

The Widening of the Integration Process

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This chapter examines the widening of the integration process. That is to say, it examines Economic Community (EC)/European Union (EU) enlargement. The chapter begins by emphasising how the enlargement process has mainly proceeded via a series of enlargement rounds. This is followed by an examination of key features of the enlargement rounds and of the member states that have been, and may in the future be, part of them. Attention is then turned to the EC/EU's positions on enlargement: why has it been prepared to enlarge given that in most respects it has been a successful organisation and that many applicants might have been thought to have threatened the success? The different ways in which enlargements have impacted on the nature and operation of the EC/EU are then considered.

Enlargement via Enlargement Rounds

From an original EC membership of six (see Map 5.1), the EU has grown in size to 28 member states at the time of writing (autumn 2016). This great increase has mainly taken place not on a one-by-one basis but rather in a series of enlargement rounds. In these rounds, states with significant shared characteristics have lodged membership applications at about the same times and have subsequently become members at either precisely the same times or at times that have not been too far apart. As Table 5.1 shows, there have been four enlargement rounds to date: the first resulted in Denmark, Ireland, and the UK acceding in 1973; the second, which is commonly called the Mediterranean round, resulted in Greece acceding in 1981 and Portugal and Spain doing so in 1986; the third, which is often referred to as the EFTA round (because the applicants were all members of the European Free Trade Association) resulted in Austria, Finland, and Sweden joining in 1995; and the fourth, which may be called the 10 + 2 round (both because ten of the newcomers were Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) and two were small Mediterranean islands and also because ten states joined in 2004 and two did so in 2007), resulted in Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia acceding in 2004, and Bulgaria and Romania acceding in 2007. In time, a fifth enlargement round – the Balkan, or perhaps South-Eastern, round – is likely to be added to this list, but it will be drawn out over some years and currently has only one entry against its name – Croatia, which joined in 2013.

Map 5.1 The founding member states



In addition to increasing the size of the EC/EU, each of these enlargement rounds has made distinctive contributions to the nature of the integration process. The first enlargement round did

so by broadening integration out from its founding base, by granting accession to a large state – the UK – with the potential to disrupt the then well-established Franco-German informal leadership.

Table 5.7 The enlargement rounds

| Enlargement round | Date of accession | Member states acceding |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| The Six | 1 January 1973 | Denmark, Ireland, the UK |
| The Mediterranean (first phase) | 1 January 1981 | Greece |
| The Mediterranean (second phase) | 1 January 1986 | Portugal and Spain |
| The EFTA | 1 January 1995 | Austria, Finland, Sweden |
| The 10 + 2 (first phase) | 1 May 2004 | Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia |
| The 10 + 2 (second phase.) | 1 January 2007 | Bulgaria and Romania |
| The Balkan (projected) | 1 July 2013 | Croatia |

of the Community, and by bringing in two states – Denmark and the UK – that over the years have been firmly in, indeed may be said to have generally led, the ‘Euro-cautious’ camp on integrationist matters. The second round gave integration a decided tilt to the south and a tilt also to less prosperous states. The third round – which, because the acceding states were all relatively small, prosperous, and well functioning, was by far the easiest round to negotiate and manage – meant that virtually all of Western Europe was now part of the EU: when the three EFTAs joined the only significant Western European states to remain outside the EU were Norway, Iceland, and Switzerland. The fourth enlargement round was the most momentous round of all. It was so both in terms of the number of acceding states and in terms of it transforming what had been a process of Western European integration into a near Europe-wide process of integration. Prior to the collapse of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989–90, followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, CEECs had not been eligible for EC membership and in any event had not been sufficiently politically independent to contemplate applying. But, the events of 1989–91 transformed the political and economic landscape of Central and Eastern Europe, and opened the door to a transformation in EU membership in the 2000s.

* * *

Each of the enlargement rounds will now be reviewed, with a particular focus on the motivations of the applicants.

The 1973 enlargement: the UK, Denmark, and Ireland

Three factors were especially important in governing the UK’s attitude towards European integration in the post-war years. First, the UK saw itself as operating within what Winston Churchill described as three overlapping and interlocking relationships: the Empire and Commonwealth; the Atlantic Alliance and the ‘special relationship’ with the USA; and Western Europe. Until the early 1960s Western Europe was seen as being the least important of these relationships. Second, successive British governments were not prepared to accept the loss of sovereignty that integration implied. There were several reasons for this, of which the most important were: Britain’s long-established parliamentary tradition; the record, in which there was considerable pride, of not having been invaded or controlled by foreign powers in modern times; a generally held view that cessation of sovereignty was neither desirable nor necessary, since Britain still saw itself as being a world power of the first rank; and a certain distaste with the idea of being dependent on the not altogether highly regarded governments and countries of ‘the Continent’. Third, Britain’s circumstances were such that three of the four main integrationist organisations to be proposed in the 1950s had few attractions in terms of their specific areas of concern: the restrictions on national decision-making powers entailed in the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) looked very unappealing to a country whose coal and steel capacity far exceeded that of any of the six; the European Defence Community (EDC) would have



from its founding large state – the then virtual leadership

limited governmental manoeuvrability and options at a time when Britain's defences were already stretched by the attempt to maintain a world role; and Euratom looked as though it would involve sharing secrets with less advanced nuclear powers. Only the European Economic Community (EEC) seemed to have much to offer, but foremost amongst the problems it carried with it was its proposed supranationalism. Attempts were made to persuade the six not to be so ambitious and to direct their attention to the construction of a Western European free trade area, but with no success. As a result, and with a view to increasing its bargaining power with the six, Britain looked to other non-signatories of the Treaty of Rome. This led, in January 1960, to the Stockholm Convention, which established the EFTA. The founding members of EFTA were Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK.

Shortly after the EEC began functioning in 1958 the attitude of the UK government began to change and membership came to be sought. The first enlargement of the Community could, in fact, have occurred much earlier than it did had President de Gaulle not opposed UK applications in 1963 and 1967. He did so for a mixture of reasons: he feared the UK would rival and attempt to thwart his desire to place France at the centre of the European stage; he believed UK membership would unsettle the developing Franco-German alliance – an alliance that was given symbolic force with the signing in 1963 of a Friendship Treaty between the two countries; and he was suspicious of the UK's close links with the USA, thinking they would pave the way for American penetration and domination of Europe if the UK joined the Community. So the UK was barred from Community membership until de Gaulle was replaced as French President by Georges Pompidou in 1969. A different view was then taken in Paris: the UK might serve as a useful counterweight to the increasingly strong and self-confident Germany; UK governments would lend support to France's opposition to pressures from within the Community for increased supranationalism; and France would probably gain economically by virtue of having better access to UK markets and as a result of the UK being a net contributor to the Community budget.

The reasons for the UK's changed position on Europe were a mixture of the political and the economic. Politically, it was increasingly clear

that the UK was no longer a world power of the first rank. Paralleling this decline, the nature and status of the 'special relationship' with the USA weakened and became increasingly questionable. Furthermore, the British Empire was giving way to the Commonwealth, a very loose organisation and not one that was capable of providing the UK with much international political support. Economically, trade with the Commonwealth was declining, whilst indicators on growth in trade, investment, gross national product (GNP), and income per head all showed that by the early 1960s the member states of the EC were outperforming the UK. Quite simply the figures appeared to show that in economic terms the Community was a success and was so at a time when the UK's pattern of trade, even when not a Community member, was turning away from the Commonwealth and towards Europe. Moreover, the growing economic strength of the EC seemed to be linked with growing political status.

Thus, when Pompidou opened the EC door, the UK government willingly entered.

* * *

Denmark and Ireland were not interested in joining the Communities that were founded in the 1950s. Both of their economies were heavily dependent on agriculture, so the ECSC had little to offer them. As for the EEC, there were several reasons to doubt that it would be to their benefit, the most important of which was that both countries had strong economic and historical links elsewhere: in Denmark's case with the other Scandinavian countries and with the UK; in Ireland's case with the UK. These links with the UK resulted in both of them trying their willingness to join the EC with the outcome of the UK's attempts to gain membership, so they both applied and then withdrew their applications on two occasions in the 1960s and then became members in 1973.

Like Denmark and Ireland, Norway paralleled the UK in applying for EC membership in the 1960s (twice) and early 1970s. On the third occasion terms of entry were agreed by the Norwegian government but were then rejected by the Norwegian people in a referendum in 1972 following a campaign in which suspicions about the implications for Norwegian agriculture, fishing, and national sovereignty featured prominently.



The first enlargement round (1973)



The first enlargement round (1973)

- Existing member states
- New member states

Key
 1 Albania
 2 Switzerland

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The Mediterranean enlargement: Greece (1981) and Spain and Portugal (1986)

In the 1950s the Greek economy had been unsuitable for ECSC or EEC membership, being predominantly peasant-based. Additionally, Greece's history, culture, and geographical position put it outside the Western European mainstream. But just as the countries that joined the Community in 1973 would have liked to have become members earlier, so was the accession of Greece delayed longer than Greek governments would have liked. The initial problem, recognised on both sides when Greece made its first approaches to Brussels soon after the EEC came into being, was the underdeveloped nature of the Greek economy. A transitional period prior to membership was deemed to be necessary and this was negotiated in the form of an Association Agreement that came into force in 1962. Full incorporation into the Community would, it was understood, follow when the Greek economy was capable of sustaining the obligations imposed by membership. However, between April 1967, when there was a military coup in Greece, and June 1974, when civilian government was re-established, the Association Agreement was virtually suspended. It might be thought that this would have further delayed full membership, but in fact it had the opposite effect. After a general election in November 1974 the government immediately made clear its wish for Greece to become a full member of the Community. The Commission issued a formal opinion that Greece was still not economically ready and proposed a pre-accession period of unlimited duration, during which economic reforms could be implemented. In response, the Greek government restated its wish for full membership, and particularly emphasised how membership could help both to underpin Greek democracy and to consolidate Greece's Western European and Western Alliance bonds. The Council of Ministers was sympathetic to these arguments and rejected the Commission's proposal. Membership negotiations were opened in July 1976 and Greece entered the Community in 1981.

As with Greece, for many years both political and economic circumstances resulted in Spain and Portugal being unsuitable for EC membership. Politically, both countries were authoritarian dictatorships until the mid-1970s, to which the democratic

governments of the founding six states did not wish to be too closely attached. Not that there was anything in the treaties to specify that members must be liberal democracies: Article 237 of the EEC Treaty simply stated 'Any European State may apply to become a member of the Community.' The assumption was, however, that a democratic political system was a necessary qualification for entry. Economically, both Spain and Portugal were predominantly agricultural and underdeveloped, and both pursued essentially autarkic economic policies until the end of the 1950s factors that hardly made them candidates for the ECSC and that had the knock-on effect of excluding them from the negotiating processes that led to the EEC (which were opened up by the ECSC six only to the UK – which then withdrew at a very early stage).

So although both Spain and Portugal requested negotiations on association with the Community as early as 1962, and Spain made it quite clear that its request was with a view to full membership at some future date, both countries were treated with caution by the Community. Eventually they were granted preferential trade agreements, but it was only with the overthrow of the Caetano regime in Portugal in 1974 and the death of the Spanish leader General Franco in 1975 that full membership became a real possibility. Portugal applied in March 1977 and Spain did so July 1977. The negotiations were protracted and difficult, covering, amongst many problems, the threat posed to other Mediterranean countries by Spanish agriculture, the size of the Spanish fishing fleet, and the implications of cheap Spanish and Portuguese labour moving north. As with the Greek negotiations, political factors helped to overcome these difficulties: the EC member states wished to encourage political stability in Southern Europe; there was the opportunity to widen and strengthen the political and economic base of the Community; and, by helping to link Southern Europe to the north, there were seen to be strategic advantages for both Western Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

The EFTAn enlargement: Austria, Finland, and Sweden (all 1995)

In 1992 the EC formally opened accession negotiations with Austria, Finland, and Sweden, and in 1993 it opened negotiations with Norway. These

Map 5.3 The



The Mediterranean enlargement round (1981 and 1986)



The Mediterranean enlargement round (1981 and 1986)

- Existing member states
- New member states

Greece acceded in 1981
 Spain and Portugal acceded in 1986

Key
 1 Albania
 2 Switzerland

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 that there was anything...
 members must be liberal...
 the EEC Treaty simply...
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negotiations were concluded successfully in March 1994, with a view to each of the countries becoming members of the EU after the terms of accession had been ratified at national level.

Two sets of factors stimulated the four states (and Switzerland too – of which more below) to seek membership of the EU. First, what previously had been regarded as virtually insuperable obstacles to EC membership came, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, to be seen as being less of a problem. For Austria and Sweden (and also Switzerland) the end of the Cold War reduced the importance of their traditional attachment to neutrality. For Finland, the difficulties posed by the country's relative geographical isolation and special position in relation to the Soviet Union disappeared. Second, Austria, Finland, Sweden, and Norway, plus Switzerland, Iceland, and the micro-state of Liechtenstein, made up the membership of EFTA, with which the EC already had special relations. When EFTA was constituted in 1960 – with Denmark, Portugal, and the UK then also as members, but not at that stage Finland, Iceland, or Liechtenstein – it had two principal objectives: the establishment of a free trade area in industrial products between the member countries, and the creation of a base for making the whole of Western Europe a free trade area for industrial goods. The first of these objectives was established in 1966 with the removal of virtually all customs duties and quantitative restrictions on trade in industrial products between EFTA countries, and the second was achieved in 1977 with the creation of an industrial free trade area between the EC and EFTA.

Over time, however, despite relations between the EC and EFTA being friendly, and being indeed further developed via cooperation in such areas as environmental protection, scientific and technical research, and transport policy, the EFTA states increasingly came to view key aspects of the EC–EFTA relationship as unsatisfactory. One reason for their dissatisfaction was that the EC was collectively much stronger than EFTA. Another, and related, reason was that the EC was prone to present EFTA with *de facto* situations to which the EFTA countries had little option but to adjust – as, for example, when the Community laid down product specifications. This latter problem, of having to accept trading rules they had played no part in helping to formulate, became of increasing concern to EFTA countries as the EC's programme to complete its internal market by 1992 – the Single

European Market (SEM) programme – gathered pace in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This concern played an important part in encouraging the EFTA countries to reconsider the attractions of EC membership. It also led the EC – concerned that a widening of its membership might threaten its own deepening – to suggest that EC–EFTA relations be strengthened by the creation of a European Economic Area (EEA) which would, in effect, extend the internal market programme to the EFTA states but would stop short of EC membership. The EEA was duly negotiated, but ratification ran into difficulties when in December 1992 the Swiss people narrowly voted – by 50.5 per cent to 49.7 per cent – against Swiss membership. This resulted in Switzerland not being able to join the EEA, in the timetable for bringing the EEA into effect being delayed, and in the Swiss government being obliged to put aside Switzerland's EU application.

By the time the EEA did come into effect, in January 1994, it had already come to be accepted by most interested parties, including the governments of the EC, that the ambitions of the governments of Austria, Finland, Sweden, and Norway would be satisfied only by full EU membership. Accordingly, accession negotiations were opened with all four states in early 1993. They proceeded much more easily and quickly than had negotiations in previous enlargement rounds. This was partly because the applicants were already well prepared for EU membership – having well-functioning market economies, having already incorporated much of the Community's *acquis* into national law, and having firmly established democratic political systems. It was partly also because many of the matters that normally have to be covered in accession negotiations had already been resolved in the EEA negotiations and agreement.

In the event, Norway, as in 1972, did not ratify the accession treaty and so did not accede with the other three states in January 1995. In the Norwegian ratification referendum campaign issues raised echoed those of 1972, though with the additional argument being made by the opponents of membership that Norway had no need to join the EU since it was a prosperous country that, thanks to the EEA, already had the trading ties with the EU that it required.

In consequence, to this day, Norway continues to be a member of EFTA, with Switzerland, Iceland, and Liechtenstein being the other members. The EEA also continues to exist, although Switzerland, of course,



ICELAND

FINLAND

NORWAY

SWITZERLAND

Existing

New member

Map 5.4 The

New member

The EFTA enlargement round (1995)



The EFTA enlargement round (1995)

- Existing member states
- New member states

- Key**
- 1 Albania
 - 2 Switzerland
 - 3 Serbia-Montenegro
 - 4 Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
 - 5 Bosnia and Herzegovina
 - 6 Slovenia
 - 7 Moldova

Note: the territory of East Germany (the German Democratic Republic) was incorporated into a united Germany in 1990.

not a member. Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland all participate in many EU programmes and activities.

A reduction in the size of EFTA looked likely for a while, with Iceland applying for EU membership in July 2009 in the wake of its economy having been severely damaged by the global financial crisis. However, on making a rapid economic recovery, with the election to power in 2013 of a eurosceptic government, and with the continuance of long-held concerns about the potentially damaging implications of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) for its very important fishing industry, Iceland withdrew its EU membership application in March 2015.

The 10 + 2 enlargement: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia (all 2004); Bulgaria and Romania (both 2007)

As noted above, the 10 + 2 enlargement round involved ten CEECs plus the two Mediterranean islands of Cyprus and Malta.

Central and Eastern European countries

After gaining their independence in 1989–90 following the collapse of communism, most CEECs were soon openly expressing the hope that, as they established liberal democratic and market-based systems and as East–West relations were transformed, the way would be eased for their accession to the EU. Whilst the circumstances of individual CEECs varied, they were all driven by a broadly similar mixture of overlapping and interconnected political, security, and economic motivations. Politically, there was a widespread desire to become (re)integrated into the European, and more broadly the Western, world. This resulted in CEEC governments necessarily seeking membership of the EU – the organisation which both symbolised ‘the new’ Europe and embodied much of its drive. In security terms, EU membership was seen as offering a measure of ‘soft’ security protection – to bolster the ‘hard’ protection of NATO, which most CEECs also were seeking to join – especially against any communist revival or nationalist surge. And economically, the

EU market was clearly crucial for trade, whilst the EU as an organisation offered a framework and policies to assist with and to underpin economic liberalisation, restructuring, regeneration, and growth.

In the early 1990s the (then) EU-12, prompted and guided by the Commission, were quick to assist CEECs as they set out on their paths of fundamental economic and political reconstruction. The assistance, which took various forms, was given on the assumption that it was but the first step in what was likely to be a long transitional process of building EU–CEEC relations. Certainly, EU membership for CEECs was generally regarded by EU decision-makers not to be a realistic prospect for many years. After all, the CEECs were still in the very early stages of post-communist reconstruction and were nowhere near being ready to meet the demands and disciplines of EU membership. Furthermore, from the very early 1990s the EU was itself preoccupied with other matters, including the EFTAn enlargement round and preparing for European Monetary Union (EMU).

However, notwithstanding the reservations of most of the member states about moving too quickly, an incremental process of ‘rhetorical ratcheting-up’ soon began to unfold in which increasingly specific promises about membership were made to CEECs. A key step in the process occurred at the June 1993 Copenhagen European Council where, in the knowledge that applications from CEECs were likely in the near future, EU leaders declared in the Conclusions of the Presidency (in effect, the official communiqué of summit meetings) that ‘the associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe that so desire shall become members of the European Union. Accession will take place as soon as an associated country is able to assume the obligations of membership by satisfying the economic and political conditions required’ (European Council, 1993: 12).

So as to ensure that the enlargement to CEECs would not threaten the functioning or continuing development of the EU, the Copenhagen summit also laid down – for the first time in the Community history – conditions that countries aspiring to membership would have to meet. All that had existed hitherto was the very open Article 237 of the EU Treaty which stated ‘Any European State may apply to become a member of the Community. – The conditions of admission and the adjustment to the

... necessitated thereby shall be the subject of an agreement between the Member States and the applicant State.' The Copenhagen conditions – or criteria as they came to be known – were designed so that there would be a convergence between existing and new member states in respect of their political and economic systems and also that new member states would be able to adopt and implement Union laws and policies (these laws and policies being generally referred to as the *acquis*). The Copenhagen criteria are reproduced in Box 5.1.

Between March 1994, when Hungary applied, and January 1996, when the Czech Republic applied, ten CEECs formally applied for EU membership (see the Chronology for the dates of applications). The December 1995 Madrid European Council formally reacted to these applications by requesting the Commission to investigate the implications for the EU of enlargement to these countries and to produce opinions on each of the CEEC applicants. This led to the issuing in July 1997 of the Commission's influential communication *Agenda 2000: For a Stronger and Wider Union* (European Commission, 1997a), which claimed that enlargement could be achieved with little extra cost to the Union provided significant reforms

were made to the existing main spending areas – agriculture and structural policies. As for the requested opinions on the applicants, the Commission recommended that negotiations should be opened with five of the ten CEECs – the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia – plus Cyprus, but should be delayed with the other five – Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and Slovakia until their economic (and in the case of Slovakia, political) transitions were further advanced. (Malta had suspended its application at this time.) The European Council accepted the Commission's recommendations at its December 1997 Luxembourg meeting and negotiations with what came to be referred to as the '5 + 1 first wave' states duly began in March 1998.

Before long, however, the Luxembourg decision came to be viewed as having been mistaken. One reason for this was that the link that had long been recognised between enlargement and European security was put into sharper focus with continuing turbulence in the Balkans. In particular, the NATO campaign in Kosovo in early 1999 highlighted the continuing dangers in South-East Europe and the broader dangers inherent in letting 'second wave' countries believe they were being left on one side. A second reason was that some of the second wave countries began to narrow the economic gap between them and first wave countries. And a third reason was that the Luxembourg summit had not only differentiated between first and second wave countries, but had also decided that Turkey – which had applied for membership as long back as 1987 – was not yet eligible to be even considered. Strong expressions of dissatisfaction by the Turkish government about how Turkey was being treated, coupled with suggestions that it might be forced to look elsewhere for friends, resulted in the EU having to reconsider its position on Turkey.

Accordingly, the enlargement strategy was revised at the 1999 Helsinki summit where it was decided that: negotiations with the second wave 5 + 1 states would be opened in early 2000 (the 1 being Malta – see below); decisions on the preparedness for membership of all 10 + 2 states to become EU members would be made solely on the basis of their progress in negotiations, not on when the negotiations with them were opened; and Turkey would be given the status of being a 'candidate country'.

Such was the progress in the accession negotiations with the second wave states, which opened in

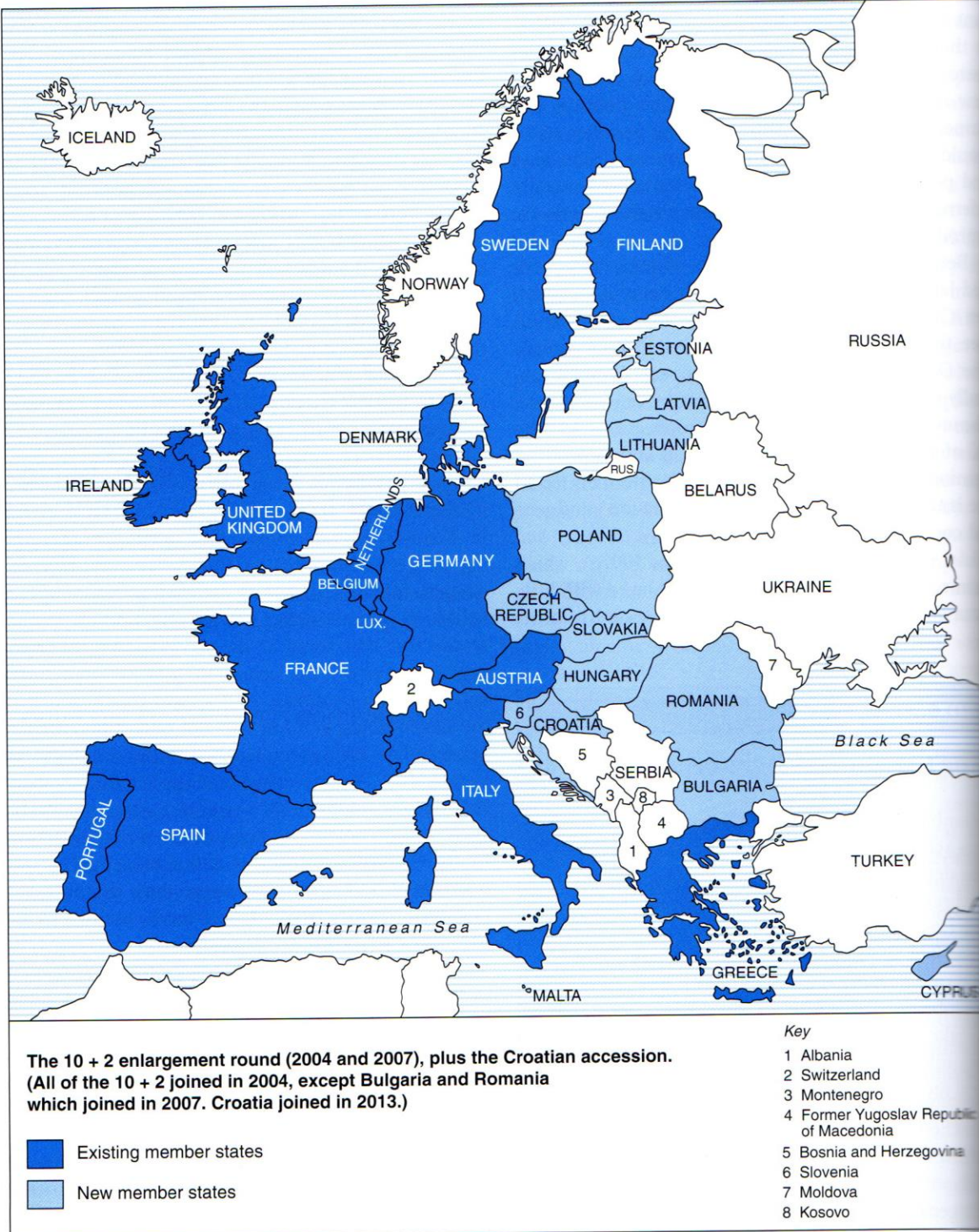
BOX 5.1

The Copenhagen criteria

Membership requires that the candidate country 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. Membership presupposes the candidate's ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.

The Union's capacity to absorb new members, whilst maintaining the momentum of European integration, is also an important consideration in the general interest of both the Union and candidate countries (European Council, 1993: 12).

Map 5.5 The 10 + 2 enlargement round (2004 and 2007), plus the Croatian accession (2013)



This map shows the situation in 2016.

February 2000, participants and proceeding in a se there was likely to a time before the Ju elections – with p than Bulgaria an November 2000 t enlargement stran framework and a with the more pr December 2002. T gts were welcome nt and the June 2 that EU-15 leaders that were ready 2002. This hope v Copenhagen sum the basis of report Commission, dec to signal in Apr after from Bulg becoming memb them to be able 2002 elections. It w and Romania mad with the member membership in 20 accession treat the Wals and C 2001. By Septemb successful ratifi brought, along w members on 1 Ma Bulgaria and R other transition in March of 200 with 100 miles as to be established 200 was agreed ab some and judic in massive corr concerned about t the staying Bulg and now, the E 2004 meeting de common treaties signed and both since 2007.

sion (2013)



January 2000, that it soon became apparent to both participants and observers that far from enlargement proceeding in a series of stages, as had been assumed, it was likely to a 'big bang' enlargement round some time before the June 2004 European Parliament (EP) elections – with perhaps all negotiating states other than Bulgaria and Romania joining the EU. In November 2000 the Commission set out a revised enlargement strategy, incorporating a more flexible framework and a 'roadmap' allowing for negotiations with the more prepared states to be completed by December 2002. The Commission's strategy and targets were welcomed by the December 2000 Nice summit and the June 2001 Gothenburg summit confirmed that EU-15 leaders hoped negotiations with applicants that were ready could be concluded by December 2002. This hope was realised at the December 2002 Copenhagen summit when the European Council, on the basis of reports and recommendations from the Commission, decided that an accession treaty could be signed in April 2003 with all negotiating states apart from Bulgaria and Romania, with a view to them becoming members in May 2004 – that is, in time for them to be able to participate fully in the June 2004 EP elections. It was further decided that if Bulgaria and Romania made satisfactory progress in complying with the membership criteria, they could anticipate membership in 2007 (European Council, 2002b).

Accession treaties with the ten states – eight CEECs, plus Malta and Cyprus – were duly signed in April 2003. By September 2003, all eight CEECs had held successful ratification referendums and, as scheduled, the eight, along with Cyprus and Malta, became EU members on 1 May 2004.

Bulgaria and Romania did not advance as rapidly in their transitions as had been hoped and throughout much of 2003–04 doubts were being expressed in EU circles as to whether they should be granted the scheduled 2007 admission. Particular concerns were expressed about the robustness of their administrative and judicial systems and the continuance of excessive corruption in public life. However, concerned about the possible negative implications that delaying Bulgarian and Romanian membership could have, the European Council at its December 2004 meeting decided to authorise the signing of accession treaties in April 2005. These treaties were signed and both states became EU members in January 2007.

Cyprus and Malta

Although they are geographically distant from the Western European heartland, the two small Mediterranean states of Cyprus and Malta are usually thought of – and have mostly thought of themselves – as being part of the Western European tradition. In the late 1980s interest in possible EU membership developed in both states. It did so not without considerable internal dissension and doubts, but the attractions of being a member of the economic area with which they conducted most of their external economic relations, having full access to EU programmes and funding opportunities, and becoming part of EU decision-making systems were increasingly recognised. For Cyprus there was an additional attraction: EU membership, and possibly even just talks about membership, might open the way to a solution of 'the Cyprus Problem' (see below).

Both countries applied for EC membership in July 1990. Their applications were not received with any enthusiasm in EC circles. This was partly because of a reluctance by the EC to tackle the institutional questions that would be raised by the accession of very small states. In the case of Cyprus, it was also because it was the view of most EC decision-makers that problems arising from the division of the island and Turkey's occupation of North Cyprus – over 30,000 Turkish troops had been based there since a Turkish invasion in 1974 occasioned by a right-wing Greek coup on the island – must be resolved before the accession of Cyprus could be contemplated. However, the prospects for both countries improved in June 1993 when the Commission issued its official opinions on the two applications. Whilst recognising that there were many difficulties ahead, the Commission generally supported the applications and, in a significant break with the past, indicated that it did not favour allowing the partition of Cyprus to be a reason for permanently excluding Cypriot accession. The European Council moved the process further forward when it decided at its June 1994 Corfu meeting that 'the next phase of enlargement of the Union will involve Cyprus and Malta' (European Council, 1994). An election in Malta in 1996 then delayed Malta's plans, by bringing to power a government that put the EU application on hold. Nonetheless, the Cyprus application continued to be advanced and accession negotiations opened in March 1998 in parallel with the opening of

accession negotiations with the five first wave CEECs. In September 1998 a further change of government in Malta resulted in the country's membership application being revived and the EU opened accession negotiations with it, alongside negotiations with the second wave CEECs, in February 2000.

Cyprus's situation within the enlargement round was always extremely difficult and sensitive. On the one hand, the Greek Cypriot government, acting in accordance with its established position in international law and in the name of the Republic of Cyprus, insisted from the very outset of its attempt to join the EU that it represented the whole island and would be conducting accession negotiations on that basis, even though in practice its writ ran only in the south. On the other hand, the Turkish Cypriot leadership in the north, strongly supported by Turkey, totally rejected the right of the Greek Cypriots to claim to be negotiating on behalf of all of Cyprus. EU leaders hoped that a solution to this situation – which is commonly referred to as 'the Cyprus Problem' – would be found before the end of the accession negotiations, but there were never solid grounds for these hopes. Delaying Cyprus's accession until the Cyprus Problem was resolved remained a possibility throughout the accession negotiations, but not a very realistic one after Greece threatened to veto all of the EU aspirants if Cyprus's accession was postponed. At the same time, however, accepting a divided Cyprus as an EU member risked damaging the EU's relations with Turkey.

At their December 1999 Helsinki European Council meeting, the EU-15 leaders agreed on how they would manage the conflicting pressures associated with the Cyprus application. On the one hand, they declared that whilst a settlement was much desired, it would not in itself be a precondition for Cyprus's accession. On the other hand, they sought to mollify Turkey by stating that 'Turkey is a candidate state destined to join the Union on the basis of the same criteria as applied to the other candidate States' (European Council, 1999d: 3).

With no solution reached by the time of the key December 2002 Copenhagen summit – the summit that took final decisions on which of the 10 + 2 applicant states had completed accession negotiations and the target date for their accession – the EU-15 leaders acted on the basis of their Helsinki decision and decided Cyprus could join the EU in May 2004, along with the eight CEECs and Malta. Subsequent to the

2002 Copenhagen summit, a ratification referendum on its accession treaty was held successfully in Malta in April 2003. In Cyprus the government decided that a referendum would not be held unless it could be tied in with a resolution of the Cyprus Problem. With no such resolution seemingly pending, Cyprus's membership was ratified by the Cyprus Parliament in July 2003 – thus resulting in Cyprus being the only one of the ten acceding states not to directly seek the approval of the national electorate.

In the autumn of 2003 the UN, which had made various attempts over the years to broker a Cyprus peace settlement, sought to take advantage of Cyprus's scheduled EU membership to launch another round of peace negotiations. The hope was that with the question of Cyprus's EU membership 'resolved', both sides would display increased flexibility. A highly detailed settlement plan – known as the Annan Plan after the UN's Secretary General – was issued, but despite being revised several times to meet objections it was rejected by the Greek Cypriot government on the grounds that it was too favourable to the Turkish Cypriots. Both sides did, however, agree to put the Plan to binding referendums to be held on the same day in April 2004 in both parts of the island. In the referendums, the Turkish Cypriots voted to accept the Plan by 64.9 per cent to 35.1 per cent on a 87 per cent turnout, but the Greek Cypriots, encouraged by the President, voted to reject it by 75.8 per cent to 24.2 per cent on a 89 per cent turnout. The fact that in the south of the island there was no penalty of exclusion from the EU for voting for rejection was a major factor in determining the outcome. Accordingly, on 1 May 2004 the whole of Cyprus legally joined the EU, but the part of the island that had voted to accept the Plan was, in practice, excluded. Despite periodic rounds of negotiations aimed at reaching a settlement, the Cyprus Problem remains to the present day.

The enlargement to Croatia, and the ongoing Balkan round

The June 2003 European Council meeting in Thessaloniki confirmed the EU membership ambitions of the countries of the Western Balkans (which in essence, means the countries that were formerly part of Yugoslavia, plus Albania). The Conclusion of the summit included: 'The European Council

... a ratification referendum held successfully in March 2004. The government decision not to be held unless it could be resolved. The Cyprus Problem remains seemingly pending, Cyprus is the only country in the Cyprus Parliament in Cyprus being the only country not to directly seek the UN, which had made it clear to broker a Cyprus settlement. The UN has taken advantage of Cyprus to launch another round of negotiations. The hope was that with the membership 'resolved', both sides would have more flexibility. A high-level plan known as the Annan Plan was issued, but it was never implemented – it was issued, but it was never implemented. It was issued, but it was never implemented. It was issued, but it was never implemented.

... its determination to fully and effectively support the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries, which will become an integral part of the EU, once they meet the established criteria' (European Council, 2003a: 12).

In fact, at the time of Thessaloniki summit the Western Balkans had already been included, with Slovenia, which was relatively advanced in political and economic terms, being part of the 2004 enlargement round. Croatia too was generally ahead of other Balkan countries in term of its political and economic development, so moves for it to open accession negotiations were already well underway by the time of the Thessaloniki Declaration. Negotiations with Croatia were duly formally opened in October 2005 and it became an EU member state in July 2013.

As Table 5.2 shows, Western Balkan countries are various places in 'the queue' for EU membership. However, the progress of all is protracted and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future, with the European Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, having indicated soon after assuming office in 2014, that there was no prospect of any accessions before the end of his College: that is, before the end of 2019 at the very earliest.

There are a number of reasons why the further enlargement to the Balkans is proving to be slow. First, the Balkan states seeking membership are mostly very underdeveloped and problematic in terms of important aspects of their economic,

political, administrative, judicial, and internal security systems. Lack of respect for democratic freedoms, rule of law problems, clientelism, and corruption are all seen by the EU as presenting significant problems in most of the aspirant Balkan states. Second, some of the Balkan states have 'special political problems' associated with them. These include FYROM having its accession path blocked by Greece, on the grounds that FYROM's insistence that it calls itself Macedonia could be interpreted as a claim on part of Greece's territory. Another 'special political problem' concerns Serbia and Kosovo, where the former fiercely disputes the right of the latter to have declared independence from it in 2008. Third, the Bulgarian and Romanian accessions are now widely viewed in EU circles as having been permitted to occur prematurely. At the time the decisions were made to permit Bulgaria and Romania to become members it was recognised that in some respects the two countries were not quite 'ready' – not least in terms of the robustness of their public institutions and their application of the rule of law. However, political decisions were made to proceed with their applications, though both countries were made subject to unprecedented post-accession monitoring processes. But, continuing post-accession institutional and rule of law problems in Bulgaria and Romania have shown how difficult it is to interfere with a country's internal politics once it has become a member state. Lessons have, therefore, been learnt by the EU from the 'mistakes' with Bulgaria and

Table 5.2 The Balkan enlargement round*

| Name of country | Date of EU membership application | Membership status | Opening of membership negotiations |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Albania | April 2009 | Candidate country | Not opened |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | February 2016 | Potential candidate | Not opened |
| Croatia | February 2003 | Became an EU member state on 1 July 2013 | October 2005 |
| Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) | March 2004 | Candidate country | Not opened |
| Kosovo | Not yet applied | Potential candidate | Not opened |
| Montenegro | December 2008 | Candidate country | June 2012 |
| Serbia | December 2009 | Candidate country | January 2014 |

* As of December 2016

Romania, with the consequence that states that now wish to become EU members are being required to demonstrate full or (or nearly full) compliance with EU standards before accession.

As part of this raised compliance requirement, the EU has become much more involved in providing pre-accession assistance to would-be members and the tenor of accession processes has become much more conditional. That is, the advancement of accession processes – which go through many stages even before accession negotiations are formally opened – are highly dependent on potential members meeting specified conditions: conditions that are, broadly speaking, based on the potential members ‘EU-ising’ themselves. If appropriate EU-ising is deemed by the EU to be occurring, then accession progress is likely to be formally recognised by the potential members being given Stabilisation and Association Agreements (SAAs), being granted candidate country status, and eventually by accession negotiations being opened.

Unsurprisingly, given all of these considerations and the increasingly staged nature of accession processes, the next accessions to the EU, though part of a broad Balkan enlargement round, are likely to occur on a very incremental and also probably individual basis.

The special case of Turkey

Turkey applied for EU membership in 1987: that is, long before the EFTA states, which became EU members in 1995, the 10 + 2 states, which became members in 2004/07, and Croatia, which became a member in 2013. Yet, Turkey is still not an EU member and there is no foreseeable prospect of it becoming so. Accession negotiations with Turkey were formally opened in October 2005, but they have proceeded at a glacial pace and at times have been virtually stalled.

There have been three central problems from the EU’s viewpoint with the Turkish application. First, Turkey’s record in respecting democratic and human rights – one of the Copenhagen criteria – is deemed to have been, and still to be, unsatisfactory. Turkey is a democratic country in that its leaders are elected to office, but many of the associated features of democracy and of open political systems – including respect for minority rights, for independent judicial and administrative systems, and for the rule of law – are

seen to be, notwithstanding ‘improvements’ that have been made over the years, too often breached. Indeed, at times they have seemed to be seriously threatened, such as in July 2016 when there were mass arrests and suspensions of thousands of public service officials and other employees following a failed uprising by sections of the armed forces.

Second, the overall ‘balance sheet’ of Turkish accession in terms of its implications for the EU (see Box 5.2) has not clearly been seen as being in the black and in the view of some member states has been seen as being decidedly in the red. The most difficult of the perceived disadvantages and risks are those that involve ‘values’: is Turkey a ‘European’ country?; would Turkish membership be ‘a step too far’ if the EU is to maintain any real sense of identity and would Turkish accession not involve bringing an Islamic country into what is an international organisation that is based essentially on Christian values? Such questions have been asked particularly in some of those member states that have harboured most reservations about Turkish membership, including Austria and Germany.

Third, there is the non-settlement of the ‘Cyprus Problem’. This results in Turkey continuing to occupy the north of the island and therefore also, since in legal terms the whole of Cyprus joined the EU in 2004, Turkey physically occupying EU ‘territory’. A settlement on Cyprus is clearly a prerequisite for Turkish membership – not least since without a settlement Cyprus would veto Turkey’s accession.

The EU’s relations with Turkey have thus been extremely difficult. They have, in essence, been based on trying to maintain a balance in which, on the one hand the EU has close relations with this very important country, but on the other hand membership prospects are delayed. If Turkey does eventually become a member, it will not be for many years to come and in all probability it will be only on a partial membership basis in that it will not be a full participant in all EU policies.

On a final note regarding the Turkish application, the possibility cannot be discounted that Turkey may become so disillusioned with the protracted nature of the process that it may withdraw its application – and perhaps settle for various types of privileged relations with the EU. (For a detailed account of Turkey and the EU, see Aydın-Düzgün and Tocci, 2015.)

BOX 5.2

Perceived benefits of membership

Perceived possible benefits

- Turkey’s population is the size of the EU and Turkey becomes part of the world and the Middle East
- The demographic would help address Turkey occupies a world and the Middle East
- Turkey has the largest population in the world and the Middle East

Perceived possible disadvantages

- Turkey would be a large country in the EU
- Turkey’s membership would be a major process implication
- Turkey is relatively young and would be a major process implication
- Turkey is relatively young and would be a major process implication

Why Has the EU not enlarged?

Enlargement has occurred

Enlargement has occurred

Enlargement has occurred

Enlargement has occurred

Enlargement has occurred

Enlargement has occurred

Enlargement has occurred

Enlargement has occurred

Enlargement has occurred

Enlargement has occurred

Enlargement has occurred

Enlargement has occurred

Enlargement has occurred

Enlargement has occurred

Perceived benefits and disadvantages/risks for the EU of Turkish membership

Perceived possible benefits

- Turkey's population is currently (2016) 76 million and is predicted to rise to about 95 million by 2030. The size of the EU's internal market would be greatly increased. (A customs union exists between the EU and Turkey, but many internal barriers to trade still exist that would have to be removed if Turkey becomes part of the internal market.)
- The demographic nature of Turkey's population, which is much younger than that of the rest of the EU, would help address the problem of the EU's ageing labour force.
- Turkey occupies a key geo-political location, which would help strengthen the EU's links with the Islamic world and the Middle East.
- Turkey has the largest number of military personnel in NATO after the USA, so the EU's military capacity would be greatly increased

Perceived possible disadvantages/risks

- Turkey would be the largest member state on accession, which would have major institutional and policy process implications.
- Turkish membership would mean that about 20 per cent of the membership of the EU would be Muslim, which would risk transforming the EU's nature in many ways.
- Turkey is relatively poor gross domestic product (GDP) per head is about 30 per cent of the EU average), so it would be a major claimant on the EU budget.
- The EU's external borders would adjoin 'troubled states', including Iraq, Iran, and Syria.

Why Has the EU Been Willing to Enlarge?

Enlargement has occurred in rounds, or stages, because European states have qualified and applied for EC/EU membership at different times. As the previous few pages of this chapter have shown, this has been for a number of reasons. One reason has been differences in the nature of national economies and economic needs in would-be EC/EU states. A second reason has been differences in national political systems, with a key point here being that membership has always only been open to liberal democratic states. And a third reason has been different perceptions by national politicians of the likely gains and losses that are likely to accrue from EC/EU membership.

But although there have been important differences between applicant states in respect of their attitudes and approaches to European integration, each

has ultimately taken the view that the advantages of membership outweigh the disadvantages. The nature of the perceived advantages has normally included the likelihood of increased economic growth and of increased political influence. The nature of the perceived disadvantages has normally included concerns about losses of national sovereignty and the national implications of certain EU policies.

So, states have sought EU membership because the perceived benefits of membership have seen to be greater than the perceived costs. But what about the EC/EU's position? Why has it been so willing to open its doors to applicants?

A difficulty in seeking to answer this question is that the EC/EU has never had a clear policy on enlargement. It has reacted to applications rather than proactively setting out its own preferences and goals. As was noted above, the 1957 Treaty stated that 'Any European State may apply to become a member of the Community...', but this gave no indication as to whether applications

would be welcomed or how the word 'European' would be interpreted. In consequence, there was nothing to stop France twice vetoing applications from the UK in the 1960s, even though the UK was seemingly eminently suitable for membership in that it was a long-established and democratic Western European state with a market economy. The 1993 Copenhagen criteria clarified the EU's up to a point, but even then the criteria were less a set of positive guidances to EU enlargements and more conditions for opening accession negotiations with applicants.

The answer to the question why the EU has generally favoured enlargement is thus best approached, initially at least, by looking at particular membership rounds. Up to and including the EFTAn round there is no great difficulty explaining the EC/EU's willingness to enlarge. It is true that doubts about the wisdom of enlarging were expressed by EU policy-makers at the time of each of the first three enlargement rounds. So, the first enlargement round saw concerns in some EC quarters about whether the UK would be a wholehearted participant. During the Mediterranean round questions were raised about whether the applicants were ready for membership given the relatively underdeveloped nature of their economies and the fledgling nature of their newly established democratic systems. And prior to the EFTAn round some EU practitioners – including the then President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors – made known their fears that enlargement could divert attention from such pressing tasks as developing the Maastricht Treaty provisions on EMU and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). But notwithstanding these doubts, existing member states were willing to accept new members for a number of reasons: the applicants were Western European states and consequently were generally seen as being part of the post-Second World War Western European 'family'; though some of the applicants were relatively underdeveloped economically at the time of their applications, they all had functioning market-based economies that appeared capable of 'catching up' reasonably quickly; most had well-embedded democratic systems, and those that did not (Greece, Portugal, and Spain) found favourable receptions from existing member states to calls to help them to consolidate the re-establishment of democracy; and because the enlargement rounds were limited in scope – with none containing more than three new members (though the first and the third rounds would

have contained four had Norway ratified the accession treaties its government negotiated) – the EC/EU could accommodate the new members without itself having to make too many adjustments.

But, with the completion of the EFTAn round the challenges posed to the EU by membership applications changed and became much more testing. For, following the 1995 enlargement, only Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland remained as potential 'easy' applicants. All other possible applicants were to the East or South-East and virtually all of them, with the partial exceptions of the two small Mediterranean islands of Cyprus and Malta (though the former carried its own unique challenges) presented considerable difficulties as regards EU future membership: they all were relatively poor; they all had long been outside the 'Western mainstream'; and they all were still in the process of establishing their democratic credentials.

Given the challenges posed by post-EFTAn applicants, why was the EU – a highly successful organisation in most respects – willing to risk enlargement to CEECs? And why does it remain committed to further enlargement when, with the exception of Iceland, the only realistic acceding states in the foreseeable future are Turkey (with which accession negotiations were opened in 2005) and half a dozen or so small states in the formerly troubled Balkans? Would not a more sensible approach have been, and be, to have established very close relations with applicants and would-be applicants whose membership has seemed to present major challenges for the EU, but to have stopped short of offering them a membership perspective?

Two types of explanation for why the EU has proceeded, and continues to proceed, with enlargement are especially persuasive. These explanations are examined at some length on pp. 457–59, so it will suffice here to give them just an outline summary:

- *Rationalist explanations* emphasise that while it is indeed the case that the potential benefits to the EU of admitting CEECs and South-Eastern European states were, and are, less strong than they have been with most previous acceding states, the cost-benefit balance sheets from the EU's viewpoint have, nonetheless, still been in the black. In economic, political, and security terms, the EU has had more to gain than lose by opening accession negotiations with and admitting CEECs, Balkan states, and even, ultimately, Turkey.

Constructivist explanations question whether the balance sheets have in fact been positive from the EU perspective, or at least from the perspective of all existing EU member states. For constructivists, the values shaping and determining the behaviour of EU enlargement policy actors have been, and are, more important determining factors in explaining post-1995 enlargement processes than have been measurable balance sheets. A particularly important value is seen as being the inclination of EU politicians and officials to empathise with, and seek to support, geographically proximate states that are attempting to 'Westernise', 'Europeanise', and 'democratise' themselves.

But whichever of these explanations is deemed to be the more plausible – and they probably should not be seen as being in competition with one another but rather as being potentially mutually complementary – it is clear that as the EU has extended the enlargement process to increasingly 'difficult' states, so has it become increasingly watchful of applicants. Accession processes have become more elaborate, accession negotiations have become much more conditional – in the sense that they involve little in the way of real negotiations and are mainly about monitoring the extent to which applicants are absorbing and adjusting to the EU *acquis* – and the EU has become much more actively involved in assisting applicants to make the transitions that are necessary to become EU members (see Gateva, 2015).

The Impact of Enlargements on the EU

All enlargements have inevitably affected and changed the Union (and before it the Community) in important ways. Six ways are especially worth noting.

First, enlargements have been an important driving force behind treaty reform, with existing member states wanting to avoid post-enlargement decision-making difficulties by 'easing' decision-making mechanisms. The most obvious instance of this concern feeding into treaty changes is the way in which the inevitably greater difficulty of obtaining unanimity in an expanded Council of Ministers has been a major reason behind the increases in qualified majority voting (QMV)

that have been provided for in all rounds of treaty reform since the Single European Act (SEA). These changes to Council voting arrangements have been successful in that, along with other factors that are explored in Chapters 10 and 18, they have helped to ensure that widely expressed predictions – that were heard particularly before the 10 + 2 enlargement round – that the addition of more member states would lead to much slower decision-making and even decision-making deadlocks, have not come to pass.

Second, the EU's institutions have naturally grown in size to accommodate representatives of acceding states. This has had a number of consequences, some of which have not been helpful in terms of institutional efficiency. For example, it is generally agreed that the College of Commissioners and the EP are now too big and unwieldy. This was recognised before the 10 + 2 enlargement occurred, which resulted in both the Constitutional Treaty and the initial version of the Lisbon Treaty providing for the size of the College to be reduced and for the size of the EP to be capped (see Chapter 7). However, the reduction in the size of the College had to be scrapped as part of a package of measures designed to persuade the Irish people to approve the Lisbon Treaty, whilst even with its cap – of 751 – the EP still remains by far the largest parliament in the democratic world.

Another institutional problem related to the increased size of the EU is language. There are now 24 officially recognised EU languages. For routine day-to-day operations this causes inconveniences but not major problems because officials of the institutions work, whatever their nationality, mostly in either French or English. However, considerable problems do arise when institutional business is being conducted by non-officials – such as Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and representatives in the European Economic and Social Committee – because they may well not have non-native language skills and, even if they do have good French or English, may insist on using their native language. Inevitably, reliance on interpreters reduces spontaneity and can cause delays if interpreters are not available. Delays can also be caused by the requirement that many EU documents (though generally not internal working documents) must be translated into the EU's official languages. Translation delays have been a particular problem for legislative processes. Various devices are used to try and minimise these linguistic problems,

including use of language relays and pressures being placed on officials to produce short documents, but some difficulties inevitably remain.

Third, many EU policy outcomes have had to become more flexible so as to satisfy the wider range of national and political interests that enlargement has brought into policy-making processes. The larger and the more heterogeneous the EU has become, the more it has been the case that there have been national representatives in policy deliberations that have wanted different outcomes. One way of dealing with this challenge to decision-making has been the above-mentioned extensions to QMV provisions in the Council. But another response has been to make some policies less binding in nature, with discretion given to national authorities regarding the extent to which and the ways in which the policies are applied. In recent years, considerable use has been made of this more discretionary and less rigid policy approach. The approach has been applied particularly in sensitive policy areas such as social policy and employment policy, often using what is known as the open method of coordination (OMC) – which relies not on ‘top down’ and binding legislation but rather on semi-voluntary cooperation to achieve agreed goals. (The OMC is explained in Chapter 18.)

The ultimate in policies being flexible is where a member state or states does not participate in a policy, or at least not fully participate. Known as differentiation, this practice has developed in response to the inability or unwillingness of some states to be involved in policies that either create domestic difficulties for them or to which they are opposed. It may have been reasonable to have expected and required all member states to ‘swim abreast’ when there were only a few of them, but such a requirement has become increasingly unrealistic as the EU’s membership has grown and become more diverse. Rigidity would have been a recipe for major policy difficulties and possible paralysis in some areas if it had continued to be strictly applied. Accordingly, outside the ‘core’ internal market policy area, there are now a number of important policy areas where not all member states are equally involved. Amongst the most notable of these policy areas are EMU, aspects of the area of freedom, security and justice (AFSJ), and defence.

Fourth, in so far as member states provide leadership for the EU, this leadership has become more spread out, with different member states or groups

of member states providing leadership on different issues. The Franco-German axis, which formerly did much to set the pace of the integration process, is still influential but inevitably it is not as dominant as it was when there were fewer member states. More generally, as the number of smaller states has increased, it has not been as easy for the larger states to push through their preferences.

Fifth, policy debates, concerns, and priorities have been affected by new members bringing with them their own requirements, preferences, and problems. For example, the growing influence, as a result of the Mediterranean round enlargement, of southern, less industrialised, and poorer countries quickly led to calls both for a re-orientation of the CAP away from northern temperate products towards Mediterranean products, and for strengthened and re-focused redistributive policies to directly assist economic development in the south. The EFTA enlargement quickly played a part in increasing the attention being given by the EU to such matters as openness and accountability in decision-making and to efficiency and sound financial management in decision implementation. And the 10 + 2 enlargement produced pressures on the EU’s budget to be focused more towards assisting with economic development in the CEECs and also contributed to the EU’s relations with Russia being given a higher priority.

Sixth, enlargement has made the EU a more important and influential international organisation. The EU’s member states account for: around one-sixth of the world’s states (not counting micro-states); all of the larger, and traditionally more influential, European states to the west of the former Soviet Union (minus the UK, post-Brexit); and a population of over 500 million (around 440 million post-Brexit). This results in the EU being a key international power, especially commercial power where it accounts, post-Brexit, for around one-fifth of world imports and exports (not counting commerce between the member states themselves).

Concluding Remarks

EU enlargement is best viewed not as series of discrete events but rather as an ongoing process. The fact is that since 1961, when the UK made

g leadership on different axis, which formerly in integration process, is not as dominant as it was in member states. More generally, as the number of member states has increased, it has become more difficult for larger states to push through

concerns, and priorities have been brought with them. Differences in preferences, and problems of influence, as a result of the geographical position, of southern, less developed countries quickly led to a shift of the CAP away from its original focus towards Mediterranean agriculture and re-focused rededicated to assist economic development. An enlargement quickly shifted the attention being given to openness and accountability to efficiency and sound decision implementation. This has produced pressures for a shift more towards assisting development in the CEECs and also towards negotiations with Russia being

the EU a more important international organisation. The impact of enlargement for: around one-sixth of the population (counting micro-states); a geographically more influential area; the addition of the former Soviet states (including the UK's exit); and a population of over 700 million post-Brexit). The EU's global economic and political power, where it accounts, presently for about 15% of world imports and exports, and its influence on international commerce between the mem-

bers. In the formal accession application of any state, there has rarely been a time when the EC/EU has not been involved in some combination of considering the merits of membership applications, conducting accession negotiations, and 'fitting in' newcomers. This is a situation, moreover, that is likely to continue for the foreseeable future, with, at the time of writing, accession negotiations underway with Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey, applications lodged by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYROM, and Serbia, an application from Kosovo likely in the foreseeable future, and applications from such former Soviet states as Georgia and the Ukraine possible in the more distant future.

Enlargement has been a very difficult policy area for the EU. There have been three main reasons for this. First, an EC/EU enlargement policy resting on clear and consistent principles has never been developed. This absence is largely explained by (changing and evolving) differences between the member states on a range of enlargement and enlargement-related matters. A particular difficulty in trying to develop such a policy now would be finding agreement on the 'What is Europe?' question. Second, the EC/EU has had little control over the lodging of applications, which has meant that, starting with the Mediterranean round, it has been drawn into accession processes with applicants much earlier than ideally it would have liked. This resulted in the Mediterranean and

10 + 2 rounds being extremely protracted: from the lodging of the membership application to assumption of membership the longest waiting periods were the thirteen years and ten months for Cyprus and Malta, followed by the ten years and one month for Hungary and Poland (later surpassed by Croatia's ten years and six months); from the formal opening of accession negotiations to accession the longest periods were the seven years and three months for Portugal, the six years and eleven months for Spain, and the six years and two months for the 'first wave' CEECs and Cyprus. If Turkey eventually becomes a member, it will far outdistance all previous records, whatever basis is taken for measuring. Third, since the completion of the EFTAn round, virtually all of Europe's richer and democratically well-established states have been EU members. With the exception of Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland, only 'difficult' states are now outside.

But notwithstanding the many difficulties that have been associated with it, enlargement has transformed the political map of Europe. From the six original founding members, the EU expanded in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s to embrace virtually the whole of Western Europe. It then – dramatically and momentously – expanded in the 2000s to incorporate much of Central and Eastern Europe and to transform what had been a process of Western European integration into a process of near Europe-wide integration.

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not as series of dis-
ongoing process. For
when the UK made the