

Halki International Seminars

The European Union and the Challenge of Enlargement

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Dr. Fraser Cameron^{*}

Introduction

In the coming years the European Union faces one of the greatest challenges in its history – namely its enlargement to embrace the new democracies of central and eastern Europe. Enlargement of the Union is a political imperative and a major opportunity. Never before have so many countries wished to join the Union². Never before has the Union envisaged an enlargement of such importance, both in terms of dimension – it could add more than 100 million to its population of 370 million – and in terms of the different economic and social situations involved. The combined income of the ten potential new members in central and eastern Europe is roughly equivalent to that of the Netherlands and their average national income per head is still only 30% of the EU average.

The next enlargement, therefore, is an unprecedented historic challenge, requiring imagination and political will of the same order as inspired the foundation of the original European Communities. But unless reforms are made in the functioning and decision-making of the institutions, enlargement could lead to paralysis and even disintegration.

The next enlargement will clearly present different problems and challenges from preceding enlargements, and the Union may have to find new approaches and new solutions, without in any way weakening the existing *acquis communautaire*. If the EU is to maintain its cohesion and compete in an increasingly global market place then it needs to ensure that new members are capable of fulfilling all the obligations of membership. Indeed it is highly desirable that the candidates apply as much of the *acquis communautaire* as possible on accession, and that there should be no open-ended derogations from the *acquis*. The EU has already made clear that each candidate should be considered on its merits, which implies a differentiation in approach, even if not for the end result. There can be no question of compensation for some candidates because they have not been accepted for the first wave of NATO enlargement.

The Enlargement Process

The process of enlargement can be a lengthy and complicated affair³. Previous enlargements of the Union have often taken many years – in the case of the UK more than a decade. Application for membership is

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momentous decision for the applicant country, and triggers on the Union's side the process defined in Article 0 of the Treaty:

"Any European State may apply to become a member of the Union. It shall address its application to the Council, which shall act unanimously after consulting the Commission and after receiving the assent of the European Parliament, which shall act by an absolute majority of its component members. The conditions of admission and adjustments to the Treaties of which the Union is founded which such admission entails shall be the subject of an agreement between the Member States and the applicant State. This agreement shall be submitted for ratification by all the contracting States in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements."

After an application, the Council takes the procedural decision to consult the Commission by requesting its Opinion. This is an in-depth analysis of the situation of the applicant country, and an evaluation of its capacity to fulfill the conditions of membership, taking account of the evolution of Union's aquis. It is designed to assist the Council in its important decision whether to open negotiations for accession.

The opening of negotiations with the applicant country marks another stage in the process of enlargement. An accession negotiation is not a typical external negotiation, in which the Commission is the spokesman on matters of Community competence. It is a kind of intergovernmental conference between the Member States and the applicant country. The Union's "common positions", decided by the Council by unanimity, are normally presented to the applicant country by the Presidency of the Council. The Commission, however, has an important de facto role in proposing common positions to the Council, and it may be mandated by the Council to seek solutions with the applicant country.

As can be seen from the tables in annexes two and three, the length of accession negotiations has varied considerably in the past. At the conclusion of negotiations, there is agreement on a draft Treaty of Accession, which receives the assent of Parliament and the approval of Council, and is the signed. The Treaty has to be ratified by all the Member States and the applicant countries, according to their respective constitutional arrangements, which may include referendums. These procedures of approval and ratification mean that there can be a lengthy period between the conclusion of the negotiations and accession⁴.

The Criteria

Early in 1996, the Commission began collecting the necessary information for the preparation of its Opinions on the ten CEECs. (Opinions were already made on Cyprus and Malta in 1993). The main thrust of the Opinions will be an assessment of the candidates' capacity to assume all the obligations of membership. In carrying out its work, the Commission will have to take

account of the additional political and economic conditions identified by the European Council in Copenhagen, which stated that membership of the Union requires:

“that the candidate has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;

the existence of 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 European Council added a further criteria when it linked enlargement to institutional reform by concluding that “the Union’s capacity to absorb new members, while maintaining the momentum of European integration, is also an important consideration in the general interest of both the Union and the candidate countries”.

The Madrid European Council in December 1995 confirmed these criteria and referred also to the need:

“to create the conditions for the gradual, harmonious integration of the candidate countries particularly through:

-the development of the market economy

-the adjustment of their administrative structures

-the creation of a stable economic and monetary environment”

The European Council in Madrid also gave a new impetus to the enlargement process by asking the Commission:

- “to take its evaluation of the effects of enlargement on Community policies further, particularly with regard to agricultural and structural policies”; (impact study)

- “to embark upon preparation of a composite paper (document d’ensemble) on enlargement”, which will complement the Opinions by providing an overall approach;

- “to submit a communication on the future financial framework of the Union, having regard to the prospect of enlargement, immediately after the conclusion of the Intergovernmental Conference”.

This implies that the Commission should forward to the Council a comprehensive package of communications on enlargement soon after the conclusion of the IGC. In its Opinions on the applications for membership, the Commission will therefore have to make an assessment of the actual situation of each country together with an evaluation of its capacity to take on the obligations of membership at the time of accession. These are strict obligations and will require a considerable effort by all the candidates. For example, assuming the *acquis communautaire* involves implementing over 100,000 pages of Community legislation. An important factor will be the progress made by each country under the pre-accession strategy, which includes the association agreements, the Phare programme, and the White Paper on preparing for integration into the Single Market.

To establish the factual situation for its Opinions, the Commission relies to a considerable extent on information provided by applicant countries. That is why in April 1996 it sent to the ten countries a series of questions covering all the main areas of the "*acquis communautaire*". The questionnaire had an important impact in the applicant countries, encouraging them to understand more fully the extent and scope of EU policies, and to review their administrative arrangements for coordination of EU-integration affairs. The information in the replies to the questionnaires (received at the end of July) is being verified by the Commission, taking into account information and analyses from other sources, with a view to preparation of the Opinions⁵.

The impact study will examine the effects of enlargement of EU policies and their likely future development. It will evaluate the effects of the adoption of the *acquis* of the EU by the applicant countries as well as possible problems which need to be resolved. The composite paper will examine the horizontal issues raised by enlargement which go beyond the scope by the opinions on the individual applications for membership. Such issues are likely to include transitional arrangements and strengthening the pre-accession strategy. In some policy areas, according to the Commissions reports prepared for the Madrid European Council, there will be few problems; in others, such as the CAP or Structural Funds, adjustments will have to be made not only in view of the accession of Central and East European Countries but also for other reasons independent of enlargement. In the agricultural sector, for example, the Union has embarked on important reforms to make the CAP more market-orientated, taking account also of international commitments in the Uruguay Round. These reforms, which are already having their effects, will by 2,000 have resulted in changes which are difficult to predict⁶.

At this stage it is impossible to forecast the financial implications of enlargement because of continuing changes to many EU policies. The EU's present financial framework, which was established by the Edinburgh European Council in December 1992, expires at the end of 1999. The future financial framework will cover the early years of the next century and taking into account the likely effects of enlargement. These will be a difficult exercise as it will occur against the background of member states striving to meet and

maintain the strict conditions for the third phase of economic and monetary union. There is, at present, little enthusiasm to increase the Union's budget, due to reach 1.27% of Community GDP by 1999. Indeed some of the major net contributing member states have indicated their wish to see a reduction on their contributions in future.

A Timetable for Enlargement

Although it has been mentioned for the year 2000 as a target date for accession, the Union has not fixed a definite timetable⁷. The impatience of the associated countries to speed up their accession to the Union is understandable. After years of hardship under communism, they want to be accepted fully into the institutions, which have, for so long, sustained West European freedom and prosperity. The prospect of accession is especially important for those who are living with the short term costs of economic transition. But on the question of a timetable for enlargement the official EU position is that agreed at the Madrid European Council which stated that "following the IGC, and in the light of the opinions and reports from the Commission, the Council will at the earliest opportunity take the necessary decisions for launching the accession negotiations" with the CEECs. It further stated that it "hopes the preliminary stage of negotiations will coincide with the start of negotiations with Cyprus and Malta" which "will commence six months after the conclusion of the IGC, and will take its results into account". The opening of enlargement negotiations thus depends on successful outcome of the IGC⁸, as well as the progress of the applicant countries in continuing the political and economic reforms necessary to prepare for membership⁹.

Whilst the commission follows the European Council's injunction to treat each applicant equally, it has made it clear (in its report to Madrid) that, "if some countries have made sufficient progress in preparing for membership, they should not be delayed because others have not reached the same level". On the assumption that the IGC ends mid- 1997, accession negotiations with at least some of the applicant countries could begin in early 1998. The duration of such negotiations is very difficult to predict. In the case of Austria, Sweden and Finland, they were completed in thirteen months, whereas with Spain and Portugal they lasted for nearly seven years. The length of the negotiations with each of the candidates from Central and East Europe will depend on the complexity of the issues to be resolved.

The Benefits of Enlargement

The further enlargement of the EU is sometimes presented in negative terms- the cost of taking in poorer members, the difficulty of reforming union policies, institutional problems, etc. But the potential benefits of enlargement are also considerable because it will:

- enlarge the EU's internal market to include more than 100 million additional consumers with rising incomes
- support the newly liberalized market economies by further opening up markets in goods and services between East and West, North and South, stimulating economic growth in Europe and offering new trading opportunities for all;
- bind the countries of central and eastern Europe into western European political and economic structures and thus enhance security and stability; both the US (and Russia) support enlargement for this reason;
- increase effective cooperation in the fields of Justice and Home Affairs, helping to fight crime and the menace of drugs, the effects of which are felt throughout our continent;
- bring higher environmental standards to central and eastern Europe, benefiting all of Europe by reducing cross- broader and global pollution;

Deepening and Widening

It is quite instructive to look briefly at previous enlargements, which have often been associated with a deepening of the Community.

Following the first enlargement involving UK, Ireland and Denmark, the Community agreed common policies in new areas (e.g. regional, environmental, technology) as well as closer cooperation in foreign affairs (EPC). Institutional arrangements were also strengthened with the introduction of the European Council and direct elections to the European Parliament.

Following accession of Greece, and then Spain and Portugal, the Community further developed the Structural Funds as a mechanism for transfer of resources to the less- developed regions of member states. This second enlargement wave was also accompanied by the Single European Act, increased involvement of the European Parliament and a new financial resources package for the Community. The Single European Act significantly extended the use of majority voting, with out which it would have been impossible to complete the Internal Market.

The latest enlargement involving Austria, Sweden and Finland followed the Treaty of European Union which again involved considerable deepening e.g. the commitment to Economic and Monetary Union, the establishment of a Common Foreign and Security Policy, and yet further powers for the European Parliament¹⁰.

It is this quite clear from these examples that enlargement can actually speed up the process of integration, cohesion, and convergence in the Union¹¹. With regard to the next enlargement, a deepening of the integration process is even more essential given the number of applicants and the increased diversity their accession will bring to the EU.

The Wider Agenda

Enlargement is a course part of a wider European agenda which has internal and external aspects. Internally, the Union will need

- to reform the institutions of the Union, which were designed for six member states, to the requirements of a much larger Union (part of the IGC agenda)
- to introduce the single currency (the Euro) in 1999 according to criteria in the Maastricht Treaty. There is no doubt that this move will have a major impact as regards the deepening of the Union
- to agree new financial guidelines for the Union after the expiry of the present budget agreement in 1999
- to agree on the future of the Structural Funds
- to continue reform the CAP

Externally, the EU has a number of major priorities, including:

- reconstruction in the Balkans
- developing a new Euro- Med Partnership following the Barcelona Conference and the Cannes decision on a new and substantial package for the Mediterranean
- developing a strategic partnership with Russia and Ukraine, and deepening relations with other members of the CIS
- strengthening ties with Turkey following the conclusion of the Customs Agreement in December 1995
- strengthening transatlantic relations by building on the EU- US Action Plan agreed at Madrid in December 1995
- building a new relationship with Asia following the Bangkok summit in March 1996
- preparing for a new round world trade negotiations

Taken together, these internal and external issues make up a challenging "Agenda of Europe" over the next few years.

This by all means exhaustive list of external priorities also gives an indication of the EU's increasing global role. But if the EU is to exercise its true weight in the world, it is essential that agreement is reached on measures to strengthen the common foreign and security policy (CFSP). As Commissioner Hans van den Broek has argued "Our citizens, and indeed our partners in the world, are keen for Europe to speak and act with one voice in dealing with major issues such as the crisis in Bosnia. So far the CFSP has been rather a disappointment. There is now an opportunity to achieve reforms in the IGC-reforms which will become increasingly urgent with enlargement¹²." It is worth adding that the need for greater security was one of the main considerations leading the CEECs to seek membership in the Union¹³.

The pre- accession strategy

Since 1989, the European Union has steadily increased its efforts to support the reform process in the CEECs, and the developed a range of policies tailored to the situation and needs of each country, which are constantly evolving to meet changing circumstances¹⁴. The Union has also put in place a comprehensive pre- accession strategy to prepare for the next enlargement. The principal elements of this strategy are as follows:

- wide- ranging association or "Europe" agreements which provide for comprehensive cooperation in political, economic, trade, cultural and other areas. Association Councils meet regularly to discuss issues of common concern, as do parliaments from the associated countries with their European Parliament counterparts. The Europe agreements further provide the framework for rapid progress towards trade. The Union has already eliminated the tariffs and quotas in all areas except agriculture. Overall, a massive reorientation has taken place in trade flows, with the Union today accounting for six per cent for trade with the United States, and less than two per cent for trade with Japan. There would be little point in the Union opening up its markets if barriers remain in trade among the associated countries themselves. For this reason, the Union strongly supports the Central European Free Trade Area (CEFTA) and its extension to all associated countries. As trade barriers fall, direct investment should increase, with further gains to productivity and competitiveness.
- The Phare technical assistance program is the EU's principal financial instrument for supporting the efforts of the applicants to prepare for membership. Phare's flexibility has been increased through the adoption of multi- annual indicative problems and an increase in the proportion of fund that may be sent on infrastructure to 25%. Applicant countries may also use up to 10% of their national Phare allocations to fund their participation in Community programmes. Between 1995- 1999, the Phare budget is 6,693 MECU. In all, Phare will have delivered a total of 11 BECU in assistance to the applicant countries over the ten years from 1989 to 1999.
- The structured dialogue consists of meetings of heads of state and government (as a rule once a year) and ministerial meetings (often twice a year) in policy areas ranging from foreign affairs and justice/ home affairs to transport, research and environmental areas. It is worth noting that never before have applicant countries been invited to participate on a regular basis in joint meetings with the institutions of the Union, until just before accession.
- The White Paper, approved at the Cannes European Council in June 1995, on the steps which the associated countries must take in order to prepare themselves to operate in the Single Market. The White Paper provides a guide to the complexities of the internal market and

suggests a logical sequence in which the associated countries should go about bringing their legislation into line with that in the Union. Legislation, to be effective, must be properly implemented and enforced, and so the White Paper also provides guidance on the necessary regulatory and administrative structures.

The principal responsibility for implementing the White Paper's recommendations lies with the associated countries themselves. The sooner their laws, conformity tests, standards institutes, and judicial procedures, are adapted to those in the Union recognizes that advice and support are needed and so the Commission has established a new Technical Assistance Information Exchange Office for the purpose which draws on the experience of the member states in transposing Union legislation into national law in order to advise partners in Central and Eastern Europe. The Commission is now working with each associated country to devise its own strategy for alignment with the internal market, taking into account its economic situation and reform priorities.

The need for continuing reforms

This brief outline of the pre- accession strategy is sufficient to indicate the Union's deep commitment to the preparations for future enlargement. Equally important, however, are the preparations being made by the associated countries themselves. The first priority in preparing for Union membership is the consolidation of political and economic reform. This will enable the Commission to confirm, when it issues its opinions on applications for membership, that the Copenhagen principles are fully respected. Respect for human rights, protection of minorities, the free flow of information, and the independence of the media and the judiciary, are essential elements in the consolidation of democracy. On the whole, the record is good, but there are worrying developments in some candidate countries¹⁵.

Good relations with neighboring states and the, often related, question of respect of minority rights are also important in preparing for membership. Here, too, a great deal of progress has been made thanks largely to the efforts of the countries concerned, partly within the framework of the Stability Pact¹⁶. But again a number of sensitive issues remain to be resolved.

Just as important as the consolidation of democracy and stability is the pursuit sound macro- economic policy and economic reform. The adoption of internal market legislation, as provided for by the White Paper, will only produce the expected benefits if accompanied by the right economic policies. On the whole most applicant countries have established the foundations of the market economy and the conditions for stable economic growth. The situation, however, varies considerably from country to country with some applicants achieving real growth rates of over 5%.

Some underlying economic problems remain. Foreign investment, though increasing, is still relatively slow and it is distributed across the candidates unevenly. Potential investors will want to be sure that host countries provide adequate protection for intellectual and industrial property rights, before they supply sophisticated new goods and services. Here, too, adequate mechanisms for implementation and enforcement are as important as the legal framework itself. The privatization process lacks transparency in some cases and is not always accompanied by necessary restructuring. Reform of the banking and financial sectors still remains weak and the implementation of competition policies of type practiced in the EU is only just beginning.

It is important that competition policy and state aids controls are brought into line with the Union in order to create equitable conditions for trade and investment. This will bring distinct benefits both of the Union and for the associated countries. For once satisfactory implementation of competition law and state aids control, as well as other White Paper measures, since there would then be a guarantee of fair competition comparable to that inside the Union itself.

The IGC and Enlargement

Whilst the associated countries continue with their reforms, the Union is also faced with the challenge of strengthening its own institutions and decision-making procedures to prepare for enlargement. This will be one of the main tasks of the Intergovernmental Conference.

The fundamental question is how to organize a European Union with perhaps 25 plus members on the basis of democracy, transparency and efficiency? In the Commission's report to the Reflection Group, the necessity of the IGC taking decisions to ensure that an enlarged Union would continue to function effectively was emphasized. The European Parliament also pointed to the need for major institutional reform. The Reflection Group itself has highlighted the need for institutional reform in its Final Report but to date there appears little indication that the negotiators in the IGC are ready to confront these issues. There remain wide differences in the member states on the nature and scope of such reforms.

The IGC already has a heavy agenda but the enlargement issue ensures that two types of questions will need to be addressed: the constitutional and institutional. As regards the constitution of the Union, each new accession increases the burden of work and the diversity of issues to be handled. This suggests that the IGC will have to pay greater attention to the application of the subsidiarity principle. What should be the balance between the decisions taken and tasks attributed at the Union, national, and regional level? How can greater involvement in, and acceptance of, the Union's activities by its citizens be achieved? On the institutional side,

attention will need to focus on how to improve the preparation, taking, and implementation of decisions in an enlarged Union which will inevitably involve more complex and diverse considerations.

Perhaps the most sensitive and institutional issues, is the question of changes to the voting system in the Council. The larger states will certainly press strongly for greater attention to size of population. Another contentious issue will be the range of decisions to be taken by qualified majority vote. Member states are already becoming accustomed to the idea that they may not be on the winning side of every vote but that, on balance, their interests are served by a system which maintains its capacity to act and is not confronted by vetoes. This should give no cause for alarm as history shows that, whatever the formal position, the Union is based on solidarity and has always shown understanding when a member state has particular difficulty on a major issue. Other difficult issues include the nature and composition of the six- monthly rotation Presidency/ Troika system, the manner in which the Council transacts business (a tour de table with 25 member states, with each speaking for just five minutes, would take over two hours!), and the system of choosing the Commission President.

As for the Parliament, there does seem to be a consensus emerging to limit its numbers to 700 and to simplify its hideously complicated procedures. Although it has gained important new powers under Maastricht Treaty, it remains far from satisfied with its position vis-à-vis the other institutions and it could well seek to use its potential to block further enlargements unless it gains additional powers, particularly in co-decision.

Another important task will be to agree arrangements to strengthen the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) to ensure that the EU begins to punch its true weight in the world. Basic decisions are also needed about the Union's relations with the Western European Union and NATO. This will become increasingly urgent with enlargement. After all, the need for greater security is one of the considerations leading the countries of central and eastern Europe to seek membership in the Union.

A Multi- Speed Union

Should the IGC fail to agree on the necessary institutional reforms, the proposal for a hard- core Europe may well re- surface. Mr Lamers, the CDU Foreign Affairs spokesman, aroused some controversy in 1994 when he published proposals for a hard- core Europe involving Germany, France and the Benelux countries. The central point of the Lamers paper was that those Member States ready willing and able to take further steps towards integration should not be prevented from doing so.

Mr Major responded by calling for a more flexible Europe, a Europe a la carte, in which Member States could essentially pick and choose in which

policies they wish to participate. In other member states there was talk on variable geometry, a concept which implies that all Member States accept shared goals but may take different times to reach them. As far as the Commission is to the disintegration is concerned, the concept of Europe a la carte is quite unacceptable as it would lead to the disintegration of the community system. But it may well be that some form of flexibility or variable geometry is unavoidable in an enlarged Union. After all the concept is not new. A form of variable geometry is already enshrined in the Maastricht Treaty which accepts that not all Member states will be ready to participate in the third stage of EMU in 1999.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the next enlargement is an unprecedented historic challenge, requiring imagination and political will of the same order as inspired the foundation of the regional European Communities. But unless the EU makes thorough preparations for enlargement, including the functioning and decision-making procedures of the institutions, enlargement could lead to paralysis and even disintegration.

The enlargements which brought Greece, Spain and Portugal into the European Community has as a basic motive the consolidation of democracy and stability in countries which had abandoned totalitarian regimes. For the countries of central and eastern Europe, membership of the Union has a similar significance. There can be no question of accepting applicants who do not fulfill the criteria for membership. But assuming they do not fulfill the criteria, the efforts required to integrate the applicant countries are well within the capacity of the Union.

But if enlargement is to succeed, it is essential that it should be well prepared and be accompanied by considerable deepening of the Union. The Union must be able to take decisions quickly, ensure that they are implemented and that they rest on popular support. In effect this means acceptance of a community approached based on the principle of subsidiarity.

But, at the same time, the Union must seek to ensure that the further enlargement lives up to the expectations which it has aroused. Candidate countries must be in a position to accept and implement all the rights and obligations which this involves. It is equally important that the Union be in a position to absorb new members, while maintaining its sense of purpose, its integration, and, above all, its capacity to act together in the interests of its citizens.

The prospect of EU membership continues to offer the best incentive to the central and east Europeans to preserve with political and economic transformation. The changes which have to be made are often painful, and so far have brought little reward for politicians in office. Without the

sustained encouragement of the EU, a number of countries could easily be blown off course.

It is clear, therefore, that there is much work ahead for the associated countries and the Union in preparing for enlargement. But instead of feeling impatient at the time needed to complete this process, it is important to seize the opportunity offered by the next two or three years to make a real success of the pre- accession strategy. The more that can be achieved in advance, the easier the accession negotiations will be.

Annex One: Dates of Application for the EU Membership

Hungary	31.3.94
Poland	5.4.94
Romania	22.6.95
Slovakia	27.6.95
Latvia	13.10.95
Estonia	24.11.95
Lithuania	8.12.95
Bulgaria	14.12.95
Czech Republic	17.1.96
Slovenia	10.6.96

Annex Two: Basic stages of enlargement

	A	B	C	D	E
	Applicatio n	Opinion of Commissio n	Opening of negotiation s	End of negotiation s	Accessio n
United Kingdom	10.5.67	29.9.67	30.6.70	22.1.72	1.1.73
Denmark	11.5.67	"	"	"	"
Ireland	11.5.67	"	"	"	"
Norway	21.7.67	"	"	"	"
Greece	12.6.75	29.1.76	27.7.76	28.5.79	1.1.81
Portugal	28.3.77	19.5.78	17.10.78	12.6.85	1.1.86
Spain	28.7.77	29.11.78	5.2.79	"	1.1.86
Turkey	14.4.87	14.12.89			
Austria	17.7.89	1.8.91	1.2.93	12.4.94	1.1.95
Cyprus	4.7.90	30.6.93			
Malta	16.7.90	30.6.93			
Sweden	1.7.91	31.7.92	1.2.93	12.4.94	1.1.95
Finland	18.3.92	4.11.92	1.2.93	12.4.94	1.195
Switzerlan d	26.5.92				
Norway	25.11.92	24.3.93	5.4.93	12.4.94	(1.1.95)

NOTES:

Column A: Account is not taken in this table of the first round of applications of Ireland (31.7.61), United Kingdom (9.8.61), Denmark (10.8.61) and Norway (30.4.62); it led to the opening of negotiations with the UK (8.11.61) and subsequently with the others, but then to their suspension with UK (29.1.63) and subsequently with the others.

Column D: "End of negotiations" is date of signature of treaty, except for Austria, Sweden, Finland and Norway for which it is date of last session of accession conference.

Column E: Norway did not accede in 1973 or 1995 because of the "no" in its referendums.

Annex Three: Length of stages of enlargement

	Preparation of opinion	Decision to open negotiations	Duration of negotiations	Total period
	(A- B)	(B- C)	(C- D)	(A- E)
	Months	Months	months	Years/ months
United Kingdom	5	33	19	5/7
Denmark	5	33	19	5/7
Ireland	5	33	19	5/7
Norway	2	33	19	(5/5)
Greece	7	6	34	5/6
Portugal	14	5	80	8/9
Spain	16	2	76	8/5
Turkey	32			
Austria	24	18	13	5/5
Cyprus	36			
Malta	35			
Sweden	13	6	13	3/6
Finland	8	3	13	2/9
Norway	4	1	12	(2/1)

NOTE: Periods are calculated to the nearest month (on basis of dates Table 1).

Annex Four: EU Membership- From Application to Accession

A European country submits an application for membership to the Council of the European Union (the Council)

The council asks the Commission to deliver the opinion about the application

The Commission delivers an opinion about the application to the Council

The Council decides unanimously to open negotiations for accession

The Commission proposes, and the Council adopts unanimously, positions to be taken by the Union vis-à-vis the Applicants in accession negotiations

The Union, represented by the Council President, conducts negotiations with the Applicant

Agreement reached between Union and Applicant on a Draft Treaty of Accession

Accession Treaty submitted to the Council and the European Parliament

European Parliament delivers its assent to the Accession Treaty by an absolute majority

The Council approves the accession Treaty unanimously

Member States and Applicant formally sign the Accession Treaty

Member States and Applicants ratify the Accession Treaty

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- ¹ The author writes here in a personal capacity and does not commit the European Commission in any way
- ² See annex one for dates of applicants
- ³ See annex four for a summary chart of the stages from application to accession
- ⁴ See Graham Avery "The European Union's Enlargement Negotiations", *The Oxford International Review*, summer issue, 1994
- ⁵ The ten sets of replies amounted to around 30.000 pages, varying between 1.000 and 5.000 pages pre country, plus voluminous annexes
- ⁶ See Green Paper published by Mr Fischler on CAP reform in December 1995
- ⁷ Both Chancellor Kohl and President Chirac, in separate visits to Poland, talked of the year 2.000 as a goal for Polish membership. The Commission has taken a more cautious line talking of "accession taking place in the years immediately following 2000".
- ⁸ The European Council in Florence in June 1996 confirmed what was agreed in Madrid, and on the subject of the IGC called for "decisive progress towards the respect of the timetable, which implies completing the Conference by mid- 1997". A special European Council held in Dublin on 5 October failed to make any substantial progress on the IGC whilst the December European Council also failed to provide the necessary impetus. Most elections scheduled for May 1997.
- ⁹ See speech by President Santer to the European Parliament on 18 September 1996
- ¹⁰ For an assessment of the fourth enlargement see the author's keynote article of the *Journal of Common Market Studies Annual Review* (1994)
- ¹¹ See Helen Wallace "Widening and Deepening", RIIA Discussion Paper, London, 1990
- ¹² Speech of Mr van den Broek in Helsinki, 26 August 1996
- ¹³ See reports by the Commission to the Reflection Group and to the IGC
- ¹⁴ There is now a considerable literature on the EU's relations with the associated countries of central and eastern Europe. For a critical assessment, on the trade side, see Alan Winters "Europe's Trade Policy with the East", London, 1994
- ¹⁵ The EU has made a number of demarches concerning Slovakia. See also the study on democratization in the CEECs prepared for DG1A by Sussex European Institute, September 1996
- ¹⁶ See paper on the Stability Pact presented by Fraser Cameron at the US Defence Agency Conference Philadelphia, June 1993