



# DIIS REPORT

## **“OUR 9/11 OF HOPE”**

SHORT ESSAYS ON EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY  
SINCE 1989

*Edited by Fabrizio Tassinari*

*With a preface by Timothy Garton Ash*

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## **Abstract**

This collection of short essays proceeds from an international conference organized by DIIS on 9th November 2009, the day of the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The volume centers on the political, social, and economic implications of the revolutions of 1989 on European democracy. The authors of these essays come from very different backgrounds and interests: ranging from academics and public intellectuals that have written extensively on post-Cold War Europe, to practitioners and activists who have witnessed or contributed in different capacities to the continent's democratic transformation. This diverse participation has enabled a broad discussion on existing paradigms of democratization and their record in Central and Eastern Europe; on the transition of former Communist states towards a market-based liberal democracy and the impact of events such as the 2009 economic crisis on it; on the role of the EU and of European integration.

The volume, edited by DIIS Senior Fellow Fabrizio Tassinari, opens with a preface by Timothy Garton Ash and includes articles by: Per Stig Møller, Bernd Henningsen, Balint Molnar, Morten Hansen, Michael Emerson, Arkady Moshes and Alyson JK Bailes.

## **Preface**

On the morning of 9th November 2009, the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, I had the pleasure of speaking at Copenhagen University. I talked of how we could celebrate it as a triumph of the new model of peaceful revolution, and the beginning of the reunification of Europe. Written European style, the 9th November was our 9/11 of hope.

I now read with great interest these papers from the symposium that followed, which sound many notes of entirely due caution and scepticism about the depth and durability of the transitions that followed, and about the role of the EU. Alyson Bailes asks if the EU will content itself with just being good as opposed to doing good. I believe we Europeans should answer that question with a resounding 'no'. Indeed, as I said in Copenhagen on the day, Europe needs to recover something of the spirit of '89, as it attempts to shape a more coherent and effective European foreign policy in an increasingly non-European, indeed post-Western world.

Fabrizio Tassinari and the Danish Institute for International Studies are to be congratulated on a very stimulating collection which concentrates our minds on vital questions for all Europeans.

Timothy Garton Ash  
Oxford  
February 2010



## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

*Fabrizio Tassinari*

Political scientist George Lawson has recently likened the year 1989 to Nassim N. Taleb's famous 'black swan': the kind of rare event whose impact is extreme and which, crucially, makes us "concoct explanations" so as to achieve "retrospective (though not prospective) predictability".<sup>2</sup> Be that as it may, two things stand out about the two decades since 1989. First, for better or worse, much of what has taken place in Europe in the realm of democratization has been *anything but* a black swan. Second, and increasingly beyond Europe, some sort of 'predictability' has long pervaded the image of 1989, as it continues to be referred to in terms of its possible, future manifestations.

This collection of short essays, proceeding from an international conference organized by DIIS on 'the legacy of 1989', seeks to address both issues.

## The Record of 1989

In contrast with the 'unpredictability' of the 1989 events, what is striking about the democratization of Europe of the past twenty years has been its meticulously designed nature. As the then Danish Foreign Minister, Per Stig Møller, argues in the opening chapter of this volume, the transformation of the former Warsaw pact countries has been the great European story of this generation. The reunification of the continent, most notably attained through the 2004 Eastern enlargement of the European Union, has constituted one of the high points of the post WWII project of European integration. None of this has happened out of the blue: it has been accomplished through comprehensive domestic reforms accompanied by massive Western financial assistance; monitored against strict EU benchmarks, and sustained by U.S. and European diplomatic support. The democratic transition of Central Europe has been first and foremost the result of persistent hard work.

<sup>1</sup> The author acknowledges the support of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence, the Danish Committee for European Integration, the U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen and the University of Copenhagen, as well as the precious assistance of Maria Ruxandra Lupu.

<sup>2</sup> George Lawson: "Introduction: The 'What', 'When' and 'Where' of the Global 1989", paper presented at the 2009 International Studies Association Annual Convention in New York, p. 4. Nassim Nicolas Taleb: *The Black Swan. The Impact of the Highly Improbable*, Random House, New York, p. xviii.

Pointedly, both Per Stig Møller and Prof. Bernd Henningsen of Humboldt University, the author of the second contribution, use the term ‘return of history’ to describe these developments. Post Cold War Europe, they argue, has returned to the state of peace and prosperity that it enjoyed until 1913. The phrase evokes Francis Fukuyama (and Hegel), for whom the ‘end of history’ was famously about the ‘universalization of Western liberal democracy’. But, differently from Fukuyama, referring to this not-too-remote past underscores the frailty of previous European peace projects, and how naturally it comes to Europeans to take stability for granted. The reference to the return of history, then, takes on a negative connotation.<sup>3</sup> It refers to the civilizational struggles that have engulfed the world, most notably since the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. History has returned in the form of more or less successful models of autocratic government such as in Russia or China. The reference suggests that history did not end with the universalization of democracy.

Minister Stig Møller confirms as much when denouncing the risks of “complacency, narrow-mindedness and indifference” toward Europe’s own history. And so does Balint Molnar, Acting Director of Freedom House Europe, in the third article. Commenting on Freedom House’s annual *Nations in Transit* report, Molnar dissects the reasons behind, and the manifestations of, ‘post-accession blues’ in the new EU member states of Central Europe. When warning Central European countries not to delude themselves about ‘the irrevocable nature of democracy’, he touches a raw nerve in the post Cold War narrative on democratization. Before and in the immediate aftermath of the Soviet collapse, the debate was indeed largely dominated by a ‘transition paradigm’, explaining how countries move away from autocracy and towards democracy. The experience of the past twenty years in Central Europe does indeed tell a story of peaceful, civic revolutions followed by gradual democratization. But it also registers innumerable shades of grey; hybrid regimes that can for a long time be partly or falsely democratic, and – especially beyond Europe – countries that are effectively stuck *between* autocracy and democracy.<sup>4</sup>

The EU enlargement process has helped candidate countries to not become thus stuck. But, rather provocatively, one may go as far as to claim that the EU has accomplished this feat because it did not blindly buy into the more optimistic aspects of the transition paradigm. By monitoring democratic progress and setbacks, the

<sup>3</sup> See Robert Kagan, *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*, Vintage, New York, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Carothers: “How Democracies Emerge: The ‘Sequencing’ Fallacy,” *Journal of Democracy* 18/1, January 2007. Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004.



EU effectively accounts for the possibility that countries can also backtrack on from their democratic commitments. It has in effect taken very seriously the assumption that democratizing states are more unstable than mature democracies or stable autocracies.<sup>5</sup> Also in this light, the process of EU enlargement comes out as a carefully planned and executed policy. But the spectre of 'reform fatigue' in Central Europe, and especially in the newest EU member states of Bulgaria and Romania, is very real and the consequences can be dire.

One event unpredicted by many that has heightened some of the worries about the solidity of Central Europe's transformation is the credit crunch that started in 2008. For the purpose of our collection we have chosen to encapsulate the ensuing financial and economic maelstrom by focusing on the case of Latvia. These days Latvia is regarded as something of a 'basket case'<sup>6</sup> economy because of the crisis. Prof. Morten Hansen, of the Stockholm School of Economics in Riga, explains that Riga's economic bust is the tale of a consumption boom heavily reliant on credit. The profligate fiscal policy that fed the boom will now require very strict austerity measures.

The next question, of course, is what the stunning turn of events of the past two years tells us about the political transformation of Central Europe, and whether a prolonged economic slump can undermine their democratic institutions. Hansen finds a rather original way to dispel our worst fears on this point. He notes that the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall is an emotional (and rather Western) way of commemorating the end of the Cold War. But for Latvians the end of the Cold War relates more directly to the (re)gaining of national independence: this is *their* anniversary and *their* achievement, from which, says Hansen, there is "no going back".

### **The Future of 1989**

There is a growing penchant among observers to relate, more or less explicitly, recent civic upheavals in Eastern Europe and Asia to the momentous revolutions in Central Europe. Many recent episodes of popular turmoil have been dubbed with a particular attribute (often a colour: 'rose', 'orange', 'denim' etc), so as to echo the narrative of the 'velvet' revolutions of 1989.

<sup>5</sup> Jack Snyder and Edward Mansfield, "Democratization and the Danger of War," *International Security* 20/1, Summer 1995.

<sup>6</sup> Edward Lucas "The Fall and Rise and Fall Again of the Baltic States," *Foreign Policy*, July/August 2009.

Are these allusions justified? Do recent episodes herald another ‘wave’ of democratic transitions in the former Soviet space and the Middle East? What is the global legacy of 1989? The contribution of Michael Emerson, Senior Fellow at the Centre for European Policy Studies, spells out the useful category of ‘struggling transitions’ to help us piece together this puzzle. To be sure, in countries such as Georgia and Ukraine, the bright colours that characterized the revolts of 2003–2004 have faded away. Disenchantment, together with exasperatingly poor governance structures, has replaced the initial optimism of the population and the ambitious goals of their new policy makers.

Yet, things can be even worse. Just next door to where the 1989 revolutions took place, the West, and the EU in particular, are confronted not only with democratic stagnation but with what Emerson calls ‘proliferating dynasties’ in countries such as Azerbaijan, Belarus and Kazakhstan as well as in most North African states, where father to son successions are effective or envisaged. All eyes these days are fixed on Iran, and on the prolonged mass protests against the theocratic regime there. Notwithstanding the many predictions (and prescriptions) about their outcome, the repression that is accompanying the Iranian demonstrations seems to painfully exclude one key feature of 1989 – that it was, for the most part at least, peaceful.

The next contribution by Arkady Moshes, Program Director at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, focuses on the paradigmatic case of Russia. The year 2009 here marked a division of the post Cold War period into two equal parts – the watershed event being Vladimir Putin’s ascent to power in the autumn of 1999. According to many a Western analyst, Putin’s leadership (first as President and, since 2008, as Prime Minister) has systematically disavowed the democratic credo known as triple transition: to market economy, liberal democracy, and to independent state and nation-building. In a strong Russia, power is ‘vertical’, democracy is ‘sovereign’, and the state is governed by a ‘dictatorship of the law’. This depiction is in many respects accurate, and Moshes himself refers to the post-Yeltsin era as an ‘aborted transition’.

Even so, the background for this democratic introversion ought to be carefully pondered if the West is to eventually establish a working relationship with Moscow. In this context, the quest for political stability may well be regularly advanced by Russia’s ‘political technologists’ in order to justify Putin’s power grab. But it is also true, as Moshes points out, that “western liberties were viewed as firmly linked with, and bringing, prosperity. When affluence did not arrive, the whole construction was

rejected". As a result, the so-called 'autocratic capitalist' model<sup>7</sup> – pursued by the likes of China and Russia – turns the correlation between economic and political liberalism on its head, and places the quest for prosperity and order at the heart of a government's performance.

### **Our 9/11 of Hope?**

Plainly, the 'predictability' of an extreme and rare event is the difficult exercise. All the more so when the complexity and multifaceted nature of the conditions and factors that shaped 1989 into Europe's *annus mirabilis* are acknowledged. However, as Ambassador Alyson Bailes, currently at the University of Iceland, argues in the article that concludes this collection, the European story of fragmentation and then reunification does provide us with a number of valuable insights. Integration, in this sense, is not only about 'deepening' versus 'widening' of the European integration process – as the conventional debate on this subject goes. Nor is it only about pitting the quest for Europe's internal transformation against that of keeping instability at arm's length. A wider Europe concerns the bringing in of new heritages, so that "Europe *knows what it is*," as Bailes puts it.

This is ultimately the greatest challenge that 1989 has left to Europe. The fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9th was, according to Timothy Garton Ash, "9/11 – European style, with the day before the month". Like the 'other' 9/11, nineteen eighty-nine proved to be an unpredicted event with extraordinary consequences. Differently from 9/11, the fall of the Wall did not generate fear: it marked the emergence of an inclusive, voluntary and eminently 'European' model to meet Europe's age-old quest for peace and democracy; it was "our 9/11 of hope".<sup>8</sup> This volume suggests that, twenty years on, Europeans have taken huge strides in the direction of attaining these objectives. However, especially beyond the current borders of the EU, the European 9/11 has yet to fulfil its promise.

<sup>7</sup> Azar Gat "The Return of Authoritarian Great Powers", *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Timothy Garton Ash, *Free World: Why a Crisis of the West Reveals the Opportunity of Our Time*, London: Penguin, 2004, p. xi.

## **The Legacy of 1989**

*Per Stig Møller*

What happened in Berlin on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 1989, when East Germans began flocking to the checkpoints along the wall, became a watershed in Europe's history. I would go so far as to call it the single most important event in Europe since the end of the Second World War.

That evening on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 1989 Günter Schabowski, the spokesman for the East German Communist Party, gave a press conference and just before it began he was handed a note on visa liberalisation for travel to West Germany which was to take effect from the next day. When the last question concerned the travel restrictions for East German citizens, Schabowski searched through his papers, found the note and produced an answer that was to change the world. Asked when the liberalisation would take place, he answered: "That comes into effect, according to my information, immediately, without delay". This was almost correct, but Schabowski got the timing wrong. Understandably, the Communist Party had wanted to prepare the border guards at the wall for the human tidal wave about to be unleashed on them. Therefore the instruction to Schabowski had been to announce that the travel restrictions would be lifted the next day; on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November. But once the words "immediately, without delay" had been uttered, a huge chain reaction was set in motion which could not be undone.

The fall of the Berlin Wall marked the fall of the Iron Curtain that had divided Europe since the end of the Second World War. It paved the way for German reunification less than a year later. It pulled the carpet from beneath a crumbling Soviet Empire which collapsed two years later. It created the political dynamic that, four years later, transformed the European Community into the European Union. It helped persuade France, Britain, the US and Russia to end their military occupation of Germany five years later. And it sent a snowball rolling which, thirteen years later in Copenhagen during the Danish EU Presidency, crashed through the last remaining obstacles to the enlargement of the European Union to take place to include eight former members of the Soviet Empire. The fall of the Berlin Wall was one of those truly transformative events in European history which usually happen once or perhaps twice in a lifetime.

The analysis of what transpired that evening on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November in Berlin will continue, but history itself is supposed to have ended. The American philosopher

Francis Fukuyama has proclaimed it 'The End of History.' He argued that communism had lost its credibility as a viable alternative and that liberal democracy would come to constitute 'the final form of human government'. Unless, for he had put in a 'caveat'; unless Islamism would erupt as a disturbing factor, which it did twelve years later on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2001. So Fukuyama was right about communism being terminally ill, but he was wrong about history ending any time soon in the total triumph of liberal democracy. A quick look at a political map of the world will show that there is still a long way to go in many places.

In fact I would argue that the legacy of 1989 is the direct opposite of the end of history. It is the return of history. It was the Cold War with its artificial division of Europe into two supposedly monolithic camps, and the Cold War's imposed certainties about the people on the other side of the Iron Curtain, that represents a historical intermezzo or parenthesis. The bipolar universe of the Cold War implied a political, economic and psychological straitjacket for millions of Europeans. At the same time, however, the American security umbrella in the West and the Soviet repression in the East ensured that violent nationalism, ethnic cleansing and the old European tradition of launching a war to conquer a neighbour were kept in check. When Communism disappeared in Yugoslavia we got exactly that. We witnessed the re-emergence of violent nationalism and ethnic cleansing.

Of course, the straitjacket of the Cold War had very different implications for the different people in Europe. In Central and Eastern Europe the straitjacket was simply naked Soviet repression of national identities and national sovereignty. It took the form of massive human rights violations, the secret police, political submission to Moscow, censorship, economic five-year plans and indoctrination at school. It was the sum total of all this that in the 80's led Vaclav Havel to call his own country 'Absurdistan.'

So 'the return of history' means the return of a diversified and pulsating Europe, where we again are able to travel, compete, cooperate and trade across national boundaries, and where we again have cultural links as well as simple people-to-people contacts. I stress 'return' because Europeans could in fact do all these things right up until June 1914, when the lights went out in Europe and our continent descended into the abyss of the First World War.

In 1919 the great English economist, John Maynard Keynes, described in his book 'The Economic Consequences of the War' the freedom and possibilities that existed

in Europe before the First World War. Keynes wrote: “The inhabitant of London could order by telephone, sipping his morning tea in bed, the various products of the whole earth, in such quantity as he might see fit, and reasonably expect their early delivery upon his doorstep; he could at the same moment adventure his wealth in the natural resources and new enterprises of any quarter of the world, and share in their prospective fruits and advantages. He could secure, if he wished it, cheap and comfortable means of transit to any country or climate without passport or other formality. But, most important of all, he regarded this state of affairs as normal, certain, and permanent...”

Certainly, there was nothing normal, certain or permanent about it, but the good news is that the fall of the Berlin Wall made it possible gradually to recreate the state of affairs described by Keynes, not just for the inhabitants of London, but for the inhabitants of Warsaw, Budapest, Sofia or Prague as well. Today, when we commemorate what took place in Berlin twenty years ago, I believe that we would be well advised to reflect on the fact that the tremendous freedom and possibilities, which we take for granted nowadays, have been transient. They were here in 1913; went missing in 1914 and reappeared again after 1989. They don't exist in the same way that gravity exists. They exist by choice, not by necessity. Basically, we are able to enjoy them today because of the bravery, wisdom, inspiration and good fortune of the generation of '89. And there is no guarantee that we will be as brave, wise, inspired or lucky in the future as they were.

During the Cold War, democracy, freedom and national self-determination were suppressed in Central and Eastern Europe by a totalitarian oppressor from outside. Today I am concerned that democracy, freedom and national self-determination in Western Europe, including in Denmark, is under threat from our own indifference and passiveness. When Milan Kundera published his book 'About Laughter and Forgetting' in 1978, he said in an interview, in an echo of George Orwell in 1949: “The basic event of the book is the story of totalitarianism, which deprives people of memory and thus retools them into a nation of children. A nation that loses its memory about the past will gradually lose itself”. I agree with him.

The Communist Party tried to create a universal *Homo Sovieticus* by erasing people's memory of the past. And in the West as well, too many intellectuals suffered from the totalitarian temptation as Czeslaw Milozs saw already in 1953 in his famous book 'The Captive Mind'. With penetrating insight Milozs stated that “Westerners, and especially Western intellectuals, suffer from a special variety of 'taedium vitae'”;

Freedom is a burden to them; no conclusions they arrive at are binding. The happiest of them seem to be those who become communists". Today, democratic institutions in Denmark and elsewhere risk being eroded by people's complacency, narrow-mindedness and indifference towards their own history.

What Fukuyama got right when the Berlin Wall came down in '89 was his analysis of how the disappearance of the Soviet enemy would affect us mentally in the West. That is, his notion of 'the last man'. Fukuyama drew attention to the fact that our Cold War enemy had provided us with a point of reference in terms of what was morally reprehensible, and what we, as liberal-minded people, should stand up against. With the fall of the Berlin Wall we no longer had to take a political or moral stand on broader issues, because we had defeated the communist alternative to liberal democracy. This led us to withdraw from the political sphere and become excessively focused on our narrow individual needs and desires. What to eat, what to drink, how to exercise and where to travel? Today we are still tolerant and open-minded, but to be only tolerant and open-minded is merely an attitude, devoid of any political, cultural or religious content. As indicated by the American philosopher Allan Bloom in his book 'The Closing of the American Mind', being liberal is just an empty shell if it is not nourished constantly from the deep wells of religion, history and culture. On its own it does not provide us with the moral compass necessary to navigate between good and evil.

There are many danger signs today that our democratic institutions in Western Europe suffer from neglect. The turnout for the elections in June 2009 to the European Parliament was at a record low with just 43 per cent compared to 61 per cent in 1979. While almost 25 per cent of eligible voters in Denmark, around 650,000 people, were members of a political party in 1950, that number was down to around 180,000 people or 5 per cent of eligible voters in 2000. Increasingly politicians are viewed by the wider public as opportunistic professionals focused on advancing their own careers rather than as idealistic citizens driven by a desire to change society and promote the common good. All this does not bode well for our democracy, and we cannot afford to take our democratic institutions and traditions for granted indefinitely. A quick look at history will illustrate that democracies need protection, participation and renewal.

With the return of history in '89 the undivided Europe made a comeback. But this is not the same as saying that happy days are here to stay. Since '89 we have witnessed the re-emergence of bloody conflicts in the Balkans and in Caucasus. The civil war

in the former Yugoslavia and the war in Chechnya could only happen because the straitjacket of the Cold War had been removed. Our only comfort is that history returned in '89 under mitigating circumstances. Europe took a crucial leap forward in 1952 with the establishment of the Coal and Steel Community and another one in 1958 with the Treaty of Rome which launched the European Community. Thanks to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the chain reaction caused by this political earthquake, the European Community took yet another leap forward in 1993 when the Maastricht Treaty created the European Union and paved the way for the ensuing enlargement.

The European Union is significantly different from any previous attempt to foster international co-operation. Take, for example, the League of Nations, which was powerless to prevent the Second World War and ceased to function in any meaningful way in 1938. The League of Nations could do nothing about Hitler, Mussolini or Stalin. It had no sanctions or binding arbitration. The European Union by contrast is a contractual and rule-based co-operation among independent Member States with a European Court of Justice to impose democratically adopted decisions. Jacques Delors has rightly described the European Union as a 'UPO'; an 'Unidentified Political Object'. The EU is a unique entity without precedent in European history. Now, finally, the Lisbon Treaty is coming into force, enabling the EU to produce even more results and even more benefits for the people in Europe and at the same time, hopefully, positioning the EU in league with the US and China.

But despite the mitigating circumstances, the return of history still entails an irreversible farewell to the certainties and stable threat environment of the Cold War. Most of us no longer believe in grand narratives like Communism, Fascism or the universal triumph of human reason. As we are confronted with new threats from an irrational Islamist totalitarianism, today's international threat environment is much more unpredictable than in the old days when we were busy counting Soviet tanks and nuclear warheads.

Furthermore, the current financial crisis has accelerated a fundamental shift in the world economy; a shift in the balance of power between an economically declining West and a rapidly rising East with China and India at the forefront. In addition, we face a brand new security threat which nobody had heard anything about in '89; the threat of man-made climate change. Hopefully, the international community will be able to confront this threat head-on in the years to come.



In terms of our physical security, the main threat nowadays comes from the elusive and faceless enemy that is international terrorism. While we were able to pinpoint the position of Soviet missiles, we never know if a terrorist is living in our neighbourhood and is preparing a suicide attack on our local metro station. The free and easy air travel of the 90's has disappeared in this decade. The terrorists threaten to limit our freedom yet again and Big Brother might, for our own sake, be watching us again. At the same time, the firepower and sophistication of international terrorists is pathetic compared to the planetary devastation that the Soviet armed forces were able to inflict, but at the individual level it seems that the nature of today's terrorist threat is capable of injecting a fear into our minds comparable to the fear in the 60's of a nuclear war. My advice is now and was then that we do not allow ourselves to become prisoners of our own fear. Remember what Rainer Werner Fassbinder said: 'Angst essen Seele auf' – anxiety eats the soul.

All this leads me to a key message. Twenty years after the fall of the wall we are more doubtful and more uncertain about the world we inhabit. But doubt and uncertainty is not all bad. Doubt and uncertainty also have an upside which should be highlighted as well. If we take a close look at Europe's history and ask the question: 'what has been the main driver behind political, economic and scientific progress in Europe since we gave up being hunters and gatherers?', my answer would be that the main driver has been the insistence on our right to doubt: to be able to doubt the wisdom of political leaders, the perfection of religious truths and the constraints of social conventions. Take key figures like Martin Luther, Isaac Newton, Adam Smith or Charles Darwin. All of them had doubts about prevailing conceptions regarding the role of the Church, the universal laws, the economic system and the origin of human beings. It was their ability to doubt that led them to new and revolutionary theories which changed our world and made Europe advance as a civilization.

Likewise uncertainty, which possesses the same dynamic qualities as doubt because it protects us from a false sense of security. History has so often demonstrated that it is when we feel secure and relaxed that we are in fact most vulnerable. When Al-Qaeda attacked the World Trade Centre on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2001, President Bush was sitting in a classroom in Florida reading fairytales for children in the second grade. During the 1950's, when we had convinced ourselves about the ability of mutual assured destruction to preserve the peace, along came the Cuba Missile Crisis in '62 and took the world to the brink of disaster.

The point is that uncertainty keeps us vigilant and focused upon improving our security, while we tend to let our guard down and become careless when we feel secure and relaxed. Of course, doubt and uncertainty does not sound like an attractive life condition, and it will always be the primary task of any foreign and defence policy to improve security. The crucial thing is, however, that we must learn to contain our doubt and uncertainty in order to use their dynamic qualities. Otherwise, we risk being consumed by fear as Fassbinder put it, or being paralyzed as was the case with the Soviet Union.

The world today may be experiencing a financial crisis, a climate crisis and a crisis in dealing with international terrorism. But the word 'Krisis' comes to us from ancient Greek where it was used in relation to a specific type of pneumonia. 'Krisis' signified the turning point when the patient began to recover. 'Krisis' was a sign of improvement. The crisis which erupted in the German Democratic Republic twenty years ago was also a turning point and a sign of the recovery of Eastern Europe after a long and life-threatening disease.

Today we fear challenges which we did not even know in 1989. That is the normal way of history, and we can still overcome the challenges facing us today. So who are we? Where are our limits? What do we want? If Europe shall play a part in the future we must answer those questions and not let the answers keep blowing in the wind. How we should approach the task of answering these questions has been summed up very eloquently by an African-American songwriter, Mrs. Bernice Johnson Reagon: "Life's challenges are not supposed to paralyze you, they are supposed to help you discover who you are". Let us use our current challenges to discover who we are.

## **The Unhappy Germans: United but Alienated**

*Bernd Henningsen*

On 30 September 1990, only a few days before the first German elections in the GDR and the Federal Republic for the common federal parliament – an event which marked the reunification of Germany – the Danish newspaper *Politiken* published a special edition under the headline ‘Sammen igen. Tyskernes drømme og mareridt’ (*Together again. Dreams and Nightmares of the Germans*). I wrote an essay for this edition which made the front page: ‘Tyskerne vender tilbage til deres historie’ (*The Germans return to their history*). Having read the essay again recently, I am still convinced that I was right twenty years ago: 1989 marked the return of Germany to history and to politics, the resolution of a 75 year long European civil war, and even the end of the German ‘Sonderweg.’ Germany has gained more political influence in Europe and around the world, a world which has begun to ask that Germany assume more responsibility in international politics.

Auschwitz was and still is at the centre of German political discourse, but since 1989 it has ceased to be a useful excuse or argument against international German political action. Joschka Fischer’s argument in favour of German participation in the Balkan wars demonstrates this – it was the last time that a German politician used Auschwitz in a controversial political debate (he gained the necessary support with this argument). Günter Grass’s insistence on the historical necessity of the existence of two German states as a political punishment for the Holocaust turned him into a political laughing stock. Even Jürgen Habermas, not to mention Oskar Lafontaine or Otto Schily, did not understand the impetus of the East Germans in their efforts to overcome the unjust and ineffective rule of the Socialist Unity Party. It became evident that the desire for freedom in the East was misunderstood in the West. Political unhappiness obscured the intellectual landscape like a haze.

Furthermore, in Germany and abroad the return to what some call ‘political normality’ was seen as a threat; even and especially here in Denmark. For example, when reading Danish newspapers from twenty years ago which expressed their fear of the anticipated ‘ewige deutsche Drang nach Osten’ or endless German drive towards the East one wonders about the political wisdom of the political observers of that time. Nowadays we can read the files of the British Foreign Office from the years 1989 to 1990. Taking into account Maggie Thatcher’s expressed opposition to German unification and the (still ongoing) discussions about François Mitterrand’s attitudes and

decisions, one gets a definite sense of the meaning of the *longue durée* of history. One could then ask why, against this political background, the Germans should be expected to be free of the historical contradictions, be free from the effects of the experience of forty years of separation, indoctrination and different political developments?

Let me illustrate the current German situation of historical amalgamation, historical misunderstandings and ideological misleading – which are all described under the term ‘die Mauer im Kopf’ or ‘unhappiness’ – let me illustrate the return of German history and the specific German amalgamation of political experiences with a remarkable story.<sup>9</sup>

This story takes place in the remote village of Kriebitzsch (1,180 inhabitants) at the easternmost part of Thuringia in the east of Germany – at the periphery of the periphery, so to speak. The mayor of Kriebitzsch has never changed his party membership: he was a member of the GDR Unity Party the SED (predecessor to the PDS) and he is now a member of ‘Die Linke,’ the successor to the SED and PDS. The mayor of our little village has also never changed his political convictions. In 1999 he was elected with 53 per cent of the vote and in 2004 he was re-elected with 96 per cent.

In 1760 a linden tree was planted in Kriebitzsch (this was in the period following the Seven Years’ War and the great years of Frederic II). After more than 170 years, in 1934, the tree rotted, died and fell (the 1000 Year Reich was just beginning. Adolf Hitler was the German Chancellor and became, after the death of President Hindenburg, ‘Führer und Reichskanzler’). A new tree was planted and it was named ‘Adolf-Hitler-Linde.’ The tree survived the war, the pollution caused by brown coal mining, and it survived the GDR. In 2003, due to road construction (the aforementioned mayor was in office), the tree was felled and under the tree they found a capsule containing a declaration from 1934 that the tree was dedicated to Hitler because he had rescued the German *Volk* from Marxism. In any case, a new tree had to be planted – a real German tree: an oak tree – and a capsule was buried under it containing newspapers of the day, records about the village of Kriebitzsch, a list of the members of the city council as well as a picture of Wilhelm Pieck, the former President of the GDR, not of Johannes Rau, the sitting President of the united Germany. The mayor’s argument was that Pieck – who died in 1959 – was a freedom fighter and that the 40 years of the GDR were in any case 40 years of freedom. Pieck had never visited Kriebitzsch.

<sup>9</sup> *Der Spiegel* 38/2009, p 38.

But what is a tree without a name? And what is a living monument without a marker? The people of Kriebitzsch, headed by their mayor, erected a granite monument at the place signalling that this oak was dedicated to Wilhelm Pieck. The monument was paid for by the mayor himself. This amalgamation of historical events, of political symbols and of *lieux de mémoire* is something akin to an ironic turn of consciousness, not for the actors themselves but for the observers: 'Goodbye, Lenin!' at its best. The oak of freedom and the stone monument are concrete manifestations of the unhappiness of a great part of the East German population. The anticipated rape of the political and personal past by and because of the unification process of these two societies is the oft-stated reason for this unhappiness. The divide between Wilhelm Pieck and Johannes Rau, as well as the divide between past and present, makes manifest the alienation of a nation which was united in joy and happiness during the days and weeks of November 1989.

Interestingly enough, the collapse of real, existing socialism has become a *German* symbol: the fall of the Wall. There are no symbols or metaphors in the other countries of the former Eastern Bloc related to this collapse which are as condensed as are the events of November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1989. This author is convinced that the end of established socialism came step by step – if the process had not already started in 1953 or 1956 or 1968, it was in any case unquestionably underway with the establishment of the *Solidarność* movement in Poland ten years prior to the fall of the wall, and then later with the opening of the borders between Hungary and Austria in June 1989 (which had already been announced in May). The symbolic interpretation of the socialist collapse focuses on the wall, not on *Solidarność*, nor on events in other countries. This lack of symbols of collapse can be seen as the reason for some national interpretations – and misinterpretations – of the historical events of 1989.

Nevertheless, the transformations following the end of a bipolar world in the countries behind the former iron curtain had to be navigated by the individual nations themselves. East Germany is the only country in the former Eastern Bloc which has experienced massive interventions from the West – individual, political, institutional and financial – which last to this day. The solidarity tax introduced in 1991 (5.5 per cent of income tax) does not expire until 2019. The other countries had to overcome the immense (individual, economic and political) costs of this transformation by themselves. The previously mentioned symbolic overflow and the enormous interventions from the West did not save the Germans from unhappiness and alienation – indeed, they may even be at the root of the said unhappiness and alienation. To answer this question is not a task for historians or political scientists but for psychologists. They have to

question the unwillingness of the West (Germans) to deal with the political, social and cultural experiences of the East (Germans): their life stories; their joys and suffering, their stories of guilt and revenge. And they have to question the unwillingness of the East (Germans) to deal with their own past; their assimilation into and adjustment under an undemocratic (to put it mildly) regime. Going even further, East and West have to be asked whether a historical entanglement in a common historical past is, at present, still out of sight. East and West are two parts of one family: they have the same past and the same responsibility for this past – but for forty years they did not deal with what they had in common. The present unhappiness is, above all, rooted in this inability to deal with this past: in an enduring silence.

## Central Europe's Post-Accession Blues

*Balint Molnar*

Twenty years ago, many were enthralled by the exhilarating and seemingly inevitable sweep of history moving across the countries of the former Soviet bloc. From Vilnius to Almaty it was thought that the final victory of liberal democracy and capitalism was at hand in lands previously dominated by communist ideology and its attendant authoritarianism and bankrupt, centrally planned economic model.

Now it is clear that the road leading from communist authoritarianism to fully fledged pluralist democracy is a long one, and that any progress achieved is far from irreversible. In fact, analyzing data from Freedom House's *Nations in Transit*<sup>10</sup> (NIT) survey of democratization in the 29 countries of the former Soviet bloc leads one to conclude that many of the challenges facing the new EU member states in the areas of governance and the overall political sphere have already reared their heads following the enlargement of 2004.

Looking at the time series data presented in each annual edition of NIT, the survey shows remarkable differences in both the pace and the direction of the various democratization processes. And while it highlights the comparative success of Central European countries, it also offers a clear warning to the complacent not to delude themselves about the irrevocable nature of democracy.

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Baltic embarked on successful, albeit sometimes painful and still incomplete, political democratization and economic transformation, eventually joining the European Union. In contrast, the successor states of the former Soviet Union, including Russia, after briefly trying to create democratic systems and functioning market economies, have succumbed to growing authoritarianism and curbed many of the hard-won freedoms brought by Soviet collapse, while maintaining a robber baron type system of capitalism. Meanwhile, the countries of the Western Balkans initially descended into a series of bloody wars and then, with differing degrees of success, re-committed themselves to a path of sustainable democratization and European integration, with the countries of Central Europe and the Baltic as role models.

<sup>10</sup> *Nations in Transit* 2009 is available for downloading at [http://www.freedomhouse.hu/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=242:nations-in-transit-2009&catid=30&Itemid=92](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=242:nations-in-transit-2009&catid=30&Itemid=92)

In this reading, Central Europe and the Baltic states stand out as nearly unqualified success stories. In another reading, however, the ten countries of CEE and the Baltic states do not look so impressive. In fact, this year's edition of NIT registered declines in seven countries and stagnation in two, with only Poland registering improvement in its overall rating. Previous editions of NIT have already registered slight but noticeable declines in some of these countries in many of the seven areas of democratic governance that the survey assesses (national governance, local governance, civil society, corruption, independent media, judicial framework and independence, and electoral process).

It seemed as though the exuberance of EU accession quickly gave way to 'reform fatigue'. Unfortunately, the onset of the global economic crisis found most of these countries unprepared, and some of them dangerously weak. Countries such as Bulgaria, Hungary and Latvia have been hit especially hard, and the impact has spilled over into the political arena. The trend of slow but steady democratic backsliding observed in most of these countries has continued and has only been further abetted by the weakening economic environment.

In fact, it seems that the conclusion of the long and often difficult process of EU accession – for most countries in the CEE a key driver of political and economic reforms for over a decade and a half – has brought on a sense of relief and completion on the one hand, and a sense of disappointment on the other. These two opposing sentiments seem to have led these countries to slow or stop completely their efforts to conclude the still necessary structural and political reforms, and their electorates to doubt the much touted benefits of EU membership for which, now achieved and appearing to be less than what it was promised to be, they largely refused to make additional sacrifices.

The result has been that many of these countries have come face to face with the economic crisis with weak foundations on both the economic and political, as well as the social fronts. The consequences of this harsh encounter are yet to fully unfold.

### **Drivers of a Downward Trend**

Nations in Transit has been tracking democratization in 29 countries of the former communist bloc since 1995. NIT is a comparative survey based on individual, qualitative country reports and an added uniform scoring framework



to allow for cross country comparison. The country reports follow an essay format that allows the report authors to provide a broad analysis of the progress of democratic change in their country of expertise. The authors are provided with guidelines for ratings and a checklist of questions covering seven sub-categories: National Democratic Governance, Local Democratic Governance, Electoral Process, Judicial Framework and Independence, Independent Media, Civil Society, and Corruption. Ratings are provided for each of the seven areas on a scale of 1–7, with 1 representing the highest and 7 the lowest level of democratization in a country. The straight average of the sub-category scores is called the ‘Democracy Score’. Based on the range within which its democracy score is placed, Nations in Transit classifies a country into one of the following five categories: Consolidated Democracy, Semi-Consolidated Democracy, Transitional Government or Hybrid Regime, Semi-Consolidated Autocracy, or Consolidated Autocracy.

The countries of Central Eastern Europe fall, with the exception of Romania, into the ‘Consolidated Democracy’ category based on their democracy score. Indeed they look quite healthy, especially in comparison to the other countries included in the survey some of which, especially the Central Asian republics, have shown little progress over the years. In fact, many of these have steadily and dramatically regressed so that today they are firmly in the semi-consolidated or consolidated autocracy category.

The two figures below show the Democracy Score trends of the five Central European countries covered by NIT that joined the EU in 2004: The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

Figure 1. CEE Democracy Scores 1999-2004

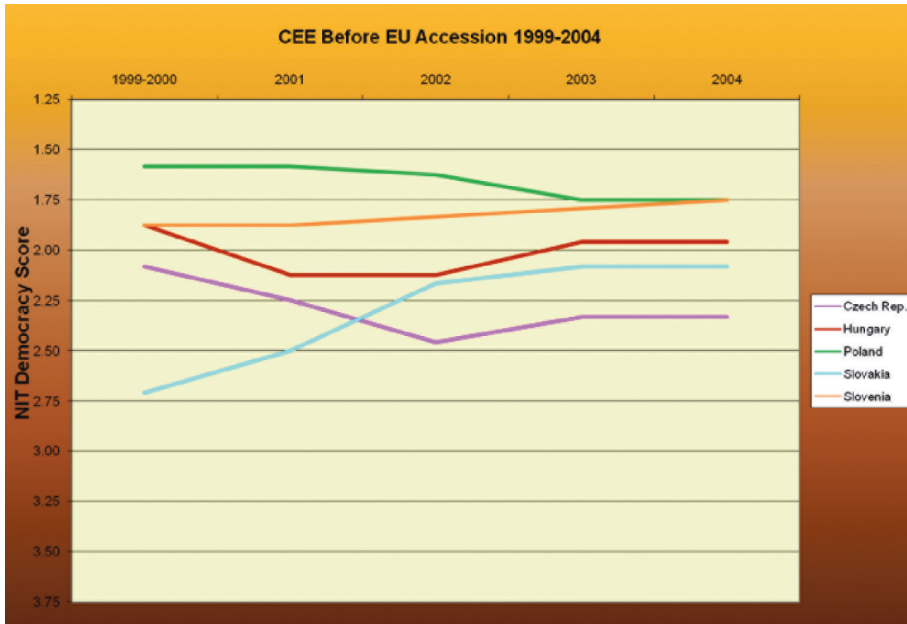
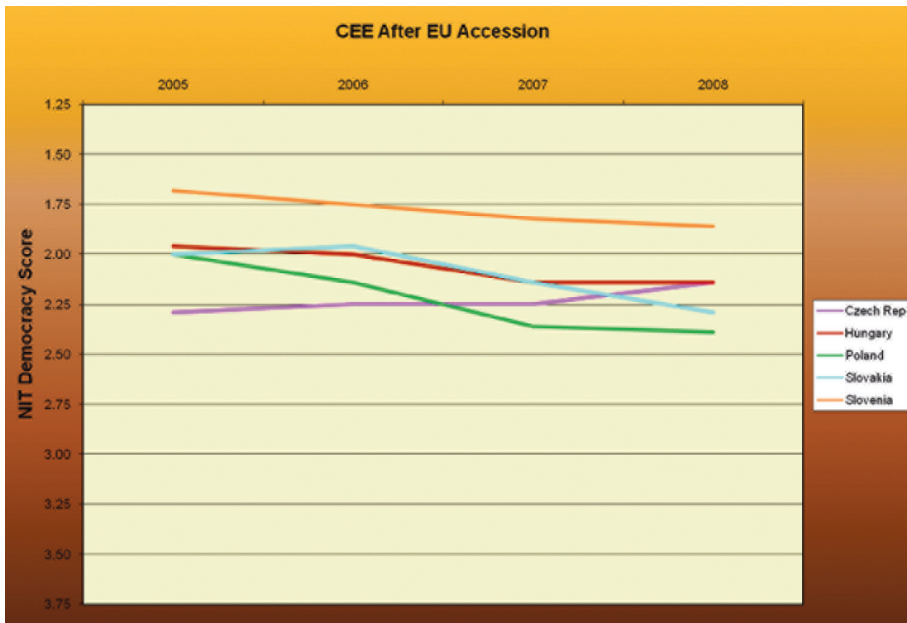


Figure 2. CEE Democracy Scores: 2005-2008



While the first figure shows slow but steady improvements in almost all of the countries leading up to their EU accession in 2004, the second figure shows that trends, as expressed by the countries' cumulative democracy scores, have become much more uniformly negative in the years following their accession. This trend is what has been dubbed 'Central Europe's Post-Accession Blues' and to understand better what drives it, it is necessary to look at the specific areas where the largest drops in performance have been observed in recent years.

Based on the analysis included in NIT, three key areas can be identified as the main drivers of the downward trend: Corruption, Civil Society, and Independent Media. Between 2004 and 2008 the cumulative score changes in those three areas in the five CEE countries were respectively: -0.15, -0.15, and -0.3.

One particular area of concern regarding the new EU members examined in NIT is the state of civil society. The rise of political radicalism in Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic signals a potentially dangerous trend, especially in light of the impending, and by all expectations serious, social impact of the global economic crisis. The sizeable and marginalized Roma communities are often targets of an intensifying racist violence, raising the ugly spectre of ethnic tension between majority and minority populations, with the accompanying rise in popularity of extreme right wing political outfits.

In the new EU member states 2008 and 2009 featured a rise in 'uncivil society' in the form of extreme nationalist groups. Hungary's far right Hungarian Guard is one example. According to the report for the Czech Republic, "extremist groups seemed emboldened in 2008, as highlighted by attempts late in the year to attack a mostly Roma inhabited housing estate in north Bohemia". The other issue affecting civil society involves legal frameworks regulating associational life. The Hungary report warns that "tax regulations and other administrative requirements may threaten the sector's long-term sustainability and development".

Civil society played a critical role at the outset of democratic transition in the new EU member countries, and the NGO sector remains an integral part of these societies. However, restrictive legislation, undue administrative burdens and lack of funding pose risks to their operation. Furthermore, the strains of the economic crisis heighten the danger of 'uncivil society' moving into the vacated public space. The weakening of civil society in these countries may be a temporary phenomenon if governments demonstrate the will to recognize and address the problem. Nevertheless, develop-

ments in 2008 suggest that the sustainability of civil society, even in consolidated democracies, cannot be taken for granted, and that threats to the sector grow if it is not supported by national and international donors as well as favourable legal and administrative frameworks.

Yet another area where the previous 'A' grade students of democratization from the CEE show a particular tendency to backslide is corruption. Bulgaria, Hungary and Latvia have all registered declines. Only Poland managed to improve its score; in all other countries stagnation was the norm. Continuing clientelism, lack of transparency in public procurement, irregularities in party financing and the proximity of organized crime to politics continue to hamper efforts to combat corruption.

The 2009 findings of NIT should be a warning to anyone interested in protecting and strengthening the democratic gains of the past twenty years in the CEE. These countries have done well and serve as models for others in the former communist bloc. Their tendency in recent years to slow reforms and to tolerate and indulge questionable practices in domestic politics now combines with a highly unpredictable economic environment, threatening to turn minor negative trends into a more costly and systemic crisis.

### **A Question of Culture?**

What lies behind the worrisome phenomenon of lost commitment to reform and weakening democratic performance in these countries? While there are plenty of thorough and considered analyses available on this subject, it is perhaps a seemingly simple and at the same time somewhat nebulous thesis that provides the most useful glimpse into the ailing core of Central Europe's young democracies.

This approach centres on the question of political culture in the post-communist EU member states. The results from a recent survey conducted by the Hungarian research outfit TÁRKI indicate serious deficiencies in the value system underlying social, including political, behaviour in Hungary.<sup>11</sup> While this survey focused only on Hungary, given the strong symmetry in trends across the CEE region it is probably reasonable to assume that a similar survey would deliver similar results in the other countries of the 2004 and 2007 enlargements. The findings of the TARKI survey identify four key issues related to the value system: lack of trust, confusion

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.tarki.hu/hu/research/gazdkult/osszefoglalo\\_kepviselok\\_091026.pdf](http://www.tarki.hu/hu/research/gazdkult/osszefoglalo_kepviselok_091026.pdf)

about norms, a sense of injustice, and paternalism. These issues combine to create and sustain social, political, and economic behaviour patterns that are detrimental to the overall health of democratic societies.

Lack of trust manifests itself in low levels of trust and tolerance between individuals, a limited capacity for cooperation and low levels of societal participation. It also encompasses low levels of trust in and, consequently, utilization of democratic institutions by citizens with significantly less value being attached to political rights and civil liberties than in more mature Western democracies and a stunningly low level of trust in politicians, entrepreneurs and journalists. Norm confusion is captured by such indicators as (i) that 2/3 of Hungarians think of themselves as decent and law-abiding, but at the same time regard others as not; or (ii) a general tolerance of norm-breaking behaviour. The sense of injustice that seems to permeate Hungarian society manifests itself in the widespread belief that income inequality is unjust and in the attendant belief that competitors in the economic and political spheres are engaged in an all-consuming zero-sum game. Finally, the persisting preference of citizens for state driven solutions to everyday problems suggests that the paternalist instincts instilled by decades of communist rule are slow to wither. At the same time these expectations go headlong against the also widely-held belief among Hungarians about the state's inefficient and corrupt working and a resulting low opinion of the state itself.

In conclusion then, it would appear as though the post-accession backsliding and reform fatigue observed in all countries of the 2004 and 2007 enlargements may have its roots in the political culture prevalent in these countries. A culture that is still very much in transit, very much in the process of shedding the remnants of five decades of ruinous autocratic rule. And while the systemic transition to multi-party democracy and a market economy has been by and large completed and has been mostly successful, the fine-tuning of these young democracies will take many more years and a great deal of the work will have to focus on the elusive concept of political culture.

## **Latvia: Political, Economic and Financial Integration – and then Disintegration?**

*Morten Hansen*

Latvia's economy has been severely hit by the world financial and economic crisis and during 2009 Latvia has been the possibly most watched country in the European Union, standing, metaphorically, first in a line of dominoes that could spread financial and economic collateral damage across Eastern Europe and perhaps derail or at least damage one of the European Union's greatest successes, the 2004 enlargement. What went wrong, what does the future hold in store and, in the context of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, which way will Latvia look – east or west? This little article tries to answer those questions.

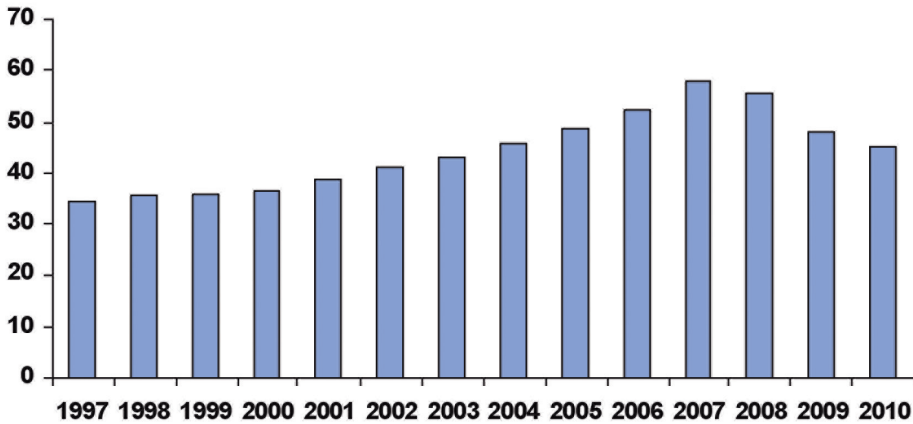
### **2004–2007: The Boom**

Latvia's EU membership on 1 May 2004 exacerbated an already growing credit boom that brought the Union's highest growth rates but also its greatest imbalances. As credit flooded in from foreign owned banks a massive real estate boom (prices rose up to 60% a year for some years) and a huge consumption boom (the influx of imports resulted in a current account deficit that reached 26% of GDP) ensued. The tremendous increases in economic activity increased the demand for labour while the labour supply declined due to emigration to higher wage countries such as Sweden, the UK and Ireland, resulting in strong upwards wage pressure. As wages increased rapidly (up to 35% annually) and much faster than productivity, costs and thus prices had to respond: Latvia also saw the highest inflation rate in the union, reaching 17.9% in May 2008.

A mega-boom fuelled by cheap credit, overly reckless lending, a financially uneducated population, and not least a belief/hope/dream of rapid income convergence. Latvia is a poor country in the EU but has managed quite remarkable convergence, see fig. 1. With a per capita income level at just some 20–25% of the EU average<sup>12</sup> in the mid-1990s when the country emerged from its post-transition recession, this rose to more than 50% by the middle of the present decade; a remarkable achievement.

<sup>12</sup> In Agenda 2000, the EU Commission's 1997 bulletin that outlined the Copenhagen criteria, Latvia's GDP was listed as lower than Bulgaria's and Romania's which is far from the case today.

Figure 1. Latvian GDP per capita at PPS as a share of the EU27 average, EU27 = 100



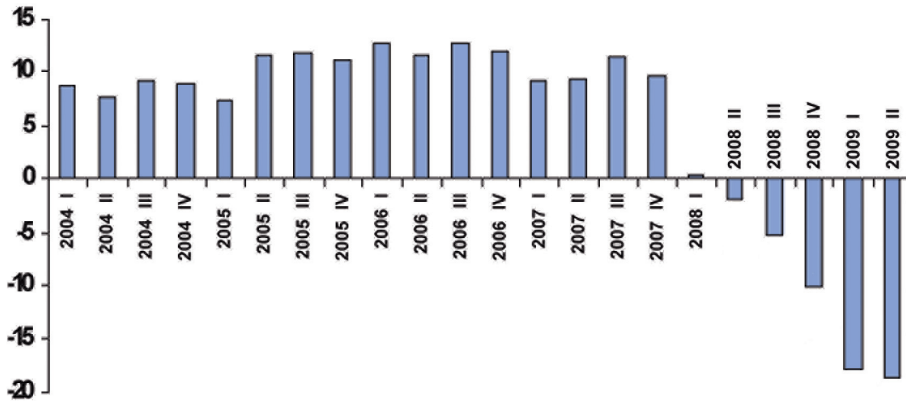
Source: Eurostat

When the world experiences a financial crisis it is not strange that an economy that is so dependent on credit suffers disproportionately.<sup>13</sup> Latvia, in the words of current finance minister Einars Repše, “hit a wall while driving at 200 kilometres an hour”. Figure 2 should illustrate this quotation quite well – by the beginning of 2008 the dizzying growth rates of 9–12% had gone flat and kept deteriorating until what seems to be some stabilization in mid-2009. But for 2009 as a whole, a GDP decline of 16–18% is envisaged, again an EU record,<sup>14</sup> and already at the time of writing GDP has declined to the levels of 2005 and is likely during 2010 to reach the level of early 2004, i.e. prior to EU membership. In Latvia convergence has turned into divergence.

<sup>13</sup> Although much focus is on Latvia, notably for its huge IMF-EU assistance programme, it should not be forgotten that the other Baltic economies have experienced severe credit busts too.

<sup>14</sup> Unless the decline ends up being bigger in Lithuania. At the time of writing this cannot be ruled out.

Figure 2. Year-on-year quarterly growth rates, %.



Source: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

### 2007 Onwards: The Bust and its Aftermath

The boom had been exacerbated by a recklessly procyclical fiscal policy – even at the height of the boom Latvia was still running a budget deficit. As economic activity collapses, tax revenue collapses with it and a gaping hole in public finances emerges. In frozen international financial markets (autumn 2008) such looming budget deficits were unable to find financing and Latvia had to seek assistance from the IMF and the EU.<sup>15</sup>

The austerity measures in this programme are harsh but necessary – through an internal devaluation of wage deflation the excessive wage inflation of the past is to be undone. This may succeed in Latvia where labour markets are highly flexible (no trade unions to speak of) but it will be demanding and create a lot of bitterness. The issue of an external devaluation, a standard recipe from the IMF, was from the outset unacceptable to Latvia's central bank, the Bank of Latvia, as well as to Latvian politicians.<sup>16</sup>

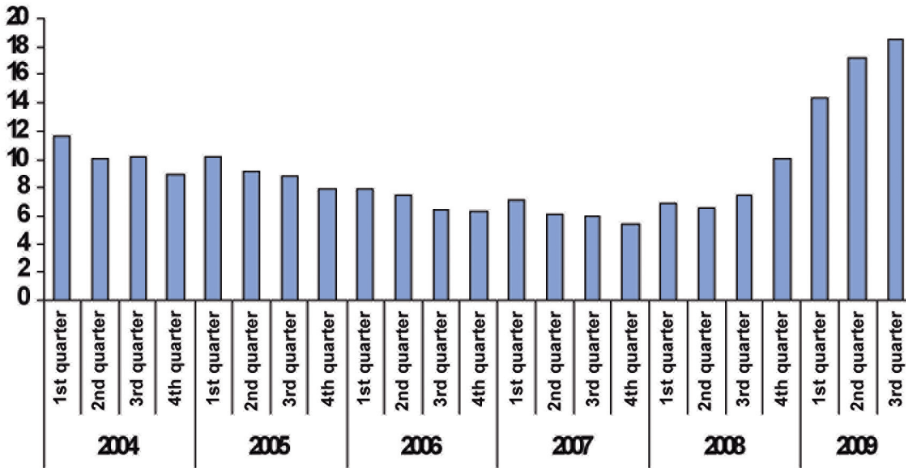
As another illustration of how hard the crisis has hit Latvia one may look at figure 3 which displays the development of the unemployment rate which has tripled in just a year (and is, as the reader may have guessed by now, the highest in the union).

<sup>15</sup> Latvia had the additional problem of having to recapitalize a large, domestically owned bank, Parex, which was nationalized in October 2008. See also <http://www.imf.org/external/country/lva/rr/index.htm>

<sup>16</sup> Latvia shares with its Baltic neighbours an almost religious belief in the stabilizing properties of a fixed exchange rate and euro adoption is the main monetary policy goal.



Figure 3. Latvian unemployment rate, %.



Source: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

### The Future: Looking East or West, Looking Backward or Forward?

The dramatic development in Latvia, exacerbated by the country's lack of a proper welfare state, has raised eyebrows and caused concern. Might the EU enlargement of 2004 end in failure, might Latvia look backwards to Soviet times or eastwards to Russia? Such fears are clearly overblown. Latvia is a part of the western hemisphere and the incremental gains of integration – NATO membership on 1 April 2004, EU membership on 1 May 2004, inclusion in the Schengen area on 21 December 2007 – are viewed as largely positive, not least as steps further away from Russia and Russian influence. The market economy is not under attack either; there is, in short, 'no going back'.<sup>17</sup>

Was 9 November 2009, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, thus a big event in Latvia? No – but certainly not because Latvians do not feel its significance. Rather, Latvia (and, again, its Baltic neighbours) has so many days and events to commemorate on its way to the restoration of independence that they easily over-

<sup>17</sup> Some might worry why Latvians elected Alfreds Rubiks, the last communist leader while Latvia was still a part of the Soviet Union, to the European Parliament. My argument may be very cynical but the segment of old Russian speakers also need someone to vote for. But this segment is in steady decline for obvious reasons.

shadow this – quite frankly – rather western way of identifying with the collapse of communism. From the four short years of 1987–1991 Latvians will recall the first demonstrations at the Freedom Monument (banned in earlier Soviet times), the reintroduction of the Latvian flag (likewise banned in earlier Soviet times), the Declaration of Independence of 4 May 1990, the killings by Soviet OMON troops of five protesters in January 1991 in Riga, the barricades of 1991 and the restoration of independence on 21 August 1991 after the collapse of the coup in Moscow.

Latvia is in deep economic crisis because it became a victim of its own longing for income convergence and of its hubris in believing that this could be achieved relatively fast and effortlessly. A long period of debt deleveraging and return to growth lies ahead while the country must ponder why it remains such a relatively poor member of the EU. A great deal will be demanded of its politicians and probably less will be achieved but there is no doubt that Latvia's future lies with the EU and the West, although issues like Russia in general, or the NordStream pipeline in particular, will cause divisions and disagreement.

## **Struggling Transitions and Proliferating Dynasties**

*Michael Emerson*

There is virtually no well functioning democracy in the neighbourhood of the European Union, which is now surrounded by states which broadly fall into one of two categories of roughly equal numbers. On the one hand there are those states which have seen the post-communist political transition processes go astray and take form in various distorted, perverted, or dysfunctional forms of democracy which, for short, we call the 'struggling transition cases'. This group now includes the newest member states of the EU.

On the other hand there is a set of authoritarian regimes where the concentration of power has become increasingly consolidated as manifested in various forms of dynastic succession. These states have a considerable degree of commonality: petro resources, political Islam as a suppressed form of opposition, and radical Islamic groups as source of terrorism that leads to repressive counter measures. They also have little or no sense of European identity and most, on the contrary, stress their 'otherness', be this on the grounds of secular nationalism or of having a Muslim culture.

### **Struggling Transitions**

Into this category we place the countries in or close to the EU of Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Turkey, as well as several but not all of the European former Soviet republics – Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova and Armenia. These are all countries where the pursuit of sound democracy is an ongoing struggle. Success is not assured but the normative appeal of democracy is evident, even if its advocates are fighting continuous battles either amongst themselves (as in Ukraine), or with those who prefer the corrupted order (as in Serbia or Romania). Notably absent are the driving forces that are common among in the second category of proliferating dynasties, namely: petro riches, Arab and Islamic culture, and radical Islamic terrorism.

The general characteristics of the struggling transition cases are manifest in the opposition between two contradictory forces. On the one hand there is the appeal that European democratic norms and models hold for society, and on the other hand are the hazards of the partial or unbalanced progress of political and economic reform processes which are being undertaken by corrupted systems.

The Europeanization process is driven by some combination of two different paradigms: of conditionality and emulation. Conditionality is massively at play for countries that are acceding or candidate states, and here the whole rule book is thrown at them by the European Commission, with regular reports which resemble termly reports at school. By contrast, the countries with European aspirations but without any immediate prospect of membership have to rely on emulation. The relative force of the two paradigms is a matter of debate. The cases of Bulgaria and Romania show how the force of conditionality ends upon accession, and how there may have been a degree of forced and unsustainable compliance with the European norms, which is reversible. While this reversibility has tended to become an accepted view, the Bulgarian case has produced a new conditionality mechanism with the withdrawal of EU funding in the absence of adequate steps to de-corrupt the use of this funding. Given the considerable importance of this funding for the poorest member states this mechanism can have real leverage. The Bulgarian case also witnessed public opinion effectively finding an ally in the European Commission as the people have become increasingly disgusted by the gross corruption of their political leadership and its probable links with criminal gangs.

‘Emulation’ is essentially the same as what has been described as a ‘gravity model’ of democratization. The term gravity model originated as a theorem of economics to explain the intensity of trade relations between countries as a function of geographic proximity and economic weight. For its democratization variant the explanatory factors are again proximity, both geographic and in terms of cultural and historical identity, and then the perceived attractiveness of the political regime of the neighbour.

Of particular significance is the split here between Russia and its other European former Soviet states – Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia and Georgia. For all these four latter countries Europe stands not only for democracy and human rights, but also for freedom from Russian hegemony. For Ukraine the Slav cultural and historic commonality with Russia is of course a massive fact, but the heavy handedness of Russian national patriotic discourse and efforts to reintegrate the former Soviet space fits uneasily with Ukraine’s cultural and regional diversity.

The colour revolutions, or street protests in alliance with opposition leaders that have overthrown corrupt regimes, are to be seen as attempts to break out of the early post-Soviet forms of rotten democracy. But their recent record, in Georgia and Ukraine, has been disappointing. Georgia reverted to heavy handed authoritarianism masquerading as democracy through the eloquent speeches to western audiences in

fluent English of President Saakashvili. That is, until the war in August 2008, which leads on now to a new political dynamic with an uncertain outcome. Ukraine has slipped into dysfunctional democracy with chronic instability and conflict between leadership groups. But the cases of Armenia and Moldova are showing that underlying societal demands for a cleaner democracy are on the rise.

The story of these struggling democracies is, in general, one in which popular demands for cleaner democracy are vibrant, and while these demands are not yet met, neither can authoritarianism acquire sufficient critical mass to dominate. This leaves open the question of possible slippage between our two primary categories, namely; struggling transition cases or authoritarianism. The case of Moldova is that closest to having seen, and very recently, risks of such a slide towards authoritarianism, or towards the Belarus model. This slide seems now to have been reversed, and one may even ask whether the Belarus regime may be hazarding a slide in the opposite (more democratic) direction?

The colour revolutions of 2004–5 may not have matched up to the euphoric expectations of the moment, but they have still marked important steps in the political history of these states, and reveal a deepening role for civil society in sustaining the struggle to get better democracy. The colour revolution episode has also seen a parting of the ways among other neighbouring states. Russia has mounted its own counter-offensive against the European model of democracy at home and abroad, and this meets with a positive echo in various authoritarian states, most of all in Central Asia. On the other hand, in east Europe there are several new candidates for colour revolutions warming up, for example in Armenia and Moldova, to judge by the powerful street protests against electoral irregularities and popular indignation over corruption and income inequalities. These countries all have some sense of European identity, even where membership of the European Union is not on the horizon.

### **Proliferating Dynasties**

For this second category we adopt an elastic concept of dynasty. It starts with some old, regular monarchical dynasties such as those of Morocco and Jordan. It includes some new, apparent dynasties where ageing and authoritarian presidents have paved the way for family succession, such as has already happened in Azerbaijan and Syria, and is at least the subject of speculation in Egypt, Libya, Belarus, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan where sons and daughters of the presidents already have major political roles.

This group overlaps with other regimes which have also seen term limits removed to effectively permit presidents for life, as in Algeria, Belarus, Egypt and Kazakhstan. Tunisia is also clearly in this category, as well as all the rest of Central Asia.

Finally there is the case in which the letter of the law over term limits for presidents may be respected, but where the intention of the constitution is abused with a system of alternation between the posts of president and prime minister by a single individual. A further feature is the informal 'family' succession in which the incumbent president selects his successor to be partner in this conspiracy against the constitution, and organizes some formal elections to endorse the process. This regime has been worked out in practice by Putin in partnership with Medvedev and which, with alternating roles, could in theory run on for life. Given the comparative youth and robust health of Putin (55 years) and Medvedev (43 years), it might mean adding another three decades in office to the first decade already served. Prime Minister Putin illustrated the nature of the regime in September 2009 in the following words: "There was no competition between us [with Medvedev] in 2007 and we won't have any in 2012 [upon the next presidential election]".<sup>18</sup>

These several species of dynasties have several common features of note. All are consolidated authoritarian regimes which are able to control affairs to exclude any meaningful political pluralism and democratic competition, although all go through the motions of presenting a formal façade of democracy with its usual institutions and elections.

All are countries where identification with Europe and its norms is weak or nil; or even negative in terms of identifying with another competing political concept or image, such as Eurasianism, sovereign democracy, managed democracy or Arab democracy. Russia is here a complex hybrid case, identifying itself as either or both European and Eurasian; indeed insisting that it is Europe, while purporting to define its own alternative European normative order. Kazakhstan is also projecting a thin Eurasian discourse, reminiscent of but maybe more plausible than Morocco's bid for EU membership made in the 1970s.

All are countries where the transition paradigm has withered away, or is now at a dead end. This is because there is no longer (if there was ever) a sense of movement

<sup>18</sup> Financial Times, 12–13 September 2009.

towards the liberal-democratic model of society and politics, and the authoritarian dynasty is strongly entrenched.

The basic motives for authoritarianism are surely lust for power and wealth, with petro-riches offering both of these, as seen in Azerbaijan, Algeria, Kazakhstan Libya and Russia. The mixing of state control and corruption further serves to solidify the loyalty of the favoured elite, given its potential for the blackmailing of any dissenting voices.

However, some of these states such as Morocco and Kazakhstan strive for a certain 'neo-enlightenment' branding, with relatively open societies and avoidance of brutal repression. We may recall Europe's 'enlightenment' of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the most enlightened of despots were open to the arguments of the philosophers in support of civil liberties and fair trial, but without risking popular democracy. Democracy takes time to mature.

## **Conclusions**

The demand for democracy of the societies of the struggling transition countries is increasingly vibrant. If this process is a struggle, so has it always been in the historical emergence of European democracy. The EU will continue to set the standard, but emulation rather than conditionality may be the most effective and durable mechanism. Nonetheless, the EU is developing new leverage on some new member states through its control of funding, and its associated political role in allying with civil society and public opinion in their struggle against corrupt governance.

For the authoritarian states without a European perspective there may well be a long period ahead when a brand of 'neo-enlightenment' may be the most plausible positive scenario, i.e. one in which representative democracy remains a very thin and formalistic affair, but where the improvement of civil liberties and respect for human rights is achievable. But for many of the authoritarian countries of the neighbourhood the transition paradigm has reached a dead end. A different scenario is needed, focusing on long-term socio-economic development and the emergence of new middle class and educated elite interests as the future drivers of democracy. This seems implicit in the actual policies of the European Union, which focus most attention on human rights, and hardly mention the word democracy any more for the time being.

Table. Struggling transitions and proliferating dynasties

	<i>Struggling transitions</i>	<i>Proliferating dynasties</i>
<i>In or close to the EU</i>	Bulgaria 3.04 Romania 3.36 Serbia 3.79 Turkey rest of Balkans	
<i>Former Soviet Union</i>	Georgia 4.93 Ukraine 4.39 Armenia 5.39 Moldova 5.07	Azerbaijan **** 6.25 Belarus ** 6.57 Kazakhstan * 6.32 Uzbekistan ** 6.89 Russia * 6.11
<i>Arab Mediterranean</i>	Lebanon Palestine	Morocco ***** Jordan ***** Syria **** Egypt *** Libya ** Algeria **

\*\*\*\*\* Monarchy

\*\*\*\* Republican dynasty (father to son succession)

\*\*\* Potential republican dynasty (father president without term limit, son politically prominent)

\*\* Presidency without term limit

\* Presidency subject to term limit, but with faked compliance, and circumvention in practice (alternating presidency and prime ministership)

Note: The numerical ratings are taken from Freedom House, Nations in Transit 2009, where the scale ranges from 1.00 (= the most democratic) to 7.00 (=the most authoritarian).



## **Transition Aborted: Ten Years of Putin's Russia**

*Arkady Moshes*

Today, the nations that once lived under Communist rule differ strongly. Some have successfully completed the transition towards a market economy and liberal democracy. Some still hope to achieve this goal. Some found such a transition to be 'mission impossible' and have essentially established sultanist regimes, even hereditary ones. Russia is somewhere in the middle of the road, but it seems to have lost a sense of where to go next. On the one hand, it has become a global economy and a country with open borders and a fairly good communication infrastructure. Due to its economic interdependence with the West it cannot afford a Cold War paradigm, and its elites care about international legitimization of their own status. It would be a mistake to view modern Russia as a smaller Soviet Union. On the other hand, many changes that were introduced in the country in the early 1990s have proven to be reversible. Once a champion of political freedoms in the post-Soviet space, Russia is now ruled by means of the so-called 'vertical of power' – a system universally perceived outside the country to be soft authoritarianism.

It is highly symbolic, therefore, that for Russia the autumn of 2009 is the time of two 'round' dates: the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Wall and the tenth anniversary of Vladimir Putin's ascension to power. Both formally – if one applies a time criterion – and in substance, Russia's post-1989 history is split into two competing halves. Have the Russian people forgotten what they gained thanks to the collapse of totalitarian regimes in Europe, including their own? Aren't they able to appreciate private property, the possibility to earn, save and spend money as they wish? The full shelves in small shops as well as megastores, the lack of ideological control, the freedom to travel and to send their children to study abroad? They definitely do appreciate these freedoms, even though many nowadays need to be reminded that all this was not available to them as recently as twenty years ago. Although aggregate indicators do not always tell the whole truth, it is possible to agree with the common statement that Russia has never been so rich and so free at the same time. Another matter is, of course, that this conclusion is unfortunately valid even when shrinking freedoms are compensated with growing wealth, and when, at the individual level, property rights are not insured.

But neither can it be said that Russia as a whole has forgotten the drama of the reforms. However, what it has failed in is to understand this drama in full and to surmount the challenges it produced. The society, brought up in a tradition of state paternalism, was shocked when it saw crime and corruption and the paralysis of state institutions (education, healthcare, the military, the law-enforcement system etc). A technologically developed country faced several consecutive waves of de-industrialization which, among other things, destroyed the strata of technical intelligentsia that had been a major driving force of the Gorbachev reforms in the 1980s. The empire was lost and the new liberalizing Russia was met internationally with only a fraction of the respect that a Soviet dictatorship had been used to meeting. A profound feeling of insecurity emerged when the enlargement of the Western security alliances coincided with the War in the Caucasus, a terrorist threat inside the country and uncertainty regarding the future of Russia's relations with its mighty Far Eastern neighbour, China.

No wonder then, given the stress under which the Russian people were living throughout the 1990s, especially when the prospects for recovery seemed to have been demolished by the economic meltdown of 1998, that a demand was formed for a strong hand in power. Democracy should not be a synonym for lawlessness and chaos, but it was in the Russia of those days. Against that background the hopes of the people were too easily placed on the promise of 'order'.

It is hardly possible or even necessary to try to list all the factors that determined why Russia chose the path of aborted transition that it did, revealing the hybrid state of its institutions and the confusion in people's minds through the eclecticism of her national symbols – the imperial twin-headed eagle, the tri-colour flag, and the slightly amended Soviet anthem. Some factors – Yeltsin's sickness, the naïve views of early economic reformers – were important but, eventually, merely fortuitous.

The major problem was that after 70 years of Communism the Russian people had at best a very vague understanding of democratic values and of their primacy. Western liberties were viewed as firmly linked with, and bringing, prosperity. When affluence did not arrive, the whole construction was rejected. In turn the new elites that came to power were not guided by democratic principles either. Too easily they compromised these principles in order to enrich themselves or extend their own positions of power. The elections of 1996 were not fair and, perhaps, this was the turning point of Russian post-Soviet history, leading to many things that happened afterwards.

As far as the traditional West is concerned, there are many reasons why it should be self-critical as well. The problem is not, as is sometimes alleged these days, that it 'took advantage' of Russia's weakness; moving geopolitical borders further East in order to guarantee its own security interests and thus contributed to the emergence of the atmosphere of a besieged fortress in Russia, even though this effect was there and was exploited. The problem is that the West turned a blind eye to many things happening in Russia and, again, acted contrary to the values it proclaimed it was trying to promote. When Russia was poor, the West prioritized stability over democratic governance – let's remember that Boris Yeltsin was given *carte blanche* when he decided to shell the parliament in 1993. When Russia became richer the boundaries of the morally acceptable in dealings with Russia were blurred, and the pursuance of liberal values was almost officially sacrificed to 'pragmatic interests' in the Russia policy of major EU countries, businesses and prominent public figures.

All historical parallels are false. Every situation is unique. However, when thinking where Russia may go from where it is now one temporal reference may be relevant. It is argued by some people that today, as the global economic crisis does its sobering work and Kremlin leaders themselves speak about the need to harmonize relations with Western democracies, Russia is living another 1986, and another attempt at liberal reform is very close. Others say that following the war with Georgia the country is becoming only more assertive, that it is living another 1982, and that another serious crisis between Russia and the West will happen before internal changes and a new rapprochement with the West will become possible.

It would be too subjective to try and pass a final judgment in this discussion. But what is obvious is that West is interested in seeing Russia go the way of 1989, the way of building a modern liberal state with a modern market economy. And the anniversary of 1989 is a reminder and an incentive to reiterate the vision and commitment to help this happen.

## **1919 to 2009: What are our Limits and our Limitations?**

*Alyson JK Bailes*

In concluding this collection, I would like rather perversely to take you back, not 20 years but 90 years, to 1919 and the peace settlement after World War One. It was then, and within a very short space of time, that we saw the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Turkish Empire and the transformation of the former Russian Empire, through a bloody civil war, into the Soviet Union plus an independent Finland and three Baltic States. If we took the resulting map of Europe and laid a map of Europe today on top of it, we would see that the free and integrated Europe of the EU and NATO now covers everything that fell out of the Habsburg Empire and the Russian Empire at that time and potentially all the Balkans, but not Turkey itself and not anything that stayed within the 1920 Soviet boundaries. The obvious question is whether this 90 year cycle from fragmentation to reunification in Europe, passing by way of another terrible war and several poisonous ideologies, must be seen as a closed loop of history: or whether today's new and unique model of a united democratic Europe can be spread further in future, and if so in what direction(s) and how soon?

Please don't think I am hinting that today's dividing lines make any *religious or civilizational* sense. On the contrary: some of the oldest centres of Christianity lie outside the present boundary of integration, as far away as Armenia and Georgia or Egypt and Ethiopia for that matter. The cultural, ethnic and linguistic connections that stretch around all sides of the Mediterranean and from Iceland to Vladivostok stand out rather by their strength and by the fact that the creation of common political, economic and social structures has fallen far short – throughout history – of the possibilities offered by these aspects of basic human kinship.

To ask against this background 'is it time for history to go further?' is to open up a thousand times more questions that I can cover in these few pages. I can only try to outline three sets of issues: the relationship of democracy with the European road to integration, the integration of those new democracies that have so far joined, and the present EU's relations with its new borderlands. I ask pardon in advance for a rather plain, shorthand style that to some will seem unfair or provocative.

## Is Democracy Always about Integration and Integration about Democracy?

The Community of Democracies launched at Warsaw in 2000 includes some 120 states, among them the Russian Federation. Clearly it is possible to be democratic, and also to have a free market ideology and a constructive international stance, outside the EU and outside NATO. NATO is a community of Euro-Atlantic democracies that also happen to share some other values and specific goals; and the EU is a grouping of European neighbours sharing many more detailed goals again, while having certain values not necessarily identical to those of the United States and/or Canada. Clearly, then, being or becoming democratic is not sufficient reason to achieve membership of either organization. Democratic performance is just one of many entry criteria.

Furthermore, the existing members when considering further expansion will not even always see democracy as the main test, partly because the core of Europe is made up of states who fought their own battles for democracy at least 60 years ago and who would like, rightly or wrongly, to take it for granted in their own cases. If so they will look harder at other criteria which not only include all the obvious economic and developmental ones, but also key aspects of the *European way of being democratic* which has many unique features including: substantial surrenders of sovereignty, submission to supranational law, openness to the evolution of national identities and to multiple identities, priority to non-military over military spending, and a very strong preference for so-called peaceful solutions and conflict avoidance, at least in the wider region of Europe itself. Clearly, not all these preferences are shared by the democratic United States, even under a Democrat President: and this fact – as well as a possibly different *strategic* motivation and calculus in Washington – helps us to understand why the two sides of the Atlantic often disagree on their judgment of just how democratic certain applicant states are and how much weight should be given to their democracy in enlargement decisions.

The stakes are of course high because many would argue that the prospect of NATO and/or EU entry is often the only incentive strong enough to drive a neighbouring state through a true democratic transformation, while membership with all its disciplines is the surest way to stop backsliding afterwards. This could suggest that the nations with the most difficult road to democracy are the ones that need integration most. But it still leaves the question of *why* the EU or NATO should take on the burden of playing that role towards the ever more numerous states of the region? Morally they obviously should: but in strategic and economic terms the trade-off can be harder to work out between the *price* the organization has to pay (including new risks/liabili-

ties) and the net *benefits* of having a more democratic neighbour during the accession process and an extra member afterwards. I will suggest later that we don't even think clearly about defining and comparing these two sides of the balance sheet.

To wrap up the first point, however, I would like to suggest that the conscious or unconscious standards of what I call the European way of being democratic are likely to be objectively harder to meet for states that have a combination of very recent statehood, no historic experience of living in multicentric empires as distinct from authoritarian ones, and no twentieth century experience of being disciplined in multilateral groupings. The Warsaw Pact and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance practised a false, hollow and abusive multilateralism, but they did go through the motions sufficiently to give their members some practice in how to maintain their identities and work for their interests in such a post-modern setting. By definition that experience could not be shared by nations locked within the Soviet Union or indeed by the former Yugoslavia. Also, if a state is still directly threatened in its integrity, control of its own territory and right to decide its own identity, it is hard for it to accept what Robert Kagan has defined as the typically European rejection of power play and the reluctance even to take risks in one's own defence. At worst, if a state came in on democracy grounds without having absorbed the rest of what I may call for short 'the benign denationalizing process', it could use the shelter of integration to behave aggressively to outsiders with risks not just for itself and its community but for the reputation of democracy as a whole.

### **'Old' and 'New' Democracies in NATO and the EU, 1999–2009**

This brings us to the role of those countries liberated at the end of the Cold War who have already joined both organizations. As one closely involved in their story before and after 1989, I have always felt that Western Europe largely sleepwalked through the process and that, to this day, the so-called old democracies lack understanding of the magnitude of transformation in Central and Eastern Europe and the sacrifices the new democracies made in their political character and national identity as well as in socio-economic terms for their peaceful integration. Perhaps, as with the creation of the new united Germany, people could only be persuaded to accept the risks and burdens involved by largely closing their eyes to them. But as a result the miracle of this re-birth which, in just twenty years, has made our continent something new and unique in history is very little present to most Western European minds to balance the differences and difficulties the new members are seen as having brought with them: whether through migration and its impact on multiculturalism; or attitudes to

the US, especially in connection with George W Bush's global strategic programme; or relations with Russia; or recently revealed economic and financial fragilities, or certain internal political developments that many other Europeans found distasteful – while of course ignoring their own darker sides.

Such feelings, together with the older members' own economic, political and social weaknesses, have contributed to the notorious 'enlargement fatigue' of recent years, but there is a bigger underlying issue here. Since the new members are virtually all pro-enlargement for both moral and practical reasons, we would have to conclude that some of their most characteristic attitudes have not yet deeply informed and shifted the balance of mainstream European policies, even if they have had successes on more specific dossiers like energy and climate policy or Russian trade, where the decision making procedures gave them leverage. In turn this is, of course, partly because the new members are not a solid bloc and have some quite major differences of view among themselves, like any other normal set of European neighbours. But it does suggest that the old debate about whether Europe needs deepening before widening maybe needs a third term to be added: namely whether Europe after each stage of enlargement has absorbed and integrated the substantial heritage brought by its new members, so that the new Europe *knows what it is* – and accepts it is something more than just the old Europe writ large – before going on to a further and perhaps more radical injection of new identities. In today's circumstances I don't think that question could be answered with a clear 'Yes', either for the EU, or for NATO where the tension between a Western *globalist* and an Eastern or peripheral *territorialist* vision of national security has perhaps come out even more clearly into the open lately. And I hope you can see that the new synthesis I am calling for here demands something more than just two pieces of paper called the Lisbon Treaty and the new NATO Strategic Concept.

### **Security and Transformation, Stability and Risk**

Finally, the new borderlands of this new Europe pose unprecedented challenges for further spreading the European model. We have tackled nothing before to match Russia's competing, antagonistic but totally flawed vision for organizing its own neighbourhood, or the bundle of issues attached to Turkey, or the obstacle of the Middle East dispute which, incidentally, makes Israel that region's most isolated as well as most democratic state, or the poisoned legacy of colonialism in North Africa. Confronting these obstacles, Europe as a strategic entity lacks a clear united view on whether it is more important for us to go on bringing the benefits of democracy

and integration to others – with the inevitable risk of more upheavals on our own borders – or to establish longish periods of stable frontiers and accommodations with neighbours, to consolidate and guard what we have. To put it another way, must our inflated but still weak, exposed and divided Europe sometimes be content with just *being good* and conserving itself, rather than *doing good*, especially to those who are closer to hand and more complicated and harder to help than we think the Congolese or Acehnese or even the Afghans are? The 2003 European Security Strategy fudges this issue by saying we want a ring of ‘well governed’ countries on our borders, and defines good government in this context mainly as having security threats under control: a condition that could also be met by an authoritarian but stable and efficient regime.

Of course, the truth is that all these dichotomies are false and that states that are not free, or that deny freedom to their own peoples and partners, will never be safe and reliable neighbours in the long term – any more than we could have lived or could have wanted to live forever with the kind of stability the Warsaw Pact offered us up till 1989. But that still begs the question of how to move towards democracy and greater security in parallel across this new terrain without fatally compromising either at any point. I don’t have an answer for you. I can only end with perhaps the most provocative remark of all: that perhaps the cultural and civilizational kinship we feel especially with our eastern neighbours has blocked us from looking at issues of cost-benefit analysis, leverage and conditionality as clearly as we would with conflict states and states in difficult transitions elsewhere in the world. Imperfect as it is, the EU’s China policy seems to me clearer and smarter than its Russia policy, and our conflict control strategies in Africa better thought through and more adventurous than those in the Caucasus. If I may paraphrase what the Hungarian poet József Attila once said about Thomas Mann, what we should be feeling good about is not our kinship with the white guys, but finding Europeans among them.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Closing lines of the poem *Thomas Mann Üdvözlése*, 1937:  
‘S lesz, aki csak éppen néz téged, mert örül, hogy lát ma itt fehérek közt egy európaít’.



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