# The European Parliament's identity discourse and Eastern Europe, 1974-2004

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This article explores the European Parliament (EP)'s construction of European identity in relation to Eastern Europe between 1974, following the December 1973 Declaration on European identity by the European Council and the beginning of the Helsinki Process, and 2004, when eight Eastern European former Communist countries acceded to the European Union.[1] The piece argues that the construction of a European identity was a conscious undertaking MEPs engaged in to provide a source of legitimacy for the consolidation of the European edifice. "Europe" is a contested concept that is constructed differently according to time and place, whose meaning varies according to the national discourses within which is it used and the actors undertaking the construction.[2] The EP developed its own definition of Europe: this paper highlights the main elements underpinning this construction, evaluating how far they can be seen to form a coherent discourse, and stressing the difficulties MEPs encountered in trying to build a European identity.

As the European project experienced a certain consolidation with the summit in The Hague in 1969 and the first enlargement in 1973, the collapse of dictatorships in Southern Europe in the early seventies triggered a broad reflection on the part of the EP about enlargement in which prior notions of European identity and the purpose of "Europe" were subject to reinterpretation and refinement, and woven into particular historical "narratives" of a (West-) European self. The 1973 Declaration on European Identity indicated the Community's perceived need for self-definition, and parliamentary discourse would elaborate many of the ideas present in the declaration, such as democracy and human rights.[3] The Helsinki process beginning in 1973-1975, the end of the Cold War and, eventually, Eastern enlargement, entailed broad renegotiations and reinventions, within the EP, of the meaning and history of Europe,

1. The Copenhagen European Council issued the Declaration on European identity on 14 December 1973 – Bulletin of the European Communities. December 1973, n.12, pp.118-122. The Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, together with Cyprus and Malta, acceded to the European Union on 1 May 2004.
2. See K. EDER, *A theory of Collective Identity. Making Sense of the Debate on a 'European Identity*, in: *European Journal of Social Theory*, 4(2009), pp.427-447; G. DELANTY, *Inventing Europe*, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 1995; J. GAFFNEY, *Political Rhetoric and the Legitimation of the European Union*, in: T. BANCHOFF, M.P. SMITH (eds.), *Legitimacy and the European Union*, Routledge, London, 1999; M. af MALMBORG, B. STRATH (eds.), *The Meaning of Europe*, Berg, Oxford, 2002; I.B. NEUMANN, *European identity and its changing others*, in: *Norwegian Institute of International Affairs*, paper n.170, 2006.
3. See B. STRATH, *Multiple Europes: Integration, Identity and Demarcation to the Other*, in: B. STRATH (ed.), *Europe and the Other and Europe as Other*, PIE Peter Lang, Brussels, 2000 on identity as the "buzzword for the European unification project" in the 1970s.

leaving conflicting interpretations of "Europe's" multiple itineraries which proved difficult to be reconciled in a shared memory.

Based for most of the time of the Community's existence on the division between East and West, the narratives constructed around the theme of European identity initially implied excluding important parts of Europe and their cultural heritage. When the Cold War ended, this narrative revealed cracks and contradictions, confronting MEPs with the need to maintain continuity while adjusting the notion of "Europe" to the new realities. Nonetheless, parliamentary discourse over this period reveals a surprising degree of convergence among MEPs from the main political groups (the socialist, liberal democrat and European people's parties) as far as the articulation of European identity is concerned. MEPs' identity discourse generally went beyond the political cleavages between party groups and political families and verged towards a unitary parliamentary voice within the European institutional landscape.

The reasons for focusing this analysis solely on the EP are manifold. The EP is, since 1979, the only directly elected institution at European level and as such it claims for itself the role of true representative of the European people.[4] In doing so, parliament as a whole claims to speak as the voice of Europe in a way in which the Council, as the representative of the member state governments, and the Commission, as an executive body without a direct link to the voters, cannot. In addition, the EP is primarily an arena for debate and deliberation, and its proceedings reveal that it is a microcosm of the debates taking place within the European public sphere and political arena in general. Many MEPs have also at some point held positions in the government or parliament of their respective member states, influencing ideas about Europe from the national angle.[5] Finally, Council and Commission representatives are regularly required to take part in parliamentary debates in order to respond to MEPs' queries, recommendations and criticisms – turning the EP into a forum where ideas circulate between these institutions. This evidently pertains to the realm of public discourse and cannot and is not meant to provide an insight into the inner workings of detailed policy-making at European level. Rather, the aim is to shed some light on the way in which ideas of Europe and European identity are introduced and elaborated in the public discourse to provide legitimisation for the process of European integration.

4. This claim appeared repeatedly in speeches made by MEPs of varying political allegiances in plenary sessions – see for instance 16.09.1974 – EEC-Greece Association; 29.11.1981 – Enlargement; 22.10.1984 – Human Rights; 17.01.1985 – Accession of Spain and Portugal; 08.05.1985 – Enlargement.
5. Two famous examples are Jacques Delors, Socialist MEP between 1979 and 1981, French Economics Minister between 1981 and 1984, President of the European Commission between 1985 and 1994; Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, MEP within the Liberal and Democratic Reformist group between 1989 and 1993, President of the French Republic between 1974 and 1981, and Chairman of the Convention on the Future of Europe from December 2001 to July 2003.

## The EP's identity discourse

The main elements of the European self-image present in the EP's enlargement discourse revolve around three clusters: political, cultural and historical.[6] The political element of European identity is the most prominent – corresponding to identifiable characteristics of the political system of both member states and the Community's institutional structures. It seemed therefore relatively easy for MEPs to identify democracy, the respect of human rights, and the rule of law as the fundamental elements of Europe's political identity.[7] The idea that such values would be a prerequisite for states wishing to enter the Community was, however, not part of the Treaty of Rome of 1957,[8] which made no specific stipulations as to political requirements that potential candidates would have to fulfil. It was only in 1962, and at the behest of the EP, that democracy and the respect for human rights entered the discourse on the foundational principles of the Community and were claimed as requirements for membership. The occasion presented itself when Franco's Spain made ouvertures to the EEC with a view to seeking membership at a later date. In a well-known document known as the Birkelbach Report spearheaded by the socialist group, the EP adamantly declared that non-democracies, whether they be on the right or on the left of the political spectrum, and whether they be aligned with the West or not, would not be permitted to become members of the Community.[9] The EP argued that the fundamental political identity of the Community was based on democracy and human rights, and that the respect of these values was crucial to the very identity of the Community, and not just its member states. The Community had a duty to defend and uphold these principles in all its internal and external dealings, and only a common identity based on these political principles could form the basis for the continuation of the integration process.[10]

The EP continued to uphold and promote those foundations of political identity, first and foremost in enlargement discussions in the 1970s. When in 1974-75, the right-wing dictatorships in Greece, Spain and Portugal collapsed, the EP was keen to

6. This analysis refers to the general EP debates on enlargement as well as the public speeches given by EP Presidents speaking to outside audiences. From 1996 onwards, the debates analysed in this piece are available online (permanent URL: http://www.eui.eu/Research/Library/ResearchGuides/EuropeanInformation/KeyPublications/EPD.aspx).
7. The criteria for accession to the EU established by the Copenhagen Council of 1993 indicated these characteristics as the essential political criteria for any state wishing to join the Union – http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/accession_criteria_copenhague_en.htm.
8. See Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, 25 March 1957 and T. DANIEL, *Constitutionalisation Through Enlargement*, in: *Journal of European Public Policy*, 13(2006), p. 1195.
9. Charles Powell has examined the origins of the Birkelbach Report in relation to the Spanish case. C. POWELL, *The Long Road to Europe: Spain and the European Community, 1957-1986*, paper presented to the conference 'From Rome to Berlin, 1957-2007', Madrid, June 19-20, 2007.
10. See Willi Birkelbach, Rapport fait au nom de la commission politique sur les aspects politiques et institutionnels de l'adhésion ou de l'association à la Communauté, Assemblée Parlementaire Européenne, Documents de Séance, Doc.122, 15.01.1962 and Débats, 23.01.1962, Aspects politiques et institutionnels de l'adhésion ou de l'association à la Communauté.

highlight the Community's responsibility for ensuring that these countries continued along their path towards democratisation by anchoring them to itself through EC membership. Accepting these countries as full EC members would, MEPs argued, both cement their commitment to the political values of democracy and human rights on which the Community was founded, and provide them with a positive institutional and political framework within which they could continue to democratise.[11] It would also, MEPs contended, prove that the EC was willing to act on the basis of its foundational principles by assisting fellow European countries in their rejection of dictatorship and their decision to embrace the values of the Community.[12] It was a mutual reinforcement: EC membership would give the new democracies an anchor to stabilise the changes, and it would in turn reinforce and confirm the EC's self-image as the champion of democracy and human rights. Eventually, the European Council officially recognised the fundamental role of these political values when it introduced the Copenhagen Criteria for enlargement in 1993, showing how the ideas elaborated within the EP strongly resonated with the other institutions and were eventually formalised within the EU's framework.

The EP's identity discourse embedded political values in the European cultural heritage: MEPs repeatedly stated that the values of democracy and human rights were specific to European culture and civilisation, historically developed over centuries, and that the EC/EU was the highest expression of this civilisation and aspired to embody the European political and cultural ideal.[13] The Greek enlargement was thus hailed as the symbol of the fact that modern European political values as represented by the EC had their roots in the idea of democracy originated in ancient Greece:

> "In welcoming Greece the mother of democracy, the Community becomes Europe in the fullest sense. For all of us your country remained the cradle of our civilisation, the land in which the term 'politics' in its noblest sense was first coined thousands of years ago. […] Greece comes to us bearing its history and its culture which are at the very root of Europe […] this new enlargement brings us closer to the frontiers of our civilisation which will achieve its full flowering in the region around the Mediterranean basin".[14]

In general, MEPs affirmed how "the Community must contribute, both within its frontiers and beyond, towards greater protection of these principles [human rights] which is the common basis of the European cultural heritage".[15]

The political and cultural elements were paralleled by the development of a historical narrative that provided a legitimisation of the European integration process

11. For example, see EP Debates, 4 July 1978 – EEC-Portugal additional and financial Protocols – Relations between the EEC and Turkey; 19.11.1981 – Enlargement of the Community.
12. See EP Debates, 1.10.1977 – Enlargement of the Community.
13. See for instance EP debates, 15.10.1975 – Statements of action taken on Parliament's resolution on Spain; 11.05.1977 – Human Rights; 16.05.1977 – Human Rights.
14. Simone Veil, EP President (1979-1982), Liberal and Democratic Group, EP Debates, 12.01.1981 – Welcome to Greek members.
15. EP debates, 11.05.1977 – Human Rights.

based on a complex historical myth.[16] On the one hand, parliamentary discourse hailed the leaders of the Six founding states that launched the process of integration in 1950 as the "founding fathers" of modern Europe and slowly built them and their ideas into a myth of Europe as reconciliation between long-standing enemies. Throughout the debates of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, Schuman, Monnet, Adenauer, De Gasperi were turned into larger-than-life figures whose vision and bravery in finding a peaceful solution to Europe's problems had successfully banished violence and hatred from the European mindset and built the Community as a response to Europe's experience of war and bloodshed up until 1945.[17] This historical narrative was built around the positive experience of the post-war era as the crucible of a new, peaceful, reconciled, forward-looking European Community, and the negative experience of previous European history which largely served as a negative historical "other" to the contemporary, and morally superior, "self".[18] Parliamentary discourse helped construct this identity-shaping narrative by explicitly stating repeatedly that the EC/EU represented a conscious rejection of previous experiences in European history and embodied the new history that the member states were intent on creating for themselves. This historical narrative was therefore based on both the myth of the founding fathers and of integration as an ongoing process of reconciliation, and on an idea of Europe as projected into the future, with its back turned to historical experiences before 1945 or even, to some extent, before 1950.[19] Parliamentary discourse wove together all the above elements into a European identity that, to a larger or smaller extent, excluded Eastern Europe.

The most striking aspect of EP discourse was that MEPs routinely talked about "Europe" in general rather than just about the "Community" or even the "Union". When talking about democracy and human rights, they referred to them as "European" values, rather than Community (or national) values. More specifically, contemporary political values, democracy and human rights are presented as having their roots, and their justification, in European culture – which is not exclusive to the Community, but which parliamentary discourse claims for its version of Europe, with the contention that the Community is the embodiment of this culture. Finally, the historical narrative, which is really just a narrative based on the experiences of the

16. On historical myths for the European project, A.D. SMITH, *National identity and the idea of European Unity*, in: P. GOWAN, P. ANDERSON (eds.), *The question of Europe*, Verso, London, 1997, pp.318-341; B. STRATH, *Europe and the Other* ..., op.cit.
17. EP Debates, 3.12.1997 – Enlargement – Agenda 2000; or there are several instances in speeches given by EP President Pat Cox (Ireland, Group of the European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party) to the parliaments of the candidate countries between 2002 and 2004. Irish MEP Pat Cox, member of the ELDR group from 1989 to 2004, was EP President between 2002 and 2004. During his tenure, he visited all candidate countries at least once, speaking to the parliaments of the accession states. Speeches available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/former_ep_presidents/president-cox/speeches/en/archive.htm.
18. This narrative became prominent in EP discussions of the fifth enlargement to Central and Eastern European countries: it was shared by MEPs from all mainstream political groups and featured prominently in the speeches given by Pat Cox between 2002 and 2004.
19. See G. DELANTY, *The European Heritage from a Critical Cosmopolitan Perspective*, in: LSE, *Europe in Question*, Discussion Paper Series, 19(2010).

small group of states that participated from the beginning in the integration process, is articulated as the historical narrative of Europe: the founding fathers are not merely the founding fathers of the Community, but of Europe, and reconciliation, although it started only in the West, is European reconciliation. Whenever MEPs engage in the exercise of defining what the Community's purpose and identity are, they never really refer to it as the Community, but as Europe. It is Europe's responsibility to uphold human rights in the world, it is Europe's responsibility to anchor Greece, Spain and Portugal to democracy and to the European way of life, it is Europe's purpose to build a new polity and reject the dark European past. This was best shown in enlargement debates of the 1970s and 1980s, when becoming members of the EC meant becoming truly European – so that the equation between membership and Europeanness was presented by the Community, and accepted as true by the candidate states.[20]

Given that this discourse of European identity is really the discourse of Community identity, how did Eastern Europe, which for the largest part of the Community's and even the Union's existence remained outside the Community and, until 1989, stood in political opposition to it, come into the discourse at all?

The Cold War was an inescapable reality that shaped the way in which the EC's identity discourse was articulated. Its end represented an incredible challenge to the Community, not just in practical terms, but also in terms of the development of this identity discourse. Its sudden and unexpected end and the clamouring for membership by many Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) presented MEPs with the challenge of having to accommodate the countries that had until then represented a convenient political other to the Community's European self. MEPs largely relied on a historical narrative to solve this conundrum.

## Eastern Europe in EP identity discourse: from the Cold War to EU membership

In the 1970s and 1980s, the EP's identity discourse largely framed Eastern Europe as a political other. The very fact that MEPs used the term Europe when referring to the Community left "Eastern Europe" out of the Europe discourse – if the Community was Europe, then Eastern Europe could not claim true "Europeanness" for itself. The Cold War context was crucial to the development of Europe's political and historical identity, influencing how the EP shaped its discourse and how parliamentarians reflected on Eastern Europe.

The EP's identity discourse and Eastern Europe came together in parliamentary debates on the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Helsinki

20. See EP Debates, 12.11.1975, Recommendations of the EEC-Greece Joint Parliamentary Committee adopted on 27 June 1975 – Additional Protocol to the EEC-Greece Association Agreement; EP Debates, September 1977, Political Situation in Spain; 1.10.1977 – Enlargement of the Community (debate on report doc 323/77); EP Debates, January 1979, Prospects of enlargement of the Community – discussion of Pintat report Doc 479/78.

Final Act, starting in 1974, which the EP immediately linked with its human rights debates. The linkage between the Community's political identity as based on democracy and human rights and the "otherness" of Eastern Europe is immediately apparent when reading these debates.[21] MEPs discussed Eastern Europe and human rights by placing themselves, as representatives of Europe, in the role of those who held others, in this case Eastern Europe, accountable for violating human rights principles, and, by extension, placing Eastern Europe in the role of those who must be held accountable for breaching European values and thus turning their back on Europe. MEPs thus immediately established the fact that they, i.e. the Community, had the right to demand compliance with human rights because they were already the embodiment of these principles that effectively constitute Europe's political essence, and that Eastern European countries must strive to reach the same standards if they hoped to reinvent themselves as true Europeans. As long as the Community, and the EP as its representative, could demand compliance from Eastern European countries, the latter were marked as "other" in terms of the fundamental political values that form the basis of EC's self-image.

The discourse was, however, rendered more complex by the linkage between political identity and the cultural elements that are defined as its very roots, and which go back, far beyond the Cold War, to a common European civilisation. In making this cultural link, MEPs left an opening for Eastern Europe to one day leave behind its "otherness", which was largely determined by political circumstances, and reembrace its true Europeanness by reconnecting with its culture and, by default, its true political values. This device also allowed them to distinguish the governments of Eastern Europe, and their decided "otherness", from the people of Eastern Europe who had the right to be treated as European.[22]

MEPs discussed the Polish events of the early 1980s and the Solidarity movement largely in this vein. In the 1982 debate on Poland, Europe again becomes synonymous with the Community's values:

> "if we want to be Europeans in today's world, we cannot regard Europe as an abstract entity. It is the Europe of political democracy, the Europe of the people which concerns us and which we must defend. […] Poland is an integral part of Europe's history and culture. We see the Poles as kindred people […] Poland has played a great part in Europe, in Europe's history, for the European ideal and for liberty in Europe […]. Poland is an essential part of Europe and let us not ignore the Polish people when we think of extending the European Community and searching for better forms of integration […] it is – let me stress – a part of our Europe".[23]

21. EP Debates, 11.05.1977 – Security and Cooperation in Europe.
22. This was compounded by the EP's self-appointment as the voice of all European peoples: see for instance EP Debates, 10.04.1981 – Situation in Poland; 22.04.1982 – Demonstrations by young Europeans in the capitals of several Warsaw Pact countries.
23. EP Debates, 17.09.1980 – Human Rights in Poland.

The cultural link was even more evident in the Bettiza Report of 1985 on Relations between the EC and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe:[24] the Report highlighted the Cold War framework as fundamental to understanding the relationship between the Community and the countries of the Eastern bloc. However, the Report also highlighted Central and Eastern Europe as "in cultural terms one of the most fertile and creative areas of the continent which binds us together in a common civilisation"; "these are regions, therefore, which, because of their essential and profoundly European roots, form an integral part of Europe and are able to understand and appreciate the spirit of inter-European solidarity which today in particular inspires a great many of the citizens of our Community" hence the need for a "normalisation of relations".[25] Again, the Report maintained that

> "the historical, geographical and cultural unity of Europe transcends the political division of the continent, and the creative contribution of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to European history and the cultural heritage has been and remains particularly significant".[26]

MEPs expressed similar sentiments during the subsequent debate on relations with Eastern Europe.[27]

Both, the report and discussion, however, very much reflected the Cold War mindset – as everybody else, MEPs in the 1980s were rather unprepared for the change that would come in 1989-90, when they would need to go from vague declarations of "common civilisation" to having to adjust to an Eastern Europe going through democratisation and liberalisation whilst knocking on the doors of the Community. The task of re-elaborating the identity discourse to match the drastic political reorganisation of the continent would in fact occupy MEPs through the 1990s and into the mid-2000s. Arguably, this re-elaboration is still under way today.

The 1990s saw the consolidation of the European Union's political identity through the institutionalisation of the political values constituted by the adoption of the Copenhagen criteria in June 1993 – which were geared towards the newly democratic Central and Eastern European countries and their membership aspirations.[28] The political criteria meant that the Union's Cold War political "other" now

24. Vincenzo Bettiza, Report on behalf of the Political Affairs Committee on Relations between the European Community and the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe, October 1985.
25. Ibid., p.11.
26. Ibid., p.5.
27. For instance, Gerd Walter (Germany, Socialist group) claimed that the "situation reflects decades of subordination of European interests, both in the East and in the West, to those of the respective superpowers, it is not in keeping with our common European history and cultural traditions"; his colleague Jiri Pelikan (Italy, Socialist group) reinforced this idea: "Their traditions, their history and their culture make them an integral part of our Europe" however "no real progress will be possible unless the governments in Central and Eastern Europe change their attitude on respect for human rights, which is one of the Community's fundamental values" – EP debates, 23.10.1985 – Relations with Eastern Europe.
28. European Union website, consulted 25 November 2010, http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/accession_criteria_copenhague_en.htm.

had to fully commit to the political values of what was, essentially, Western Europe, in order to become "truly European". While during the Cold War this seemed impossible, the new reality made it relatively easy to achieve, in particular when the linkage between political values and wider European political culture was brought to the fore. By linking what was essentially a post-war experience and a political choice of Western European countries to historically embedded, cultural roots in its identity discourse of the 1970s and 1980s, the EP had effectively left an opening for Eastern European countries to claim that, by means of this shared culture, the same political values of democracy and human rights belonged also to the Central and Eastern European cultural experience. The gap between recent dictatorship and pre-World War One imperial experience on the one hand, and the adherence to contemporary Western European values and reality, could therefore be bridged by a foray into the idea of a shared European culture. However shaky a foundation, when combined with genuine efforts to create and maintain democratic institutions and respect human rights, this was enough for the EU member states and the Central and Eastern European candidates to converge onto the political identity that the EU had created for itself. The real obstacle to re-adjusting the identity discourse to include Eastern Europe in the 1990s and early 2000s was, in fact, the inherently Western European historical narrative on which the EP had built Europe's foundation myth.

## The enlargement to Eastern Europe and the EP's historical narrative

Geopolitical and economic reasons were, of course, paramount in justifying the fifth enlargement, yet MEPs also added a historical theme to their enlargement debates. They tried to reconcile the historical narrative, which they had articulated thus far, with the admission of Central and Eastern European countries, weaving a largely contradictory historical discourse that in the end fell short of providing a coherent narrative or common foundation myth. MEPs contended that Central and Eastern European countries had the right to be part of the integration process because, before the Cold War had forced them on the "wrong" side of the Iron Curtain, the CEECs were part of Europe and thus shared a long history with Western European countries.[29] This, however, could hardly be depicted as a positive shared history based upon common values, given that the historical narrative articulated thus far depicted pre-1945 history as essentially a history of war and conflict, and post-1945 integration history as the one positive shared experience that bound member states together. MEPs had then to find a way to reconcile this new emphasis on shared history before 1945 with the strand of its dual historical narrative that depicted European history before 1945 as the historical "other". The common basis on which they settled was the theme of "breaking with history": Western Europe's break with its pre-1945

29. H. SJURSEN, *Why Expand? The Question of Legitimacy and Justification in the EU's Enlargement Policy*, in: *JCMS*, 3(2002), on Eastern Europe as the "kidnapped West".

history was combined with the idea that CEECs were now doing the same in breaking from their post-1945 history. The Cold War, which had largely influenced the development of the EC/EU's identity in the first place, became in this narrative the historical "kidnapping" of the Eastern half of the European "whole"[30] – and the division could thus be blamed squarely on external actors.

Why did MEPs place such an emphasis on historical themes in the first place? Before the end of the Cold War, Western Europe had defined itself politically in stark opposition to the communist dictatorships of Eastern Europe. After 1989 its political identity could not be changed – in fact, it was strengthened by an increased emphasis on "European" values such as democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe was predicated on the need to support these countries' political re-orientation towards adherence to these same political values. However, this in itself was not sufficient to legitimise enlargement.

The European Parliament largely justified widening EU membership to Central and Eastern European countries on the basis of a moral obligation stemming from a twofold reading of history as having "robbed" these countries of their "rightful place" in Europe through the Cold War, and of an earlier, shared historical heritage cutting across the Iron Curtain.[31] This shared history made the accession of Central and Eastern European countries "natural".[32] The fifth enlargement would bring together centuries of common "history, culture and art", and overcome the division imposed by Munich and Yalta.[33] These two historical moments symbolised the two different aspects of the historical division of Europe: Munich was considered by many to be the moment in which Western Europe had abandoned Eastern Europe to National Socialist aggression, and Yalta as the imposition of an artificial division that would then be cemented by the hardening of the Cold War. MEPs claimed that abandoning these countries to their fate imparted upon the European Union a "moral obligation" to accept their membership application.[34] Enlargement would mark the final end of the Cold War division and "ensure that the old iron curtain is not replaced by a velvet

30. Jean-Louis Bourlanges (France, Liberal Democrat group) EP Debates, 03.12.1997 – Enlargement – Agenda 2000.
31. See for instance EP Debates, 16.07.1997, Agenda 2000, esp. Klaus Hänsch, Hans-Gert Pöttering, and EP Debates, 19.11.2002 – Extraordinary Debate on Enlargement. Ulrich Sedelmeier highlights the idea of a moral obligation towards Eastern Europe. U. SEDELMEIER, *Constructing the path to Eastern enlargement: the uneven policy impact of EU identity*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2005.
32. Nicole Fontaine, France, EPP, EP President 1999-2002, Speech to the European Conference, Sochaux, 23.11.2000 (permanent URL: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/former_ep_presidents/president-fontaine/speeches/en/sp0062.htm).
33. Enrique Barón Crespo, Spain, PSE, EP Debates, 19.11.2002 – Extraordinary Debate on Enlargement.
34. Otto Habsburg, Germany, EPP, EP Debates, 14.04.1999 – Applications for Membership. He was referring specifically to the Baltic states.

one, excluding part of the continent from the benefits of belonging to the European family".[35] It was also

> "an act of moral justice: European countries, countries which are just as European as those which are already part of the Union but which, by a twist of fate, found themselves, through no fault of their own, on the wrong side of an artificial line drawn across our continent, are coming back to Europe, coming back to us".[36]

Talk of "a twist of fate" also had the additional advantage of glossing over the potentially awkward question of who had been responsible for the division of the continent. For had blame been apportioned, there was always the danger that some of it would attach either to the United States (which remained a key ally and partner) or to Britain and France in their role as the powers who acquiesced in the Munich "Agreement". MEPs did not elaborate this historical narrative in isolation: Council and Commission officials used much of the same rhetoric when they addressed the assembly – showing how parliamentary discourse is in fact a window open onto the wider European landscape.

Europe had, of course, never been unified in the first place, and so such talk imagining a kind of "re-unification" constituted at best an euphemistic view of European history. Wolff's study of the emergence of the idea of Eastern Europe in the Eighteenth Century provides but one example of the fact that the distinction between East and West had existed in European consciousness for centuries.[37] Moreover, what this "common history" actually amounted to was never specified. While this was pointed out by some MEPs, such remarks remained isolated and did not influence the main thrust of parliamentary discourse.[38]

Increasingly, MEPs and EP Presidents talked no longer merely of "enlargement", but of "re-unification". The discourse on enlargement tied in with the wider discourse on Europe as reconciliation and peace process by re-defining enlargement as the continuation of a process of "re-unification for the whole of Europe".[39] Moreover, it also identified enlargement as the need to "amend history"[40] and to "finally turn the

35. Peter Truscott, UK, PSE, EP Debates, 03.12.1997 Enlargement – Agenda 2000; for other examples see also Frode Kristoffersen, Denmark, EPP, 02.12.1998, and Klaus Hänsch, Germany, PSE, 03.10.2000 Progress towards Accession by the 12 Candidate Countries.
36. Jas Gawronski, Italy, EPP, EP Debates, 09.04.2003 – Enlargement.
37. L. WOLFF, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1994.
38. See for instance André Brie, France, GUE/NGL, EP Debates, 19.11.2002 – Progress Report on Enlargement.
39. Elmar Brok (Rapporteur), Germany, EPP, EP Debates, Progress towards accession by the 12 Candidate countries, 3 October 2000.
40. "As citizens of the European Union we now have the historic opportunity to transcend Munich – to reverse the events of 1939 when the people of Central and Eastern Europe were abandoned – and this must be done on the basis of what we have built. I think it is a question of amending history, and we should welcome the opportunity to do so". Enrique Barón Crespo, Spain, PSE, Enlargement – Agenda 2000, 03.12.1997.

page"[41] on the "cruel division of Europe"[42] imposed by the Cold War. The accession of the Eastern European countries was therefore also the symbolic closure of the period of division and signified that everything that the Berlin Wall had stood for had finally been torn down.[43] Enlargement was thus "an opportunity because it [was] an occasion to reunite what the tragedies of recent history had torn apart".[44] The mere use of the word "re-unification" provided the fifth enlargement with significant historical, and moral, legitimacy:

> "'enlargement' itself is not the correct name – it is the coming together again of our old continent of Europe, it is a reunification, a re-birth of sorts, a renaissance of the European idea".[45]

Upon the signature of the Accession Treaty on 16 April 2003, EP President Pat Cox stated that the break with history had finally been achieved: "today we consign our fractured past to the history books".[46]

This discourse was a contradictory one, weaving together the different historical myths of the founding fathers and reconciliation, of Europe's dark past and of a shared history prior to World War II and the Cold War and using the idea of reconciliation as a common thread. In the EP's image of Europe, the European Union itself became the embodiment of the myth of the European peace process, and was presented in constant opposition to the historical tradition of violence. The recent positive myth was anchored in the myth of the long history of conflict and legitimized as a decisive rupture with Europe's historical legacy and as the dawn of a new era. In justifying the fifth enlargement, however, Parliament also reintroduced the idea that there was in fact a positive shared history between the countries of Western and Eastern Europe and that this constituted the basis of a "reunification" of the continent: enlargement was thus transformed into the rightful return of the kidnapped East to the common European fold. The contradiction inherent in this discourse, however, remained: the strongest part of the historical narrative, the myth of the founding fathers and of the integration process, remained an exclusively Western European experience. The attempt to make pre-1945 history both a historical "other" and a time in which Europe was allegedly united left an unresolved contradiction.

41. Jean-Claude Pasty, France, Group Union for Europe, 03.12.1997.
42. Ursula Stenzel, Austria, EPP, EP Debates, 09.04.2003 – Enlargement.
43. Address by Pat Cox at the European Council in Brussels, Brussels, 25.10.2002.
44. Catherine Lalumière, France, ARE, EP Debates, 03.12.1997 – Enlargement – Agenda 2000.
45. Pat Cox, Speech to the Estonian Parliament (Riigikogu), Tallinn, Estonia, 15.04.2002.
46. Address by Pat Cox at the Ceremony of the Signature of the Treaty of Accession, Athens, 16.04.2003.

## Conclusion: a less than cohesive identity

Paradoxically, it was not the political element of Europe's identity that made it arduous for the EP to bring Eastern Europe in from the cold of "otherness" to being part of the European self: the linkage between democracy and human rights and their cultural root in Europe's ideational development through history, and the practical possibility of adjusting it to the political criteria set at Copenhagen in 1993 left an opening for Eastern Europe to become "Europe". The Cold War opposition between two political identities could thus be resolved through an appeal to the shared cultural roots embodied in the EC's political identity and therefore allow Eastern European countries to converge onto the Union's political identity. It was the prior creation of an exclusively Western European historical narrative based on the narrow experiences of the integration process after 1945 that created the greatest obstacle in the articulation of a discourse that could successfully include Eastern Europe. After all, this was exemplified by the confrontation between the new, Eastern and Central European members of the EU and its old, Western members, over the historical references that should be included in the joint declaration issued in 2007 on the 50th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome, when it became apparent that the experiences of the two sets of countries in the previous fifty years and their perception of European history in general were diametrically opposed. The open question then remains: to what extent are a shared history, a common memory and historical narrative necessary to the creation and success of a European identity? Parliamentary discourse seems to indicate that MEPs did in fact feel the need to provide a historical narrative as an underpinning to the enlargement process. Whether this construction will continue to be part of the European identity discourse remains to be seen.

# Korruptionsbekämpfung im postsozialistischen Bulgarien


In dieser Studie wird die Frage gestellt, weshalb es Bulgarien nicht gelingt, wirksam gegen Korruption vorzugehen. Die bisher erfolglose Korruptionsbekämpfung – so die hier vertretene These – ist auf schwache Staatskapazitäten und auf korruptionsbegünstigende Kontextfaktoren zurückzuführen.

Anhand umfassender Dokumentenanalyse, Medienmonitoring und Experteninterviews erarbeitet die Autorin eine qualitative Diagnose der Kapazitätenschwachstellen und der möglichen Lösungsansätze. Es handelt sich um eine Evaluation von administrativen Kapazitäten (Institutionen und Gesetze), Akteurshandeln (staatliche und nichtstaatliche Vetogruppen) und kontextuellem Einfluss (Transformations- und Europäisierungsprozesse). Hierbei werden die markantesten Korruptionsfälle der letzten 20 Jahre detailliert ausgewertet.

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