strategy to cultivate an overwhelming public support and consensus of the political class in favour of EU membership than national division equivalent to the twofold experience of Norway in this regard (The Economist 2006-03-02).

In addition to the political parties, Iceland has organized popular pro- and anti-membership movements. There is a general disinclination to hand over powers to the EU; but the burning question in this regard is whether Iceland is better off without a formal access to the decision-making tables of the EU? There is no apparent political obstacle for Iceland to remain a non-member; but partly internal political reasons have hindered Iceland to join.

Data from opinion polls have indicated that the Icelandic electorate is more positive towards EU membership than the political class. In 2005, 43% said that they were in favour of Icelandic EU membership, whereas 37% said No and as much as 20% did neither favour nor oppose EU membership. (Samtök iðnaðarins 2005-09-01). The same opinion poll also showed that a majority – 59% favoured an initiation of membership negotiations; 25% opposed this and 16% said neither/nor (ibid.). It is often said that Norway attempts to join the union every 20 years (Sweeney 2005: 226). If this holds true, 2015 may be the year when Iceland and Norway together join the EU. One also has to remember that Norway when it comes to fishing policies is an economic competitor to Iceland – historically a Norwegian vassal state (Østergård 1998: 302) – and Iceland has therefore a national interest to follow what happens in Oslo (Redmond 1997: 6).

Iceland is assumed to have a Western European identity (Therborn 1997: 359), but is also stoutly regarded a Nordic country; Iceland enjoys a passport union with other countries which belong to the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers; i.e., Denmark, Faeroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Norway, Sweden, and Åland. Despite this close cooperation, these countries have chosen different paths vis-à-vis EU and also NATO membership.

SOLIDARISM

The Icelandic example puts into question whether the development of a welfarist state have reached a stage where it cannot independently provide social services, as a consequence of increased international economic interdependence, something which renders all forms of transnational

cooperation gradually more wise (Falkner 1996: 236). This constitutes one contentious aspect when solidarism as a driving force of enlargement is discussed concerning Iceland. As an EEA country Iceland has not so far had to consider this issue more profoundly; except for the economic policy implications, the country has within this framework merely access to EU's cultural programmes (Sandell 2002: 264).

Icelandic economy finds itself in a very favourable situation characterised by low unemployment rates and a stable economic growth. The country has no obvious economic reasons to join the EU and would even likely become a net contributor to the EU budget (Sweeney 2005: 226). Already today, Iceland as an EEA member has to pay into the Cohesion Fund which allocates resources to EU regions with a low GRP. In that way, it is not entirely correct to argue that a country which belongs to the EEA has *all the benefits and none of the costs* (ibid.). And the provocative question in this regard is why the country should join the EU, which has economic average levels distinctively below corresponding Icelandic standards? One plausible answer includes that the national currency, the *Króna* is relatively unstable and frequently plagued by a high level of exchange rate volatility, a fact which causes problems for the domestic export industry. The question is whether an Icelandic rapprochement towards the EU would lead to lower prices as a result of a deepened marketization between the EU and Iceland.

Another impinging solidaristic factor regarding Icelandic EU membership concerns the consequences it would have for Iceland to adopt the Common Fisheries Policy. Going back to 1971, a unilateral decision was taken by the Icelandic government that proclaimed Icelandic sovereignty over the waters up to fifty nautical miles from its coasts, something which led to a *cod war* with barred UK fishermen. In 1975, Iceland's water control was further extended to 200 nautical miles, something which according to international maritime law constitutes an *exclusive economic zone* (Lequesene 2005: 357 & 372). Relations with the UK were considerably strained following these occurrences, something which however did not impede Iceland from joining the EFTA which from the beginning was an initiative launched by the UK (Førland-Claes 1998: Ch. 6). It lasted until 2006 before an Icelandic PM paid a visit to London (The Economist 2006-03-02), something which indicates a detectable thaw in Icelandic-UK relations.

Iceland has vigilantly protected its waters from external intrusion; therefore, access to territorial waters has been regarded as non-negotiable (Preston 1997: 94). A membership of the EU would imply that Iceland most likely has to open up its waters to fishermen from other EU member states;

a replica of the compelling reason which forced Greenland to leave the EU in 1979 (Redmond 1997: 6). One has to keep in mind that fish still constitutes an important export source for Iceland; after WWII fish exports have accounted for 70 to 90% of Iceland's total value of exports (Preston 1997: 92). Anyhow, in recent times the country has undergone profound changes concerning its commercial structure, and nowadays tourism, trade in securities and the hydro energy sector constitute key economic sectors.

In addition, there is one maritime issue which could constitute an obstacle for Iceland to become a member of the EU: whaling for commercial purposes. Iceland halted this practice in 1989, as a result of the 1986 moratorium on the issue. At the beginning of the 00s, however, Iceland decided to recommence whaling for investigation purposes, arguing that whales had a negative impact on fishery, something which caused a palpable international spat. This indicates that for a possible Icelandic EU membership, the country ought to consistently answer the question on how to solve the conundrum of exchanging access to natural resources into access to decision making process on issues related to cross-border commerce.

GEOPOLITICS

Though Iceland has no armed forces, it is a full member of NATO. Since 1985, the country is additionally a nuclear-free zone. After the WWII, the US has stationed troops on Iceland and in that way US-Icelandic relations have been close and cordial. For Iceland's geopolitical interest, ties with mainland Europe has therefore been ascribed a minor role and it has even been indicated that Iceland due to its geographical position has remained outside the central arenas of international politics (Redmond 1997: 6). However, disputes between the EU and US on issues related to international security policy, have from time to time involved Iceland. A former US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, once expressed that due to EU's upbuilding of military capacities countries which are NATO members but not EU ditto might suffer from this because of: i. decoupling of the transatlantic link; ii. duplicating the defence resources; iii. discrimination of countries which do not hold dual memberships of the EU and NATO (*Financial Times* 1998-12-07; cited in Whitman 2002: 293). However, one should add that the EU swiftly solved these problems at the end of 90s when Iceland – along with other NATO but not EU members – was granted an associate membership of the WEU and furthermore by Iceland's nomination of assets to the Forces Answerable to WEU was granted entitlement to participate in operations undertaken by the WEU on equal conditions as full members and consequently was given full access to its institutional structures (Whitman 2002: 289). Therefore, geopolitics might only play a minor role for a possible

Icelandic membership of the EU. The country has no predicament concerning how to reconcile membership with policies on non-alignment, neutrality and non-involvement in military alliances (Sweeney 2005: 200). Historically, Iceland's small state identity has obliged itself to vociferously protect its independence. Once it was said by an Icelandic PM that there existed a risk that "[The EU] could buy Iceland in an afternoon" (Romantschuk 1990).

Kazakhstan

Қазақстан Республикасы; Республика Казахстан

[14.711.068 inhabitants; calculation 2006 (World Gazetteer: E)]

VOLUNTARISM

In 1999, the Council of Europe (CoE) declared that Kazakhstan is a European country and has a right to apply for membership. In sports events Kazakhstan competes with Asian countries; albeit Kazakhstan joined The Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) in 2002. Following the CoE declaration the traditional notion that the Hellespont (today known as the Dardanelles) constitutes the ipso facto border and *genetic code* (Prodi 1999: Ch. 5) between Europe and Asia has been somewhat altered since historically Turkey and Kazakhstan share common Turkic roots. But even EU politicians have described Kazakhstan as *The Heart of Asia* (Khabar TV 2004-10-08), though it is highly questionable to what degree the country can be said to espouse the rather unfathomable concept of *Asian Values* (Jönsson 1998: 184-90). To ascribe an identity label is not easy in the case of Kazakhstan.

The question is whether the decision by the CoE impels Kazakhstan to embark on a process leading to EU membership? Likewise, Turkey has been a member of the CoE since 1949 and has aspirations to join the EU. However, political obstacles for Kazakh EU membership remain; these include for example: democratic instability and the controversies sparked by a mandatory language test in order to obtain Kazakh citizenship, something which occasionally has been alleged to exclude Russophones of the country from full civil rights. Anyway, the latter issue could also be found among current EU member states. In addition, Kazakhstan has recently undertaken democratic reforms like the abolishment of death penalty and reforms of the legal and electoral systems.

Despite the fact that a part of Kazakhstan lies to the west of the Urals – i.e. in Europe – and the lion's share of its landmass is geographically situated in Asia. Kazakhstan could be labelled as a transcontinental country (World Gazetteer), an etiquette under which some would contend that

also Turkey and Spain could be grouped under. The historic reason for drawing the border between Asia and Europe along the Urals can be traced back to a Russian claim of a dual European and Asian identity (Bassim 1991). Equally, Kazakhstan has been labelled as a *Central Asian* (Yermukanov 2004; Rettman 2006) and also a *Former Soviet Republic* (Smith 2003: 56). Kazakhstan's supposed amalgamation of an Asian and European trait is often termed *Euroasian* (KIEMP). Former Soviet Republics which are pondering EU membership include Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia (Phinnemore 2002: 87). The question for Kazakhstan is whether the EU is ready to accept Eurasian members.

SOLIDARISM

The EU has since 1999 a Cooperation Agreement with Kazakhstan. Council meetings within this framework are organized on a regular basis. Also issues pertaining to EU enlargement have been penetrated at these occasions: "The importance of using the benefits of EU enlargement to strengthen Kazakhstan-EU relations was stressed. Both side renewed their commitment to effective multilateralism and in particular to the central role of the UN in solving international problems" (IOM Belgium). The question certainly is whether the term enlargement in the context above can be said to be linked to a discussion over Kazakh membership of the EU. Another key issue concerns environmental cooperation between EU and Kazakhstan in order to reduce emissions of toxic chemicals into the Aral Sea and thus halt its shrinkage. Lastly, the EU could assist Kazakhstan in its bid to become a member of the WTO.

GEOPOLITICS

Since 1994, Kazakhstan has participated in NATO's Partnership for Peace and has also joined its Planning and Monitoring Program. These might be the first signs of a more independent Kazakh foreign policy vis-à-vis Russia (Yermukanov 2004); US VP President has also described Kazakhstan as a *key strategic partner of the United States* (Cited in Řiháčková, 2006-05-12). Another step in this direction might be the joint EU-Kazakh announcement of the construction of a Caspian Sea gas pipeline (Rettman 2006-05-16), connecting Kazakhstan with EU countries via Caucasus. How this will influence EU-Kazakh relations remains to be seen, but one observer had already before that made the following topical remark:

"NATO or EU membership for Kazakhstan would tremendously raise the country's international prestige, but the likelihood of invitations remains highly hypothetical, given the country's current level of political development" (Yermukanov 2004).

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