

Session I

Visions of EU Policy Toward New Neighbours

Chair:

Bronisław Geremek, former Foreign Minister of Poland,
Professor with the European College in Natolin, Warsaw

Speakers:

Dumitru Braghis, former Prime Minister of Moldova, Chairman
of the parliamentary fraction Social-Democratic Alliance, Kishinev

Józef Oleksy, Chairman of the European Committee of
the Polish Parliament, Member of the European Convention, Warsaw

Sergei Rogov, Director of the US and Canada Studies
Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow

Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, former Secretary to the Polish Committee
for European Integration, President of the European Centre Natolin
Foundation, Warsaw

Boris Tarasyuk, Chairman of European Affairs Committee,
Ukrainian Parliament, Kiev

Vincuk Vyachorka, Chairman of the Belarusian Popular Front (BNF), Minsk



Bronisław Geremek

former Foreign Minister of Poland,
Professor with the European College
in Natolin, Warsaw

Professor Geremek said that the process of European integration must not alienate those countries, which remain outside the enlarged Union. Both candidate countries and the EU should act to prevent their alienation. Therefore, the European Union should make the Eastern Dimension subject to a broad European debate.

Professor Geremek asked the following questions:

- How can EU enlargement open better opportunities to the new eastern neighbours?
- How can the new EU Member States, including Poland, contribute to the new eastern policy of the EU?
- What can the future eastern neighbours of the EU, from Russia to Moldova, be offered in the context of their specificities?

Dumitru Braghis

former Prime Minister, Chairman of the parliamentary fraction
Social-Democratic Alliance, Kishinev, Moldova

Mr Braghis said that Moldova has always been a European country though it may not always have pursued an open European policy. He asked the question where Moldova stands in terms of European integration ten years into its independence, what helps the country to move ahead towards the European Union, and what the stumbling blocks are.

Speaking of the assets of the country, Mr Braghis said that Moldova is a small country with an open economy; over the past years, it has implemented a series

of reforms, only, some of which were successful. Moldova is a multiethnic country, which had both its advantages and disadvantages; in this context, the Transdniestre conflict is a major hurdle in Moldova's drive towards Europe.

Mr Braghis emphasised that his country has applied for EU membership, has joined the Council of Europe, and has been the first country in the region to sign a co-operation and partnership agreement with other CIS countries. At the same time, when the Communist Party came to power in Moldova, proposals were made for the country to join the Russia-Belarus Union.

On the question what Moldova could do to approach the European Union and why it was never successful to the same degree as other Central European countries, Mr Braghis said that economic and political reforms lacked determination: once introduced, they were undercut after the change of cabinet. He stressed that although 70% of Moldavians are in favour of European integration, the public debate has not clearly defined the country's place in Europe, i.e., whether it should aspire to membership of the EU, the CIS, or the Russia-Belarus Union. Mr Braghis regretted the fact that Moldova has not developed a national strategy towards the EU; he hoped a policy would be drafted in 2003.

Mr Braghis pointed to several issues, which need to be solved in order to help Moldova to approach EU membership; the prospect of EU accession may itself be a strong incentive to resolve such problems. First, improved economic co-operation with the EU should overcome trade barriers in relations with candidate countries, such as Romania, which used to trade freely with Moldova. Second, the Transdniestre conflict. Third, problems specific to Moldova as a future neighbour of the EU, including illegal arms transfers, drug dealing, trafficking in people; these will require close co-operation with the EU.

The prospect of EU accession can be an important incentive to solve serious problems faced by Moldova.



Finally, Mr Braghis called for a revision of EU assistance programmes in view of enlargement; programmes like TACIS should be replaced by PHARE-type programmes helping to implement investment projects in Moldova.

Józef Oleksy

Chairman of the European Committee of the Polish Parliament,
Member of the European Convention, Warsaw

The candidate countries are joining the EU in the hope that the Union will be a driver of their social and economic growth.

Mr Oleksy said that the upcoming enlargement of the EU to ten countries in Central and Eastern Europe is a process qualitatively different from any earlier enlargement as the acceding countries have quite different historical experience from the West European countries. The candidate countries suffer from weak economic growth as a result of the Cold War divide of Europe. "These countries join the EU hoping that it will be a driver of growth and will help to fulfil social aspirations." Mr Oleksy emphasised that some of the countries to the East will remain outside the Union but the EU will be a strong factor driving their transition. Mr Oleksy regretted that such issues were hardly ever discussed in the Convention and stressed that the Polish delegates to the Convention try to draw the attention of other delegates to issues of the Eastern Dimension of the future enlarged Union.



Mr Oleksy said that although the EU is perceived by most candidate countries and non-member states mainly as an economic organisation, it should indeed pursue a coherent policy towards its new eastern neighbours and promote important political and social values, primarily respect for human rights, democratic standards, and effective governance.

Mr Oleksy said that Poland is well prepared to contribute to the development of the Eastern Dimen-

sion of the Union and hopes that the Community will want to draw upon this experience. Regional co-operation structures, such as the Vyshehrad Group, could play an important role in developing the EU's eastern policy.

Mr Oleksy concluded by calling on the EU to talk to its eastern neighbours about common global threats and the position of Europe in the world. Institutions must be founded to provide for the exchange of views between the youth and opinion-makers so as to stimulate the vast potential of the EU's eastern neighbours.

Sergei Rogov

Director of the US and Canada Studies Institute
of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow

Mr Rogov said that the EU has no strategy of integration with Russia and Russia has no strategy of integration with the European Union. Although several instruments have been signed and many declarations made, they were not followed by any in-depth discussion or thorough studies of Russia's potential EU membership. Meanwhile, on-going integration and enlargement of the European Union may isolate and alienate Russia from Europe.

Mr Rogov said that while he did not want to promote Russia's accession to the EU, he wished to present his views on the prospects of development and institutionalisation of mechanisms of close co-operation between Russia and the EU. This is an open process, which may but does not have to lead to Russia's accession to the EU. First, Mr Rogov said that an EU co-operation mechanism similar to the NATO-Russia Council should be put in place. Second, the foundations of common economic space should be developed, for obvious reasons centred on energy co-operation. Mr Rogov pointed to serious problems in economic relations between Russia and the European Union concerning Russia's WTO membership. Mr Rogov said that the EU's demand of higher energy prices in Russia was groundless as Russia suffers 8 months of winter each year. He said that some of the EU's demands on Russia are



Frankly speaking, the European Union has no strategy to integrate with Russia and Russia has no strategy to integrate with the EU.

Communist Party to come to Poland, but the European bureaucracy will soon replace the bureaucracy of the Communist Party and KGB who used to control the movement of Russian nationals.”

Mr Rogov called for close military co-operation between Russia and the EU as real partners, for instance through participation of Russian troops in joint military initiatives of EU Member States, joint manoeuvres of EU Member States and Russia in Poland, co-operation in anti-ballistic, military and air defence. He also called for the participation of Russian troops in the NATO corps in Szczecin.

Mr Rogov pointed to possibilities of closer co-operation through modernisation of some types of Soviet-made weapons in the possession of the armies of the ex-Eastern bloc or ex-USSR countries. After EU enlargement, 40% of weapons in the possession of EU armies will be USSR-made. This opens an alley of close co-operation between the EU and Russia, which could have strong positive geopolitical implications and help to reduce illegal transfer of Russian arms to third countries.

Referring to the USA-Russia agreement concerning the reduction of Russia's foreign debt in exchange for the containment of weapons (Lugar-Biden Bill), Mr Rogov said that a similar agreement could be made with the European Union whose Member States are the creditors of 70% of Russia's

justifiable while others are not. He argued that as a European and Asian country, Russia should participate in the economic dialogue between the EU and East Asia; for instance, Lithuania can participate in such discussions. Thirdly, Mr Rogov said that the introduction of barriers to free movement of people is an impediment to the citizens. Although illegal migration and other potential threats must be prevented under the Schengen *acquis*, yet the introduction of the Schengen regime could have adverse effects. “I no longer need the permission of the Com-

foreign debt. This solution would be very beneficial in the context of Russia's serious involvement in facing various global challenges, including terrorism and terrorists' access to nuclear and chemical weapons.

In conclusion, Mr Rogov again called for the development of a strategy of Russia's integration with the European Union.

Jacek Saryusz-Wolski

Former Secretary to the Committee for European Integration,
President of the European Centre Natolin Foundation, Warsaw

Mr Saryusz-Wolski addressed two questions asked in the session about the outlook of an eastern policy and the contribution of the new member states. He introduced his intervention as an "open letter to the European Commission copied to Poland's eastern neighbours."

Mr Saryusz-Wolski discussed the prospects of an eastern policy from the perspective of an enlarged European Union. The policy should be very ambitious and based on three tenets. First, the EU should integrate its security policy in the second and the third pillar of the EU, the Common Foreign and Security Policy and Justice and Home Affairs. Second, Poland's eastern border should be treated as a "*de facto* security policy of the entire Union according to the definition of soft security," which requires a combination of political and economic tools. Third, economic co-operation should be developed. "I believe it's time many West European politicians buckled up the belt. We have seen that in recent weeks. We have to remain calm, keep the right perspective, and get ready for a change of the gravity field of Europe. Our eastern neighbours are part of that change."

Speaking about a vision of the EU's new eastern policy, Mr Saryusz-Wolski stressed that it should offer prospects of closeness and partnership. The policy of closeness is more than a neighbourhood policy; it implies enhanced economic co-operation; a free trade area, a "unified market, not unlike the European Economic Area;" support for civic society; participation in infra-

structure and transport networks; cross-border co-operation; energy security; migration and labour market policies. The demographic profile of the enlarged EU in the next 20-30 years must be considered. Instruments for the policy of closeness include: a new generation of agreements patterned on strategic economic and political partnership in the Mediterranean; assistance programmes moving away from technical assistance towards assistance in investment (from TACIS to PHARE).

Mr Saryusz-Wolski proposed three instruments of the policy of partnership. First, structural political dialogue, as practised by Poland under the EU Association Agreement; Mr Saryusz-Wolski pointed to the principle of different treatment of different partners and the principle of contingency. Second, economic, non-economic and sectoral co-operation strategies. Third, establishment of “vibrant institutions of co-operation” at different levels.

The European Union's new eastern policy should offer prospects of closeness and prospects of partnership.

Mr Saryusz-Wolski enumerated some of the threats to the development of the Eastern Dimension of the EU, including the gap between the goals and the capacity to deliver due to lack of resources and political will. He was concerned that the idea for a new Eastern Dimension could remain a sort of wishful thinking; he warned against a patronising approach to the eastern neighbours.

On the potential contribution of the new EU Member States to the development of the Eastern Dimension, Mr Saryusz-Wolski stressed that it required a toolbox approach, whereby declarations and concepts are followed by specific instruments; “those instruments of regional development policy that proved effective in Poland should be transposed and implemented there, mainly to grow SMEs and small infrastructures of civic society.” In addition, Poland and other new EU Member States should effect a change in the approach of their partners in EU institutions and political class towards the new eastern neighbours.



In conclusion, Mr Saryusz-Wolski said that Poland as an EU member state should help its eastern friends and neighbours to better understand the European Union.

Boris Tarasyuk

Chairman of European Affairs Committee, Ukrainian Parliament, Kiev

Mr Tarasyuk focused on two issues: Ukraine's perspective on European integration and Ukraine's possible contribution to the EU.

Taking the first issue raised by Professor Geremek in his introduction, Mr Tarasyuk said that European integration offers to Ukraine a "return to its natural cultural habitat and a chance of participation as a subject rather than an object of the process. It also helps to learn from the experience of other countries, including Poland, how to develop a democratic political system, necessary resources, social welfare, civil control of the army, a free market economy." Referring to a 2002 statement of the Chairman of the European Commission Romano Prodi and Commissioner Gunter Verheugen, Mr Tarasyuk said that Ukraine expects that EU representatives will not make negative or offensive statements about Ukraine.

Regarding the second issue, Mr Tarasyuk stressed that Ukraine can offer a dynamically growing market, advanced airspace and ballistic technologies, and a vast human potential of qualified professionals, in particular computer scientists. He also said that Ukraine has taken a responsible position on the issue of nuclear weapons, pursues a reasonable policy towards ethnic minorities, and serves as a conduit for energy supplies from Russia and the Caspian Sea to the EU and Poland.

Mr Tarasyuk emphasised that EU enlargement will have both positive and negative implications to Ukraine. The upsides include the fact that Ukraine will border upon the European Union, a beacon of democracy, political stability and welfare; Ukraine will also learn, especially from Poland, about the process of integration with the EU. The disadvantages include



barriers to interpersonal contacts due to the introduction of the Schengen *acquis*; Mr Tarasyuk quoted the case of Slovakia where the number of Ukrainian visitors fell three-fold after the visa regime was put in place.

On the question of a European outlook for Ukraine, Mr Tarasyuk welcomed the non-paper drafted by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He said the non-paper contains very encouraging ideas; yet he regretted that the EU lacks a strategy towards Ukraine. The status of neighbour is not a good prospect for Ukraine; Mr

The European Union has no strategy towards Ukraine. The status of neighbour is not a good prospect for Ukraine; the European Union has named Ukraine its strategic partner.

Tarasyuk reminded that the EU named Ukraine its strategic partner. The best scenario for Ukraine is to sign an association agreement with the EU opening up prospects of full membership.

Asking what the new EU Member States could contribute to the development of the EU's new eastern policy, Mr Tarasyuk referred to the interventions of Mr Cimoszewicz and Mr Saryusz-Wolski and added that "in addition to a strong eastern policy in line with the guidelines proposed by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we expect the visa regime to be relaxed." Polish President Kwaśniewski had offered that visas will be issued to Ukrainian nationals free of charge; Poles will not be required to hold visas to enter Ukraine. Mr Tarasyuk said that Ukraine expected the new EU Member States to help economic co-operation with Ukraine and to develop cross-border co-operation.

In conclusion, Mr Tarasyuk pointed to effective co-operation and exchange of experience in the framework of the Polish-Ukrainian Standing Conference.

European integration gives Ukraine an opportunity to return to its natural cultural habitat and a chance of participation as a subject rather than an object of the process.

Vincuk Vyachorka,

Chairman of the Belarusian Popular Front (BNF), Minsk

Mr Vyachorka welcomed the fact that discussions on the new Eastern Dimension of the EU do not exclude Belarus, although the country is a “special case”. Belarus should seriously consider its potential contribution to the Eastern Dimension initiative.

Mr Vyachorka said that Belarus is not a free country: the media are oppressed, the freedom of assembly, religion and expression is stifled, there are no free democratic elections, the State promotes an anti-Western ideology. Mr Vyachorka said that Mr Lukashenka’s statements to the tune of “No one is waiting for us in Europe” are particularly discouraging to the general public. Moreover, President Putin makes all efforts to praise the opportunities open to Belarus through integration with Russia while he fails to support democratic transition in Belarus. Mr Vyachorka said that the issue of democratisation in Belarus is closely related to its independence. In his opinion, the new EU Member States can play a key role in affecting the EU’s eastern policy towards Ukraine and in helping the country’s democratisation by differentiating between the regime and the citizens, offering various programmes supporting civic society, helping to form independent media, developing cross-border programmes, co-operating with private companies in Belarus. Mr Vyachorka emphasised that “the people have to be convinced that economic reforms will be supported and assisted by the West.” In conclusion, Mr Vyachorka said that if the EU pursues an active policy towards Belarus “after the demise of the Minsk regime,” this will greatly mobilise the society.

The people in Belarus have to be convinced that economic reforms will be supported and assisted by the West.



DISCUSSION

Katarzyna Żukrowska

Warsaw School of Economics

Professor Żukrowska mentioned possible economic instruments of co-operation between the future enlarged Union and its new eastern neighbours: symmetrical and asymmetrical liberalisation of economic relations. She also stressed that economic liberalisation is now taking place on a global scale, determining the orientation of the ex-USSR countries and our relations with those countries.

Leszek Moczulski

Warsaw

Mr Moczulski said that the European Economic Area could serve as a model of co-operation for the enlarged European Union and its relations with the new eastern neighbours. It should encompass the countries of ex-Yugoslavia and Albania.

Mr Moczulski called for a message to be given to Belarus, as strong as the message to Ukraine or Moldova, encouraging Belarus in its drive towards Europe.

On the issue of EU-Russian relations, Mr Moczulski said that Brussels and Moscow hold similar views: “neither wants to integrate.” Possibly, however, European integration could involve the Russian Federation.

Genowefa Grabowska

Senate of the Republic of Poland,

Member of the European Convention, Warsaw

Senator Grabowska pointed to the fact that the draft European Constitution includes an Article entitled “Special relationship with close neighbours.” Senator Grabowska said that the Convention wants the Union to treat the close neighbours as its most preferred partners. Polish delegates to the Convention should make best efforts to retain this provision and give it substance. Referring to Mr Saryusz-Wolski’s statement concerning the neces-

sary “toolbox for the close neighbourhood formula,” she called for new legal mechanisms to be established in the relations between the EU and its new eastern neighbours.

Senator Grabowska also referred to issues of borders, the Schengen *acquis*, and the solidarity principle. She said, “We must put up a wall but only against negative developments, always considered marginal and prevented jointly... The solidarity in protecting the Polish border as an external border of the Union must be leveraged, paradoxically, in order to ensure stronger relations and communication both within and outside the Union.”

Zbigniew Kruszyński

Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Warsaw

Mr Kruszyński pointed to the importance of cross-border co-operation; although only a part of the relations between the enlarged EU and its close neighbours, it remains crucial. “Cross-border co-operation provides a robust framework for mutual understanding between peoples, helps to fight prejudices and to promote common European values, including democracy, human rights, and self-government.” Mr Kruszyński called for the participation of Euroregions in the implementation of the INTERREG Community programme.

Mr Kruszyński reminded that the Carpathian Euroregion inaugurated by the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Krzysztof Skubiszewski celebrates its tenth anniversary this year while the Euroregion Baltic inaugurated by Minister Bronisław Geremek celebrates its fifth anniversary.

Heinz Timermann

German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), Berlin

Mr Timermann said that the EU and its Member States should prepare for the change that will sooner or later take place in Belarus. Belarus was forgotten for years; the EU was not ready for its independence in 1991. “We remembered Poland, Russia, Ukraine, but Belarus was virtually unknown. This should not happen again”.

Mr Timermann was surprised by Mr Rogov's intervention concerning Russia's membership in the EU; he asked whether Russia has changed its position and referred to Russia's 1999 mid-term strategy towards the EU whereby Russia did not aspire for EU membership or association. Mr Timermann said that accession aspirations of Russia may however have to be considered in the nearest future.

In conclusion, Mr Timermann commented on Mr Rogov's intervention concerning the write-off of Russian debt in exchange for Russia's commitments in the containment of weapons; he said, "Americans tried to do it at our cost. We have 50% and the US 5% of the debt; how can Americans say debt should be written off in exchange for commitments of weapons containment? This was done over our heads. Of 8 billion dollars, 500 million was cancelled in Weimar last year; that's already a lot. Now Americans claim the debt should be written off completely at our cost. I find it unacceptable".

Heather Grabbe

Research Director, Centre for European Reform, London

Ms Grabbe asked whether the EU should keep special relations with failed states; she mentioned failed states in the Balkans. She also asked whether the EU should develop an approach to failed states as part of its new Eastern Dimension, which should also include pre-emptive instruments. Ms Grabbe asked whether the EU should consider possible interventions in the region or conversely, rule this out altogether.

Rastislav Pavlenko

Professor with Kiev-Mokhylev University, Kiev

Mr Pavlenko said that the policy of the enlarged EU should focus on three social groups: decision-makers, opinion-makers, and the general public, in order to improve attitudes to Ukraine and its EU accession. The Union faces three kinds of tasks. It should develop a road-map and define an outlook in its approach to decision-makers; it should follow up with its present activity targeting opinion-makers; and it should win the general public by reinforcing

ing the networks of exchange of experience and information among the countries of the region.

Sergei Rogov

Addressing interventions and questions, Mr Rogov reiterated his concerns that

Russia may be isolated in Europe: “Russia is not a member of the organisations, which play the leading role in the social, economic and military life in Europe.” He said that the interests of Russia are not always sufficiently protected. If Turkey is bound to become an EU member state, why not Russia? Mr Rogov stressed that “on the one hand, we should not be saying that the accession of Russia to the EU is the goal; on the other hand, we should not rule it out.” He said that issues of relations between Russia and the EU fall into three categories: issues where the EU makes decisions without consulting Russia; issues where the opinion of Russia should be considered before the EU makes a decision; and issues which should be considered with full participation of Russia.

In conclusion, Mr Rogov said, by way of provoking his friend Mr Tarasyuk, that it would be absurd to expect Ukraine to become an EU member state unless Russia is a member too.

Boris Tarasyuk

Referring to Mr Rogov’s intervention, Mr Tarasyuk said that the accession of Ukraine to the EU would not change the nature of the Union, unlike possible accession of Russia. He said that it is a hypothetical question since Russia, according to its official position, is not interested in EU membership whereas Ukraine has declared its interest in accession.



Vincuk Vyachorka

Referring to the interventions of Mr Moczulski and Mr Timermann, Mr Vyachorka said that the government of Belarus has to be consulted on practical issues but great care should be taken as the government lacks legitimacy.

Józef Oleksy

Mr Oleksy wrapped up the discussion on the policy of the enlarged Union towards its new eastern neighbours and said that the task ahead is ambitious: new mechanisms, relations and infrastructure should be put in place, the economy should be stimulated, democratic standards must be promoted.

Jacek Saryusz-Wolski

With reference to Professor Żukrowska's intervention, Mr Saryusz-Wolski said that while symmetrical and asymmetrical instruments of economic liberalisation are well known, the problem lies in lack of political will. Referring to Mr Moczulski's intervention about the European Economic Area as a possible model of co-operation with the new eastern neighbours of the European Union, Mr Saryusz-Wolski said that the mechanism is insufficient and inadequate for the region. "The European Economic Area (EEA) is a rich men's club," he said, calling for the development of new legal instruments.

Bronisław Geremek

Professor Geremek recapitulated the discussion and revisited the question of what the EU can do for its future eastern neighbours. He mainly pointed to a prospect of co-operation that must be offered both to countries aspiring to EU membership, like Ukraine, and others, like Belarus. Concerning Russia and its hypothetical EU membership, Mr Geremek asked who would be joining whom. However, he seconded Mr Rogov's statement that neither the EU nor Russia have a mutual strategy.

Professor Geremek also said that the Schengen *acquis* is exceedingly demanding: "It pains me to think that the dreams of the former dissenters in Central Europe are now in conflict with our policy."

Referring to Ms Grabbe's question about the relations between the EU and failed states, Mr Geremek said that pre-emptive military action should only be a measure of last resort after all other means are exhausted and legitimacy is sought; the EU lacks mechanisms to take such action and its foreign policy is too weak. In this context, the EU should ask a question about its relations with and position among other international institutions.

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