

The New Member States and the Making of EU Foreign Policy*

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I Introduction

Much has been written on the mixed record of the European Union's common foreign and security policies both from the point of view of the EU's actual policies and the ways in which those policies are decided. The reluctance of the Member States to forego more exclusive bilateral relationships in the interests of sometimes uncertain benefits of common action have been made frequently clear, not least over the invasion of Iraq in 2003. A number of competing pressures and tendencies are discernable: on the one hand, if European policies are to remain complementary and additional to national policies, to be undertaken only when their 'added value' is clear, then the determination of Member States to maintain the requirements of unanimity remains obvious. And yet, on the other hand, there has been an equally clear recognition of the benefits of establishing a European presence, identity or capability, if only to meet the expectations of those within and outside the EU for it to match politically its economic weight, since there has a continuous deepening of institutional structures. That institutionalization has also in part been a response to the challenge of large-scale enlargement, particularly during a period of particular uncertainty and change in the international system, not least since the terrorist attacks on the USA in September 2001. It led to the proposals within the Constitutional Treaty of 2004 for the formalization and further development of the role of the High Representative as the EU's Minister of Foreign Affairs supported by an Integrated European External Action Service. The defeat of the Constitutional Treaty with the adverse referendum results in France and the Netherlands has, at least temporarily, halted such developments. What this article aims to do therefore is to look at some of the trends discernable in the interaction of the new Member States of the EU within the CFSP processes under the Nice Treaties, looking particularly at the countries of central and eastern Europe (CEECs).

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The approach adopted has been influenced by a number of current ideas not least those pertaining to socialization or Europeanization.¹ The CEECs have been members of the EU only since 1 May 2004, not a long time one might argue for much to be concluded about what must be a long-term process of adaptation to different practices and the internalization of norms. But the CEECs were associated with EU declarations on many non-enlargement or other European issues soon after accession negotiations began, and became 'active observers' in the decision-making processes once they had been concluded. They also participated in the Convention on Europe's Future, 2002–2003. Given the nature of the EU's relationship with the CEECs since the so-called 'Copenhagen criteria' were laid out in 1993, as well as the accession negotiations themselves, the 'top-down' dimension of Europeanization of the CEECs has already been addressed, whether through conditionality² or other means of persuasion.³ Since accession, the new Member States have been able formally to input their own ideas and proposals, particularly in terms of relations with the USA and with other countries of Eastern Europe. What has become clearer in the process is the importance of the continuous interaction of top-down influences within the European institutions with a 'bottom-up' or 'up-loading' of concerns and preoccupations from the CEECs to the European level. That interaction may then combine to establish what March and Olsen have explored in terms of a 'logic of appropriateness' whereby actors consider the context and expectations of the policy-making process and base their decisions accordingly.⁴

However, interaction within the EU framework begs a number of questions about the degree of 'fit' of past policies with what might be expected in the present as well as what might be hoped for in the future – this in addition to the coherence of national with European decision-making processes. Such questions raise particular problems insofar as the European Union is but one organization of which the CEECs have become members in the last decade, with NATO a particularly significant 'other' in terms of security and defence. Moreover, the EU itself, in its policy-making processes, is particularly

¹ See, for example, Radaelli who, inter alia, points to the need to bring politics back into the discussion insofar as political learning can be conflictual and asymmetric not least when domestic political systems interact within the European framework; Claudio M. Radaelli, 'The Europeanisation of Public Policy' in K. Featherstone and Claudio M. Radaelli (eds), *The Politics of Europeanisation* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003).

² Karen Smith, *The Making of European Foreign Policy* (Macmillan, London, 1999).

³ See for example Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003).

⁴ J.G. March and J.P. Olsen, 'The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders' (1998) 52/4 *International Organization*, pp. 943–969.

fragmented, making the socialization process particularly patchy in terms of convergence on norms and practices.⁵

What this suggests as being key in terms of the CEECs willingness to adapt to European practices and norms is the extent to which the EU offers the opportunity successfully to pursue their concerns to the European level. There has been a particular edge to this in that many elites and publics in the CEECs have believed themselves treated as second class citizens. As the then Polish foreign minister, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, suggested in March 2003:

the CFSP is built on dialogue of partner states. No state can impose its opinion on other states. Some recent statements could be interpreted as expressions of an underlying belief that 'all states are equal, but some are more equal than others'. This is far from helpful.⁶

Granted he made the comments during the difficulties over the invasion of Iraq, but they have a more general validity born of the accession negotiations. It has particular resonance in many of the new Member States because, while there had been a strong consensus within the CEECs in favour of a 'return to Europe', hard bargaining over the costs of membership meant that few governments once in the EU have been able simply to play a passive role – even if they had wished to. 'Europe' became an integral part of domestic politics. Any lack of solidarity among the Member States has been regarded with instant suspicion, and differential treatment immediately seized on. It is therefore more the extent to which governments believe and publics accept that they are being offered opportunities equal to those taken by the other, older Member States in ensuring that the EU takes their particular concerns into account that is significant.

This willingness and ability on the part of the CEECs to adapt to the EU has been reinforced, not least given the turbulence in the international system over the past five years, by attitudes towards NATO and the extent to which NATO, qua the United States, has or has not been pursuing alternative policies that demand prior or deeper loyalties. Divisions over Iraq have been particularly difficult in challenging Atlantic solidarity. Before the invasion and before EU membership, such choices were not demanded; nor were they appreciated when they were. The new members remain heavily preoccupied by their geostrategic position as well as their recent past, making for a particular sense of solidarity in terms of territorial defence at a time when NATO under US leadership has been more concerned with the global 'war on terrorism'. The

⁵ A point made for example by Kassim Hussein in 'The National Coordination of EU Policy: Must Europeanisation mean Convergence?' (2000) 5 *Cahiers européens de Sciences-Po*, available under <www.portedeurope.org>.

⁶ Quoted in Fraser Cameron and Antoinette Primatarova, 'Enlargement, CFSP and the Convention: The role of the Accession States', EPIN Working Paper No 5, June 2003 p. 11.

result has been unwelcome tensions in the relationship with the USA and NATO on the one hand as well as the EU on the other.

II Socialization Towards What From What? Expectations and Realities

If there had been consensus on the return to Europe, it was not one wholly uncritical of the EU's foreign policy positions. The CFSP chapter of the negotiations may have been easily agreed, but that was largely because the *acquis politique* was not, after all, particularly demanding. From the outset, the Poles were especially keen to put down a marker on future policies, as when the then foreign minister, Bronisław Geremek, argued in favour of an Eastern dimension, declaring on the opening of Poland's Accession negotiations that: 'Poland's participation in the Common Foreign and Security Policy . . . will enhance the EU policy towards its Eastern neighbours, contributing to the development of open and partner-like relations with countries remaining outside the enlarged Union.'⁷ While, as we will see, there have been different approaches and, indeed, divisions among the new Member States, nearly all have expressed a heightened sense of solidarity among themselves as countries of Central and Eastern Europe – notably through the Visegrád group and its extended relationships – and with European countries remaining outside, whether to the East or in the Balkans. There were also tellingly different histories from those of the older Member States of relations with Russia, and, consequently, an element of despair at the lack of any coherent EU position towards Russia. And while Jan Rokita of the Polish Civic Platform might have claimed a 'unique mission' for Poland, many others, too, were only too well aware of the need to be 'guardians of the memory of totalitarian crime in Europe'.⁸ A vital question has therefore been the extent to which such collective memories and histories have been sufficient for common action among the new members in pressing for particular policies at the European level⁹ – bearing in mind among other factors that, apart from Poland, the new members are small or medium sized states.

The expectations of the new Member States were inevitably conditioned in part by their experience of the accession process and the positions taken by the other Member States. Not all the old Member States had appeared equally sanguine about the impact of enlargement on the EU's foreign policy. There was, for example, the more general sense of unease that, as with other areas

⁷ March 1998. See <www.zbiordokumentow.pl/1998/1/2.html>, last accessed 21 December 2005.

⁸ Jan Rokita (chairman of the Civil Platform's parliamentary caucus), 'Polish Foreign Policy – How much Continuation, How much change', CIR, 14 April 2005.

⁹ Questions raised by, for example, Mateusz Gniazdowski, 'Possibilities and Constrains of the Visegrád Countries Cooperation within the EU' (2005) 3 *Foreign Policy Review*.

of policy, more diverse interests would make decision-making even more difficult – problems the proposals in the Constitutional Treaty were designed to answer.¹⁰ And while the United Kingdom and other more Atlanticist-oriented governments welcomed the prospect of additional support within the EU's councils, the French were more wary of yet more American 'Trojan horses'. The prospect of difficult choices was raised often, as during the Convention on Europe's Future when, as quoted by Cameron and Primatarova, the working group on external policy suggested:

In certain cases the understanding of the Western interest will differ between the US and the EU and this may put CEECs into an uncomfortable position. Moreover, if America shifts its strategic priorities towards East Asia and the Middle East, the CEECs will of necessity become more reliant on the EU for security, making it difficult for them to pick and choose between NATO and the EU.¹¹

Iraq had revealed the differences only too clearly. The US secretary of state for defence, Donald Rumsfeld, appeared almost deliberately to exacerbate the difficulties when making his distinction between 'old' and 'new' Europe over the invasion of Iraq in 2003, not least when five of the CEECs were about to become members of NATO (in March 2003 – the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland had joined in 1999). As one *Washington Post* columnist put it:

If Rumsfeld had been deliberately searching for a way to simultaneously irritate the leadership of Europe's two largest countries, expose their deepest national insecurities *and* undermine the entire European Union political project, which has long revolved around a 'Franco-German axis,' he couldn't have found a better way to put it.¹²

Whatever the justification for his remarks, Rumsfeld re-emphasized the transatlantic commitment of the new members. Moreover, his remarks were then given an extra edge as far as the CEECs were concerned by their shock exposure to President Chirac's diplomacy over the letter of the so-called Vilnius 10. Not only did he somewhat undiplomatically suggest that the CEECs had missed an opportunity to be quiet he also reminded them that final decisions on enlargement had not yet been taken.¹³

¹⁰ For an overview of the Constitutional Treaty's provisions on CFSP/ESDP see, for example, Antonio Missiroli, 'EU Constitutional Treaty', EU-ISS at <www.iss-eu.org/esdp/13-am.pdf>, last accessed 7 March 2006.

¹¹ Cameron and Primatarova, note 6 above, p. 3.

¹² Anne Applebaum, *Washington Post*, 29 January 2003.

¹³ See BBC News, 19 February 2003, for reactions to Chirac's warning that the EU's decision on membership had not yet been taken and that the Vilnius 10 (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia (the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland had declared their support earlier)) 'had missed an opportunity

Neither US nor French ‘diplomacy’ was welcomed by the new Member States. On the part of the Czechs, for example:

there was no joy over the US attempted strategy to split ‘new’ and ‘old’ Europe. The US left behind the feeling of mismanaging its Central European allies even more with its biased policy of awarding contracts for reconstruction of Iraq. The Czech public was from the beginning close to the general European mood and shared its very sceptical views of US military action.¹⁴

Or as the Poles put it, reflecting the strong Polish presence in the USA – and its lobbying capacity in Poland:

We in Poland are aware that our close – even privileged – relations with the United States are not an alternative to our engagement in European integration. We ask ourselves this question: how can we take advantage of our particularly close relations with the United States to improve the Atlantic relations overall? Our commitment to improving the Transatlantic relations will not be credible unless it is coupled with an equally strong commitment to the development of European cooperation.¹⁵

But the predicament has remained. To follow Polish policy further, in an interview with *Foreign Policy Review* in August 2005, Foreign Minister Rotfeld declared that, on the one hand:

It was in the interests of Poland to develop a privileged and special relationship with the Americans. At the moment we belong to the group of several countries engaged in an institutionalised strategic dialogue with the Americans and are regarded by them as the closest allies.

And yet, seemingly wholly compatible with this, he added that ‘Those who anticipated that too close a relationship with the United States would reinforce the stereotype of Poland as the American “Trojan Horse” in Europe were wrong.’¹⁶ The point is less Poland’s sense of privilege and leadership than the more generalized security and defence dilemma created by poor EU–USA relations sensed by nearly all the CEECs.

Tension in the relationship and the apparent pressure to make a choice between ‘Europe’ and the USA were resented not simply because choice was to keep quiet’, <news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/2775579.stm>, accessed 21 December 2005.

¹⁴ See (2004) *CFSP Watch*, at <www.fornet.info/CFSPwatch.html>.

¹⁵ Foreign Minister Adam Daniel Rotfeld to the Polish Parliament, January 2005, under <www.msz.gov.pl>, accessed 18 October 2005. See also Marcin Zaborowski, ‘From America’s protégé to constructive European: Polish security policy in the twenty-first century’, Occasional Paper No 56, December 2004, EU Institute for Security Studies (EU-ISS), Paris.

¹⁶ Gniazdowski, note 9 above, p. 5.

seen as essentially false and unnecessary but because it revealed the doubts of many CEECs about the EU. The Baltic states, for example, had been particularly alarmed by Western European attitudes to further NATO enlargement which seemed to suggest greater concern for Russian sensibilities than a Baltic sense of security. There was therefore little questioning of the supremacy of NATO under US leadership (despite some American misgivings about the military defensibility of the Baltic)¹⁷ and deep scepticism of the EU's efforts to move towards a defence and security policy. One Latvian official put it particularly crisply: 'I think that due to our bitter lessons of history, we, Latvians, will be good Atlanticists' for, he concluded, 'Realism means military capabilities and no paper exercises or paper tigers. . . . Realism means working to increase military capabilities and not creating command structures that are duplicating or competing with existing NATO ones.'¹⁸

It was not therefore just a question of dismay over poor EU–USA relations and the need to improve them but one of seeking a more coherent and consistent policy towards both Russia and other Eastern neighbours. What made this even more significant were continued suspicions among the majority of CEECs of the seeming accommodation of Russia by the EU, led, in their view, by Germany, France and Italy. Indeed, as one sympathetic commentator suggested, Paris, Berlin, London and Rome all seemed to have been 'vying to offer Russia favours'¹⁹ – most obviously Mr Berlusconi who was reported as rushing to defend President Putin against 'media distortion' after the EU–Russian Summit of November 2003 and who seemed to think that Russia was the safeguard of Moldovan independence rather than the continued cause of its divisions.²⁰ Inevitably such concerns have varied among the CEECs with the Baltic states, and especially the Latvians and Estonians, at one end of the spectrum, given their Russian minorities as well as their heavy dependence on Russian energy supplies, and the Czechs and Hungarians at the other. But it did not help matters when the Germans started negotiating a on a new gas pipeline from Russia that would exclude everyone else. Given

¹⁷ See Ilgvars Klava, Director, Security Policy Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia <www.lai.lv/Kopaa_ANG.html>, October 2003.

¹⁸ Ibid. He added: 'Before coming here from Brussels, this summer I participated in a seminar in NATO where Supreme Allied Commander of Europe Gen. Jones was asked a simple question, whether it was true that Europeans, who altogether have around 2 million persons within the military, could deploy outside of their original territory only about 60 000 to 80 000 troops. General Jones confirmed that. He was asked the same question about Americans who have around 1.4 million persons within the military. His answer was – depending on preparatory/pre-warning time, Americans can deploy between 250 000 and 500 000 soldiers. The numbers speak for themselves.'

¹⁹ Heather Grabbe in the Batory Foundation's *New Geopolitics of Central and Eastern Europe: Between European Union and United States*, Warsaw, 2005, p. 91.

²⁰ See BBC News at <news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/3248995.stm>, accessed 19 October 2005.

their sensibilities, it was also not surprising that there was a renewed sense of anti-German sensitivity, especially in Poland, when the then chancellor, Schroeder, questioned whether NATO was any longer the primary forum for the discussion of security and strategy without appearing to suggest a better alternative.²¹ It simply reinforced the sense of vulnerability of many CEECs and their growing suspicion of a more assertive Germany, forgetful, as some have suggested (again especially by the Poles, resentful of the resurgence of German claims for property restitution), of its past.

What has been foremost therefore for the Poles and Baltic States, together with, for the most part, the Slovaks – i.e., all who border Russia, Belarus Ukraine – was and remains the idea of an Eastern Dimension, an EU policy that could be seen as some sort of parallel to the EU's Northern Dimension pursued by the Finns since their accession. Reference has already been made to Geremek's call for a new relationship with Eastern Europe when Poland's accession negotiations opened. Even more aspirational was the speech of the Lithuanian foreign minister, Antanas Valionis, on Lithuania's accession on 1 May 2004:

Lithuania and other new members bring in their unique experience of foreign policy and the region, their strong desire to strengthen the transatlantic cooperation. Good neighbourly relations became the highest value of the Baltic region and a symbol of democratic changes. We will seek that Lithuania should become one of the key states of the Region linking the Union with its new Eastern neighbours and shaping the EU policy of good neighbourhood.²²

It has been a continuous expectation that improved relations were simply vital. There was therefore a widespread belief that it was confusing and misleading to lump North Africa together with the countries of Eastern Europe in the EU's new Neighbourhood Policy. In the first place, few of the CEECs have any great or direct interest in the Mediterranean. As one Polish journalist noted:

The Mediterranean, seen from most of the European Union's new member states is a distant sea. . . . It is a struggle to get our domestic politicians to take an interest in salient EU related issues let alone something they consider to be esoteric as a policy aimed at creating 'a region of peace, stability and prosperity' in the Mediterranean.²³

²¹ The Chancellor's speech was read for him so that he could not elucidate. Schroeder, 2 December 2004 under <www.securityconference.de>.

²² See under <www.urm.lt>.

²³ Krzysztof Bobinski, 'European Enlargement and the Barcelona Process' in Andreas Jacobs (ed.), *Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation: Enlarging and Widening the Perspective*,

But second, the CEECs have been very much aware of the aspirations of those to the East and the leverage held out to the EU of offering future membership. If enlargement eastwards had been one of the most effective foreign policies of the EU in terms of liberalization, democratization etc., then they saw no reason for it to end before all those with a European vocation were included. This was relevant not only to Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus, but equally to the western Balkans and even to the southern Caucasus.

Despite, therefore, a generalized convergence of values and aspirations on the part of the CEECs with those of the EU, there were several areas of doubt and, indeed, scepticism. On the one hand, there have been many calls for Europe to take more responsibility in the world; Marek Belka, for example, on the point of becoming Polish prime minister, declared:

Europe should increase its share of responsibility for the world, especially in these turbulent times, times of terrorism, the privatization of war, so to speak, and in times where modernism is being questioned, challenged, attacked, bombed, killed by dark forces. . . . In such a world I think Europe should increase its responsibility.²⁴

On the other hand, despite the hopes for modifying or improving particular policies, there was not always any great respect for the EU's CFSP and ESDP. As Trzaskowski and Osica have suggested (when writing about Poland), there was a sense of impotence, the source of which 'was seen in the intra-European competition among main members who tended to set their own national interests over Community ones (for example, policy towards Russia) or attempted to hijack EU foreign policy for the sake of their own policies (e.g. Iraq).'²⁵ And further, as Jan Rokita put it:

Poles want a strong Europe because they associate it with growth and security. At the same time, Poles do not doubt that Europe needs a strong presence of the US, particularly in the military sense. The reason for that is simple: Poles tend to trust the American leadership, especially in times of crises.²⁶

Discussion Paper C131, Zentrum für Europäische Integrationforschung, 2004. At the same time, it has been suggested that the CEECs' experience of democratic transition might be seen as valuable to others: see Erzsébet N. Rózsa, 'National Attitudes of New EU Member States towards the EMP: The Case of Hungary' (2005) EuroMeSCo Papers No 42, Lisbon IEEI.

²⁴ Marek Belka at the Trilateral Commission meeting in Warsaw 7–10 May 2004, <www.trilateral.org/AnnMtgs/PROGRAMS/warsawpdf_folder/belka_poland_europe.pdf>, last accessed 5 January 2006.

²⁵ Rafal Trzaskowski and Olaf Osica, *CFSP Watch*, 2004, at <www.fornet.info/CFSPwatchannualreports2004.html>.

²⁶ Rokita, note 8 above.

Rather too clearly most of the CEECs have remained considerably more preoccupied with territorial defence and regional security than with global challenges and the security risks and threats as outlined, say, in the European Security Strategy.

III Negotiation Strategies and Tactics

Despite many similarities, there have been some radically different conceptions of roles, whether derived from different perceptions of geopolitics, values, interests etc., even if there has been at least an implicit recognition of the importance of coalition building within the EU. The accession negotiations if nothing else revealed the pointlessness of being small or medium-sized and being isolated, especially as in CFSP decision-making which rests on consensus even if not unanimity. But clearly, as Khol has suggested in relation to the provision of military forces, the CEECs have had to make some difficult choices in terms of taking on new concerns and becoming involved not just in Europe but globally.²⁷

To take Poland first as the largest of the new members, and one particularly aware of the dangers of being isolated: their very different sense of their own regional role was clearly outlined by the former foreign minister, Adam Daniel Rotfeld, in his report to the Polish Parliament in January 2005.²⁸ Rotfeld in part saw Polish promotion of interests in terms of different areas of contact. Top of the list were bilateral relationships with the EU's Big 3 – the 'strategic partners'. Poland has been one of the so-called Weimar group with Germany and France, and in the past has placed significant value on the relationship. It would not, however, appear to have got much from it, despite the call from the then French foreign minister, Michel Barnier when inaugurating a new French Embassy building in Warsaw in January 2005, to make the Polish-French dialogue 'more effective in order to make it possible to better understand each other and remove earlier misunderstandings'.²⁹ Such misunderstandings presumably included those over Iraq when, as Rotfeld put it, 'we did not need to be taught on how to be good Europeans', or the instance when the French and Germans pursued their own line with the Russians in Kaliningrad. Misunderstandings seemed, however, to have continued when, at President Chirac's invitation, the French, Germans and Russians held a summit in March 2005 with the Spanish in attendance rather

²⁷ Radek Khol, 'Ongoing Cooperation Between Europe's Armed Forces' in Sven Biscop (ed.), *E Pluribus Unum? Military Integration in the European Union*, Egmont Paper No 7, IRRI-KIIB Brussels/Academia Press, 2005, available at <www.irri-kiib.be/paperegm/ep7.pdf>.

²⁸ See <www.msz.gov.pl/Ministers,Annual,Address,,2005,2132.html>, last accessed 2 January 2006.

²⁹ See <www.ambasciatapolonia.it>.

than the Poles, with discussions on most global issues.³⁰ Nor has the third Big 3 strategic relationship, with the United Kingdom, been without its frustrations despite the foreign minister declaring, for example, that, 'we share the same appreciation of the significance of Transatlantic relations'. Even here, however, Mr Blair's special relationship with Mr Bush has been a somewhat exclusive one. Differences over the Constitutional Treaty and the EU's budget have also complicated the relationship.

The second area of Polish activity is the regional one that includes relations with the other Visegrád countries, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, in part, perhaps, because if and when the group can agree, it is seen as lending additional weight to Poland's voice.³¹ In the past, however, there has been only limited agreement – during the Convention, for example, while there was a broad consensus against anything that was not complementary to NATO's collective defence commitment, there were differences over voting procedures with the Poles attached to their advantageous weighting under the Nice Treaty. The third area includes relations with other Member States depending on the specific topic.

A further bargaining ploy, an additional, secondary dimension to the need to retain US/NATO interest, has also been a temptation to most of the new Member States. Again, while Poland might be seen as being in a privileged position given its size, the idea is not unknown to other foreign ministers even if the Polish foreign minister expressed it thus:

the special manner in which the Americans treat us, improves significantly our rating in Europe. Had we not had so good relations with the Americans, our position would have been lower respectively. It is thus in our interest to maintain very close relations with the U.S. and to influence their policy as far as possible.³²

And while the White House might or might not have shown itself to be particularly receptive, the closeness of the relationship has been regarded as a useful tactical point to play to offset any sense of impotence in European councils – even if not one necessarily endearing new members to some of the old Member States.

The other and smaller CEECs have sought somewhat different routes from those of Poland in the search for influence within the EU. The Visegrád grouping has been regarded by its members with some ambivalence as such a vehicle. According to Gniadowski, the Poles have been much more in favour

³⁰ Though interestingly, Stefan Meller reported that the Weimar Triangle had been significant during the Brussels summit of December 2005 on the EU budget; see <www.mfa.gov.pl/Meller,on,Polish,foreign,policy,in,2006,4023.html>.

³¹ The suggestion of Gniadowski, note 9 above.

³² 'An interview with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Adam Daniel Rotfeld, 26 August 2005' (2005) 3 *Foreign Policy Review*, p. 15.

of closer regional ties than the other members of the group, merely 12 per cent of Hungarians being so in favour.³³ While its weaknesses have been clear, derived in part from its foundation at a particular time for largely the single purpose of moving together towards membership of the EU and NATO – it has been accorded more than simply lip-service. It may not, as Gniadowski has suggested, have provided a single cohesive Central European identity strong enough to ensure common action. And yet the new Visegrád Declaration of May 2004 at Kroměříž does call for further, flexible cooperation and the enhancement of a Central European Identity based not just on ‘centuries of interlinked history and based on similar political, economic and social developments in the past decades’ but with an institutionalized framework, schedules of meetings with national coordinators in MFAs as initiators, and with the EU as the top area for ‘consultation and cooperation on current issues of common interest’.³⁴ Those common interests included an ‘active contribution to the development of the CFSP, including the Wider Europe–New Neighbourhood policy and the strategy towards the western Balkans and an active participation in the ESDP, ‘as a contribution to the strengthening of relations between the EU and NATO and deepening the substantive dialogue between both organizations’. And, despite limited popular support for the grouping, the Hungarian government when taking over the chairmanship of the group in July 2005, put forward a particularly ambitious programme for cooperation. Other activities have included efforts since 2001 to extend the group to Austria (largely an Austrian initiative, even if not always popular among the Right in Austria)³⁵ and Slovenia, within the framework of a Regional Partnership, a grouping that inevitably has had a particular interest in the western Balkans, as well as Ukraine, and to make contact with other groupings, including under the Slovak chairmanship (2002–2003) the Benelux countries.

For their part, while differences persist among the Baltic states on quite how to deal with Russia (which in part have depended on how isolated the Russians can make them in terms of borders, minorities etc.), there have been serious efforts to try to coordinate policy at the EU level. In Lithuania, for example, a ‘Party Consensus’ was formed on foreign policy for the period 2004–2008 that had as the third of its priorities:

To promote and expand regional co-operation and strengthen the position of Lithuania as a centre of interregional co-operation; to foster co-operation between the three Baltic states; to further develop the strategic

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ See <www.visegradgroup.org>.

³⁵ For some reluctant and sceptical Visegrád reactions, see Lubos Palata, ‘Cooperation or Empire? Vienna wants to create a Central European grouping with Austria as the center’, under <www.fpa.org>.

partnership with Poland; to initiate and implement new formats of regional co-operation, uniting the states of Northern, Central and Eastern Europe; to support democratic processes in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, the countries of the South Caucasus and the Russian Federation, in particular the Kaliningrad region.

The first two priorities were, not unsurprisingly, strengthening the Atlantic relationship and relations with the EU.³⁶ An Estonian variation lay particular emphasis in addition on cooperation with the Nordic countries, Nordic-Baltic cooperation having existed on an institutionalized, 5+3 basis since 2000.

IV Processes and Policies

Through whatever means, the new Member States have been highly active in terms of the EU's CFSP. There have, inevitably, been differences of emphasis – the interest of the Baltic states in the western Balkans has not been the same as those of the Hungarians, the interest of the Czechs and Slovenes not quite the same in relation to Belarus, Moldova or Russia, even though all have been supportive of a more proactive policy towards Ukraine. Even during the still brief period of full membership of the CEECs, there does seem to have been a shift in the EU's centre of gravity eastwards. Inevitably this is in part due to the significance of events such as the Orange Revolution on the EU's borders which has given particular salience to both the Neighbourhood Policy and relations with Russia. At the same time, while there has been a steady improvement in relations with the USA, not least since the re-election of George W. Bush, there have also been signs that have disturbed many of the CEECs and which have put the EU's policies in a more constructive light.

In terms of decision-making processes within the EU itself, there had been a general concern that the greater the number of Member States, the more difficult it would be actually to gain agreement if only because of the greater diversity of interests. Those fears do not seem to have been realized. The Council, even if generally less club-like (a trend noted by others after the EFTA enlargement³⁷), has been deemed no less efficient. Indeed, *European Voice* has reported that decision-making is actually more efficient because, as one Council insider put it:

we are forced to be more business-like. . . . Before ministers could afford to make longer speeches, side-remarks, jokes, because they were not under

³⁶ See <www1.urm.lt/data/2/EF92017755_ENpolpartiesagreementOct2004.htm>, last accessed 2 January 2006.

³⁷ See, for example, the comments of some of the British Permanent Representatives in Anand Menon, 'Britain and European Integration; Views from Within' (2004) 75/3 *The Political Quarterly*, pp. 285–317.

enormous time pressure. Now they know from the outset that they should only speak when they have to.³⁸

Such changes have been helped by the fact that most of the new Member State ambassadors are younger and/or more focused than at least some of their peers – at least five of the Permanent Representatives of the new Member States, for example, were under forty-five on their appointment and several were in their thirties. They and several of the members of the Political and Security Committee (COPS) had been closely involved in accession negotiations. Their rapid acclimatization, however, has been balanced by other factors: the slowness of the take-up of posts within the European institutions by the new Member States has meant that there has not been much interaction among officials on the basis of familiarity with particular concerns and circumstances. More importantly, at the same time, there has been a greater sense of unpredictability in CEEC behaviour in the Council and its committees in that there have also been greater uncertainties about the positions being adopted in national capitals, especially in response to electoral or prospective electoral change. Nonetheless, there have been changes in the reorganization of ministries of foreign affairs to meet the pattern of policy-making in the Council and to cover all issues on the CFSP agenda, even if it has sometimes been patchy.³⁹ And there has been, in the case of the Czech Republic as Radek Kohl has reported, a:

new rhythm of regular work established following the pattern of CFSP activities and preparing Czech position on all issues of CFSP agenda, some of which were before 2004 only of marginal concern to Czech foreign policy.⁴⁰

Or on the part of the Slovene MFA:

Compared to the ministry's previous organisation it is easy to note the new level of attention paid to security and human security issues as well as humanitarian aid which may be attributed to the EU's identity in world affairs (in the case of humanitarian aid) and general security-related issues

³⁸ *European Voice*, 28 April 2005.

³⁹ Jan Truszczyński, Polish Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, for example reported (Institute for Strategic Studies and Office of the Committee of European Integration Conference, 20 December 2004) that parts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dealing with security policy were working well and were comparable with counterparts elsewhere in EU, '(b)ut, unfortunately, other parts of the MFA are still sleeping mentally. Poland must not only look towards the USA, it must also take active part in the EU otherwise Poland will be marginalized'; see <iss.krakow.pl/IMG/ksiazki/facts&myths.pdf>, accessed 18 October 2005.

⁴⁰ Radek Kohl, 'The Czech Republic and CFSP: One Year After Enlargement' (2005) 3/3 *CFSP Forum*, p. 8, at <www.fornet.info/CFSPforum.html>.

in the world after 9/11 broadly and more narrowly to the European Security Strategy.⁴¹

There has also been an intensification of bilateral contacts among the embassies of the new Member States.⁴²

In terms of policies, as suggested above, there has been a certain ambivalence over support for the EU's Neighbourhood Policy insofar as many of those to whom the policy was directed are considered by the CEECs as potential or at least possible members. On the other hand, some have been keenly aware of the consequences of using membership as an instrument for transition in the sense of liberalization and democratization when it also includes the prospective membership of Turkey, opening negotiations for which was agreed with difficulty in 2005. But, several of the CEECs have sought to develop the Neighbourhood Policy further, including extending it to the Caucasus. Including Georgia in the policy, so bringing with it the prospects of additional support to the Georgian government at a time when there remained tense relations with Russia over Southern Ossetia and Abkhazia, as well as difficulties over the remaining Russian bases in Georgia, was regarded as important even if of limited immediate value. It also added to the other limited ventures under the ESDP.⁴³ While the EU as such has been reluctant to talk of the possibilities of future membership, CEECs such as Lithuania have not. Significantly, their support rests on such factors as, to quote the Lithuanian foreign minister in February 2005, 'completing the geographical boundaries of the EU strategic interests in Eastern Europe.'⁴⁴ The concept of 'de-peripheralization' is one that has considerable resonance with the new Member States, even if governments have been quick to dismiss the idea that support for future Ukrainian membership has been in order to establish a friendly buffer against Russia.⁴⁵ It also points to the continuing significance of relations with Russia.

Olaf Osica has pointed to the disappointment of Poland, among others, at the only marginal reference to Russia in the European Security Strategy paper

⁴¹ Sabina Kajnc, 'Changes in Slovenian Foreign Policy Following Accession to the European Union' (2005) 3/3 *CFSP Forum*, p. 8, at <www.fornet.info/CFSPforum.html>.

⁴² With the Baltic states actually establishing new embassies in a few cases.

⁴³ These include 'EUJust Themis', a rule of law mission under the ESDP that includes less than a dozen lawyers, the appointment of a Special Representative for the Caucasus and a border monitoring exercise consisting of three people when the OSCE's Border Monitoring Operation came to an end in 2004. For a critical assessment of the EU's policies see Mark Leonard and Charles Grant, 'Georgia and the EU: Can Europe's neighbourhood policy Deliver', CER Policy Brief, September 2005.

⁴⁴ See under <www.urm.lt>.

⁴⁵ An idea dismissed for example by Polish diplomats in the *International Herald Tribune* of 2 September 2004.

of 2003 – a paper designed above all to reconcile differences after Iraq:

Russia has always been the litmus test for Polish public opinion and politicians of European foreign policy. . . . It will be hard to convey to the Polish public that ‘the resolution of the Arab/Israeli conflict is a strategic priority for Europe’, but Russia’s policy on the Caucasus is beyond the main scope of the ESS.⁴⁶

‘Old’ and ‘New’ Europe has some real meaning when, for example, one counterposes CEEC commentaries with the position of, say, President Chirac. Radek Khol, for example, wrote of the Czechs’ perspective on Russia as still an undemocratic state and a potential threat (whether directly or through the export of instability or through the energy dependence of the West): ‘EU policy is seen as sometimes naïve and plagued by special deals or special statuses. . . . without any reference to its progress in building democracy or the rule of law.’⁴⁷

In contrast, as Chirac told Hungarian parliamentarians in February 2004:

Building a Europe at peace also entails devising a new relationship with Russia: this is essential. Like you, we believe it is time to cast aside the reflexes of the past and establish a balanced partnership founded on mutual respect. Let us help Russia to release its boundless energies; let us help it to consolidate the rule of law and successfully implement the reforms it has undertaken. Let us resolutely implement the common spaces we decided to forge recently in Saint Petersburg.⁴⁸

While there was little opposition to deepening cooperation with Russia on anti-terrorism and other criminal matters, there has remained deep suspicion of Russian policies in the Caucasuses, and towards Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. It was less the threat of a Russian invasion than, as Heather Grabbe put it, a ‘distaste for spheres of influence and balance of power’.⁴⁹ It had led to a greater acceptance of US hegemony rather than of ideas of collective security.⁵⁰ Or to put it more bluntly as Ilgvas Klava, then head of security policy in the Latvian MFA, did on the discussions surrounding the solidarity clause in the Convention on Europe’s Future: ‘We cannot afford the luxury of duplicating NATO’s Article 5 guarantee.’⁵¹ While Russian pressures over

⁴⁶ Olaf Osica ‘A secure Poland in a better Union? The ESS as seen from Warsaw’s Perspective’, *German Foreign Policy in Dialogue Newsletter*, Vol. 5, Issue 14, October 2004, pp. 12–13.

⁴⁷ Kohl, note 40 above.

⁴⁸ See under <www.elysee.fr>.

⁴⁹ Grabbe, note 19 above, p. 187.

⁵⁰ Jacques Rupnik’s point at the same meeting; Grabbe, note 19 above, p. 39.

⁵¹ Ilgvas Klava ‘NATO, ESDP and Relations with the USA’ (2004) *Third Baltic-German Dialogue*, p. 31, under <www.swp-berlin.org>.

the Russian minorities in Latvia and Estonia have given those governments particular concern, there was more generally a higher appreciation and concern among the CEECs over what Michael Emerson has referred to as ‘Gazprom politics’ and the maximization of ‘monopolistic Russian control over gas pipeline supplies’⁵² – concerns that became more than simply abstract in January 2006 when Gazprom briefly cut off supplies to Ukraine and seemingly unintentionally reduced supplies to much of Europe (Moscow blamed Kiev for siphoning off supplies).

In the face of such continued suspicions of Russia, the relationship with the USA has remained key. And yet, here, there have been a number of factors that have been problematic both for NATO and the relationship with the USA, and which have had the effect of creating a more positive view of the CFSP and the EU. There had been some alarm, for example, that NATO had not been considered as the vehicle for US policies post-11 September 2001; that, according to Rumsfeld, the thought of using NATO hadn’t even crossed his mind.⁵³ The CEECs had, of course, responded to the Bush Administration’s call for a coalition of the willing in relation to Afghanistan and Iraq. But this was despite increasing disquiet among public and elites. Even in Poland, the Pew Foundation found that opinion favourable to the USA was down from 79 per cent in 2002 to 62 per cent in 2005.⁵⁴ Reference has already been made to the lack of appreciation for US efforts to emphasize and exploit the divisions between old and new Europe, particularly when it descended into petty but bitter personal jibes. Leading figures in Poland, mindful of both the USA as saviour and the power of the US Polish lobby, were critical of the lack of responsiveness on the part of the US administration – the Polish president being led to call for it to be more ‘flexible, open and gracious’, adding that he did not want to see ‘America take the ideas of the neoconservatives of isolationism, to have full dominance in the world and to play a divide-and-rule policy – it is a mistake’.⁵⁵ There was a widespread mood of disbelief in Europe that US military action was legal, and a scepticism about the wisdom of US military action that was exacerbated by events in Iraq and reactions to Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay – not surprising perhaps on the part of those whose memories were of repression and abuse of human rights. At a rather different level, there was criticism of the lack of reward for supporting the

⁵² See interview with Michael Emerson (Director of CEPS and a former head of the Commission’s delegation in Moscow), 12 March 2004, under <www.euractiv.com>.

⁵³ Hans Daalder, ‘The End of Atlanticism’ (2003) 45/2 *Survival*, p. 155.

⁵⁴ Pew Global Attitudes Project, 23 June 2005; see ‘U.S. Image Up Slightly, But Still Negative’, under <pewglobal.org/reports>. Other polls, such as Gallop reported by CBS News in March 2003, suggested that 63% of Poles were against the US-led invasion of Iraq, as compared to 82% in Hungary, 81% in Latvia and 67% in the Czech Republic; see <www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/03/06/opinion/meyer/main543005.shtml>.

⁵⁵ *International Herald Tribune*, 2 September 2004.

USA – not least in the sense of not handing out contracts for reconstruction of Iraq.⁵⁶

But it wasn't simply a matter of Iraq. What was also worrying was that post-11 September 2001, the USA has looked to the transformation of NATO, from being very clearly a defence organization to something more involved in global security. Among the many speeches on NATO's transformation, agreed in 2003, there was one by NATO's Secretary General, Lord Robertson, who, in pointing out the different pillars on which transformation would be based (expansion to create a 'common security space, from the Atlantic to the Black Sea, and from the Baltic Sea to the Balkans', its new missions to counter 'terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and failed states', the transformation of NATO's military capabilities, including the introduction of a NATO Response Force, and the development of a network of partnerships throughout the Euro-Atlantic area), added: 'Is territorial defence really relevant in the middle of 21st century Europe? Surely security is better ensured by dealing with threats at their source rather than on our doorsteps?'⁵⁷

However much it simply reflected NATO's new position, it was not geared to settling any nervousness on the part of new NATO members. For those still preoccupied with their territorial integrity, it was more than somewhat alarming. As one Pole put it:

Joining NATO in Polish eyes meant that when the Russians appeared on the country's eastern frontier at Białystok, the armoured might of the western alliance would stop them in their tracks. Instead 'new' and 'old' NATO members are being told to prepare for 'out-of-area' operations.⁵⁸

It raised all the concerns that had existed from the outset about the willingness and ability of NATO allies to come to the rescue of Poland and the Baltic states if invaded, with all the means at their disposal.⁵⁹

This move away from core defence concerns has contributed to a greater appreciation of the potential of the ESDP, even if as very much a second best, and for its preventive role. There has been significant interest, for example, in the battle group proposals put forward by Tony Blair and Jacques Chirac in November 2003 (with, for example, the Czechs joining the Austrians and Germans in one group, with Italy, Hungary, and Slovenia in another, and Sweden, Finland, Estonia and Norway in yet another – even if many of these are still promised rather than real). There has also been greater interest in

⁵⁶ Kohl, note 40 above.

⁵⁷ Lord Robertson, October 2003, at <www.nato.int/docu/speech/2003/s031013a.htm>.

⁵⁸ Bobinski, note 23 above.

⁵⁹ As Ilgvars Kļava put it in 2003: 'In Europe the main argument . . . was Moscow's concerns, while in the US arguments against were mostly of a military nature – about defending the territory of the Baltic states and about real input into the alliance from three relatively small countries.' See under <www.lai.lv/Kopaa_ANG.html>.

developing especially the civilian side of the ESDP: the Lithuanians, for example, were instrumental in launching the EU Rule of Law Mission in Georgia – even if it has involved less than a dozen lawyers.⁶⁰

But most important in terms of respect for the CFSP, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine was a turning point, leading many CEECs to take the CFSP and the High Representative more seriously. The mediatory role between Yanukovich, Kuchma and Yushchenko in late November and early December undertaken by Javier Solana, together with the Polish president, Alexander Kwasniewski, and the Lithuanian president, Valdas Adamkus, was seen by many as critical to the peaceful outcome to the Orange revolution.⁶¹ Even though the EU as such was little engaged except through Solana, it showed what could be done.

V Preliminary Conclusions?

The EU and the older Member States continue to make such a shift in opinion difficult. There is no Eastern Dimension to match even the limited Northern dimension in security or other terms (and it is perhaps difficult given the supporting elements – environmental, social and economic – that have led to the institutionalization of the Northern Dimension). The lack of coherence and continuity in relations with Putin's Russia continues. The vagaries and inconsistencies of the Neighbourhood Policy and relations with Ukraine still have to be sorted out, with the CEECs particularly disappointed that the Commission is not disposed towards Ukrainian membership. There remain, too, remain suspicions of real or imagined directories of the Big Member States (as in relations with Iran, for example) when, that is, the Big 3 can actually work together. And despite some disenchantment with the United States, the CEECs continue to look to America in security terms and remain foremost among those seeking to improve the EU's relationship with the USA (in some senses an open door since even the French see improved relations as sensible, not least since President Bush's re-election).

Very clearly, though, the CEECs are prepared to be active in the EU framework. Their preoccupations are therefore important, whether continuing the improvement in relations with the USA, or establishing an Eastern dimension that deals with Russia on a more coherent and consistent basis, and a Neighbourhood Policy that keeps open the possibilities of enlargement,

⁶⁰ The Lithuanian foreign minister, for example, had called for 'deeper EU involvement through the usage of available ESDP instruments. The role of the EU Rule of Law Mission, which was launched in Georgia last summer under the Lithuanian initiative, could serve as a successful example of the benefits that EU could provide for the region.' See www.urm.lt, accessed 19 October 2005.

⁶¹ Eberhard Schnieffer and Christoph Saurenbach, 'Kiev's EU ambitions', *SWP Comments*, 14 April 2005.

especially to the Balkans, and to Ukraine (with Belarus and Moldova when possible) and even to the Caucasus. On some of these issues, they will find ready allies elsewhere in Europe; on others they will discover the almost infinite opportunities for inconsistency and continued bilateralism. Yet it is clear that a process of socialization of officials is proceeding apace which may begin to counter the weight of history and geography that still bears particularly and not surprisingly strongly on their political leaders.