

European Union Enlargement in 2004: System Analysis of the Benefits and Losses

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Abstract

The Eastern enlargement of the European Union (EU) in 2004 that having become the global geopolitical event for the whole united Europe is considered in this article through philosophical understanding of the essence of the EU with use of the synergistic approach.

The authors propose the analysis of achievements and losses of enlargement of 2004 in the view of three levels of knowledge of key elements of European integration. The level of philosophical understanding is based on the synergistic approach to the research object. The geopolitical dimension actualized research on the understanding of the European Union as a world-system, which has a high level of self-organization. The political, economic, and social components form the third cluster, depending on the first two. Changes at this level are most noticeable, predominantly they create a superficial image of the event. For the applicant countries, the experience of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic could be useful in many ways. Analyzing the positive experience and taking into account the negative tendencies of European integration progress in historical, political and economic terms serves as an additional tool for adjusting the policy of approximation to the requirements of the EU.



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Section
Articles

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EU enlargement in 2004: system analysis of the benefits and losses

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Abstract. “The Eastern enlargement” of the European Union in 2004 that having become the global geopolitical event for the whole united Europe is considered in this article through philosophical understanding of the essence of the EU with use of the synergistic approach. The authors propose the analysis of achievements and losses of enlargement of 2004 in the view of three levels of knowledge of key elements of European integration. The level of philosophical understanding is based on the synergetic approach to the research object. The geopolitical dimension actualised research on the understanding of the European Union as a world-system, which has a high level of self-organisation. The political, economic, and social components form the third cluster, depending on the first two. Changes at this level are most noticeable, predominately they create a superficial image of the event. For the applicant countries, the experience of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic could be useful in many ways. In order to form a successful strategy for synchronisation with a united Europe, there is a perspective to use the experience of preparing and testing algorithms for the operation of many segments. Analysing the positive experience and taking into account the negative tendencies of European integration progress in historical, political and economic terms serves as an additional tool for adjusting the policy of approximation to the requirements of the EU.

Keywords: enlargement, EU, analysis, system, synergy, influence, model.

Introduction

Changes in Europe at the end of the 1980s have greatly accelerated the formation of an integration model that has become a geopolitical lighthouse for countries escaping the influence of the Soviet system. Immediately after the actual disintegration of the USSR and the parade of sovereignty, the process of involving the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic States into the EU was started. For the past 14 years, preparations have been made for the full membership of these states in the EU. The model of integration, which included the stage preparation and the complex of transformations of the applicant countries, started a new era of cooperation in Europe built on the principles of liberal-democratic values. 15 years since ten countries had gained the full membership of the EU was a period when the positive and negative effects have manifested themselves sufficiently.

The key hypothesis of this research is the thesis about success of the “Eastern” enlargement of the EU. This formed model is acceptable in all other countries aimed at gaining the full membership in the EU. In addition, the authors through the philosophical understanding of the investigated processes consider the EU the system that has levers for self-regulation and develops on the basis of a holistic balance between the whole and parts.

The proposed research is aimed at studying three levels of understanding of the process of the EU enlargement in their synergetic connection. Current studies of tangible issues are now mainly focused on specific areas: economics, political component, management system. In particular, the economic component of the issue was studied by R. Read, S. Bradley [1], J. Horvath [2], M. Jovanovic, J. Damnjanović [3]

Political consequences of the “Eastern enlargement” are represented in the works of B. Petersson [4], U. Sedelmeier [5], J. Sloam [6]. Migration processes related to the EU enlargement were studied by J. Schmieder and A. Weber [7], B. Heider [8].

The proposed author concept of understanding includes an integrated approach to the study of the results of the consequences of the “Eastern enlargement” of the EU using the three levels of cognition.

Methodology

The authors studied integrational entering of Central-Eastern European countries and the Baltic States into the European Union using three levels of understanding of the process. Methodological toolkit was actualised in accordance with each cluster of problematics.

The first level is philosophical understanding. In order to understand the correlation of the European Union and the Member Countries, the authors adhere to the conceptual provisions of "Holism". In particular, the study of the results of gaining full membership in the EU states gave new properties to both "parts" and "whole". The list of these properties in the context of a holistic understanding leads to the next level – geopolitical. As the path of the CEE countries and the Baltic States to the EU represented a response to the challenges of the collapse of Soviet geopolitical architecture in Europe, results of the process have been analysed not only from the view of medium-term perspective, but also the component of the future existence of a united Europe as a world-system education has been taken into account. In the historical context, Europe has always strived for unity, in terms of time, formats and ways of integration differed, but geopolitically, the key imperative of existence was the consolidation and the formation of stable, powerful structures. The factors considered at the third level of cognition – the political component, the economy, and the social sphere – are indicators of the success or failure of the formation of the super-state system, they are directly correlated with the geopolitical level.

Each of the mentioned levels implies “interpenetration” and permanent crossing of the cognition design. The authors adhere to understanding of the process of eurointegration of mentioned countries as synergy of three key dimensions – philosophical, geopolitical, local (political and socio-economic).

By presenting this conceptual understanding in the sphere of synergy, the authors propose to consider the EU the system that seeks for a high level of self-organisation, especially at points of bifurcation.

Results

The main achievements of the EU enlargement, due to the inclusion of the countries of the CEE and the Baltic States, should first be investigated at the highest level of cognition. It is also logical to consider the results of the enlargement of the EU both from the perspective of the member states and from the perspective of the Community itself. The biggest enlargement of the European Union in 2004 in the global sense was the culmination of the desire to create an effective system of peaceful coexistence of European peoples in order to prevent military conflicts and prevent the spread of revanchism ideas as a result of contradictions that had been laid down by the Bipolar system. The 50-year cycles of the devastating European wars that lasted from the 17th century had to go back to the past.

Creation of mechanisms of economic cooperation, formation of the ideology of liberal society with traditional values and purposes within the EU have made this integrational association attractive especially for countries that found themselves in geopolitical vacuum after the disintegration of the USSR. In fact, in the early 1990s, when the foreign policy priorities of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Malta and Cyprus for the accession to the European Communities were formed, there was a process of the transfer of parts of the unstable system (the Soviet bloc) to a more stable system, one that strives for self-organisation on absolutely opposite principles. For these countries, the transition lasted 13 years and ended in bloodless, peaceful way, unlike, for example, the “Yugoslav” system, where disintegration led to a long military confrontation. Therefore, in the measure of geopolitical balancing, the Baltic States and the CEE managed to find an algorithm for a safe change in the centre of gravity, which, thanks to the high organisation of the system (including the security system), contributed to overcoming the negative consequences of the post-war re-division of borders and economic dependence on the Russian Federation.

Actually, in 2004, during formal completion of the integration process of 10 European countries, Europe moved to a new formation – the era of non-conflict-mitigation of the negative effects of age-old hostility between peoples across the territories and resources. In addition, in geopolitical terms, there was actually a bloodless, civilised transit of states that were part of the Soviet system to a more stable and democratic entity.

Speaking of results and achievements of EU enlargement, it is worth noting that the model of integration launched immediately after the Second World War, has become the most stable and

“peaceful”, unlike, for example, the unification of Germany with “fire and sword”, or the formation of the USSR.

Mentally this process required quick change in the worldview of many people and forming of the idea of unified Europe. The ideas of Pan-European progress, formulated by R. Coudenhove-Kalergi were implemented in 2004.

One of the results of efficient self-regulation of the EU system has been formation of the algorithm of acceptance of new members. Acceptance of 10 countries of “Soviet bloc” required forming totally new approach to the strategy of preparing for the membership of countries that have been politically, economically and mentally subordinated to the totalitarian system until recently. In fact, the ideology of enlargement faced a difficult task, which was to quickly update the value field, democratisation of society, political transformations. In addition to fundamental reforms in the countries themselves, the system ensuring the functioning of the EU had to undergo a complex stage of preparation of internal resources for the ability to operate effectively under the conditions of the most extensive enlargement.

Analysing the results of the 2004 enlargement for the EU as highly organised system, it seems expedient to calculate approximate cost of the process. According to the estimates of the European Commission, this progress has cost 60 billion Euro [9]. Experts from the European Commission also counted the possible financial gains for the EU budget from the adoption of 10 new participants. In the monetary equivalent of the first year of membership, the EU common budget had to receive preferences of about 200 million Euros.

Estonia	10500	11600	13400	57,4	1,4	3,0	4,1
Cyprus	17400	18800	19500	83,5	4,0	1,9	2,0
Latvia	8900	9700	11000	47,1	2,2	6,2	6,9
Lithuania	9800	10800	12200	52,1	-1,1	1,2	2,7
Malta	15800	15900	16200	69,3	1,9	2,7	2,5
Poland	10200	11100	11700	49,9	0,7	3,6	2,2
Slovakia	11300	12000	12900	55,1	8,4	7,5	2,8
Slovenia	16500	17900	18700	80,0	5,7	3,7	2,5
Hungary	12900	13600	14300	60,9	4,7	6,8	3,5
The Check Republic	14700	15900	17100	73,0	-0,1	2,6	1,6
Average EU indicator	21800	22700	23400	100	2,0	2,0	2,1

One of the key indicators of this research was the study of the attitude of the population of the countries towards EU membership. Indicators of Diagram 3 show that the overwhelming majority of the population expressed a positive attitude towards the EU. On average, the indicator of positive attitude ranged from 38% to 60% in 2004. The number of euroskeptics in countries did not exceed 25%.

At the initial stage of full membership, the studied countries continued to be recipients of EU funding. This situation was conditioned by the need for continued reform and the feasibility of financial support for the continuation of the process of adaptation of the legislative framework. It should be noted that the EU does not provide subsidies to the country's budget for the purpose of current calculations, allocations are made solely for specific projects aimed at implementing reforms in various spheres.

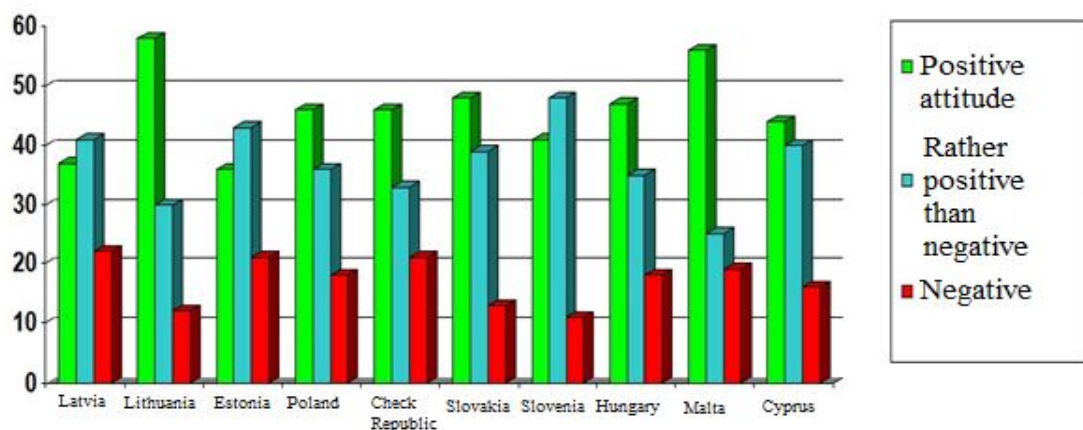


Figure 1. Attitude of citizens of the acceding countries in 2004 to the EU membership [12]

Starting positions of the membership of the 10 new EU members in 2014 were mainly characterised by a positive dynamics of change and an increase in the rates of economic growth.

The study of the first results of the 2008-2009 membership suggests that all 10 countries were able to continue the process of transformation and demonstrated economic growth along with improvements in the social sphere [13].

By studying the 15-year term of 10 countries and comparing their starting positions with the 2018 indicators, it's worth noting that all countries have maintained the dynamics of economic growth.

Table 3. Dynamics of GDP(in PPP) in US dollars

Country/year	2017	2018
EU (average indicator)	41.339	43.120
Malta	41.839	44.587
Cyprus	37.172	39.302
Czech Republic	35.537	37.423
Slovenia	34.480	36.826
Slovakia	33.070	35.099
Lithuania	32.379	34.829
Estonia	31.649	33.553
Poland	29.642	31.647
Hungary	29.559	31.561
Latvia	27.702	29.488

Analysing the structure of economics, social sphere, demography, that is those spheres that have been indirectly influenced by eurointegration, it is possible to conclude that for a more detailed study, the conditional division of the group of countries into 3 categories would be expedient. The criteria for classification are the structure of economies, the level of GDP, the dynamics of demographic processes (Table 4).

Table 4. Classification of the acceding countries to the EU membership in 2004

Countries	Type	Structure of economy	The level of GDP	Demographic processes
Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia	CEE countries	High level of processing industry, significant integration of economies with developed countries of the EU.	29-37 thousand US dollars.	The inflow of population from Eastern European countries (an average of 200 thousand people), slow growth rates of population.
Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia	The Baltic States	The low level of industry development, 60-65% of GDP is the service sector	27-34 thousand US dollars.	Significant outflow of population in other EU countries. Fast ageing and population decline
Cyprus, Malta	Mediterranean countries	Tourism, agriculture, liberal taxation system	37-44 thousand US dollars.	Slow pace of population growth.

The first group of “CEE countries” – Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Slovenia, Hungary, among the “newcomers” in the EU are characterised by stable growth of economies. Integration into the EU market and a high level of value-added production coupled with investment contribute to a stable development. On the whole, it is possible to state the positive effect of EU membership for the economies of the countries. In the demographic terms, this group is characterised by weak growth rates and a significant outflow of able-bodied population in the “old” EU countries.

The second group of the "Baltic States", having acquired a full membership in the EU, took a transport niche in the Pan-European economy. Most of the industrial enterprises, due to their unprofitable and uncompetitive capacity on the European market, ceased their activities. The key sectors of the economy have become the services and transportation. In addition, Latvia,

Lithuania, Estonia have created a liberal taxation system and a favourable investment climate [14]. Since the mid-1990s, there has been a rapid outflow of able-bodied populations. In addition, the demographic characteristics of these countries can be attributed to the rapid “ageing” and population decline [15]. One of the features that affects the investment attractiveness of the Baltic States is the information influence on the part of the Russian Federation, which seeks to regain its position in the post-Soviet space. This, in turn, is a latent factor in the slowing down of the socio-economic development of these countries and the imbalance of the region in the EU structure [16].

“Mediterranean countries” demonstrating the highest achievements in the economic sphere, have received the greatest effect from EU membership. Both countries have a powerful tourism industry, a significant investment attraction and a loyal tax system that encourages the inflow of financial flows from around the world. The efficiency of the economy and small population are largely conducive to rapid economic growth.

Discussion

When determining the key achievement of membership in the EU for the group of countries studied, it is needed to outline the growth of the role of these countries in the decision-making system of Community institutions. Since the EU is searching for a model of further development in connection with Brexit and the threat to the energy system, the scientific community is tied to the study of European integration processes and has been actively exploring the decision-making system in the Communities. In 2017, the results of the study “The impact of the Eastern enlargement on the decision-making capacity of the European Union” were made public [17]. The work became a kind of response to the discussion related to the thesis that the admission of the new 10 members led to the crisis of the decision-making system in the EU – as one of the negative effects. In particular, in researches of European researchers T. König [18], S. Hagemann and J. De Clerck-Sachsse [19], R.D. Kelemen, A. Menon and J. Slapin [20] the following point of view dominates: Due to the involvement of representatives of the CEE countries and the Baltic States in the decision-making bodies of the EU, the deadlines for the adoption of documents have increased considerably owing to lengthy discussion procedures. Also, mentioned scientists actively defended the thesis that “newcomers” blocked adoption of decision that might negatively affect their countries, but for the European Union as a whole they would have a positive result [21]. From the one side, possibility to influence decision-making process in EU is natural enough for CEE countries and the Baltic States, from the other side, political system of Community should adapt to find compromises between the interests of “old” and “new” members. Results of research of D. Toshkov demonstrate that countries of Eastern enlargement have not created alliances that could block adoption of important decision for the whole EU.

The results obtained by the authors on the positive effect of EU membership for the Eastern enlargement countries as a whole correlate with the findings of such leading researchers as M. Pollack [22], J.-H. Ko [23], S. Wood [24], J. O'Brennan [25].

Represented in this article results are quintessence of comprehensive study of the consequences of the EU enlargement in 2004, both from the side of accession countries and from the Communities through the prism of a philosophical understanding of the integration processes in Europe.

The hypothesis about positive effect of Eastern enlargement of the EU, in the opinion of the authors, are confirmed fully by the results of the conducted research. Also, it is worth noting that given the alternatives for the further development of the CEE and Baltic countries in the dismantling of the Soviet system, the European choice was entirely justified.

The authors see potential for the further research through the personal perception of changes in countries related to membership in the EU. Economic, political and social dimensions of research of results allow studying influence of eurointegration on a country in general. The

subject of further research in this direction may be the reflection of a personality focused on a routine level, where the age stratification of the study may be expedient.

It should also be noted that the study has the potential to improve the search for the algorithm of preparation for full membership for the applicant countries. There is also a need to study the correlation of the historical past, the mentality of a particular country with the values of the united Europe.

Conclusion

Globalization processes in Europe are motivated by the need to find a stable model of peaceful coexistence of countries, they gave impetus to the formation of a system that acts as a centre of gravity creating a structural relationship that is completely different from the previous ones. If earlier the unification of states was based mainly on force, now the alliance in Europe is formed with the use of economic, political, social, and value factors. The important moment in the existence of the Communities is the attempt to take into account the interests of all actors with granting of voting rights for countries without taking into account their economic effect.

The significance of enlargement in 2004, in author's view, is actualised in forming the complex of measures to prepare the countries of Eastern Europe for joining, which is today the source for the roadmap for the integration of applicant countries.

The biggest enlargement of the EU in 2004 has attracted considerable interest of many researchers. This was due to the qualitative and quantitative composition of the countries that were accepted. Particular attention was paid to the formation of interaction structures between countries that until recently belonged to different blocs.

From the point of view of global understanding, in 2004, Europe moved to a new level of organisation of the system, key to the existence of which is the political imperative of the constant expansion and formation of the field of unity.

The study showed that integration into the EU structures was mostly positive for the CEE and Baltic countries, as well as for the Communities. One of the key trends in the development of leading European countries has been the rapid decline in population, residents of the countries of the Central and Eastern Europe, and the Baltics should have become an alternative to migrants from the East. This situation, in turn, led to an outflow of able-bodied population from newcomers and a significant pension burden on the budgets of countries.

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