

Models of European Integration Enlargement or Neighbourhood

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Abstract

The European Union was set up with the purpose of ending the wars between neighbours, which culminated in the Second World War. Because of the political and economic situations, the six founders decided to expand the community. In the beginning, there were only two important points to become a member: the former was to have territories on European continent, the latter was to be a democratic government. The increasing number of states that wanted to be a part of the European Union caused the formation of some new accession criteria which is called the Copenhagen Criteria.

A successful integration of non-member states is vital to strengthen freedom, security and justice in Europe. In the post-cold war period, the enlargement of the European Union was one of the most important and difficult challenges. In recent years, the European Neighbourhood Policy has become a favourite topic for the European Union. Indeed, this new policy framework begins to demonstrate the EU's role as an international actor in its geographical vicinity.

In this study, the process of enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy will be examined by considering the European Integration Models. It will be discussed which one of them is more advantageous for security, freedom, identity, justice and border control.

Keywords: The Enlargement, European Neighbourhood Policy, Integration, European Union Policies.

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The European Union (EU) is an economic-based partnership that represents a form of cooperation between 28 member states. The EU was created in the aftermath of the Second World War and covers much of the European Continent. In 1951, six countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) founded the European Coal and Steel Community; in 1957, the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community. (Enlargement 2013, p. 1)

The European Union currently has 28 Member States. Following the first six Member States, 22 countries have acceded to the EU: 1973: Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom; 1981: Greece; 1986: Spain and Portugal; 1995: Austria, Finland and Sweden; 2004: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia; 2007: Bulgaria and Romania; and 2013: Croatia. (Enlargement 2013, p. 2)

The candidate countries are Turkey, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Montenegro and Serbia. All of them are at different levels of the accession process. For example, Montenegro and Serbia have recently begun accession negotiations while Turkey's accession negotiations have been underway since 2005. Macedonia has not started it, due to the ongoing dispute with Greece over the official name of the country. And EU accession talks with Iceland have been on hold since May 2013, because of a new Icelandic government that is opposed to EU membership. Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo are not recognised as candidates, but they are engaged in the stabilisation and association process. This means that they have the status of potential candidates. (Archick and Morelli 2014, p. 1)

When the enlargement process had begun, countries that were both European and democratic and were not yet integrated into the EU were classified as eligible. (Schimmelfennig, 2008, p.921-922) According to the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, any European country can apply for membership if it meets the "Copenhagen Criteria". (Archick and Morelli 2014, p. 1) These criteria for EU membership require candidates to achieve "stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities; a functioning market economy, as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union; the ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic, and monetary union." (The Copenhagen Criteria 2011, p. 1) Any European country can be the member of the EU who is able to fulfill the EU's political and economic criteria for membership. In order to become a member of the EU, countries must comply with all of the EU's standards and rules, have the consent of the EU institutions and EU member states, and have the consent of their citizens. (Enlargement 2013, p. 1)

According to the EU, the enlargement process is an historic opportunity to bring peace to the European continent. Analysts agreed that the enlargement process is one of the EU's most powerful and effective policy tools and has helped transform dictatorships into stable democracies and free market economies. (Spain and many of the former communist states of Central and Eastern Europe can be seen as examples of this situation.) (Archick and Morelli 2014, p. 1)

Enlargement was always important, but its salience has increased since the end of the Cold War. The accession of three former European Free Trade Association (EFTA) members, the membership of ten countries in 2004, and the extension of the membership perspective to the Western Balkans, has made enlargement a permanent and continuous process. (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier 2002, p. 500) The Copenhagen criteria helped for the historical transformation and accession of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. (European Commission 2013, p. 1)

The EU must be able to absorb new members (Archick and Morelli 2014, p. 1), as a result of this situation; European politicians were divided into two camps: deepeners and wideners. The deepeners believed in pursuing the political integration of the European Union. Their aim was to create a “United States of Europe”. The wideners were interested in expanding the membership of the EU, including all the post-Communist countries of Eastern and Central Europe. Their aim was to spread the political and economic benefits of EU Membership as broadly as possible. (Rachman 2006, p. 51)

The results of the enlargement issue can have consequences for the EU itself, and also for the many applicant states. The enlargement could be seen as a threat for the internal order of the EU. The new external borders could create new divisions on the European Continent and cause instability in Europe. (Sjursen 2002, p. 491) However, there are some advantageous effects of the enlargement process. The most important of them is the contribution to the promotion and defence of human rights and fundamental democratic principles. (Sedelmeier 2013, p. 1) As an example, the EU’s enlargement policy encouraged the transition to liberal democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. (Sjursen 2006, p. 4) Enlargement is generally claimed to be one of the successful foreign policy tools of the European Union. It has contributed to the democratization process, conflict resolution, respect for human rights, minority protection, and stability in Eastern Europe. These are all related with the political part of the Copenhagen Criteria. (Schimmelfennig 2008, p. 918-919)

There are some disputes about the EU’s future enlargement policy. Recent developments in the EU and its neighbouring countries are the causes of these disputes. First of all, the EU is not keen on further enlargement. According to the enlargement strategy in 2006, the EU would be ‘cautious about assuming any new commitments’. (Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2006, p. 2) The integration capacity began to be discussed among member states and EU citizens. The domestic political problems of some of the non-member countries in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe made it difficult to fulfill the conditions; even though the EU was open to admitting them on principle. (Schimmelfennig 2008, p. 919) ‘More concerns and less hope’ could be a description of the general tendency in applicant states’ perceptions of the EU and the enlargement process. (Hafner 1999, p. 793) From the integration capacity perspective, enlargement seemed counterproductive, because the capacity of the common foreign and security policy to deal with the security agenda might be reduced as a result of the enlargement process. Developing a coherent foreign policy can be more difficult with 25 or 28 members than with 15 members. The membership of the central, eastern and southern European countries might bring new foreign policy perspectives to the EU because of their different cultures, geographic locations and historical experiences. (Sjursen 2002, p. 498-499)

Many researchers claim that the EU enlargement is in its limits; not only geographically but also in terms of public enthusiasm for further expansion. (Archick and Morelli 2014, p.1) The term of “enlargement fatigue” has become a serious issue in European countries. After Croatia’s membership, and the EU’s membership commitment to the other Western Balkan countries, the EU experts asserted that some of the European leaders and many of the EU citizens are reluctant about further EU enlargement. EU officials underline that the enlargement process must take into account the Union’s “integration capacity.” (Archick and Morelli 2014, p. 14-15)

Some other experts point out that the EU struggles with the identity of Europe; where Europe ends and what the EU stands for. These issues are related to the integration capacity of the EU. Thus the question is can countries like Ukraine or the southern Caucasus can be considered as a part of Europe? According to the common thought, the EU is unlikely to include the countries of “wider Europe” in the foreseeable future. (Archick and Morelli 2014, p. 15) Enlargement may be inevitable, but it is not seen as a priority by EU citizens. Priorities are concentrating on the EU’s internal problems such as unemployment, national sovereignty, the EU democratic deficit and intolerance. (Hafner 1999, p. 796)

There are some reasons to guess that the enlargement strategy will not be available for a future Europe. Even though there are new members entering the EU (Croatia) and ongoing discussions with candidate states (Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey), the enlargement strategy has begun to change. First, the EU has internally begun to discuss its absorption capacity. All of the enlargement processes led to major institutional changes within the EU, and it seems that the EU is becoming reluctant to these changes. Second, European leaders are suspicious of the readiness of non-EU member states to adjust to the economic and political commitments. Third, the Euro-crisis has resulted in an inward-looking approach towards European integration. Finally, the EU can not go on enlarging forever, the increased number of members has also raised the question about the stopping point of the EU. These reasons show that the EU’s foreign policy strategy of enlargement is less available for the EU as a future policy. If so, how can the EU continue to be effective in its foreign policy without an enlargement strategy? (Silander and Nilsson 2013, p. 444-445) The answer can be found in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The dispute about the deepening and widening of the EU is related to the capacity of the EU to cope with new members, but it has also paved the way for innovation in the field of foreign relations. (Delcour and Tulmets 2007, p. 5) Future enlargement plans include the Western Balkans. However, the Union’s relations with the remaining post-Soviet states (Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia), also with the southern Mediterranean states and the Middle East, require new and effective policy instruments. (Comelli, Greco, and Tocci 2007, p. 206) The big-bang enlargement in 2004 resulted in a widened democratic Europe. After the enlargement success, the ENP was developed as an alternative strategy to enlargement, to develop good relationships with the new neighbouring states. (Silander and Nilsson 2013, p. 441)

The basis of the European Neighbourhood Policy was the Barcelona Process. It was the first step of managing the bilateral and regional relations between the European Union and its neighbours. In November 1995, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of 15 EU members and 14 Mediterranean partners agreed to announce the Barcelona

Declaration; which was the basis of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. This process had three main objectives; “Political and Security Dialogue”, “Economic and Financial Partnership” and “Social, Cultural and Human Partnership”. (The Barcelona Process, p. 1) According to the Barcelona Declaration which had published on 27-28 November 1995; (The Barcelona Declaration, p. 1)

- Political and Security Dialogue: The participants express their conviction that the peace, stability and security of the Mediterranean region are a common asset which they pledge to promote and strengthen by all means at their disposal. To this end they agree to conduct a strengthened political dialogue at regular intervals, based on observance of essential principles of international law, and reaffirm a number of common objectives in matters of internal and external stability.
- Economic and Financial Partnership: The participants emphasize the importance they attach to sustainable and balanced economic and social development with a view to achieving their objective of creating an area of shared prosperity. The partners acknowledge the difficulties that the question of debt can create for the economic development of the countries of the Mediterranean region.
- Social, Cultural and Human Partnership: The participants recognize the traditions of culture and civilization throughout the Mediterranean region, the dialogue between these cultures and exchange them at human, scientific and technological level. This is an essential factor in bringing their people closer, promoting understanding between them and improving their perception of each other.

The next meeting of these countries’ Ministers for Foreign Affairs had planned to be in 1997. (The Barcelona Declaration, p. 1) These meetings are punctuated by periodic meetings of Euro-Mediterranean Ministers of Foreign Affairs. So that the progress of the partnership could be improved through the changes in international issues. (The Barcelona Process, p. 1) As an example, since 1995, threats to the security of Euromed partners have significantly changed. These threats became less predictable, more diverse and they included issues such as terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, anti-personnel landmines, regional conflicts and organised crime. (Political and Security Partnership, p. 1)

The policy was first outlined in a Commission Communication on “Wider Europe” in March 2003. (What is the European Neighbourhood Policy?, p. 1) This was an era where the European Union was preparing itself for the biggest enlargement. After a year, the Wider Europe, ten Central and Eastern European countries would be part of the EU; thus the content of the Wider Europe was shaped through the enlargement policies. According to it, the EU has a duty, not only towards its citizens and the new member states, but also towards its present and future neighbours to ensure continuing social cohesion and economic dynamism. The EU must act to promote regional cooperation and integration which are preconditions for political stability, economic development and the reduction of poverty. (Wider Europe-Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours 2003, p. 3)

The main aim of the Commission was to create a ‘ring of countries, sharing the EU’s fundamental values and objectives’. The ‘Wider Europe’ policy can be defined as an explicit form of geographical integration between the EU and its neighbours. The

ENP is not about enlargement, but can be seen as a tool to promote a mutual commitment to common values, democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development. This policy provides a privileged relationship in which the neighbouring states can receive more support than other third-party countries have been offered. However, it can be said that the main idea of the ENP is to push neighbouring states to 'be like us, but not one of us'. (Silander and Nilsson 2013, p. 441) The dimensions of the relationship are related with the number of the values that are shared. (What is the European Neighbourhood Policy?, p. 1)

In order to avoid new dividing lines, the EU decided to create a 'ring of friends', through the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) with partner-countries geographically and politically. (Babayan 2011, p. 1) The European Neighbourhood Policy presents a challenge to the conceptualization of the European Union's relations to the world. (Jeandesboz 2007, p. 388) The ENP was introduced in 2004, after which, the Barcelona Process became the multilateral forum of dialogue and cooperation between the EU and its Mediterranean partners. The bilateral relations began to be managed under the ENP and through Association Agreements signed with each partner country. (The Barcelona Process, p. 1)

The ENP framework targeted 16 close neighbours; 10 of which were southern Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, and Tunisia), and 6 of which were on the EU's eastern periphery (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine). (What is the European Neighbourhood Policy?, p. 1)

The ENP tries to transform the external borders and to create an area outside its boundaries that constitutes a stable, prosperous and friendly neighbourhood. (Dimitrovova 2010, p. 1) The ENP had underlined the Union's determination to avoid drawing new lines in Europe and to promote stability and prosperity within the new borders of the EU. The enlargement would serve to strengthen relations with Russia. It called for enhanced relations with Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and the Southern Mediterranean countries to be based on a long term approach promoting reform, sustainable development and trade. (Wider Europe-Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours 2003, p. 4) Because of the changes in geography, politics and culture both on the European continent and in the Mediterranean, the regional co-operations needed to be enriched. The Eastern Partnership, the Union for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea Synergy were examples of these co-operations. (What is the European Neighbourhood Policy?, p. 1)

In order to form closer relationships with the neighbours, and a zone of stability, security and prosperity, the EU and the ENP members accepted reforming objectives within certain areas; such as cooperation on political and security issues, mobility, environment, integration of transport and energy networks, scientific and cultural cooperation. The EU would provide financial and technical assistance to support the implementation of these objectives. (What is the European Neighbourhood Policy?, p. 2) The EU works closely with each of its Mediterranean partners so that the supports and reforms take into account according to each country's specific needs and

characteristics. These kinds of actions are funded under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). (The Barcelona Process, p. 1)

One of the key elements of the ENP is the bilateral “Action Plans” between the EU and each ENP partner. These documents are negotiated with each country, based on the country’s needs and capacities, as well as their interests and the EU’s benefits. (What is the European Neighbourhood Policy?, p. 2) The procedures of the Action Plans are like the individual accession partnerships. They evaluate a roadmap to provide the needed reforms. When these priorities are fulfilled, the neighbour state becomes closer to the European Union. (Cremona and Hillion 2006, p. 11) However, among the neighbour states it is possible to make a distinction between the ‘willing’ and the ‘passive’ states. Among those without Action Plans the distinction can be as ‘reluctant’ and ‘excluded’ states. (Emerson, Noutcheva, and Popescu 2007, p. 1) Algeria, Belarus, Libya and Syria have not yet agreed to the Action Plans; thus the ENP is not fully activated for those countries. (What is the European Neighbourhood Policy?, p. 1)

The basis of the ENP is to allow the EU to develop an alternative to enlargement, while preventing future EU borders from becoming hard exclusionary boundaries and developing into integrated borderlands. The former purpose of the ENP is to promote border security and develop cross-border contacts and cooperation between the enlarged EU and its neighbours. The latter is to foster a ‘ring of well-governed countries to the East of the EU and on the borders of the Mediterranean’ and the main idea is inclusion but without membership. (Comelli, Greco, and Tocci 2007, p. 208)

At the external action of the EU, the ENP is an important determinant. As it is mentioned in the Security Strategy of the EU, via the ENP, the EU can contribute to global security and governance. (Cremona and Hillion 2006, p. 26) Under the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the EU has appointed Special Representatives for most of the crises regions in its neighbourhood and has launched operations in countries; such as Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Moldova/Ukraine, the Palestinian Authority and Georgia. The EU has becoming active in the conflict regions in its neighbourhood. (Popescu 2007, p. 1)

According to the EU, the capacity of the ENP to strengthen cooperation between the EU and non-member states is related with both their individual ambitions as independent states and shared EU norms of democracy, human rights, rule of law, good governance, peace, security, market economy principles, and sustainable development. However, the EU Commission declares three normative challenges in the neighbouring states: the resolution of existing conflicts, promoting economic development, and the development and consolidation of democracies, including freedom of expression, rule of law, human rights, and a civil society. (Silander and Nilsson 2013, p. 448)

The European Eastern Partnership (EaP) was accepted in the spring of 2009 after years of policy development towards non-member states and as a specific eastern dimension of the ENP. The EaP is a complementary program with the EU’s six eastern periphery countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) designed to offer more concrete EU support in exchange for democratic and market-oriented reforms. The EU considers Russia to be a “strategic partner,” but

Russia does not want to be a part of both the ENP and the EaP. (Archick and Morelli 2014, p. 13) In 2011, the EU claimed that a closer relation between neighbour states could provide for further economic integration of the EU market and eventually include the four fundamental freedoms of movement (persons, goods, services, and capital). (Silander and Nilsson 2013, p. 448)

It is argued that the EU vision of creating a ring of friends via the ENP has failed. Even though the number of EU members has increased, Europe remains divided between the EU member states and the others. The democratic decline in Russia, the conflict in Georgia in 2008, and the growing authoritarianism in Belarus and Ukraine have had negative effects on the notion of a whole, free, and democratized Europe. (Silander and Nilsson 2013, p. 442) However, some authors state that improving EU foreign policy via ENP framework is an indicator of international ambition, having particular consideration for Eastern neighbours' eagerness to be a part of the EU. (Melo 2014, p. 192)

Conclusion

The limits of Europe have never been clearly identified by the EU; especially in the East. The ENP can be seen as a policy for excluding countries unlikely to fit under the EU's current definition of Europe. (Schimmelfennig, 2008, p.921-922) A successful integration of non-member states is vital to strengthen freedom, security and justice in Europe. It is not certain how the EU will continue its integration. However, the experts can suggest some scenarios for future evolution of the EU's relation; Fragmented Union, unreformed Union, strengthening of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Status quo of the Union, and a Reformed and externally more dynamic Union can be listed as the topics of these scenarios. (Comelli, Greco, and Tocci 2007, p. 215-217)

The ENP offers the neighbour states a privileged relationship in return for a commitment to common values, democracy, human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles, and sustainable development. Although the ENP is based on a deeper political relationship and economic integration, it does not include enlargement and does not offer an accession perspective. The ENP was not evaluated to cope with economic situations. However, the EU is trying to help the region through the current crisis both economically and politically. (Popescu and Wilson 2009, p. 7) Ten years after the launch of the ENP, it is possible to say that it has not worked effectively. Getting the neighbourhood policy right is crucial for the union's future as an international actor. Renewing and strengthening the ENP should be high on the agenda of the new EU leadership team that will take office toward the end of 2014.

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