

David Král (ed.):

*Bulgaria, Romania... and who next? Perspectives of further EU enlargement as seen from the new member states and EU hopefuls*

Prague: EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, 2007, 111 pp. ISBN: 80-86993-06-X

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The publication *Bulgaria, Romania... and who next? Perspectives of further EU enlargement as seen from the new member states and EU hopefuls* was published by the EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy whose analysts have been focusing on the European Union for a long time. They have been examining the current form of the EU, its reform process, and current issues. This recent publication is a volume, which contains the essence of the key challenges the EU and Europe are facing. The book arose out of the project aimed at research and analysis of the attitudes toward further enlargement of the EU in three new member states (that joined the Union in 2004 and later) and in three states which more or less link their future with the EU.

European Union integration is a dynamic process, which has been constantly developing since the 1950's; its final form is still unknown within the context of so-called the

EU's *finalité politique*. The representatives of governmental, political, academic and NGO spheres have been concerned with the deepening and widening of integration whereby these two processes have often been considered as directly connected. After the defeat of the EU Constitution Treaty by referendum in France and the Netherlands in 2005 (a year after the, thus far, widest enlargement of the EU), the discussion of the absorbing capacity of the EU, the necessity to decelerate the process of further enlargement and to concentrate on internal reform of the EU has been intensified.

The authors inquire into the further enlargement of the European Union and eventually the cultivation of relations among the neighbouring countries from different points of view, using ample data based on public opinion research, official documents and declarations. The book contains analy-

ses of the Ukrainian, Turkish, and Macedonian cases, first from the perspective of a new member state (the Czech Republic, Poland, and Latvia) and then from the viewpoint of a candidate state.

In the first chapter David Král deals with the relationship between the Ukraine and the EU from point of view of the Czech Republic. In new member states support of the EU enlargement is usually higher than in original 15 countries of the European Union. Attitudes of various countries differ and depend on historical and cultural ties, the strategic importance and economic development of a candidate state, etc. David Král analyses the attitudes of the Czech public toward the Ukraine and the Ukrainians, which are influenced by personal experiences, the media image and lack of information. Later on in the text he focuses on the position of the Czech political representation, the Czech "East policy," and significance of internal development of the Czech Republic, the EU and the Ukraine. This interesting chapter inquires into why the Ukraine's ambition to become a member state of the European Union is supported in a half-hearted way, and at the same time it offers certain solutions. He does not marginalize the government policy, and necessity to overcome the internal crisis within the EU, which is unfavourable to further enlargement of the Union over the earlier fixed terms.

Apropos, in the fourth chapter the author Olga Shumylo focuses on the Ukrainian perspective of the above mentioned issues. She analyses the foreign-political orientation of the Ukraine and its aspiration of EU membership by analysing the data based on public opinion, attitudes of political parties, of-

ficial government declarations, the attitudes of non-political elites and the media. She emphasizes the domestic political situation, which, of course, defines the foreign policy of the country as well, and this highly influences the Ukrainian public support for entering into the EU. From the Ukrainian point of view the European Union is considered as an element for the direction towards the West, and that is the reason why it is linked to the relationship between the Ukraine and NATO (opinions differ across the public and political representation). Remarkable is the picture with the data documenting the divergence of opinions according to ethnicity, geographical region, and place of residence (town/village) or age. It is obvious that EU integration of the Ukraine (with the potential EU membership) is a long-term and complicated process.

The second and the fifth chapters of the book are devoted to Turkey. Dace Akule analyses the Turkish EU aspiration from the Latvian point of view, the arguments for EU membership are presented here (with regard to Latvian interests), along with the attitudes of the official representatives Latvia, its political parties and the public. Pro and con arguments of Turkish membership in the EU are described here as well as economic, foreign-political, energy-strategic, religious and cultural aspects. The perspective of the Latvians is often reflected by their own historical experience; on one side they support further enlargement of the EU (like all new member states), and on the other side they are cautious in light of their experience with migration, restriction of personal freedom or transformation of the country. The possible scenario of Turkey joining the EU is con-

nected with positive changes but also with an abundance of unknown problems.

When evaluating the relation of Turkey and the EU Seda Domanic concentrates on their sphere of mutual interests, and names the three key challenges: the economic competition (the dynamic development of Turkish economy, growing attractiveness for foreign investors, favourable demographic situation in Turkey, and energy security), the balance with the variety (the improvement of intercultural dialogue, consolidation of democracy in Turkey) and global security (Turkey as an old strategic partner of the West, both sharing common interests in foreign and security policies). In the following part of the chapter the attention is given to the Turkish perspective of EU membership, i.e., public opinion research, the attitudes of political elites, businessmen, and civic society spheres. The author refers to some problematic issues, for instance the low support for Turkish membership in current member states of the EU, the Cyprian and Armenian issues the necessity for large reforms in Turkey, etc. Otherwise, the chapter sounds like the explicit support of the Turkish integration to the European Union. Many positive consequences for the EU are mentioned after the integration of Turkey, but an analysis of the potential problems is avoided.

In the third and the sixth chapter the authors research the West Balkan Countries, or more precisely, Macedonia. The Polish perspective is outlined by Piotr Kaźmierkiewicz who examines public position in Poland (with the reference to the fact that the Balkans are not a priority for the Poles, the strategic countries are the Ukraine and Belarus, the neighbours sharing the same his-

tory together), and the attitudes of the official representatives of the Poland. Generally speaking, the Polish elite and also the public widely support the enlargement of the EU (the important role represents Polish experience with its own transformation and efforts towards EU integration). The Polish people do not reject the entrance of the West Balkan countries to the Union, even though the public opinion survey reveals different support for the different countries. Poland has always advocated the integration of its neighbouring countries into the European Union more than the eastern states, due to the strategic interests of the country.

The Macedonian point of view is presented by Marija Risteska, who describes the relation between the EU and Macedonia; she handles the tasks that the country is accomplishing or should accomplish within the framework of the current treaties with the European Union. The author also warns of the problems and the obstacles, which were not resolved successfully by the EU, and she concerns herself with the security and strategic role of the Union in the Balkans. In the other parts of the chapter she suggests the implication of a future Macedonian entrance to the EU. Mostly positive consequences are mentioned here, and she concerns herself with European public attitudes to enlargement for the Balkan countries. Naturally, she seeks partners among the new member states, namely Poland; she has chosen it as a main future advocate of Macedonia's entrance to the EU, which is quite remarkable. She ascribes to Poland a more dominant and constructive position than it presently represents.

Overall, this volume gives very important attention to further enlargement of the Eu-

ropean Union, which is directly connected with the future of the EU, whereby it offers new perspectives. The attitude comparison of a member and a candidate state is an interesting approach. The member states are always chosen in such way that a candidate state would not represent a key strategic partner for them. This approach is original, offering several points of view, and taking into account the limited size of the publication. Unfortunately, there is no place for a more detailed analysis of the current member states attitudes to further enlargement of the European Union and a sufficient explanation of the challenges that the candi-

date states are facing. Never the less, it is a rather inspiring or problem-outlining book as far as the Institute for European Policy EUROPEUM followed the project and researched the attitudes of the other member states (both the new and original members). If it was concerned with the issues of other candidate states and aspirants, there would arise more representative comparative material, that would grasp the issue of the European Union enlargement in a more adequate range, from the point of view of the public, as well as the official representatives and non-political elites.