IDENTITIES AND SOLIDARITY IN FOREIGN POLICY:

EAST CENTRAL EUROPE AND THE EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

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East Central Europe and the Eastern Neighbourhood

Edited by Elsa Tulmets

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Identity and Solidarity in the Foreign Policy of EU Members: Renewing the Research Agenda

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The core idea of this publication is to investigate the link between identity and solidarity in the foreign policy of members of the European Union (EU).[1] The term 'identity' has various definitions in external relations. In a classical way, one may state that 'nationhood and national identity represent necessary myths which underpin foreign policy. They constitute the distinction between the "national community" which the government represents abroad and the foreigners with whom it deals' (Wallace, 1991: 66). In a constructivist understanding, the *self* is thus defined in relation to a specific *other*. Therefore, identity is not given; it is considered as the process of self-identification of the individuals in a group (Bloom, 1990) or an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983). In this vein, solidarity represents one of the forms of expression of foreign policy identities. Like the *self*, it is subject to relative evolution and redefinition.

Studying solidarity in foreign policy requires relying on other fields of academic literature than Foreign Policy Analysis and International Relations. Solidarity is a concept which has so far mainly been used in Sociology (of International Relations) and in the field of Law and Development, but it has known a limited use in Foreign Policy Analysis. Furthermore, it is often mentioned without any clear definition. It is generally mentioned in the literature on aid to development countries (e.g. Lechervy–Ryfman, 1993; Folz–Musekamp–Schieder, 2008), but it hardly appears in the literature on aid to transition countries (Bergman, 2006). In the literature, solidarity generally refers to mutual support, to the action of (a group of) states, organisations and (a group of) individuals in the form of symbolic and material support to another country, organisation or group of individuals. It therefore goes beyond the tradi-

tional approach of Foreign Policy Analysis, which generally focuses on the state, as solidarity also includes the activities of international organisations and non-governmental organisations and philanthropic actions.

The concepts of identity and solidarity have become particularly relevant in the context of regional integration. While solidarity is very present in the works of the founding fathers of European integration and in the policies of the European Union, recent academic publications have concentrated more on the foreign policy identity of EU members than on solidarity in their foreign policies (cf. Folz–Musekamp–Schieder, 2008). Furthermore, larger comparative approaches to the foreign policy identity of EU members are even more rare, even after the EU's Eastern enlargement in 2004/07. The countries of East Central Europe (ECE)[2] have attracted only little attention in relation to these issues. Although many publications account for an interest in ECE foreign policies, only few analysts have tackled them in a comparative perspective. In fact, the study of ECE policies remained constrained by the political agenda of accessions to the EU. The comparative literature has therefore largely investigated the impact of EU accession on internal institutions, policies and structures (Schimmelfennig, Sedelmeier, 2005), but the field of foreign policy remained underestimated. This may partly be due to the fact that the *acquis communautaire* remains rather thin in EU external relations and that most security issues were dealt with intergovernmentally during enlargement or in the framework of international organisations like the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the United Nations (UN) and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Therefore, the literature on foreign policy identity in the European Union was so far not very interested or adapted to the context of post-communist countries.

It is particularly relevant to investigate the relation between identity and solidarity on the example of East Central European foreign policies, as these policies are rather new and, contrary to other EU members, most of the countries do not rely on a long tradition of sovereignty. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the ECE countries have claimed their 'return to Europe' and defined accordingly their two main foreign policy priorities – EU accession and NATO accession. After these main aims were achieved, the ECE countries have formulated new foreign policies, among which the post-communist countries of the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe were mentioned as core priorities. Some of the 'new' EU members have particularly pushed for further EU ac-

cessions and the definition of an EU policy in the Eastern neighbourhood. Indeed, after its Eastern enlargement, the EU has gained new borders, which it shares with an Eastern neighbourhood that is represented by Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, and, across the Black Sea, Georgia. It has launched the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2003 – which Russia rejected – and this policy is also addressed to the three countries of the South Caucasus, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, and the Mediterranean countries (European Commission, 2003, 2004).[3] The Black Sea Synergy and the Eastern Partnership were launched in 2007 and 2009 respectively, and both of these policies were aimed at enhancing relations with the Eastern neighbourhood. However, not all the ECE countries engaged equally in the region, and the reasons for their engagements (or lack thereof) need to be elucidated.

Therefore, the following research questions will be tackled: As the East Central European countries' priorities were mainly oriented towards the West until their NATO and EU accessions, what are the reasons for the formulation of the ECE solidarity towards the Eastern neighbourhood? Are the solidarity policies totally new policies, which have mainly been defined after 2004's EU accession, or do they draw on older foreign policy experiences, which are now also partly channelled through the EU?

We argue that both logics are at work. The ECE countries' desire to transfer their experience of transition, and their support for EU and NATO accessions are often mentioned as the main motivations for the development of the ECE countries' new ties with the Eastern neighbourhood. Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Belarus generally belong to the priority countries. However, as we will see, there are other, less idealistic reasons. For example, the ECE countries' relations to Russia are mentioned, although they are considered here as a separate issue. This country will be mentioned only briefly here – not only because it refused to be part of the ENP, but also due to the fact that the policy of the ECE states in the post-communist space is often defined as a way to take distance from the past of the Soviet Union and its successor state Russia.

In this publication, we consider that investigating solidarity is a way to complement the constructivist research agenda on foreign policy identity. It is argued that solidarity is conceived as stemming from a dual aspect of foreign policy identity which consists of a political and a historical *self*, which are defined in relation to one or several *other(s)*. To put it briefly, supporting

transformation and a possible EU candidacy is not only a way to promote the EU's norms and values, but also a way to come along with claims of a shared past with the Eastern neighbourhood, which refer to the recent past or a much longer past. In making the neighbours' domestic order more compatible with the EU order, it is a way to reduce economic disparities and minimize the position of 'liminality' of the ECE states in the EU. In looking both at the official discourse on foreign policy identity and the effective means mobilized in the East, the contributions thus question the relevance of analytical approaches which would focus only on the *self/other* aspect of identity and foreign policy discourse. The articles gathered here represent an occasion to identify the factors that have lead to the formulation (or lack thereof) of East Central European solidarity towards the Eastern neighbourhood and to deconstruct East Central Europe as a homogeneous bloc. While the focus is on the constructivist link between identity and solidarity, most of the contributions also acknowledge the relevance of rationalist accounts for ECE's engagement or lack of engagement in the Eastern neighbourhood.

By focusing on solidarity, this book proposes to complement the research agenda on foreign policy identity and adapt it to the East Central European countries. It draws on a special issue of the journal *Perspectives* and presents an extended and slightly modified version of its contributions. Several tables were added to not only illustrate the *self/other* relations, but also to highlight the role of trade relations with the region and the level of assistance attributed mainly to Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Georgia.

As for this introductory chapter, it first explores the *self/other* dichotomy in foreign policies and the dual aspect of identity. It then turns to the concept of solidarity as a way to operationalize foreign policy identity and to investigate foreign policy implementation through an inductive approach and a specific methodology. It eventually presents a short analysis with the results of the various contributions gathered in this publication.

TOWARDS A DUAL IDENTITY IN FOREIGN POLICIES

Most academic analyses of foreign policy identity, may they come from Foreign Policy Analysis or International Relations, insist on two issues: the relation between *self* and *other* and the relation to the past. We consider that one

needs to revisit the *self /other* dichotomy in order to better explore the complexity of identity. We consider that foreign policy identity, the *self*, has to be conceived in duality: it refers to both a political and a historical *self*, which both relate to one or various *others*. As foreign policy mobilises different political forces and actors, the definition of the political and the historical *self* can be contested and thus evolve over time.

Self and *other* in foreign policy

The core works on foreign policy identity are of a constructivist essence and consider that the definition of a *self* is done in relation to a specific *other* (Wæver, 1990; Castells, 1997; Neumann, 1998; McSweeney, 1999; Rumelili, 2004; Diez, 2004). If one departs from a poststructuralist understanding, one may consider that identity is discursive, political, relational, and social (Hansen, 2006: 6; see also Ehin–Berg, 2009). Critical constructivism thus focuses on differences between the outside and the inside of a certain group, and it views these differences as central in the construction of meanings and identities (Rumelili, 2004: 30–34; Bukh, 2010: 4). The relevance of others 'may be "comparative" – "other than me" or (with reference to one's own past) "different from what I was yesterday" – but not necessarily oppositional, as is too frequently assumed' (Lucarelli, 2006: 312). And as Diez argues, the *others* may gain importance in the construction of the *self* in the sense that we take into consideration the image of the *self* that other relevant actors reflect (Diez, 2004).

The distinction between *self* and *other* is often used in studies on foreign policy identity. While analysing post-Cold War American foreign policy, Campbell, for example, shows how the U.S. is continually constituted and reconstituted in its interaction with others (Campbell, 1998: 69–70). Or to name another example, Bukh uses the post-structuralist approach of *self/other* to show that modern Japanese foreign policy possesses various 'others', including Russia and the Soviet Union (Bukh, 2010). However, the relation between *self* and *other* is not fixed and can evolve. We may even consider the existence of a multi-layered *self*, which refers to a variety of *others*.

The contributions to this book highlight the mix of elements which constituted the foreign policy identity of the ECE countries during and after their

accession to NATO and the European Union. The promotion of the experience of democratic and economic transition, as well as of accession to the EU and NATO, represents particular priorities and assets in the region of Eastern Europe. While turning to the West and promoting liberal norms and values build a clear part of the ECE *self*, one generally notices the definition of new priorities after EU and NATO accessions and a redefinition of the determining *others* in the ECE countries. The articles by Made, Kesa, Szczepanik, and Najšlová on the policies of the Baltic States, Poland and Slovakia respectively show that these states' definitions of negative *others* have recently evolved. While Russia was originally considered as a constitutive *other* in the definition of a policy towards the West, this *other* was redefined after the formulation of new geostrategic considerations and of security concepts which took into account new kinds of threats, like transborder criminality and terrorism. Therefore, Russia progressively vanished as the main *other* in the foreign policy strategies oriented towards the neighbourhood, and these states' foreign policy identity was more clearly defined against a common Soviet or communist past in order to promote modernization and Western norms. The analysis of the Bulgarian foreign policy identity by Nachev and the analysis of Slovenia by Bunič and Šabič even reveal that some EU countries do not consider Russia as a foreign policy *other*. And the contributions on Hungary (Rácz) and Romania (Angelescu) interestingly suggest that an ECE state may even consider some EU members as specific *others* when its policy towards the neighbourhood is thought through. This is why we propose to dig deeper into the classical *self/other* dichotomy in order to trace the complexity of foreign policy identity, and thus to partly explain the expression (or lack thereof) of solidarity in foreign policy. To do so, one needs to conceive identity in a dual way.

A dual identity in foreign policy

In the 1990s and 2000s, several constructivist studies have looked at EU member states' national identities and their relations to the European Union (Marcussen et al., 1999; Drulák, 2001; Joerißen, Stahl 2003; Hermann–Risse–Brewer, 2004; Wæver, 2005). While focusing on France, Germany and the United Kingdom, Marcussen et al. (1999), for example, argue that Europe resonates with identity constructions deeply embedded in national political

institutions and political culture in order to constitute a legitimate political discourse. Political elites select their ideas in an instrumental fashion from the ideas available to them in the present or the past according to their perceived interests, particularly during 'critical junctures' when national state identities are contested and challenged in political discourses. And once national state identities emerge as consensus among the political majority, they are likely to be internalised and institutionalised as a result of a socialisation process, and thus they tend to become resistant to change (Marcussen et al., 1999).

While this stimulating approach does not deal with foreign policy, we argue that some of its analytical elements can be adapted to the context of foreign policy, but they need to be reframed to fit the East Central European states, which have known much shorter periods of sovereignty in the past – and some of these nations never even experienced any period of sovereignty. We propose to conceive the foreign policy identity of EU members as a dual identity composed of a 'first order identity', the political *self*, which resembles Marcussen et al.'s 'visions of political order' (ibid.), and a 'second order identity', the historical *self*, which refers to the past and sometimes still existing 'national institutions and culture' (ibid.).

Defining the political *self*

The definition of a political identity, or a 'political *self*', is very much motivated by dominant political priorities. It represents a 'first order identity' based on a set of common (generally legitimate) norms and values. In this sense, it can be based on a consensus at the national level or reflect various and sometimes conflicting political ideologies. Its temporality is rather a short term one.

In European studies, there is a consensus that belonging to the European Union and other (Western) international organisations implies sharing and promoting a certain set of liberal-democratic norms and values. The debates on the Constitutional Treaty and the Charter of Fundamental Rights have generated a fruitful literature which has highlighted the genuine nature of the EU identity (Fossum, 2003). In the same vein, academic studies have focused on the internal dimension of the EU's identity as a whole and the projection of its norms and values abroad (Teló, 2005; Manners–Lucarelli, 2006; Cerutti–Lucarelli, 2008). However, some authors believe that European integration facilitates the flourishing of diverse national identities rather than a conver-

gence around a single homogeneous European Union identity, although the process does not exclude further integration (Cram, 2009).

A few authors have thus looked at change and continuity in foreign policy in the context of EU integration. Smith–Smith–White (1988) have highlighted the changes in the foreign policy of the United Kingdom that were due to its interaction with members of the European Community and further evolution in the field of European foreign policy. Tonra specifically looked at the phenomenon of 'Europeanisation' of foreign policies by exploring the top-down impact of the EU foreign policy, especially the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), on the Dutch, Danish and Irish foreign policies (Tonra, 2001).[4] Furthermore, a recent analysis by Jokela clearly indicates that the United Kingdom and Finland have developed very different understandings of foreign policy identities in relation to European integration (Jokela, 2011).

Although there were some exceptions (Hill–Wong, 2011), most of the comparative studies on the foreign policy of EU members thus far focused on members of the EU 15 (Manners–Whitman, 2000). When one turns to the East Central European EU members, one notices that publications on their foreign policy identities are rather rare. A major exception is the special issue of the *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* coordinated by Rick Fawn (2003) on 'ideology and national identity in post-communist foreign policies'. This issue is particularly interested in the role of ideology and minorities in shaping East Central European foreign policies. But the fact that it presents a large comparative sample including Russia and countries from Central Asia excludes any analysis of ECE's relation with the post-national EU level. While some comparative work has been done on the national preferences of 'new EU member states' (Copsey–Haughton, 2009; Bilčík, 2010), in fact, so far no comparative perspective was offered on the foreign policy identities of the East Central European EU members (cf. Šabič–Brglez, 2002).

The contributions to this book exemplify the ambiguous relation between national foreign policies and European identity. Not surprisingly, they highlight the fact that it is only after having officially accessed the European Union in 2004/2007 that the East Central European countries started to behave as EU members and promote the EU's norms. Here it is clearly evident that undergoing the socialisation process for entry into EU institutions and ob-

taining a better understanding of EU norms and values have allowed the newcomers to progressively add a new layer, the European one, to their national foreign policy identity. But what is more astonishing is that after accession, they have all defined the Western Balkans and/or Eastern Europe as priority regions, although in the 1990s and early 2000s the ECE countries – with the exception of Poland – aimed to get away from them. Most of the contributions to this book explain this by the fact that the ECE foreign policies have progressively become 'Europeanised' and tried to find a 'niche' in EU external relations (see the articles by Made, Kesa, Szczepanik, Weiss, Najšlová, and Angelescu). However, as the articles show, foreign policy identities are also defined, adjusted and legitimised in relation to the given country's past.

Defining the historical *self*

We argue further that the political *self* has to live with the historical *self*, a 'second order identity' based on memory and narratives of a common history. As a matter of fact, each country's specific interpretation of values and principles is the result of the shared meaning of its history and constitutional and legal practices (Lucarelli, 2006: 312). A historical identity thus reflects the legacies of the past, which are linked to the long-term development of the nation, the state and/or the nation-state. It can take multiple forms and entail different temporalities, but the temporalities are generally of a long-term nature.

For example, many scholars have shown that the legacies of World War II are still very present in the formulation of the foreign policy identities of various EU and non-EU countries. Germany's post-World War II foreign policy was defined as that of a 'tamed power' (Katzenstein, 1997) and a 'civilian power' (Maull, 1990). Germany thus intended to enhance the role of economic means rather than military means, and to enhance the role of norms and values in its foreign policy. Besides this, several authors have investigated why Japan has been reluctant to use military force since the end of the Pacific War, and in their findings, they argued that post-war Japan has developed a uniquely antimilitarist identity of domestic origin which has constrained the national security agenda (Bukh, 2010: 4; Katzenstein, 1996; Berger, 1996; Maull, 1990). To contrast, in Russia, 'the Great Patriotic War (i.e. the Soviet Union's war against Nazi Germany in 1941–1945) is the fun-

damental narrative on which the identity of the new Russia is being increasingly grounded' (Morozov, 2008: 160; cf. Cygankov, 2010).

But historical identity can also refer to political constructions which rely on a longer past. For Wallace, the fact that British identity is rooted 'in the evolution of the English common law, the idea of Magna Charta as the charter of English liberties, and above all the sovereignty of the Parliament' largely influences the way the UK foreign policy identity is defined (Wallace, 1991: 70). Waever and also Marcussen et al. have highlighted France's role as a 'civilizing mission' and Germany's culture of compromise in the two countries' relations to the European Union (Marcussen et al., 1999; Waever, 2005). However, a country's relation to history is not a static one; it is open to internal debates and thus does not exclude any ways of coming out of long-term historical processes. This is what Kassianova states when she argues that foreign policy should move away from a static view of history (Kassianova, 2001: 824). It also echoes the warnings of historians who highlight the malleability of history in foreign policy (Grosser, 2002).

The articles gathered in this book indicate the importance of the past in the construction of ECE foreign policy identities. The Soviet or communist era is often mentioned as a common past that is shared by ECE and the Eastern neighbourhood. It is in relation to this past, and in order to overcome it, that ECE countries are willing to share their experiences of transition and EU accession (see the chapters by Made, Kesa, Szczepanik, Weiss, Najšlová, Rácz, Angelescu, and Nachev). In the case of Poland and Lithuania, and also that of Hungary and Romania, the relations of one or more ECE country to specific countries of the Eastern neighbourhood are defined on the basis of a long-term common history. The time of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania is still mentioned by these two countries in their efforts to build stronger links with Ukraine and Belarus. Similarly, Hungary and Romania recall times when they had a larger territory in order to improve their links with Ukraine and/or Moldova. For Bulgaria, its relations to the countries of the Black Sea region represent an important priority of its foreign policy. Plus, as an example of the opposite tendency, the absence of longer historical relations between Slovenia and the Eastern neighbourhood and, to some extent, between Hungary and this region seems to explain why the two countries were not interested in getting involved in the region before their EU accession (see Šabič/Bunič and Rácz in this book).

A possible clash between political and historical identities

According to the constructivist ontology, actors' preferences are shaped along the norms, beliefs and values which constitute their identity (Wendt, 1999). In case a consensual or dominant identity is present, it can imply the adoption of a certain foreign policy role (Maull, 1990). However, as stated above, we consider that identities are not fixed, are multi-layered and can evolve. In the field of foreign policy, they can take the form of conflicting ideologies defended by a plurality of political parties and actors (Drulák, 2006), which can be contradictory and clash (Kořan, 2007; Kösebalaban, 2008). When the consensus on the political *self* and on history is not shared among all the domestic actors, there is larger leeway for reinterpretation and redefinition of the foreign policy identity and priorities. The various political positions may be supported by different conceptions of national history, relations to neighbours or relations to other countries. This is often reflected in the divisions among the political elite, and also in the divisions between the government, non-governmental actors and the public.

Various works on Turkey and Japan very well highlighted the possible conflicts on the definition of foreign policy identities. Kösebalaban, for example, indicates that 'the lack of national consensus in [Turkey and Japan] in regard to their sense of belonging to a geographical location can be traced to an incomplete process of civilizational identity formation marked by ongoing debates about the shift toward modernity and the West at the domestic level' (Kösebalaban, 2008: 6). He argues that foreign policy decisions are made against the background of ideational factors, including identities and historical memory. Foreign policy emerges in the context of clashes among domestic identity groups, and thus national identity needs to be problematised as a contested space in which different interpretations of this identity are expressed and interact with each other (ibid.: 7). Rumelili goes in the same direction when she writes that 'identities are socially constructed, negotiated, and contested' (Rumelili, 2008: 97).

When one looks at East Central European countries, one notices that despite the relative consensus on the norms and values to promote – human rights, democracy, market economy and the EU *acquis communautaire* – there are still lively debates on the way to interpret history and the relations to the Eastern neighbourhood in these countries. This is what the contribution by Szczepanik on the Polish policy towards the East remarkably shows.

While the other articles of this book did not go into such details, the analyses by Made (on Estonia), Rácz (on Hungary) and Angelescu (on Romania) give to understand that such national debates would be worth analysing.

To summarise this part on foreign policy identity, one may state that once their EU and NATO accessions were achieved, the 'new' ECE members have reframed their foreign policies, and the Eastern neighbourhood has become one of their core foreign policy priorities. On one side, EU accession and taking over EU norms implied a redefinition of the political *self*, a 'Europeanisation' of East Central European foreign policies motivated by the 'return to Europe'. But on the other side, politicians have drawn on experiences from the past, the historical *self*, to define and legitimise their own foreign policy and thus participate in and shape EU foreign relations. It is on this basis that solidarity could be expressed.

Solidarity and foreign policy

Solidarity represents one of the forms of expression of foreign policy identities. Like the *self*, it is subject to relative evolution and redefinition. It expresses a sense of belonging (to the same community, ideology, group of thoughts, etc.). But solidarity can also be defined against a specific *other*, may it be a past structure (like the Soviet Union), a country or a group. This *other* does not have to be threatening – it can just be different. The expression of solidarity very much depends, indeed, on which elements of the political *self* and the historical *self* are brought to the political agenda. It is on the basis of these identities that solidarity with other countries and regions can be developed, that a bridge between the *self* and the *other(s)* is made possible. Furthermore, it means that even if foreign policy is generally formulated by the state and its agents, a row of other actors are free to adopt and promote the same or a similar identity and the same or similar ideals. Their activities can be driven in cooperation with the state or in parallel – and sometimes in contradiction – to its action.

The ambition of this publication is not to test theories, but, like in sociology, to follow an inductive path: the contributions focus on different empirical cases, which then allow for some generalisation. They particularly look at the way solidarity allows for the translation of foreign policy identity into foreign policy implementation by investigating the underlying

premises of solidarity (whether it is present in the political and historical *selves*) and their forms of expression (or their absence) in the Eastern neighbourhood.

The first aim of the publication was to start with a constructivist approach. When using a constructivist lens, the authors explore the way the given foreign policy identity was constructed so as to allow (or not allow) for the formulation of a responsible policy. There is indeed a difference between political declarations being made to support democratic processes in a region or a country, and defining this region or country as a priority in a foreign policy strategy and/or actually channelling assistance (via an assistance policy) to that country. In the contributions, solidarity was mostly assimilated to political support and aid policy. Like in their development policy, the EU countries propose to 'help the aid recipients to help themselves', to help the beneficiary countries develop their own values and institutions, or to help them overcome a crisis or a difficult situation. Solidarity is also seen as a way to formulate plans for further engagement and to express the will to include external actors in a(n) ('imagined') community, not only through symbolic support, like EU and NATO accessions, but also through material support. As the European Union represents a specific post-national form of community, it thus remains particularly interesting to investigate how identity and solidarity are shaped and expressed in the foreign policy of its members.

But while the aim of the publication was to start with a constructivist approach, some interesting findings have highlighted the relevance of the rationalist view. Indeed, when looking through the rationalist lens, one may realise that a country could have other, more selfish reasons for expressing solidarity with a group, another country or a region by sending it political, human and material resources. One may consider here, as the sociology of the EU suggests, that rationality is situational and needs to be contextualised (Jacquot–Woll, 2003). Here, the logic is reversed: in this case, solidarity 'helps the EU countries to help themselves'. Expressing solidarity with a region is a way for the EU members to gain some political advantages, enhance their position in the ('imagined') communities they belong to, improve their situation of geographical liminality, solve a conflict or simply strive for economic and material gains. Nevertheless, we think that the one or the other approach does not hinder the fact that solidarity needs to be rooted in a certain form of foreign policy identity. In this sense, our core ontology remains

constructivist: interests remain constrained by the definition of a certain foreign policy role (Aggestam 1999).

We thus consider solidarity as a useful concept for enlarging the scope of the research on foreign policy identity and, at the same time, for better operationalising the links with foreign policy implementation. To summarise, solidarity is considered as a mirror expression of political and/or historical identities, and thus it reflects a norm-following behaviour, but at other times it reveals a more interest-led behaviour. As foreign policy identity is of a dual nature and is subject to various interpretations, one may be able to identify various forms of solidarity or various reasons for the expression (or absence) of solidarity. This is why a comparative approach is needed: we need it in order to see if the given solidarity is being formulated because of a common (historical) identity with a region, in this case the Eastern neighbourhood, because of a common vision of political order (the EU and its norms), because of more strategic reasons like the donor country's positioning vis-à-vis another politically influential country or within a community, or because of some other reasons or a combination of two or more of the reasons listed above.

Thus we argue that using the concept of solidarity not only complements the research agenda on foreign policy identity, but it also allows for the operationalisation of foreign policy identity – as defined in foreign policy concepts and strategies – as it builds a bridge between foreign policy identity and foreign policy implementation. In general, scholars interested in foreign policy identities have neglected the phase of implementation of foreign policies. They may focus on the different actors (opposition, media) who contribute to making a foreign policy identity evolve (Hansen, 2006). Or from a different standpoint, making recourse to a sociology of foreign policy, in analogy to the sociology of European policies (Saurugger, 2009; Saurugger–Mérand, 2010), represents a way to explain the variety of discourses, their positioning in the political sphere and the dominance, at a certain time, of one discourse over another. But while the focus of the post-structuralist approach remains on the text (in the wider meaning of the term), and the focus of sociology remains on the positioning and power relations between actors, one may consider that it remains more fruitful to use theories and approaches as methodological lenses (Kratochvíl–Tulmets, 2010). This means that both constructivism and rationalism can be used as tools to shed light

on the processes observed. They are not used in a separate way, as suggested by Fearon–Wendt (2005), or in a bridge-building approach, like that which is argued for by Adler (1997) or Checkel (1999), but in a complimentary approach (Kratochvíl–Tulmets, 2010). Indeed, because of the approaches' ontological and epistemological differences, each approach poses a different set of questions and thus sheds light on and reveals types of information which another approach would not have explored otherwise.

The formulation of solidarity in foreign policy can thus be apprehended through both the ideational and the rational reasons which are listed in Table 1. On this basis, we believe that solidarity can be expressed both in discourse and in action, and that the action that expresses solidarity can take both symbolic and material forms.

Table 1: Ideational and rational reasons for ECE solidarity with the Eastern neighbourhood

	Definition of foreign policy	**Foreign policy implementation**
Ideational factors	• Political identity (*short term*: ideology, 'Europeanisation') • Historical identity (*long term*: close neighbourhood, legacies of the past)	• Political support, promotion of EU norms and values • Assistance policy (humanitarian aid, democracy promotion, etc.)
Rational factors	• To find a 'niche' in EU policy (to become 'policy makers') • Specific issues: economic, energy issues, etc.	• Definition of EU policies in the Eastern neighbourhood • Assistance policy (technical assistance in trade, energy issues, etc.)

If one wants to go beyond political declarations and speeches in order to make the link between the foreign policy identity (entailed in foreign policy strategies) and implementation, one needs to look at *consistency* in a complementary way (Duke, 1999; Tulmets, 2008). Consistency is understood here as the expression of adequacy and the absence of contradictions between discourse and action. In order to be consistent, the solidarity expressed on the basis of a certain foreign policy identity needs to be followed by symbolic and/or material actions which prove the strength of the policy construction and the sincerity of the engagements. One can look at consistency through the prism of political solidarity, i.e. one can look at the way politicians have

reacted (or have not reacted) bilaterally and multilaterally to some events and the way they expressed (or did not express) consistency with their country's foreign policy identity (for example, in supporting the status of an EU candidate; in showing support during specific negotiations during and after events like the Orange Revolution, the war in Georgia, etc.). One can also look at the political means used to move beyond scarce bilateral material means, like the cooperation of the Visegrád Group, in order to influence the multilateral EU policy in the post-communist neighbourhood. Furthermore, holding the presidency of the European Union might also be a test of the country's capacity to remain consistent with its foreign policy identity and develop further rhetorical means to support this identity.

Looking for consistency necessitates examining whether actors have generally followed the logic of appropriateness or the logic of consequentialism, or whether they sometimes followed one logic and sometimes the other. The first logic is generally defined as 'a perspective that sees human action as driven by rules of appropriate or exemplary behaviour, organized into institutions' (March–Olsen, 2004: 2). In this logic, 'rules are followed because they are seen as natural, rightful, expected, and legitimate' (ibid.). This contrasts with the logic of consequentialism, which insists on the rationality of action as the result of check and balances (March–Olsen, 1998; see also Schimmelfennig, 2001). The logics are not mutually exclusive. As stated in the literature using this dichotomy, they are rather used alternatively to highlight different modes of behaviour (Kratochvíl–Tulmets, 2010).

In complementarity, the search for consistency between discourse and action can be done by confronting discourse analysis (the analysis of speeches) and first hand documents with semi-direct interviews, statistics on aid and trade, and analyses of the media. Triangulation thus allows for checking whether the solidarity expressed in political speeches on the basis of a certain foreign policy identity is complemented by a predominantly constructivist or a predominantly rationalist mode of behaviour, while the solidarity takes the form of symbolic and/or material actions. One can also check if bilateral and multilateral non-governmental activities are consistent with official foreign policy identities and what role(s) they played in promoting geographical and political priorities in the Eastern neighbourhood.

In regard to this issue, Weiss, for example, shows that the Czech Republic's activities in the Eastern neighbourhood have remained rather consis-

tent with the traditional Czech discourse on democracy promotion and human rights, despite the absence of historical boundaries between the Czech Republic and this region. In contrast, Šabič and Bunič highlight the absence of a Slovenian discourse on solidarity towards Eastern Europe, which meant that they had to check for further ideational and rational reasons for the presence of Slovenia's assistance policy and trade in the Eastern neighbourhood. In turn, Rácz mainly analyses the Hungarian policy in the East through the rationalist lens, thus highlighting Hungary's narrow understanding of the neighbourhood in comparison to the EU's understanding of it. Finally, for her part, Najšlová argues that Slovakia has initially followed the logic of consequentialism in order to find its place in the EU, but afterwards it was able to express solidarity with other countries along the logic of appropriateness.

EAST CENTRAL EUROPEAN FOREIGN POLICIES TOWARDS THE EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD: SOME OUTCOMES

The empirical studies gathered in this book, with each East Central European EU member receiving its own study, mainly started on constructivist soil. They have all investigated the link between solidarity and identity in the East Central European foreign policies. The core hypothesis used to explain the East Central European solidarity with the Eastern neighbourhood was that solidarity is defined on the basis of an identity which is dual, as it is composed of a 'first order' political and a 'second order' historical *self*. While the aim was not to follow exactly the analytical framework proposed above so as to leave space for an inductive path, the contributions have made the effort to highlight the relevance of one or several aspects of this framework and thus greatly participated in generating interesting findings on solidarity in foreign relations. It remains an interesting outcome of this research looking at solidarity and identity in foreign policy that the analyses highlighted not only the importance of the (constructivist) logic of appropriateness, as was expected, but also the importance of the (rationalist) logic of consequentialism. This publication thus not only explores the deeper reasons of the East Central European expression of solidarity towards Eastern Europe, but it also complements constructivist approaches to the foreign policy identities of EU members.

The comparative approach has particularly contributed to deconstructing the view of the ECE countries as a homogeneous bloc – as this view is often assumed by the 'older' EU members – by highlighting the fact that the East Central European countries' relations towards the Eastern neighbourhood are defined on relatively different understandings of political and historical identities. Variations (and even clashes) between the dual aspects of an identity can be observed, depending on the political parties in power.

The order chosen for the presentation of the contributions to this edited volume, starting with the Czech Republic and Poland and ending with Slovenia and Bulgaria, was thought to reflect the spectrum of the different degrees of the respective countries' interest in Eastern Europe – that is, we start with the countries most interested in Eastern Europe and then cover countries that have increasingly lower levels of interest in the region until we reach the countries that are the least interested in this region and more keen on developing ties with other post-communist countries, like the Western Balkans.

In the first study, which deals with the Czech Republic, Tomáš Weiss masterly shows that the promotion of human rights and democracy, and the support of further EU enlargements represent the core elements of the Czech foreign policy identity. It is in regard to these elements that the expressions of solidarity with Eastern Europe could be traced on three distinct levels: the level of political solidarity conducted through statements and motions, that of bureaucratic solidarity in the form of financial and other assistance, and that of civic solidarity, which is carried out by non-governmental organisations. This chapter therefore particularly contributes to complementing the understanding of solidarity as a way to operationalise the link between foreign policy identity and foreign policy implementation, as it proposes to look at the implementation at these three distinct though complementary levels of action. When looking at the consistency of the Czech Republic's policies, the chapter concludes that the implementation of the Czech policy towards Eastern Europe, though defined only since the Czech Republic's EU accession, remains rather consistent with the declared foreign policy identity of the country.

In the following chapter, by going into the ideological debates related to the Polish policy towards the East, Melchior Szczepanik highlights the core role played by historical legacies in the foreign policy of Poland. He shows that the ideological heritage from the early 20th century is still present in the definition of the Polish policy towards Eastern Europe and focuses on a romantic and a minimalist understanding of Poland's role in its direct Eastern neighbourhood (Belarus, Lithuania, and Ukraine). He argues that Polish decision-makers have acted in accordance with that historical legacy and consistently privileged the so-called romantic approach. This approach focuses on promoting democracy and market economy in the Eastern neighbourhood and advocates the strengthening of the contacts of the EU and NATO with these countries. Szczepanik thus suggests through his careful analysis of Polish discourse that the feeling of solidarity stems from Poland and Eastern Europe's common historical experience (the legacy of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania, the struggle against communism), which has been an important factor behind the Polish efforts to draw the Eastern neighbours into the European and Transatlantic structures.

Turning to Estonia, Vahur Made maintains that there exist two competing discourses in explaining Estonia's foreign policy towards the Eastern neighbourhood: the EU-centric discourse, which focuses on the place of Estonia in this structure, and the Russia-centric discourse, which views Estonian foreign policy only in terms of the country's relations with Russia. Made argues that Estonian foreign policy motives are gradually becoming more varied and multi-layered, which allows for a departure from the traditional Russia-centric approach. For Estonia, its support to the Eastern Partnership mainly represents a way for the country to find its place in EU foreign policy and promote the EU's values rather than a way to contain Russia's influence in the common neighbourhood. Estonia's solidarity with Eastern Europe remains consistent with this approach, and it is a fact that half of the Estonian development assistance concentrates on the Eastern partner countries.

Katerina Kesa's contribution focuses on the two other Baltic countries, Latvia and Lithuania. She mentions the fact that these two countries tend to define their foreign policy *self* in opposition to the post-Soviet world, and in particular Russia, as the *other*. The countries' EU and NATO accessions represented their main foreign policy goals since the accessions were viewed as means for the countries to lose their position of 'liminality', and since their accessions to these organisations, Russia is no longer so strongly perceived as a direct threat to the two countries' independence. However, it continues to have an indirect influence on the relations of Latvia and Lithuania with the EU and the Eastern neighbourhood. While the involvement of Latvia and Lithuania is clearly motivated by political solidarity (the promotion of EU

and NATO norms and values), their historical solidarity with Eastern Europe is defined in regard to the countries' common fate in the Soviet times and the collaboration among the countries' anti-communist activists. This, for example, explains the current interest of the two countries in supporting the EU and NATO accessions of Ukraine and Georgia, and in transferring their skills and experience to Belarus, Moldova and the South Caucasus. In her chapter, Kesa also makes some distinction regarding the two countries' policy in Eastern Europe. In the case of Lithuania, the past of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania plays a specific role and represents another motivation for the strong involvement of Lithuania in democracy promotion in Belarus. However, Latvia and Lithuania's policy action in terms of concrete assistance projects remains rather modest compared to the strong declarative policy of the two countries in the East.

The Slovak case is also interesting in many aspects. As Lucia Najšlová argues, Slovakia's efforts to shape the EU's Eastern policy have been a blend of solidarity and pragmatism, a permanent renegotiation between the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequentialism. The solidarity dimension has drawn on Slovakia's transition experience and a certain similarity between Slovakia's historical experience (among others, the experience of coming out of communist times and then the Mečiar period) and that of the EU's Eastern neighbourhood. While Slovakia expressed her will to have a democratic and better governed direct neighbourhood, it is only after the country's accession to the EU, like in the Czech case, that Eastern Europe became a foreign policy priority for her. Najšlova underlines the fact that working with the Eastern neighbourhood represents a way for Slovak diplomacy to find its 'niche' in the EU's foreign policy and increase its visibility on the international stage – through the Visegrád cooperation as well. Furthermore, becoming a donor after receiving assistance for several years is a way for Slovakia to regain respect in the international community.

Turning to Romania, Irina Angelescu shows that the country's path of accession to Euro-Atlantic institutions has consolidated the liberal-democratic form of its political identity and had beneficial consequences for Romania's relations with its neighbours, Ukraine and the countries of the Black Sea in particular. The exception to this pattern is Moldova, as historical identity lies at the basis of the Moldovan-Romanian relations and builds the ground for a more specific solidarity. With its EU accession, Romania particularly

supported Moldova's EU perspective, tried to come along with the historical legacies and pending questions in the case of Ukraine, and was particularly keen on promoting a specific EU policy towards the Black Sea given its economic interests in this region. While in the case of Moldova, historical identity plays a central role (logic of appropriateness), the policy towards the Black Sea reflects the dominance of the logic of consequentialism. Angelescu concludes that Romania has in fact been in search of its Eastern vocation in promoting both the Moldovan and the Black Sea issue at the EU level.

For Hungary, Eastern Europe does not represent an important foreign policy priority. András Rácz indeed indicates in his chapter that Hungarian foreign policy is more oriented towards the Western Balkans and that only two countries represent a focus for it in Eastern Europe: Ukraine and Moldova. In both cases, rational motivations which are strongly connected with the Hungarian historical identity and the political goal of protecting Hungarian minorities abroad play a role. He nevertheless identifies a clear policy of solidarity with Moldova, where political independence and the path to EU accession are supported, among others, as a way to counterbalance the difficult relations with Romania regarding the presence of Hungarian minorities in this country. As far as the Black Sea region is concerned, economic and energy-related interests play a significant role in the Hungarian policy towards it. As a result, Rácz very much insists on the logic of consequentialism underpinning Hungarian foreign policy in Eastern Europe, despite the country's official intention of promoting democracy abroad and implementing assistance projects in this field.

In their chapter on Slovenia, Bunič and Šabič show that the focus of Slovenian diplomacy is also less on Eastern Europe than on the Western Balkans. Furthermore, unlike in the cases of the other East Central European countries, the Soviet past and Russia are not perceived as a threatening *other*. There is therefore no strong motivation to counterbalance the Russian influence in the region. It is, however, worth mentioning that despite the absence of historical ties and solidarity with this region on the part of Slovenia, Slovenia's policy in Eastern Europe started to change since its chairmanship of the OSCE in 2005. Moldova has become a priority country of its development policy because of its inclusion in the Stability Pact South-Eastern Europe, among other reasons. Thus, beside Moldova, rational interests seem to dominate in

Slovenia's policy towards Eastern Europe as Slovenia developed economic ties in particular with Belarus and Ukraine.

In the last chapter, Ivan Nachev accounts for Bulgaria's stronger interest in the Western Balkans than in Eastern Europe, as Bulgaria is another country that has such a preference. Similarly to the other contributors, he highlights the importance of EU and NATO accessions as a core foreign policy goal of Bulgaria and the will of the country to support further accessions to these organisations. Like in the cases of Hungary and Slovenia, Moldova represents a priority country of Bulgaria's policy towards the East, and Ukraine is an important economic partner for it. The role of Bulgarian minorities on Ukrainian soil is one of the reasons for Bulgaria's maintaining of good relations with Ukraine, which refers to the existence of a certain common historical legacy between the two countries. However, like in the case of Romania, the Black Sea region remains the focus of Bulgarian diplomacy in the East. At this level, economic and energy-related interests are clearly expressed and therefore they highlight the logic of consequentialism in the promotion of the European Black Sea Synergy. It therefore seems that the Bulgarian solidarity towards Eastern Europe, if any such solidarity actually exists, remains rather declarative.

Starting with a rather constructivist research agenda, the contributions have shown that not only constructivist elements, but also more interest-based reasons are relevant to understanding the East Central European engagement in the post-communist region of Eastern Europe. The East Central European EU members are not only interested in seeing the region situated at their Eastern borders evolve politically and economically so as to reduce their position of liminality. They also see the development of policies towards the East as a way to improve their place within the European Union, to shape their own role in the EU and thus to find a 'niche' for themselves in the field of foreign policy. It is therefore not surprising to see the important role that East Central Europeans have played in the development of the European Neighbourhood Policy as well as the Eastern Partnership and the Black Sea Synergy in particular. Furthermore, holding the EU presidency represents an important moment in which the presiding country can move the EU agenda in the region forward, even after the Lisbon treaty. It was, indeed, under the Czech EU presidency that the Eastern Partnership was launched at the initiative of Poland and Sweden. Also, it was under the Polish presidency that

the second Eastern Partnership summit took place and further measures were taken to improve the EU's relations with the region.

One should not, however, neglect the use of other formats like the Visegrád Group as a way to have some interests better represented in the EU and other multilateral frameworks. More and more, the Visegrád meetings help the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia in preparing for the EU summits in order to come up with common views in the field of foreign policy. The Visegrád Fond is also mobilised to enhance its cooperation with Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Georgia in various sectors. In addition, non-governmental actors try to develop their own actions in this matter, with or without public funds, even if their means remain rather modest.

By gathering together specialists on foreign policy and the Eastern neighbourhood from East Central European countries, this publication thus not only seeks to provide valuable research on the foreign policies of the East Central European EU members, but it also opens the way for a field of investigation which remained rather unexplored until now, at least in its comparative dimension.

ENDNOTES

[1] This book draws on a special issue of the journal *Perspectives* and it was coordinated in the framework of a post-doctoral research project on East Central European participation in the European Neighbourhood Policy (the EFSPS, the 'European Foreign and Security Policy Studies' programme). I would like to thank the Volkswagen Foundation for its generous support as well as Petr Kratochvíl, Mats Braun, Kai-Olaf-Lang, and Vladimír Handl for their comments during the related workshop organized at the Institute of International Relations in Prague on 28 June 2011. I would also like to thank the anonymous reviewers of the special issue, Laure Delcour and Martin Dangerfield as well as the authors of the chapters for their comments and support.

[2] In order to go beyond the debate on the existence of Central Europe and to avoid the term used at the EU level, 'Central and Eastern Europe', which aggregates Central Europe and Eastern Europe, we prefer to speak of East Central European states. The ECE countries comprise the countries of the Visegrád group – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia; the three Baltic States – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania; and the countries of the Balkans – Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia, which acceded the European Union in 2004 and 2007.

[3] For a review of the literature on the ENP, see Kratochvíl–Tulmets, 2010.

[4] For further definitions on 'Europeanisation', see also Radaelli (2000) and Caporaso–Green-Cowles–Risse (2001).

Czech Foreign Policy Identity and Practice towards Eastern Europe: From Ignorance to Assistance

Tomáš Weiss

Eastern Europe belongs to the declared foreign policy priorities of the Czech Republic. This chapter analyses to what extent this prioritisation is based on the Czechs' understanding of themselves and whether it is reflected by their concrete actions. It follows the approach outlined in the introductory chapter (Tulmets) and compares the declared foreign policy identity of the Czech Republic with the actual foreign policy practice. This approach builds on the constructivist idea that actors' preferences are influenced by the values and beliefs that constitute their identity (Wendt, 1999). These values and beliefs can have both historical and political origins, which are based on the actors' specific narrative about their own history and their ideas about what is right and wrong (Marcussen et al., 1999).

The key attribute of a constructed foreign policy identity is that it is not given. It can evolve in time with a change in the historical narrative or the adjustment of political and constitutional norms of behaviour, which may lead to a re-interpretation of the actor's own role in international relations (Maull, 1990). It can also evolve as a result of an external pressure. One of the most studied external pressures in recent years has been the pressure of the European Union (EU) membership. The EU influences the member states' identities through both channels. Through written as well as unwritten norms it shapes the notions of what should and should not be done. The embargo on the arms trade with China might serve as an example of a written norm, whereas the practice of pre-negotiating positions in the EU group prior to meetings of larger multilateral fora represents unwritten norms. At the same time, the conduct of a common foreign policy influences the actors' understanding of themselves through actions taken in the past in a longer run. Although it is probably less visible in this matter than in some other policy areas, Europeanisation does have an impact on the foreign policy identities and practices of the member states (cf. Manners–Whitman, 2000; Tonra, 2001).

The Czech Republic acceded to the European Union in 2004 together with seven other post-communist countries. As a member it started to influence the European policy. However, the EU had already influenced Czech structures and policies during the accession negotiations, and the modifications continued after the country's entry into the EU. The Czech Republic also adjusted its bilateral foreign policies to the new situation. This chapter investigates the foreign policy identity of the Czech Republic and its change related to the EU membership. The identity is analysed on the basis of two main sources: the discourse of the elites on 'who we are' and 'what we believe in' and its translation into foreign policy priorities as defined in the key policy documents with a particular focus on the Eastern EU neighbourhood.

There is, however, another source that shapes who we are besides what we declare ourselves to be. Therefore, the second part of this chapter focuses on the actual policy of the Czech Republic and asks to what extent the practice supports the image created by the discourse and foreign policy documents. It focuses on the Czech Republic's expressions of solidarity with Eastern Europe, which can be traced on three distinct levels: the level of political solidarity conducted through statements and motions, that of bureaucratic solidarity in the form of financial and other assistance, and that of civic solidarity, which is carried out by non-governmental organisations. The last part compares the declared identity with the foreign policy practice and concludes the chapter.

INVESTIGATING CZECH FOREIGN POLICY IDENTITY

Foreign policy identity based on European values

After the 1993 split of Czechoslovakia, the independent Czech Republic and its elites continued in the discourse established right after the end of the Cold War. With the exception of the Communist Party and right-wing extremists, all the mainstream Czech parties have identified with Western Europe and the West in general. If the accession to West European economic, security and

political organisations was considered the primary objective of Czech foreign policy, it was seen not only as an interest-based action, but also as a confirmation of the West European identity of the Czechs.

Recent Czech/Czechoslovak history was conceptualised as a story of Czechoslovakia's forced and artificial separation from the region where the nation and the state had always belonged. The future accession was thus seen as a logical result of Czechoslovakia/the Czech Republic catching up with the luckier nations and 'returning to Europe'. This was clearly stated in the memorandum that the Czech government attached to its EU membership application in 1996. The government emphasised that the Czech area had been a 'natural and distinct part of the West European civilisation area' for centuries (Government of the Czech Republic, 1996). As a result of this dominant conceptualisation, the European values, such as 'democracy, respect for human rights, civil society and open market economy' (Havel, 1994), were taken for granted by the Czech elites with no need for any further debate on them. They were, after all, considered 'traditional' Czech values as well. The accession process was considered not as a transfer of values, but as a transfer of institutions (cf. Topolánek, 2009a). The debate focused more on the practical aspects of the integration, especially the integration into the European Union, such as the transfer of sovereignty. The discussion on the EU mirrored the argumentation existing within the Union itself, focusing on the question of the relationship between the EU and the national level, the broadening of the Community method to other areas, and the level and extent of regulation in various areas (cf. Marek–Baun, 2010: chapter 2).

The key foreign policy documents have reflected this (re-)internalisation of European values. The First Republic[1] was used routinely as the point of reference for the values and standards that were abandoned but had to be reintroduced (cf. Zieleniec, 1993). The Foreign Policy Concept of 1999 clearly stated that the Czech Republic 'recognise[d] the heritage and values of the European civilization' (Government of the Czech Republic, 1999). These basic values were defined as the general international law, rule of law and the principle of inalienability of basic human rights.

From the very beginning the Czechoslovak and Czech foreign policy was shaped by former dissidents. The most influential among them was the President Václav Havel, who had a profound impact on Czech foreign policy – occasionally he even almost or actually overstepped the formal competencies

of his office, such as during the Iraq crisis in 2003, when he signed the letter supporting the military solution without consulting the government (cf. Král–Pachta, 2005). Many former dissidents started to build their careers in diplomacy after the end of the Cold War – the first Czechoslovak foreign minister, Jiří Dienstbier, might be one example, and Alexandr Vondra, who is the current minister of defence and was also a long-time official of the foreign ministry and a foreign minister, might be another. Václav Havel's influence and vision have persisted even after he finished his terms because his associates from the President's office, e.g. Vondra or the current foreign minister, Karel Schwarzenberg, have still continued to occupy the key positions for foreign policy-making.

As a result, the Czech foreign policy has elaborated on values in key foreign policy documents rather than just recognising the European affiliation. In general, human rights and democracy were the two key values that Czech conceptual documents identified as 'principles' of foreign policy (Government of the Czech Republic, 1999; 2003). The general notions have been developed into concrete partial issues by the newly established specialised Department for Human Rights and Transition Promotion at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which the Czech Republic should support in its work related to target countries. These partial issues were the issues of civil society and civil rights defenders, media and access to information, rule of law and good governance, election processes, and equality and non-discrimination (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010). The Czech emphasis on human rights has been reconfirmed by the country's successful candidacy for membership in the UN Human Rights Council in 2011.[2]

Another key issue of the Czech foreign policy identity, which developed only after the country joined NATO and the EU, was the support for further enlargement of both organisations. The support for an 'open Europe' (Šlosarčík et al., 2011: 90–94) stems from the understanding of the membership, especially the membership in the EU, as a stabilising factor. There has also been a significant amount of support on the part of the general public for further enlargement. The strong consensual policy has not been hampered in its results by the fact that the two biggest political parties differ in their understandings of what influence the enlargement might have on European integration in general. Whereas the Social Democrats have simultaneously supported the widening and the deepening of the integration process,

the Civic Democrats have often advocated its widening but not its deepening with the assumption that the more members there are, the more difficult further political integration would be.

The evolution of foreign policy priorities

The focus on good neighbourly relations and transatlantic relations

The Czech Republic has always regarded itself as a middle-sized state in the centre of Europe. The Czech identity has been influenced by the fact that the Czech lands played a part in many European conflicts. Stability in Europe is therefore seen as 'the basic precondition for providing security in the Czech Republic' (Government of the Czech Republic, 1999).

Two Czech foreign policy priority areas of the 1990s resulted directly from the need for stability – namely the good neighbourly relations and the Euro-Atlantic integration. The former was at least partly considered not only as a priority on its own terms, but as a precondition for achieving the latter. Meanwhile, issues in in the Czech Republic's relations with neighbours were largely solved through bilateral negotiations (the Czech-German Declaration) or internal developments (the end of the Mečiar era in Slovakia). Some issues still remained even after the main problems were solved, but their impact on foreign policy was limited (the issue of the Temelín power plant with Austria) (cf. Handl, 2009; Šepták, 2009).

Stability in Europe has been primarily associated with the two main organisations in Western Europe – NATO and the EU. From the very beginning, the Alliance has been considered the more important of the two in political and security terms. This stemmed from the historical memories of 1938/1939 and 1968. The NATO membership (as well as the alliance with the US) has been understood as a guarantee that such events would not happen again and as the ultimate disentangling from the Russian sphere of influence. The EU, on the other hand, has been understood more in economic terms than in terms of security. The emphasis on NATO was caused by the existence of the mutual defence clause in the Washington Treaty, as the Maastricht treaty lacked such a clause. However, the pro-American stream in Czech foreign policy has prevailed even after the EU developed its own capabilities and later turned into a security organisation (Král et al., 2008: 70f).

Despite occasional disagreements about particular (albeit important) issues, such as the position of the Czech Republic on the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia or the level of its participation in the Iraq War in 2003, the Czech prioritisation of the NATO and EU accessions was based on a broad consensus between the mainstream political parties. The consensus, however, lacked a proper substance. As soon as the Czech Republic accomplished the declared foreign policy objectives in 1999 and 2004 respectively and was surrounded by military and political allies for the first time in its history (including its history as a part of Czechoslovakia), the political elite started to lose interest in foreign policy, as it seemed that the problems in this area had all been solved at that point. Currently, only very few people deal with foreign and security policy in the Czech political parties. The political debate focuses on domestic issues, and foreign policy is sometimes even used as a chip in the domestic political fight. The most visible evidence of the lacking interest has been the process of updating key foreign policy documents: Both the last security strategy and the foreign policy concept from before the EU accession were adopted in 2003, with the concept planned only for the years 2003–2006 (Government of the Czech Republic, 2003a, 2003b). But it was only in 2011 that a new foreign policy concept was adopted (Government of the Czech Republic, 2011) and a new security strategy was drafted. Consequently, the Czech foreign policy has been largely conducted by foreign ministry officials, and most politicians become interested in it only if a foreign policy topic becomes politicised and has a potential impact on domestic policy (cf. Weiss–Řiháčková, 2010).

Changing priorities after the EU/NATO accessions

Due to the lack of conceptual documents, the priorities of the Czech foreign policy after the EU accession were formulated in less specific terms in several related documents – in particular, in the governmental programmes (cf. Government of the Czech Republic, 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2009; 2010a). In general, all the post-accession governments have pledged that the Czech Republic would be an active member of the European Union and NATO. The programmes put a strong emphasis on conducting foreign and security policy through these organisations together with the partners. The priorities have remained rather general on most issues, mentioning only the 'usual suspects',

such as providing security, stability and prosperity, without specifying the concrete steps to be taken. However, there are two exceptions that are clearly underpinned by the values framing the Czech foreign policy – the promotion of democracy and human rights and the support to EU enlargement. In 2007 the government even combined the two and stated that human rights and democracy would be supported in 'Europe and its closest neighbourhood in particular' (Government of the Czech Republic, 2007).

Whereas the promotion of human rights and democracy carried on from the 1990s, the support to the enlargement appeared in the Czech foreign policy, rather logically, only after the country joined the EU. It soon developed into one of the key Czech issues in EU foreign policy and even became a chip in the domestic/internal EU debate. The ratification of the Lisbon Treaty was advocated by the Czech government for the sake of enlargement to a large extent. The then prime minister Topolánek defended the Treaty in the Czech Senate, saying, 'The failure of the Lisbon Treaty would mean the ultimate end to our key priority, which is the further enlargement of the Union' (Topolánek, 2009b).

Eastern Europe was largely missing from the radar of the Czech foreign policy until the mid-2000s. As it was separated from the region by other Central European countries, namely Slovakia and Poland, the Czech Republic focused on the relations with the neighbours, the accession process and the Balkans, which was considered the main territorial priority (cf. Kratochvíl–Tulmets, 2007). This ignorance is nicely illustrated by the fact that in an overarching review of the Czech foreign policy until 2004, the researchers from the Prague Institute of International Relations overwhelmingly focused on Czech-Russian relations in their chapter on Eastern Europe. In the same chapter, Ukraine and Belarus were mentioned in passing only and the remaining post-Soviet countries did not appear in the text at all (cf. Votápek, 2004). Eastern Europe became a priority area of Czech foreign policy only in the run-up to the Czech EU Council Presidency (Tulmets, 2008).

The particular focus on the Eastern neighbourhood became one of the Presidency's priorities – the concrete form of engagement became clearer after the publication of a Polish-Swedish initiative for an 'Eastern Partnership', which the Presidency endorsed. With the establishment of the Eastern Partnership, the Czech Presidency aimed at three specific objectives: First, the framework was to provide for good working relations with countries which

could not be realistically expected to join the EU any time soon. Second, it was to facilitate the cooperation with those countries on energy security, which had been very high on the agenda of both the EU and the Presidency due to the experience with the Russian-Ukrainian disputes. And lastly, the Presidency aimed at re-balancing the European Neighbourhood Policy, which had swung towards the South with the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean in 2008 (Placák, 2010).

The focus on Eastern Europe combined well with the other area of Czech interest – the democracy and human rights promotion. During the Presidency preparations the government clearly stated that the Czech support to democratisation and transition in the post-Soviet republics builds on the country's 'own historical experience with a non-democratic regime and the process of political and economic transformation' (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2007: 15). As a result, the final Presidency programme, which identified the role of the EU in the world as one of three key priorities, followed the line of the general Czech foreign policy with an emphasis on the closest neighbourhood, relations with Russia and the US, and the promotion of human rights, democracy and development (Czech Republic, 2009).

If an interest in the Eastern neighbourhood was missing during the 1990s, that has surely not been the case recently. Countries of the Eastern Partnership are listed as priority countries of both the Czech development policy (Moldova and Georgia) and the transition promotion policy (Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia). The focus on this region is comparable only with the emphasis on the Balkans, where both policies target a number of countries as well (Government of the Czech Republic, 2010b; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010). The latest events in North Africa, the so-called Arab Spring, have naturally deserved the Czech Republic's attention. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has correspondingly extended the transformation support to the Southern neighbourhood, especially to Egypt. This *ad hoc* reaction, however, has not been translated into a mid- and long-term re-orientation from the East to the South (at least for the time being). The focus on the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe has actually been re-confirmed in the latest foreign policy concept (Government of the Czech Republic, 2011).[3]

To sum up, after the stabilisation of the Central European region during the 1990s and the accession of the country into NATO and the European Union, the Czech foreign policy formulated its foreign policy priorities largely in

accord with its identity. Two main issues have crystallised as pivots of the Czech foreign policy identity – EU and NATO enlargement and promotion of democracy and human rights. Both build on the specific Czech historical experience in the 20th century. Especially in the European Union the Czech Republic has been very active in both democracy promotion and defence of human rights as well as in supporting the regions that have a perspective of EU membership, the Balkans in particular. In the view of the Czech Republic, Eastern Europe has gained importance only during the 2000s, but it has been recognised as one of the geographical priorities for the Czech foreign policy. As such, it was also prioritised during the Czech EU Council Presidency. Despite the development in North Africa, Eastern Europe and the Balkans have remained the main foreign policy concerns of the Czech Republic.

IMPLEMENTATION IN THE EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

A recent shift in the expression of political solidarity

The practical implementation of the Czech policy vis-à-vis the Eastern partners reflects the position of the agenda in Czech foreign policy in general. The Czech Republic was not particularly interested in the fate of these countries till the mid-2000s, and as a result it did not show much effort in the mutual relations or express much solidarity towards them before then. The shift in the Czech position can be shown on various particular cases, such as the introduction of the visa obligation, the Czech behaviour during the Orange Revolution, the 2008 war in Georgia or the Czech contacts with the Belarusian opposition.

The Czech Republic's approach to introducing visas in its relations with the Eastern countries is a case in point of its neglect of this dimension of foreign relations during its accession negotiations. The introduction of a visa regime for nationals travelling from Eastern European post-Soviet countries was one of the accession obligations for all the Central European countries. The Schengen membership requires a common visa regime and as all candidate states were then expected to abolish their internal borders control in the future, they already had to introduce a part of the Schengen *acquis* prior to their accession. Unlike Poland or Hungary, the Czech Republic did not pay

much attention to the worries of the Eastern partners and the complications this step might cause for the mutual relations and trade exchange. It introduced the visas very early, already in 2000, and it did not show any effort to limit the burden that the visa obligation imposed on the affected populations. In contrast, Poland and Hungary introduced the visas as late as possible – in 2003 – and accompanied the step with mitigation measures, such as increasing the number of consulates or not charging a fee (Kaźmierkiewicz, 2005).

The Czech reaction to the Ukrainian Orange Revolution was also rather limited. The Czech Foreign Minister, Cyril Svoboda, expressed his distress with the second round of Ukrainian presidential elections and declared his belief that the development in Ukraine would have an impact on the EU-Ukrainian relations (Svoboda, 2004). Otherwise, the Czech Republic kept a low profile, which was later recognised and criticised even within the foreign ministry itself (Vondra, 2006). This can also be put into contrast with the active behaviour of the Polish and Hungarian representatives, and such comparisons lead to declarations about a two-speed Visegrád approach to the East (Zielys, 2009). Finally, the Czech Republic abolished the visa fees for Ukrainian citizens, but it did so only after Ukraine had abolished the visa obligation for the whole EU in 2007.

The Czech-Ukrainian relations have been marked by a complex set of factors. On one hand, Ukraine was largely ignored by the Czech foreign policy for a long time and remained in the shadow of the Czech-Russian and Czech-Western relations. On the other hand, the Ukrainians living in the Czech Republic soon became an important immigrant community there. Lately, they have even become the largest foreign population in the Czech Republic with over 130,000 residents in 2009 (i.e. about 30% of the foreign population) (Czech Statistical Office, 2010). The number of illegal migrants from Ukraine is probably even higher, and Ukrainians have become a common work force in some segments of Czech industry, especially in construction work. As a result, the Czech approach to Ukraine and Ukrainian immigrants has always oscillated between the rather cautious position of the Ministry of Interior (and also of the population) and the position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which initially ignored Ukraine but later came to support it (cf. Král, 2007; see Tulmets, 2010 for the recent evolution of the issue). The internal developments in Ukraine cause further confusion, though. A recent diplomatic controversy between Ukraine and the Czech Republic over an alleged case of

espionage has been interpreted as a result of internal turf wars and/or Russian pressure and has not led to any open doubts about the Czech support to a European option for Ukraine (cf. ČTK, 2011). However, it has not helped to clear up the Czech position any further.

In 2008, the Czech reaction to the war in Georgia was much stronger. The foreign ministry declared its 'deep concerns about the aggravation of the situation and the outbreak of armed clashes in Georgian South Ossetia' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2008). Prime Minister Topolánek declared in a similar vein that the Czech Republic supported the territorial integrity of Georgia (Lidové noviny, 2008). The Czech government also sent humanitarian aid (mainly medical material) soon after the outbreak of violence and opened a special call for reconstruction projects. The extraordinary reconstruction and development aid to the value of 20 million Czech crowns in 2008 and 70 million in 2009 was already approved by the government in the second half of August 2008 (Government of the Czech Republic, 2008). Apparently, the Czech diplomacy also examined the potential for a peacekeeping engagement of NATO or the EU in Georgia during the conflict (Týden, 2011).

The concrete and quick expression of solidarity by the Czech government during the Georgian war was significantly more solid than, for example, its expression of solidarity in the case of the Orange Revolution. And this holds despite the fact that none of the Czech politicians travelled to the country or declared any intention to do that. The condemnation of Russia was also supported by most of the Czech media, which did not hesitate to compare the 2008 war to the 1968 invasion in Czechoslovakia, emphasising the disproportion between the two parties and the abuse of power by a regional hegemon (cf. Šimůnek, 2008). The image of a country entrapped in the Russian sphere of influence against its own will resonated strongly in the Czech society. However, the Czech foreign policy was not able to maintain a unified voice on Georgia (as has been the case with many issues in recent years). President Václav Klaus criticised Georgia for unleashing the conflict soon after the atrocities started in August 2008 (Klaus, 2008). This unilateral step by the President was criticised strongly by the Prime Minister on the grounds that it blurred the position of the Czech Republic before the views of the outside world, and it was stressed that the foreign minister was responsible for the foreign policy of the country (Hospodářské noviny, 2008).

Belarus has been an object of Czech attention much longer than the other East European countries. The Czech declarations of solidarity with the Belarusian opposition or the imprisoned journalists in Belarus were at first limited to the non-governmental sector (Hospodářské noviny, 2002). The minority Social Democratic government, although supporting human rights nominally, focused more on economic issues and attempted (rather unsuccessfully) to re-conquer the lost markets in the East. Since 2002, however, the critique of President Lukashenka and his regime became a standard feature of the Czech foreign policy, with the first crisis occurring in September 2002 when Mr. Lukashenka was not granted a visa to attend the NATO summit in Prague. The decision was justified by the argument that Belarus did 'not protect and respect basic human rights and freedoms' and that the Czech Republic did not want the Belarusian President to 'legitimise his position in Belarus' (Lidové noviny, 2002).

Ever since then, the Czech Republic has actively supported the Belarusian opposition, both through declarations of solidarity and by direct action. The line between the governmental and the non-governmental sector blurred in the case of Belarus: Civic Belarus, an NGO focusing on democratic transition in Belarus, was founded by, among others, former President Václav Havel and the director of the biggest Czech (and Central European) NGO People in Need, Tomáš Pojar. Pojar later became the First Deputy Foreign Minister and provided for even more coherence between the official and the NGO position in regard to Belarus. This can be illustrated by the activities of Czech diplomats during and after the 2006 elections in Belarus. The Czech Republic financed a translation of a UN report on human rights violations in Belarus into Belarusian, and the Czech diplomats distributed the brochure in Belarus, which caused a diplomatic fallout (Mladá fronta Dnes, 2006). After the elections, which were thought to be rigged, the Czech foreign ministry sharply increased the funds available for transition promotion in Belarus (Bartovic, 2008: 40f). Furthermore, Belarusian opposition leaders are regular participants at the yearly Forum 2000 conference founded by President Václav Havel (Forum 2000, 2011).

The Czech Senate has paid a lot of attention to the situation in Belarus. During the fifth and sixth term (2004–2008) it maintained the 'Temporary Commission of the Senate for identifying persons detained, imprisoned or

persecuted in other ways by the Belarusian regime for political reasons' and in the following term it maintained the 'Permanent Commission of the Senate for Democracy Promotion in the World'. The latter discussed the situation in Belarus several times and called on the Czech government, for example, not to invite President Lukashenka for the 2009 Prague Eastern Partnership Summit unless concrete steps were taken in respect to human rights protection in Belarus (Senát ČR, 2009). In 2011, the Senate condemned the crackdown on a demonstration in Minsk after another rigged presidential election and called for the release of all detained persons (Senát ČR, 2011). The Czech executive's support to the Belarusian opposition goes beyond declarations, though, as was made evident when the opposition presidential candidate of 2010, Aleś Michalevič, was granted asylum in the Czech Republic in March 2011 (Právo, 2011).

Besides its bilateral declarations and contacts, the Czech Republic has actively engaged the Eastern neighbourhood in multilateral formats, notably in the Visegrád Group with Poland, Slovakia and Hungary. The V4 address the developments in Eastern Europe on a regular basis. They have consistently supported the EU membership aspirations of Ukraine and Moldova. Also, the Czech foreign priorities, especially the emphasis on human rights and democracy promotion, have been reflected in the Czech V4 presidency programmes of 2007 and 2011 (Czech Republic, 2007; 2011).

Furthermore, the Czech Republic was elected a member of the UN Human Rights Council in 2011. The Czech foreign ministry considered this a 'sign of international recognition of its [the Czech Republic's] human rights activities that also brings with it an obligation to continue in this policy'. In their human rights activities, the Czechs want to focus on issues connected to democracy, such as support to civil societies or freedom of press. Geographically, the Czech Republic will deal with two problem countries in particular – Belarus and Burma/Myanmar – in the Council (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011a; 2011b).

A consistent assistance policy

The Czech Republic has been shaping and re-adjusting its foreign assistance policy for a long time, mostly on the basis of internal reviews and external recommendations from international institutions such as the OECD. The last

reform took place between 2008 and 2010 (Sládková, 2011). At the moment, most of the foreign assistance is concentrated under the administration of the foreign ministry. There are two main channels of the Czech foreign assistance – development assistance and transition promotion. The former represents the standard development assistance and humanitarian aid that all EU states provide to developing countries. The latter is a tool of the Czech programmes and activities related to human rights and democracy promotion, and it finances programmes and activities that should support human rights and democracy in countries in transition.

The Czech official development assistance was impaired by a lack of focus. There were twenty priority countries identified in the development assistance concept of 2002 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002: 7), but this high number was reduced by later reforms – to eight in 2006 and further down to five in 2011 (Sládková, 2011: 6). The countries in the Eastern Neighbourhood have always been present among the Czech priorities, although none of them are, strictly speaking, developing countries. In 2002 it was Ukraine that was prioritised by the Czech development assistance, and since 2006 Moldova has remained a target country. For the period 2011–2017, Georgia has been identified as a 'project country', which means a second order priority country after the priority countries proper (Government of the Czech Republic, 2010b).

A focus on countries in the wider neighbourhood has been visible in the Czech development assistance. This means that many distant countries, such as Angola, Yemen or Zambia, are left out of the current programme despite their poverty. Moreover, the priorities identified in the documents do not always fully correspond with the practice. Ukraine has been one of the top ten recipients of the Czech official development assistance every single year between 2000 and 2008. Plus, other Eastern European countries occasionally appeared in the list as well (see Table 1).

In recent years, Eastern Europe has become an ever more important target of the Czech official development assistance at the expense of other regions. Moreover, the volume of assistance delivered to Eastern Europe surpassed the aid for the Balkan countries for the first time in 2009. Also, the aid aimed at the countries of the Eastern Partnership sharply increased in 2009, which is even more remarkable when we consider that the total bilateral aid shrank due to the economic crisis (cf. OECD, 2011).

Table 1: EaP countries among the top 10 recipients of Czech ODA (according to the volume of assistance)

2000	Ukraine
2001	Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia
2002	Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia
2003	Moldova, Ukraine
2004	Ukraine, Georgia
2005	Ukraine
2006	Ukraine, Belarus
2007	Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus
2008	Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia
2009	Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova

Source: author on the basis of Adamcová, 2006; Rozvojové středisko, 2007; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009; OECD, 2011.

The transition promotion policy of the Czech Republic was officially established in 2005. It had been preceded by some assistance programmes for Iraq in 2003–2004 that proved useful, and consequently, the government heeded the lobbying by NGOs and decided to found a permanent tool for transition and democracy promotion (cf. Bartovic, 2008: 34). The policy has been predominantly focused on the priority areas of the Czech foreign policy – the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe – but several other countries were added to the policy (Iraq, Cuba, Burma/Myanmar). Four East European states are considered target countries for the Czech democratic promotion – Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010). Their share of the dedicated resources has been rising in the last years with a clear predominance of Belarus, which attracts about 20% of the programme's budget. It should be mentioned in this respect that the government has kept or even increased the budget despite the crisis and austerity measures in all sectors, including the foreign ministry.[4]

An active pool of non-governmental organisations

The Czech non-governmental sector is very active in development assistance and transition promotion alike. There are several platforms for NGOs that co-

ordinate and provide support for their activities. They also simplify the contacts between the NGOs and the government. Two major Czech NGO platforms should be mentioned in this respect: the Czech Forum for Development Cooperation (FORS) focuses on development assistance whereas the Association for Democracy Assistance and Human Rights (DEMAS) mainly deals with transition promotion. The two platforms' members are numerous (37 in the case of FORS and 11 in the case of DEMAS) and engage actively in various parts of the world.[5] As these NGOs, especially in the case of transition promotion, channel a large part of the Czech official budget, their activities follow to some extent the priorities of the Czech foreign policy. The biggest NGO among them, People in Need, runs special programmes for Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova within its human rights section and also conducts development projects in a number of East European countries, e.g. Ukraine, Georgia or Armenia. However, other organisations also greatly deal with Eastern Europe, providing training for journalists, local administration, or local NGOs (for example, the Europeum Institute for European Policy or the Association for International Affairs). Prague is also the seat of the Policy Association for an Open Society (PASOS), which is a network of NGOs from Central and Eastern Europe providing a platform for joint projects of Central and East European organisations.

Other Czech institutions have occasionally taken an active part in expressing solidarity with Eastern European countries as well. An example might be the initiative of the Charles University in Prague which established a special programme for students persecuted after the 2006 Belarus presidential elections. These students could continue their studies in Prague; the university recognised their previous study records and provided them with special scholarships (cf. iForum, 2006).

CONCLUSIONS

The Czech Republic's foreign policy identity is based on two basic notions: the support to human rights and democracy and the support to further enlargement of the Euro-Atlantic institutions. The former has been present in the Czech discourse since the beginning of the 1990s. With the accession to the European Union, the emphasis on human rights and democratisation did not

change, but just included the EU as another platform for its pursuance. The latter, however, appeared quite logically only with the Czech membership in the respective organisations. At first, it focused just on the rest of Central Europe and the Balkans, but it soon incorporated the countries of the Eastern neighbourhood as well. Since the mid-2000s the Czech Republic has paid ever more attention to the post-Soviet countries, and the Czech EU Council Presidency contributed to this trend significantly.

Whereas the human rights and democracy promotion can be considered a policy largely based on values and the Czechs' narrative of their recent historical experience, the focus on enlargement and the Eastern Partnership is underpinned by a mixture of values and interests. On one hand, the enlargement and assistance to the neighbouring countries is understood as a good thing *per se*. The European Union's main purpose should be the unification and stabilisation of the continent, which quite naturally means that the Balkans and Eastern Europe should be included. On the other hand, the enlargement and especially the Eastern Partnership have been justified in the Czech Republic by rational arguments, including arguments related to potential profits for the Czech Republic, as well. These include arguments related to the potential benefits that can be gained from a stable neighbourhood and, in recent years, arguments related to the particular focus on energy cooperation and boosting the energy security of the EU.

The practice of foreign policy and the expressions of solidarity largely correspond with the declared foreign policy identity of the Czech Republic (see Table 2). Both the political and the bureaucratic/financial solidarity to the countries of the Eastern Partnership have been on the rise. There is also a strong activity on the part of the non-governmental sector in this matter. Furthermore, there is a visible shift of the Czech attention to the areas in the neighbourhood at the expense of distant countries such as those of sub-Saharan Africa. This can be interpreted as values slowly giving way to interests, but the finding should not be too conclusive. After all, some very distant countries still remain key priorities of Czech governmental programmes, such as, for example, Cuba, Burma/Myanmar or Mongolia, and the shift has been rather recent. As a result, the trend might be reversed quite easily. Much will also depend on the bilateral relations with the particular countries and their readiness to accept the Czech solidarity. Also, the recent diplomatic controversy between the Czech Republic and Ukraine over the alleged espionage

or the Yulia Tymoshenko trial might indicate a shift in the Ukrainian position which could influence the Czech policy in the future, even though this has not been the case so far. The Czech discourse has understood the post-Soviet republics as countries with a similar historical experience as the Czech Republic. It is to be seen to what extent this identification with the Eastern Partnership countries makes sense and to what extent it is flawed.

To sum up, there is a clear link between the Czech Republic's foreign policy identity and its foreign policy practice. The EU membership has not changed the Czech focus on human rights and democracy, but it has modified the Czech foreign policy's understanding of the neighbourhood. Instead of focusing on the relations with the immediate neighbours, which are all members of the EU, the Czech Republic re-focused its attention on good neighbourly relations with the countries bordering the EU. The long-term attention paid to the Western Balkans has been supplemented with a greater focus on the Eastern Partnership countries. The question remains, however, whether the Czech Republic is not just projecting its own re-discovered identity onto countries that will have to discover their own self and their own priorities.

Table 2: Czech foreign policy identity and the Eastern Neighbourhood

	Self	***Other(s)***	**Solidarity with other countries based on identity**
Political identity (short term)	Human rights and democracy promotion Support to further enlargement of NATO and the EU	Authoritarian regimes, especially of a communist/post-communist character Regional instability in wider Europe	Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia
Historical identity (long term)	Member of the (West) European civilisation Small state, object of power games	Regional powers abusing their power – (Soviet) Russia, Germany	Georgia

Source: author.

ENDNOTES

[1] The First Republic is a label used for the Czechoslovakia of 1918–1938, which was significantly more democratic and liberal than most of its neighbours.
[2] There has been some discussion on to what extent the Czech foreign policy is lately receding from the unconditional emphasis on human rights and democracy promotion to what may be labelled as a 'greater balance' (Drulák, 2009a: 377) or even double standards (cf. Drulák, 2009b: 359). Official documents do not, however, acknowledge such a shift in any respect.
[3] In practice, however, the Czech foreign policy still suffers from occasional 'hiccups' that are caused by insufficient communication between actors and probably also by the continuing low priority given to foreign policy by politicians. In October 2011, for example, the Czechs were represented only by a foreign minister at the Eastern Partnership summit organised by the Polish Presidency due to President Klaus being ill at the time and the Prime Minister being unable to substitute for him on short notice. The country was thus represented at a very low level compared to the other EU member states at the summit, even though the Eastern Partnership is still considered the foremost foreign policy priority of the Czech Republic.
[4] In 2011, CZK 50 million were available for transition promotion projects compared to the CZK 45 million for the preceding years (Interview with an MFA official).
[5] For an overview of their activities, see the websites of the two organisations – www.fors.cz and www.demas.cz – and the websites of their respective members.

Another 'Mission in the East'? The Polish Policy Towards the Eastern Neighbourhood

Melchior Szczepanik

One of the main challenges for Poland when it succeeded at freeing itself from the dominance of the Soviet Union in 1989 was to create an independent foreign policy in an unstable post-Cold War environment. As the Soviet Union collapsed, new states appeared in Poland's neighbourhood, built by nations with which Poland shared a common past, as well as some historical animosities. This chapter examines the influence of the Polish historical and political identity on the creation of the Polish policy towards the eastern neighbours. In line with the idea behind this book, another objective of the analysis is to ascertain to what extent the concept of solidarity can help one to fathom the Polish activities in the East.

The Polish policy is analysed with reference to two opposing viewpoints that were most often referred to as romanticism and minimalism in the intellectual debate. The former preached an active support for democracy in the newly independent former Soviet republics in the name of a solidarity stemming from the countries' common history and the strategic necessity to create a barrier against Russia's tendency to re-establish its domination over the territories of the former Soviet Union. Minimalism, in the meantime, argued that a swift democratic transition and a creation of a Western-style civil society in countries such as Belarus and Ukraine were highly unlikely. Thus the tendency to challenge the influence of Russia in these territories in the name of the Polish historical mission in the East would be counterproductive. An overview of Polish relations with the eastern neighbours shows that the policies carried out by consecutive Polish governments were usually much closer to the romantic approach. This chapter argues that the domination of the romantic approach may be treated as an illustration of the significant influence

that historical and political identity has had on the choices made by Polish decision-makers.

The chapter consists of three parts. First, the historical context is briefly described in order to show the main elements of the historical legacy of the Commonwealth. The second part depicts the debate between the romantics and the minimalists and discusses the development of the Polish policy towards the Eastern neighbours, focusing on the period following the NATO and EU accession. Finally, the foreign policy implementation is analysed in order to verify to what extent actions followed declarations in Polish foreign policy. Apart from academic work devoted to Polish history and foreign policy, the analysis in the chapter is based upon the foreign policy statements presented each year to the lower chamber of the Polish parliament by ministers for foreign affairs.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE POLISH EASTERN POLICY

The territories of today's Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus once constituted a single political unit – the Commonwealth. It was created as a result of an alliance between the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The first act of union between the two states was signed in the late 14th century, and its immediate cause was a common defence against the State of Teutonic Knights. Several other pacts between them followed before an act of union that united them into a single state was signed in 1569. As a result of the Union, the nobles of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania 'polonised' the new state, meaning that the Polish political system, culture and language dominated in it (see Davies, 1981; Zamoyski, 1987).

Undoubtedly a great power in Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth found a rival in Russia. The confrontation between them – as a Polish scholar claims – 'was not only about the political dominance over the lands of today's Belarus and Ukraine, but also about their religious, cultural and ethnic identity' (Nowak, 2009: 134). Until the mid-seventeenth century, the Polish-Lithuanian state managed to keep the ambitions of Moscow at bay, but due to the Commonwealth's internal difficulties, the balance of power started to shift. A century later, although still an independent state, the Commonwealth was already dominated by its ever more powerful neighbour. In 1795, the Commonwealth ceased to exist, as it was partitioned by the neighbouring powers with the major part of its territory being taken over by Russia.

In the second half of the 19th century, on the territories that once belonged to the Commonwealth, the modern Lithuanian, Belarussian and Ukrainian nations developed – to a certain extent in opposition to Poles and Polishness (Łossowski, 1991: 6–15). After the First World War, as the Tsarist Empire was collapsing and the nations dominated by it could fight for independence, Poland entered into territorial disputes with Lithuania, in the north-east, and Ukraine, in the south-east, over lands that were ethnically mixed. Two cities epitomise these controversies. Vilnius (Wilno), the historical capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, was inhabited by a large number of Poles and it was an important centre of Polish cultural life. It was also the birthplace of the most eminent statesman of the newly independent Poland, Józef Piłsudski. Thus, it was disputed by Poles and Lithuanians. The city of Lviv (Lwów) was similarly disputed by Poles and Ukrainians. Piłsudski tried to find a solution to this complex situation by advocating the idea of a federation between Poland and its eastern neighbours who had just liberated themselves from Russian dominance. This federative conception would be a recreation of the Commonwealth, adapted to the circumstances of the beginning of the 20th century. Piłsudski's strategy was challenged by that of Roman Dmowski, a leader of the conservatives, who doubted the potential of the new nations in the East. He perceived Russia as the main partner for Poland in the East. Piłsudski's approach can be perceived as strongly rooted in the tradition of the Commonwealth, for which the East was the main direction of expansion and Russia was the main rival. In contrast, Dmowski's approach refers to the Middle Ages, when the Polish state was threatened by the German empire. In this approach, Germany is perceived as the main threat to Poland, while some sort of cooperation with Russia is believed to be possible on the basis of the two countries' common Slavic roots. The echoes of both approaches were manifest in the Polish debates on foreign policy in the East after 1989.

With nationalist currents on the rise and Russia regaining strength after the October Revolution, Piłsudski's federative strategy did not succeed. Lithuania managed to create an independent state, but her relations with Poland were cold, as the majority of the Lithuanian political elites were wary of Polish dominance (Łossowski, 1991). The Belarussian and Ukrainian struggles for independence failed. Plus, the relations between the Polish administra-

tion and a large Ukrainian minority living in Poland were complicated. During the Second World War, clashes broke out in the territories that were ethnically mixed.

The Polish inhabitants of territories that today belong to Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine, which previously belonged to the Commonwealth and then to the Second Polish Republic, suffered particularly during the Second World War. They were subject to brutal repressions by both the Stalinist and the Nazi regime. Those who survived were forced to leave their homes as the eastern parts of Poland were incorporated into the Soviet Union. As a result, the territories lost by Poland after the war gained a quasi-mythological significance in the Polish perception of history – that of a paradise lost.

The heritage of the Commonwealth and the Second Polish Republic (1918–1939) constitutes an important part of the Polish political and historical identity. In the times of the Commonwealth, Poland was a transmission belt of Western culture and civilisation to the East (Najder, 2009: 174; Nowak, 2009: 134). The Polish political system, based upon a weak central authority and a strong participation of the gentry in the decision-making and administration of the country, was often contrasted with the eastern despotism developing in Russia and the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, the difference between the Commonwealth and its eastern neighbours was not only political, but religious as well. As the Commonwealth was the western most bridgehead of Catholicism, the citizens of the Commonwealth were convinced of their particular role as defenders of the faith. In the eyes of a significant part of the Polish elite, Poland and Poles had a mission to fulfil in the East. As Mróz argues,

> in the national identity of citizens of the Polish-Lithuanian state [i.e. the Commonwealth] and in [the] Polish mentality, the tradition of great power missionism – a particular civilising mission in Eastern Europe, not only in the strictly cultural dimension, but political as well – was deeply rooted. [...] it persists in a modified and modernised form, contributing to shaping our national identity and [the] group mentality of the Polish people (Mróz, 2009: 16–17).

All in all, the historical heritage of the relations between Poland and its eastern neighbours is clearly a complex one. The common past and

the heritage of the unique political undertaking that was the Commonwealth with its democratic, multicultural and integrationist character provide a good basis for cooperation. However, while the Commonwealth has certainly been a source of pride for the Poles (bar perhaps the period of its decline in the 18th century), the eastern neighbours could have mixed feelings about it, as it could be perceived to incarnate Polish dominance over the territories that became the independent states Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine. The aspirations to statehood of the Commonwealth nations often put them in a situation of conflict with Poland. These conflicts flared up in the first half of the 20th century, and their upshots were still present at the end of that century, creating a considerable obstacle to good neighbourly relations.

EASTERN NEIGHBOURS IN THE POLISH FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGY

Establishing relations with the remodelled neighbourhood

When at the beginning of the 1990s the Republics that constituted part of the Soviet Union declared that they would seek independence, Poland faced the challenge of adopting a policy towards them. Its reaction was cautious. On the one hand, further emancipation from Soviet totalitarism could not but enthuse Polish decision-makers, most of whom were former dissidents; on the other hand, they were also aware that too vehement a support for Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic States could bring about complications in the relations with the Soviet Union/Russia. For Poland, the top priority at that time was to negotiate a calm divorce with the former hegemon and thus dismantle the system of Soviet domination (the Warsaw Pact, the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance – Comecon, the Soviet military presence in Poland). The collapse of that system could not be taken for granted, as the unstable situation in the Soviet Union gave Poland reasons to fear that Moscow could try to re-establish its zone of influence. Given these circumstances, Poland adopted the 'double track policy' (Kuźniar, 2009b: 85–86) – a strategy that assumed that Poland would establish relations with the Soviet republics that were moving towards independence while maintaining at the same time friendly relations with the Soviet Union.

Some reservations provoked by the Polish government's desire to maintain correct relations with the Soviet Union notwithstanding, the reaction of Poland to the emergence of the new states at its eastern border can be described as unambiguously positive. Even though each of the new neighbours controlled territories that were Polish before the Second World War, no territorial claims appeared. When adopting a strategy towards the new eastern neighbours, Poland followed the path chartered by Jerzy Giedroyc and Ludwik Mieroszewski – two influential émigré political thinkers who already in the 1970s argued that the fully independent Poland, which would emerge after the inevitable collapse of the Soviet Union, would have to accept the postwar borders and establish good relations with the independent Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine (Dębski, 2009: 187–188; Mróz, 2009: 23). This approach, clearly stemming from the precepts of Piłsudski's federative strategy, seemed anathema to the majority of the Polish exiles, who would not accept a Poland without Wilno and Lwów. But in the early 1990s, when the predicted shrinkage of the Soviet zone of influence finally happened, it influenced to a significant degree the Polish political elites' attitude towards the remodelled eastern neighbourhood. Poland declared its willingness to establish friendly relations and encouraged the neighbours to follow the path of political and economic reforms.

In the meantime, the situation in the East developed in several different ways. Lithuania succeeded at its political reforms and quickly adopted a firmly pro-Western course, while Belarus – soon after securing independence – rejected democracy and remained in a state of self-inflicted isolation. Ukraine, because of its strategic importance and the continuing struggle between pro-Western and pro-Russian forces, constituted the focal point of Polish diplomacy in the East.

While Poland attached a lot of importance to creating friendly and strong relations with its neighbours in the East, its top priority was integration with the Western community through membership in the EU and NATO. The ideas of creating an independent political bloc in Central Europe led by Poland and Ukraine were quickly discarded (Menkiszak, 2002: 222). The long-term goal of achieving EU and NATO membership as soon as possible always trumped any other foreign policy considerations. Poland, for instance, largely ignored the Ukrainian attempt to join the Visegrad Group in 1991 out of fear that forging overly close ties with the still unstable Ukraine could make the EU and

NATO bid more difficult (Zięba, 2010: 195). However unwilling it was to be overly burdened by close ties with Ukraine, Poland was nonetheless active in drawing it towards the West and strongly promoted Ukrainian membership in the Council of Europe and the Central European Initiative (Fedorowicz, 2011: 192).

In 1993, the representatives of the post-communist left who won the parliamentary election announced a change in the foreign policy towards the East: improving the relationship with Russia was to become the top priority, while in contacts with the post-Soviet republics the focus was to shift from politics to economy. A return to a more active policy came quicker than expected. Surprisingly for some, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, a former member of the Communist Party who became president of Poland in 1995, attached a lot of importance to strengthening the ties between Poland and Ukraine (Mróz, 2009: 27). He forged a strong personal relationship with his Ukrainian counterpart, Leonid Kuchma, and they both stressed the strategic nature of the contacts between the two countries (Fedorowicz, 2011: 191–194).

Romantics and minimalists

The main dilemmas faced by the Polish decision-makers in relation to the Polish policy in the East are well portrayed in a debate that developed at the beginning of the 21st century among experts and intellectuals. Two analysts from the Centre for Eastern Studies (a Polish think tank) questioned what they perceived as an erroneous policy in the East (Sienkiewicz, 2000; Olszański, 2001). While they did not question the Polish support for independence of Belarus and Ukraine, they judged the efforts aimed at drawing these states into the Western community as largely pointless. This conclusion was provoked by a number of observations. Both researchers pointed out that it was unlikely that a political and economic transition similar to the one that occurred in Central Europe could take place in Belarus and Ukraine in the near future. Moreover, the majority of the political elites and citizens in both countries obviously wanted to maintain a close relationship with Russia. Thus, Poland should accept the fact that these countries will remain fundamentally different from the new democracies in the Central and Eastern Europe in terms of their political and economic regimes.

Due to the limited resources at its disposal, Poland could not hope to be able to significantly influence the internal situation of these countries. Any attempts at creating a political bloc designed to counterbalance the Russian influence were doomed to fail and could only entail a worsening of the relationship with Moscow, which was clearly the major player in the region. Both analysts also claimed that a more pro-Russian position on the part of Ukraine and Belarus should not be seen as a geopolitical catastrophe for Poland, as the advocates of the Giedroyć/Mieroszewski approach would have it. The title of one of the two articles could be translated as 'National interest comes first' (Olszański, 2001), thus suggesting that the policy of drawing Belarus and Ukraine into the Western camp at all costs represented an approach that was rooted more in history than in a balanced analysis of the Polish interest at the end of the 20th century. Both authors suggested adopting what they called a 'minimalist' approach based upon a clear definition of Polish interests that would be followed by a choice of realistic goals that could be achieved by Polish diplomacy instead of objectives that were closely related to the romantic vision of Polish involvement in the East but were no more than wishful thinking. These assumptions were to a certain extent a development of Dmowski's convictions that the 'new nations' in the East were not strong and mature enough to be reliable allies and that Russia should be the main point of reference for any Polish foreign policy strategy.[1]

The position defended by Sienkiewicz and Olszański has been referred to as 'minimalist', 'pragmatic', 'positivist' and/or 'passivist'. Their adversaries were described as 'romantics', 'idealists' or 'activists'. They displayed a strong belief both in the likelihood of democracy and market economy taking root in Belarus and Ukraine, and in the capacity of Polish diplomacy to accelerate such changes (Pomianowski, 2001). They also emphasised the continuing importance of the central tenet of the Giedroyc/Mieroszewski approach: a Belarus and a Ukraine that are fully independent – and closely linked to Poland – are the key to protecting Poland against a revival of Russia's imperialist ambitions. Many arguments were put forward by the scholars and practitioners as they – more or less categorically – questioned minimalism by looking at it through the prism of questions of history and identity. Aleksander Smolar[2] recalls the words of Jerzy Giedroyc, who claimed that 'Poland lies in an area that is defined not only by geography, but by history as well' (Polska Polityka Wschodnia 2001: 4). To this, Smolar himself adds

the following: 'History plays a part in the definition of the future. We have to think about the future in strategic terms, but the past inevitably co-defines our policy' (ibid.). Zdzisław Najder[3] argues that 'Poland, together with Belarus, Lithuania and Ukraine, created the Commonwealth. We belong to the common European cultural area because we once constituted a single state [...]. Therefore one of our political objectives should be to maintain physical contact with peoples and lands that used to constitute our cultural cradle' (ibid.: 6–7). Finally, Jerzy Kłoczkowski[4] declares that 'our [i.e. Polish] identity is also the common tradition of the Commonwealth, in which Belarus, Lithuania and Ukraine have a place. These states could not exist without the heritage of the Commonwealth, and neither could Poland. [...] The Poles have a moral obligation. If there are people who call themselves Ukrainians, Belarussians or Lithuanians, [...] they have to have the conviction that we will always give them a helping hand. We cannot abandon them whatever the circumstances because they are a part of us, of our common heritage. Their independence is in our interest' (ibid.: 21).

The views quoted above exemplify the romantic approach to the eastern neighbourhood. The romantics do not reject cold realist thinking in terms of national interest – as Pomianowski stressed, Ukraine succumbing to the Russian influence would be catastrophic for Poland – but their declarations show how strongly their analysis is framed by Poland's historical experience and identity. The Polish support for the sovereignty of Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine is not only the outcome of strategic calculation, but a 'moral obligation' as well. The historical experience finds reflection in the feeling of solidarity towards the inhabitants of these countries, who – just like the Poles – are descendants of the citizens of the Commonwealth, experienced a communist dictatorship and had aspirations of regaining full sovereignty. All those reasons are behind the romantics' tendency to actively support the transition in the East. But the element of solidarity is largely absent in the declarations put forward by minimalists, who tend to emphasise that decades of Sovietisation have created considerable differences between the societies of the former Soviet republics and Poland, and – consequently – a swift democratic transition in the former is highly unlikely. The minimalist and romantic approaches described above can be treated as two ideal types between which the consecutive Polish governments developed their strategy. However, the following part, depicting Polish policy after NATO and EU accession, dem-

onstrates that most of the time the Polish strategy developed according to the romantic approach.

Polish policy after the NATO/EU accession: championing the cause of the Eastern neighbours

Poland's memberships in NATO and the EU have not influenced the perception of the main goals of Polish diplomacy in relation to the eastern neighbourhood. Poland continued to encourage partners in the east to follow the path of transition to democracy and market economy, while at the same time, in its contacts with Western European countries, Poland persistently stressed that countries such as Belarus and Ukraine wanted to integrate with the West and were able to implement the necessary reforms. In his exposé in March 2002, foreign minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz declared, 'we will do our best so that after enlargement Europe is not divided into the better and the worse off, the members of the club and the excluded. Therefore, we will be advocating the deepening of the relationship between the EU and our Eastern neighbours' (Cimoszewicz, 2002).

Membership in NATO and the EU gave Poland a much stronger position to realise its ambitions in the East (Kuźniar, 2009a: 181). It was not left to its own devices anymore, and it could contribute to shaping the policy of two powerful political alliances. An active policy in the East was also perceived by Polish politicians as a way of strengthening their position within the EU – Giedroyc's claim that the Polish position in the West will depend on Poland's influence in the East clearly had many followers. Seeking to show its value for the EU and find a niche in the realm of common foreign policy, Poland focused its efforts on achieving the position of an expert on the question of the eastern neighbours. The foreign minister of Poland summarised the country's ambitions in the following way: 'it is high time the decisions and actions of the EU – and some member states in particular – in this realm [relations with the eastern neighbours] were based on solid grounds and rational knowledge about Russia, Ukraine and other countries of Eastern Europe. We are ready not only to share our knowledge, but also to participate actively in the adoption of appropriate decisions' (Meller, 2006).

While EU membership gave Poland a stronger position, new opportunities opened up because of the political changes in the East. In November 2003,

the Revolution of Roses in Georgia brought to power political forces which declared a willingness to strengthen their country's ties with the Western community. A year later, similar transformations took place in Ukraine. The Orange Revolution and its leader Viktor Yushchenko put Ukraine firmly on a pro-Western course. These changes seemed to have negated the minimalists' doubts regarding the likelihood of a quick economic and political transformation in the post-Soviet zone. In Poland, the Orange Revolution was widely perceived as a turning point in Ukraine's move to the West and the beginning of a wider process of changes in the post-Soviet area (Longhurst and Zaborowski, 2007: 70; Fedorowicz, 2011: 206). Polish President Aleksander Kwaśniewski, when referring to the Orange Revolution, repeated one of the tenets of the Giedroyc/Mieroszewski line of thinking: 'Russia without Ukraine is better than Russia with Ukraine' (Szeptycki, 2010: 296). It seemed that the romantics' dreams were to become reality.

Polish diplomacy seized that opportunity and vigorously supported the integrationist aspirations of Georgia and Ukraine. When Minister of Foreign Affairs Daniel Rotfeld presented his priorities to the lower chamber of the Polish parliament, in the first ministerial exposé after the EU accession, he started with the need to build a strong Polish position in the EU. After that came his declaration that 'as a member of NATO and the EU, we will be advocating a new opening in the relationship between the West and Ukraine. [...] In particular, we will call for the EU to upgrade its relationship with Ukraine to the level of a strategic partnership with prospective membership, and for NATO to grant Ukraine the Membership Action Plan' (Rotfeld, 2005).

In autumn of 2005, the conservative party Law and Justice won the parliamentary and presidential election. Both the president, Lech Kaczynski, and his brother, Jarosław Kaczynski, who became prime minister, were advocates of an active policy in the East and critical of Russia's role in this area. The determination with which the Kaczynski brothers advocated the Ukrainian membership in Western organisations is best demonstrated by the fact that they are sometimes described as stronger proponents of the integration of Ukraine than the Ukrainians themselves (Fedorowicz, 2011: 77). After the dispute between Russia and Ukraine about the deliveries of gas, the issues of the political consequences of control of energy resources took centre stage in the debates about the eastern neighbourhood. In reaction, President

Lech Kaczynski organised two summits with participation of leaders from some EU countries (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) and the eastern neighbours (Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova and Azerbaijan) to discuss the ways of ensuring stable and secure access to energy sources by creating a Baku – Gdańsk supply line (Szeptycki, 2010: 304–305). The president and the government led by his brother vociferously protested against the Nord Stream pipeline project that was to join Russia and Germany via the Baltic Sea. Polish politicians argued that by opening a possibility of direct transfer of gas to Western Europe, Russia gained an even stronger position towards Ukraine and Poland – the main transfer countries. Radosław Sikorski – defence minister in the Kaczynski government – called the project 'a new Ribbentropp-Molotov Pact' (Fedorowicz, 2011: 149).

The following government led by Donald Tusk, which was created after the anticipated election in 2007, was expected to adopt a more pragmatic approach that would be closer to the minimalist viewpoint. Indeed, the new prime minister adopted a more conciliatory policy towards Russia. A few months after taking office, he visited Moscow (before going to Kiev), and later he revoked the Polish veto that blocked the negotiations of the new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Russia. The differences between Tusk's approach and that of the Law and Justice party were most manifest during the war in Georgia in August of 2008. When hostilities broke out, President Kaczynski (accompanied by the presidents of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine) flew to Georgia and, at a rally of support for Georgian President Miheil Saakashvili, accused Russia of provoking the conflict.[5] Meanwhile, a statement issued by the Polish prime minister's office was much more cautious and did not include an unequivocal assessment of the events.

While the era of the Kaczynski brothers can surely be described as the apex of romantic thinking, Tusk's actions – even though they were certainly more pragmatic and less confrontational – cannot be seen as a definitive move away from the romantic strategy. Tusk made an effort to improve Poland's relations with Russia, but he did not modify the Polish position on two issues that constituted the core of the divergence: Poland's readiness to accept parts of the American Missile Defence installations on its territory and its unequivocal support for the eastern neighbours' European and Transatlantic aspirations. Despite considerable opposition from some member states and the increasingly chaotic political situation in Ukraine, Minister for Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski was vehemently calling for a Membership Action Plan – a programme designed to help countries wishing to join the Alliance – to be granted to Georgia and Ukraine at a NATO Summit in Bucharest in April 2008. The following statement pronounced by Radosław Sikorski when reporting on his activities in the parliament demonstrates the strength of the romantic element in the Polish foreign policy strategy:

> […] Poland, just as 600 years ago it became a reference point and a model for our Eastern neighbours, and for our brother, the Ukrainian nation, in particular. Then, in the Jagiellonian era, the Commonwealth promoted standards of freedom and tolerance, being the magnet holding together through centuries the multiethnic mosaic of elites from our region. That is why we believe that the legacy of the Union of Lublin will not be fulfilled until our Eastern European brothers, aspiring to EU membership, realise their ambitions (Sikorski, 2008).[6]

The more pragmatic approach to the romantic strategy was visible in the efforts of the Tusk government to gain a more resolute backing of the EU for its activism in the east. Together with Sweden, Poland prepared a project called the 'Eastern Partnership' (EaP), which was designed to boost the relations of the EU with the six countries of the eastern neighbourhood. The proposal gained the status of an EU project. The importance ascribed to the EaP by Polish decision-makers shows a certain evolution of the romantic thinking. While Giedroyc stressed that Poland's standing in the West will depend on its position in the East, the Polish authors of the EaP seemed to be convinced that the mechanism works the other way round – Poland's position within the EU enables it to be more effective in the east.

The overview of Polish policy towards the eastern neighbours in the period following the adhesion to NATO and the EU shows that the consecutive governments and presidents adhered to the romantic strategy. With their attempts to mobilise a wider alliance in the eastern neighbourhood, with Poland at the helm (the Georgian war, energy policy), the Kaczynski brothers can be called model romantics. Meanwhile, the Tusk government, with its attempts to find some sort of *modus vivendi* with Russia and its manifest conviction that Poland can do little without the backing of the EU, made some conces-

sions to minimalism while remaining faithful to the key romantic principle of a democratic mission in the East.

Political and historical identity as driving forces of the romantic strategy

The analysis of Poland's policy towards its eastern neighbours after 1989 shows that the consecutive Polish governments tended to follow the precepts of the so-called romantic strategy rather than the minimalist one. The triumph of romanticism – which is closely related to the historical heritage – over minimalism – trying to break with certain historical dogmas – suggests that Poland's political and historical identity significantly influenced the way in which the majority of the decision-makers perceived the Polish interest. Some statements made by Polish politicians in charge of foreign affairs and intellectuals dealing with these matters demonstrate how identity influenced the definition of political aims in this area. The romantic thinking perceived the situation of modern Poland as very similar to that experienced by the First and the Second Polish Republic: the eastern neighbours were natural allies, and it was Poland's particular mission to draw these countries towards the West and, at the same time, protect them against Moscow's imperial ambitions.

When describing the driving forces behind the Polish policy in the East, next to the desire to ensure the country's security, Zdzisław Najder mentions 'the desire to ensure the continuity of [the] Polish cultural identity which for at least seven centuries has been tied to the lands that are outside Poland's borders today' (Najder, 2009: 173). His analysis emphasises that the calculation of the costs and benefits of the policy choices made by Polish leaders was strongly influenced by a particular identity that included a very strong emotional link to the lands that used to be Polish and the nations with which Poland once shared a state. Polish leaders felt responsible for helping those nations to follow the political path that, in their view, was the only right one.

The impact of the historical identity was highly reinforced by that of the political identity. It is important to bear in mind that the leaders of the democratic opposition who shaped the Polish foreign policy after the transition had spent large parts of their lives fighting for democracy and human rights

in Poland. Therefore, promoting similar changes in the neighbourhood, especially in the states that, like Poland, had to suffer communist regimes, was an obvious choice for them. It is thus manifest that both the political identity – a strong commitment to the ideals of human rights and rule of law – and the historical identity – a determination to act in accordance with the legacy of the Commonwealth – dictated a strong engagement in the name of political independence and democracy in the eastern neighbourhood (cf. Table 1).

Table 1: Polish foreign policy identity and the Eastern neighbourhood

	Self	***Other(s)***	**Solidarity with other countries based on identity**
Political identity (short term)	Political consensus on defence of human rights, democracy and market economy	Authoritarian Soviet past Russian international strategy perceived as neo-imperialist in Poland.	Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia
Historical identity (long term)	Values defended by the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania Affinity with the lands and populations that were once part of the Commonwealth.	Russia	Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine

The concept of solidarity that is the focus of attention for this book is useful for the analysis of the Polish case. The romantic conviction that democracy and market economy can take root in the east and that Poland should actively promote transition stems from a common sense of belonging to the world of Western civilisation. The proponents of the romantic approach are convinced that the legacy of the Commonwealth left a lasting trace in the societies of Belarus and Ukraine. It is, in their view, an obligation of Poland to help this element of the Western identity develop in those countries. The 'brother nations' and Poland not only share a common past but face a com-

mon threat as well – that of Russia's policy to dominate its neighbours and former satellites.

In contrast, the minimalist position constituted a break with the tradition of the Commonwealth. It assumed that due to their strong Sovietisation, the societies of Belarus and Ukraine were considerably different than that of Poland. The element of solidarity was largely absent in this view – Bartłomiej Sienkiewicz even argued that the Polish eastern border would probably become the 'border between different worlds' (2001: 12). From this perspective, it was equally unreasonable to believe that Poland could significantly influence the situation in these countries. Minimalism emphasised that Poland did not have the means to pursue a policy of a mission in the east, and much less so to confront Russia in this area.

The strategy of promoting democracy, especially in the Eastern neighbourhood, but also worldwide, offered Poland a chance to express its historical and political identity and at the same time establish a strong position for itself in international relations. After 1989, Poland, due to its demographic potential and its status of the largest country among the former Soviet satellites, could harbour ambitions to play a significant role in European politics. Its military capabilities and economic strength were modest, however, so Poland decided to use the history of its fight for freedom as a trump card in international politics. Since its record of its successful struggle against communism and its transition to democracy and market economy was its strength, Poland could play an important role as a promoter of democracy, highlighting its own example and convincing other countries, in the immediate neighbourhood and beyond, to follow this path.[7] 'Our centuries-long tradition of struggling for freedom and independence and – in particular – our experience of successful transformation constitute a rich political know-how, giving us the right to focus on the issue of human rights and the rights to democracy and free market', argued Foreign Minister Stefan Meller (Meller, 2006). 'Human rights protection and the promotion of the rule of law and democracy have become a passion of ours', declared his successor, Radosław Sikorski (Sikorski, 2008: 12).

FOREIGN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Analysts and practitioners give a mixed assessment of the implementation of the Polish policy towards the eastern neighbours. While Polish politicians were usually eager to stress the importance of the bilateral relations, the real cooperation rarely matched their ambitious declarations. Dariusz Rosati, minister for foreign affairs between 1995 and 1997, declared that 'a good opening [of relations] was not followed by more far-reaching undertakings. In fact, our policy barely went beyond declarations' (Polska Polityka Wschodnia, 2001: 13). Scholars present similar views, even referring to the term of office of Aleksander Kwasniewski, who often emphasised the 'strategic relationship' between Poland and Ukraine, as a case that supports such views. A case in point is the problem of energy supply. In 1993, Poland signed a deal with Russia to build the Yamal pipeline, which would transport gas to Western Europe through Belarus and Poland (Fedorowicz, 2011: 196–197). That deal weakened the position of Ukraine as a transit country. Later, Poland discussed closer cooperation with Ukraine in the area of energy. The projected Odessa–Brody–Gdańsk pipeline was a project that was supposed to strengthen the position of Ukraine vis-à-vis Russia by enabling it to import energy from other countries. At the same time it would open the way to exports of energy from the Caspian area without the involvement of Russia. However, the Polish part of the pipeline was never constructed.

The progress of the economic cooperation was slow, with bilateral trade and investments being very moderate in comparison to the declarations. Fedorowicz claims that the limited attention paid to developing an economic cooperation with Belarus when opportunities for it arose was a particular mistake considering the fact that Belarus's deepening economic problems were an important factor for the rise of Lukashenko and, in due course, that country's move away from its western orientation (Fedorowicz, 2011: 289). As for Ukraine, in 2011, it was only the thirteenth most important commercial partner of Poland (Kaca–Lada, 2011: 19), which, considering the geographic proximity, the size of Ukraine and especially the political declarations emphasizing the importance of the relationship, can be considered as rather disappointing.

Poland's visa regime is often evoked in the literature as an example of a policy implementation that did not match the corresponding declarations. The more demanding standards related to issuing of visas and border control, which were related to the Polish adhesion to the Schengen area in 2008, provoked chaos in the Polish consulates in Ukraine and at the crossings (Fedorowicz, 2011: 208). The government was also criticised for not trying to apply for the transitional periods that were provided for in the Schengen regime and taking a long time to conclude the Agreement on Local Border Traffic that allowed visa-free travel for people living close to the border (ibid: 2009; Szeptycki, 2010: 308). The Agreement entered into force only in July of 2009, while Hungary and Slovakia concluded their agreements with Ukraine much earlier.

Sometimes the good intentions declared by the highest authorities were not entirely shared by those at lower levels. The city council of Lviv for a long time obstructed renovation works at the Cemetery of Eaglets, which commemorates young Polish volunteers who fought with the Ukrainians for the control of Lviv in 1918. In 1999, when an official opening of the cemetery was planned with participation of the presidents of both countries, a diplomatic scandal was just barely avoided. The inscription on the tomb of the Polish soldiers was changed at the last minute to one whose content was unacceptable for Poland. After that event the authorities of Lviv resisted the pressure of the Ukrainian ministry for foreign affairs and consistently opposed the opening of the cemetery. Ukrainians, for their part, often called for a strong condemnation of Operation Vistula, during which, in 1947, around 140 thousand Ukrainians were forcefully resettled. The fact that the reconciliation promoted by the governments and presidents took some time to take root in the Polish society is exemplified by the results of public opinion polls that showed a negative image of Ukrainians in the Polish society (Copsey, 2009: 9). Only the Orange Revolution brought changes in this respect. The rallies of support for Ukrainian democrats that were organised in Poland left a visible trace in the growing sympathy for the neighbour in public opinion polls (Longhurst–Zaborowski, 2007: 66–67). The Orange Revolution also helped to surmount the obstacles of history. The Eaglets Cemetery was opened in 2005 by Presidents Kaczynski and Yushchenko. One year later, both presidents unveiled a monument in Poland dedicated to the Ukrainians killed by Polish paramilitary groups in 1945.

Despite the shortcomings of the Polish strategy and the problems described above, it should be emphasised that on many occasions the Polish diplomacy proved that its support for the independence and democracy of the eastern neighbours did not stop at declarations. As mentioned in the previous parts of this chapter, Poland supported Ukraine's candidacy to such organisations as the Council of Europe and the Central European Initiative. Once these first aims were accomplished, Poland attempted to anchor its neighbour more firmly in the West by stressing its eligibility for NATO and EU membership. In 1997, at a Madrid Summit that confirmed the first NATO enlargement into Central and Eastern Europe, Poland was instrumental for the conclusion of the Declaration of Partnership between NATO and Ukraine that opened the way to closer relations between the Alliance and Poland's neighbour. Later, Poland consistently lobbied in favour of granting Ukraine and Georgia MAP. Its efforts were not fully successful, but it gained an important declaration of the Alliance that Georgia and Ukraine 'will become NATO members' (NATO, 2008: point 23).

Similarly, even before its formal accession, Poland had been calling for the strengthening of relations between the EU and the countries that were to become its new eastern neighbours after the 2004 enlargement. Over the years Poland persistently emphasised that the differences between the southern and the eastern neighbourhood made it necessary to conceive two separate approaches instead of a single one. One of the most fundamental differences, according to the Polish point of view, lay in the possible future membership of the Eastern neighbours. 'East of our borders we are dealing with *European neighbours*, while on the southern flank – in North Africa and the Near East – we are dealing with the *neighbours of Europe*. It is a fundamental differentiation', argued the Polish foreign minister (Sikorski, 2008, emphasis in the original). Poland called for the inclusion of Belarus in the neighbourhood policy, and in the case of Ukraine it argued that the prospect of membership needed to be clearly stated (Fedorowicz, 2011: 72–79; Natorski, 2007).

A symbolic support for the Orange Revolution

The most poignant demonstration of the Polish commitment to the objective of maintaining Ukraine on its pro-Western course was the support lent to the Orange Revolution. In November 2004, Viktor Yanukovych, a candidate

advocating closer cooperation with Russia, won the Ukrainian presidential election. However, international observers and a large number of Ukrainian citizens denounced the election on the grounds that it supposedly involved serious electoral frauds. It seemed likely that the real winner was Viktor Yushchenko, who was considered a pro-Western candidate. Poland acted to bring about a strong reaction from the EU and called upon Ukrainian authorities to repeat the rigged second round. Both the former Polish president Lech Walesa and the then acting president Aleksander Kwasniewski went to Kiev and tried to mediate between the opposing camps. Kwasniewski also played an important part in convincing Javier Solana, the EU High Representative for the CFSP, to come to Kiev. The good relationship between Kwasniewski and Leonid Kuchma, the then president of Ukraine, – both of whom were former members of their countries' communist parties – was particularly mentioned as an important factor in convincing the Ukrainian president to support the re-run of the second round (Kuźniar, 2009b: 346).

The success of Viktor Yushchenko and – above all – the strong wave of popular democratic protests that preceded it provided ammunition for the Polish diplomacy in its quest to convince its EU partners that Ukraine could be democratic and that the majority of Ukrainians wanted their country to join the EU. As the then Polish foreign minister argued, 'the myth of our eastern neighbours not being able to live up to western standards of democracy and human rights was shattered' (Rotfeld, 2005). In January 2005, riding on the wave of the pro-Ukrainian enthusiasm, the European Parliament adopted a resolution stating that Ukraine may become a member of the EU.[8] The lobbying effort of Polish MEPs is generally considered one of the reasons for the inclusion of such a strong statement (Szczepanik, 2009: 97–98).

The launch of the Eastern Partnership

With its growing membership experience, Poland has increasingly focused on trying to shape the EU policy so that it would reflect the Polish calls for greater activism in the east. Those efforts found reflection in the Eastern Partnership project – the most ambitious attempt to upload Polish strategy to the EU level. The project was presented by Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski in April 2008 and endorsed by the European Council in June of that year. The EaP was a Polish-Swedish initiative designed to enhance the EU's relations with the Eastern neighbours (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) at a time when France put forward a plan for upgrading relations with the Mediterranean. It was a comprehensive programme designed to strengthen economic cooperation, open the door to people-to-people contacts by liberalising the visa regime, and dynamise civil society in the partner countries. It also included provisions aimed at boosting multilateral cooperation between the EaP countries. The project was to lead to the signature of association agreements between the partner countries and the EU.

Following the creation of the EaP, Poland made diplomatic efforts to keep this project high on the EU agenda. At the same time, through bilateral contacts with the EaP partner countries, Poland has attempted to encourage reforms in the countries, support their democratic political movements and maintain the interest of their ruling elites in developing closer ties with the EU. To make this strategy more effective, Warsaw cooperated with other EU countries. When in June 2009 the Polish minister of foreign affairs travelled to Kiev to discuss the various EaP programmes, he was accompanied by his German counterpart. The two ministers also visited Belarus, in November 2010, in order to encourage the president of the country, Aleksander Lukashenko, to follow the path of democratic reforms (Kaca–Lada, 2011: 23–24). On another trip to Kiev in the same month, Radoslaw Sikorski was flanked by the foreign minister of Sweden. Poland also tried to use the Visegrad Group as a platform for common initiatives aimed at the EaP partner countries. One of the decisions made at the Visegrad Summit in June 2011 was to establish within the International Visegrad Fund a special programme focused on the EaP countries. This programme could serve as a source of funds for projects in areas such as democratisation and the transformation process, regional cooperation, and support for civil society (Visegrad Group, 2011).

The eastern neighbourhood received considerable attention in the programme of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU. 'Europe Benefiting from Openness' is the name of one of the three priority areas (Polish Presidency, 2011: 10), and the authors of the programme declare that 'the aim should be to extend the area of European values and regulations through further enlargement' (ibid.). The EaP is mentioned in this regard as one of the projects that contribute to such an extension. Two important events – the Eastern Partnership Summit and the Civil Society Forum – took place during the second half of 2011. The aim of upgrading the relations with the Eastern

neighbours is also manifest when other aspects of the Presidency Programme are studied. Within the area of the CSDP, for instance, Poland declares its ambition to develop military cooperation between the EU and the EaP partner countries.

A modest but resolutely east-oriented assistance policy

The attention paid to the eastern neighbourhood has also translated into material help. As Poland's economic condition improved, it could gradually devote more significant sums to development assistance to other countries. In 2009, Poland devoted nearly 375 million USD to development aid (Polska Pomoc, 2009). Most of this sum (75%) was spent in contributions to international organisations that offer development aid, above all the EU, while the remaining part was devoted to bilateral assistance and administered mostly by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The resources devoted to assistance are still relatively modest, especially considering Poland's aspirations to be an important player on the international scene. Yet, however small the resources, a look at the list of the priority recipients proves the importance of the eastern neighbours for Poland. The priority recipients are Afghanistan, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, the Palestinian Autonomy and Angola. In 2009, the MFA carried out 75 projects in Ukraine, 45 in Afghanistan, 40 in Belarus and 32 in Georgia (ibid.).

Ukraine is the main recipient of Polish aid. In 2010, apart from the aid projects of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, various projects toward Ukraine were organised by institutions which are part of the central administration such as the police, courts and even firefighters. In addition, the ministry financially supported some projects toward Ukraine that were prepared by NGOs and local authorities. The projects organised by the former included supporting independent media, promoting energy efficiency, strengthening knowledge about the Transatlantic cooperation, and exchanging experiences on the subject of control of illegal migration (Polska Pomoc, 2010a). The funds devoted to these projects in 2010 amounted to 11.9 million zlotys (ca. 3 million euros). In the same year, projects carried out in Georgia received 7.5 million zlotys (ca. 1.6 million euros). The projects carried out in Georgia included assistance for the victims of social exclusion, support for regional development, and promotion of knowledge of human rights-related issues (Polska Pomoc, 2010b).

In sum, the analysis of policy implementation shows a general, but not always complete, consistency between discourse and actions. In relations with the Western European partners, Poland consistently supported the European aspirations of its eastern neighbours. In contrast, though, in bilateral relations, Poland's actions sometimes did not match its declarations emphasising the strategic nature of the relationship.

CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the development of the Polish policy towards the eastern neighbourhood after 1989. The point of reference for the present analysis was a debate between two divergent approaches to the eastern neighbourhood: romanticism and minimalism. Advocates of the former believe that Poland should actively support the political and economic transition in the eastern neighbourhood and, if necessary, challenge Russia in that area. In contrast, partisans of minimalism doubt the likelihood of a quick Westernisation of the eastern neighbours and, consequently, perceived an active involvement of Poland to this end as largely futile and potentially pernicious for Poland's relations with Russia. The analysis of the policy carried out by consecutive Polish governments shows a general dominance of the romantic strategy, even though the political forces in power since 2007 have obviously embraced some of the arguments put forward by the minimalists.

The romantic thinking is strongly related to the historical legacy of the Commonwealth: it emphasises the bond that exists between Poles and the nations that once made up the Commonwealth, expresses the conviction that Poland has a mission to be a transmission belt of Western values to the East, and has a determination to oppose Russia's imperialist tendencies. Minimalism, on the other hand, challenges the dogmas of the historical legacy by stating that the Commonwealth nations (apart from Lithuania) are closer to Russia than to Western Europe. It also questions the assumption that an alliance of Poland with Ukraine is the only way to stop Russia from returning to imperialism. The dominance of the romantic approach can thus be seen as an

illustration of the significant influence of both the historical and the political identity on how the Polish interest was interpreted and how Poland's main goals were defined.

The historical identity, built around the legacy of the Commonwealth and the political identity consisting of strong support for democracy, human rights and the rule of law, found expression in Poland's strong feeling of solidarity with the eastern neighbours. The declarations of Polish decision-makers demonstrate the widespread conviction that there exists a specific bond between Poland and its eastern neighbours stemming above all from their common history, but also from the shared desire to reject Soviet domination and build a democratic political regime. That feeling of solidarity constituted an important motivation for Poland to support the democratic transition in the eastern neighbourhood and act as a representative of their interests in its contacts with Western European countries.

The analysis of Poland's policy implementation shows a focus on high politics. Polish leaders were eager to stress the strategic nature of their contacts with Ukraine or Georgia, but there was often little substance behind these declarations in terms of economic or social relations. Poland consistently called for greater involvement of NATO and the EU in the East and emphasised the aspirations of its neighbours to integrate with the transatlantic community – sometimes more determinedly than the neighbours themselves. But the Polish actions in the East suffered from a lack of resources and of a carefully designed long-term strategy – the decision-makers were apparently convinced that meetings at the highest level coupled with highlighting the Polish experience would be enough to cement democracy in the East. Poland's recent actions, such as the Eastern Partnership project, demonstrate its growing consciousness that it can succeed in its romantic mission in the East only with the support of the EU.

ENDNOTES

[1] Even though echoes of the Dmowski/Pilsudski debate were manifest in the controversy between minimalists and romantics, the latter cannot be perceived as a simple revival of the former.
[2] Academic, advisor to the Polish Prime Minister in 1989–1990 and 1992–1993.
[3] Intellectual, dissident, former director of the Polish section of Radio Free Europe.
[4] Professor of history, senator between 1989 and 1991.

[5] In his speech, President Kaczyński claimed that Russia thinks 'that the nations around it should be subjected to it'. He also denounced Russia's imperialist tendencies and its tendency to dominate its neighbourhood, declaring that 'it is Georgia today, Ukraine tomorrow, later the Baltic States, and one day perhaps my own country Poland' (Obserwator, 2008: 9–10).
[6] The Jagiellonian dynasty came to the throne of Poland as a result of the first union between the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and ruled for nearly two centuries between 1386 and 1572. It was the last of the Jagiellonian kings who oversaw the conclusion of the Union of Lublin that created the Commonwealth.
[7] Even though Poland does not participate in the military intervention in Libya, the contacts it developed recently with Tunisia and Egypt demonstrate that it does not want to limit its role of promoter of democracy to the Eastern neighbourhood.
[8] The Parliament called 'the Council, the Commission and the Member States to consider, besides the measures of the Action Plan within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy, other forms of association with Ukraine, giving clear European perspective for the country and responding to the demonstrated aspirations of the vast majority of the Ukrainian people, possibly leading ultimately to the country's accession to the EU' (EP, 2005: point 14).

The Eastern Partnership in Estonia's Foreign Policy

Vahur Made

For Estonia, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) have proved to be increasingly important elements of the country's post-enlargement (post-2004) EU policies. Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova have been priority countries of Estonia's development assistance since 2003 (Estonian MFA, 2005).[1] Since 2011 Belarus, Armenia and Azerbaijan have also been added to this list (ibid.; Estonian MFA, 2010). Estonia maintains its strong support to the EU-aspirations of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, and supports a rapid conclusion of the association, free trade, visa facilitation and energy cooperation agreements with those countries, and an extension of all these cooperation modes to the rest of the EaP partners. Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs Urmas Paet (in office since 2005) has made the EU's eastern neighbourhood and particularly the Eastern Partnership the key issue of Estonia's foreign policy. In 2010 Paet stated that 'the six Eastern Partnership countries are now closer to the EU than ever before'.[2] Paet also advocates the view that the Eastern Partnership has to be a powerful 'reform-facilitator' in the six eastern neighbours of the EU.[3]

Why is Estonia an active supporter of the Eastern Partnership? The answer may include justifications based on geography, or even geopolitics. But the actual Estonian motives are more complex than that. Not only is Estonia's motivation to support the Eastern Partnership based on geography, geopolitics, and perhaps history, but it also reflects the competition Estonia faces within the EU's policy-making process. For Estonia, the Eastern Partnership is rather significantly about intra-EU visibility and positioning vis-à-vis other EU member states.

Against this background the present chapter observes developments within the process of forming the Estonian foreign policy identity during the past decade. EU-centric motivators have clearly emerged to challenge the more traditional Russia-centric ones in the Estonian foreign policy identity. This may indicate that in Estonian foreign policy a more traditional constructivist approach to foreign policy – based on historical memory and small state threat-perceptions – is gradually giving ground to the rational arguments stressing Estonia's need to be successful in the EU policy processes, as its success in this respect could lead to it being a visible and appreciated EU member state. In other words, visibility and activism are associated with greater intra-EU prestige, which as an end goal may provide Estonia with increasing access to political and financial support from the EU.

Table 1: Estonian foreign policy identity and the Eastern neighbourhood

	Self	*Other(s)*	**Solidarity with priority countries, based on identity**
Political identity (short term)	Political consensus on defense of independent statehood, maintenance of a nation-state closely integrated into the Western institutions, democracy, liberal values, open market economy Need to strengthen the position within the Western community, particularly within the EU and NATO.	Authoritarian Soviet past (together with the memory of mass repressions) Insecurity (re-emerge of Russian domination)	Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova
Historical identity (long term)	No other direct historical political linkages to the EaP partner countries than being part of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union However, there is a strong support to the small nations' striving for independence	Russia	None

It is more difficult to define Estonia's solidarity towards the partners of the Eastern Partnership, though. If foreign policy could be based on non-rational

– or even purely emotional – arguments, then historical experience would be decisive in this respect. Accordingly, Estonia could be expected to support other states that resist Russia's foreign policy interests and ambitions, perceiving their resistance as a security guarantee.

On the other hand one can also observe that Estonia's solidarity with the six countries belonging to the EU's eastern neighbourhood is currently pretty much under construction.

As Table 1 indicates, Estonia's solidarity towards the 'East' could be seen as a process that has only started a decade ago and still has a long way to go before it can develop into a fully legitimate foreign policy 'brand'. For instance, Estonia's wide-scale political and societal support towards Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova and the countries of the Southern Caucasus was largely missing during the 1990s. However, during the 2000s this support has been consistently built up by the Estonian foreign policy elite through the media, civil society organisations and development cooperation projects.

DEFINING ESTONIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IDENTITY

Is Russia the only game in town?

Placing the Baltic states into an East-West or a Russia-Europe dichotomy is the most common way to approach the foreign policies of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania after the Cold War. Even the accession of these states into the EU and NATO in 2004 has changed very little, if anything, in the conceptualisations of their foreign and defence policies in mainstream academic writing.[4] In addition some of the literature on EU-Russia relations views Estonia and other Baltic states as potential elements of conflict between Brussels and Moscow, or at least as the EU member states which, along with Poland, are the most critically minded towards Russia's foreign policy aims and interests in Europe. As Vadim Kononenko puts it, 'the Baltic-Russian relations are likely to remain prone to friction as long as the wider EU-Russia relationship continues to be problematic' (Kononenko, 2006: 71). Maria Mälksoo summarises this reasoning in terms of security thinking: 'in the EU the so-called "new Europeans" arguably represent the "old security thinking", especially when it comes to Russia' (Mälksoo, 2008: 33).

Countless accounts of a similar kind name a number of standard issues as arguably being the keys to understanding the Estonian foreign policies. It is said that Estonia is pushing towards ever increasing integration and identification with Europe/the West in order to distance itself from Russia. Estonia is seen as seeking in its Western partners and European institutions a counterbalance to the continuously strong pressure from Russia on its domestic, foreign and security policies. On the extreme edge it may even be argued that everything Estonia does in its foreign policy is because of Russia or in context with Russia, and that Estonian foreign policy can only be properly understood and analysed if it is placed into the wider spectrum of Russian foreign political interests, particularly those in Northern Europe and the Baltic Sea region.

Therefore it is not surprising that Estonia's approaches towards the European Neighbourhood Policy, and towards the Eastern Partnership in particular, are similarly seen as one element within this traditional Europe-Russia division within Estonian foreign policy. Again, analysing Estonian policies within the Eastern Partnership, one may come forward with the rather robust argument that Tallinn manifests its support towards the six Eastern Partnership countries only because it wants to do something that would challenge the traditional Russian dominance within the former Soviet space.

Such an argumentation is, for instance, very much present in the 2009 Eastern Partnership Briefing Paper prepared by the International Center of Defence Studies under the Estonian Ministry of Defence. Written by Kaarel Kaas and Merle Maigre the paper states that the 'Eastern Partnership lessens and balances Russia's influence in the region by promoting European values. /…/ For Estonia it is important to have a strong and unified EU foreign policy. It is not in Estonia's interest to settle the important decisions of EU-Russian relations in a bilateral format' (Kaas–Maigre, 2009). This citation illustrates also the following wishes within Estonia's foreign policy establishment: that the launch of the Eastern Partnership would help to bring into existence a more coherent EU policy towards Russia and that further bilateral deals à la Nord Stream would be avoided. In a similar vein, although with more emotion, Mart Laar (former Estonian Prime Minister and the personal policy adviser of Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili in 2006–2008) has stated that Estonia has to support Georgia because this country has chosen the 'Western path' and therefore it faces 'a serious controversy' with Russia (Laar, 2006).

Finally, there are some elements in the official Estonian foreign policy which indicate the linkage between the country's support to the Eastern Partnership and its relations with Russia. Estonia sees the development cooperation – the main tool used by Tallinn to support the Eastern Partnership – as a part of the country's security policy. The 2010 Estonian Security Policy Concept identifies the development cooperation as a part of Estonia's activities aimed at strengthening 'security and stability /…/ and assisting the aid recipient countries in their political, social and economic buildup'.[5] Furthermore, Estonia has strongly supported Moldova and Georgia in their frozen regional conflicts with Russia while agreeing with all pro-western developments in the partner countries of the Eastern Partnership.

Still, while the arguments of there being an 'EU-Russia dichotomy' definitely bear a great deal of substance in explaining Estonian foreign policy, they nevertheless do not seem to be fully explanative. Firstly, this argumentation is largely based on the state of affairs in EU-Russian relations before the 2008 Georgian-Russian war. The impacts of the war, together with the generally complex EU-Russian relationship (no renewal of the EU-Russian Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, no visa-free travel, no agreement on energy cooperation, etc.) and Europe's overall disappointment in Russia's real intention to carry out democratisation and modernisation processes, have resulted in increasing distance between the EU and Russia. The trend of the EU's 'Russia fatigue' is increasingly reflected in the academic and policy writing of recent years. We can name just a few examples: In an essay dealing with the situation in 2008, Piret Ehin questions very bluntly the rationale of offering the EU's financial assistance to Russia (Ehin, 2009). In a 2010 essay, Sinikukka Saari directly points out the gradually increasing level of distrust in EU-Russian relations (Saari, 2010). Finally, while commenting the results of the June 2011 EU-Russia Nizhniy-Novgorod Summit, Arkady Moshes states that the EU has come to the point where it lacks both the motivation and the resources to cooperate with Russia: 'From Moscow nothing is expected –neither bad nor good' (Moshes, 2011). While Russia continues to be a difficult case for the EU's foreign policy, it has ceased to be the foreign political priority. As a *success indicator* for assessing the EU's foreign policy performance, the Eastern Partnership seems to outweigh the EU-Russian relations. It is obvious that trends like these in the EU's foreign relations can not leave Estonia's foreign policy unaffected.

Secondly, the traditional way of explaining post-2004 Estonian foreign policies very often fails to take into consideration the changed status of small states, including Estonia, when they become members of the EU and NATO. For Estonia, success in its performance within the EU decision-making processes is increasingly gaining existential importance. In this light, not all the foreign and security policy steps of Estonia can be explained through the EU-Russia division. This applies also to Estonia's actvisim within the context of the ENP and the Eastern Partnership. Presenting these EU policies as Estonia's 'specialisms' is a foreign policy motivator that should be studied in the light of Estonia's EU membership rather than in the context of the Estonia-Russia-Europe triangle.[6]

From an 'authoritarian borderland' to 'prospective future EU member states'

Estonia has not always prioritised its relations to the current six partner countries of the Eastern Partnership (Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan). The difference between the democratic governance and the Western orientation of the Baltic states and the continuously authoritarian regimes of the 'Newly Independent States' of the former Soviet space was clearly stressed in the foreign political reasoning of Tallinn during the 1990s. This was understandable because Estonia was in need of an image that would be different from that of the Soviet past, as well as from that of the increasingly unstable post-1991 Russia. The countries in the 'east', routinely labelled in Europe as the 'former Soviet republics', evidently lacked any serious perspectives of closer EU approximation in the context of the 1990s.

In the 1990s Estonian perspectives, Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova, as well as the three South Caucasus states, seemed hopeless in their internal instability. These countries were associated with the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, the civil wars in Moldova and Georgia, non-democratic regimes and corrupt political culture, as well as with Russo-centric economic models and Moscow-friendly foreign policy sympathies. While the Baltic states continued their journey to the realm of the democratic West, the rest of the former Soviet Union was well on its way to concentrating around its authoritarian heritage and drifiting further away from freedom, prosperity, stability, rule of law and policy ethics.

The situation changed fundamentally in the early 2000s. The EU's eastern enlargement generated the 'new neighbourhood' proposal from the United Kingdom to the EU in 2002 and subsequently led to the launch of the ENP in 2003–2004. Simultaneously there occurred the 2003 Revolution of Roses in Georgia and the 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine.

In Estonia these developments were perceived with large-scale enthusiasm among both the policy elites and the civil society organisations.[7] Particularly the Ukrainian Orange Revolution was perceived as a starting point of the collapse of the authoritarian rule in the very heart of the former Soviet Union with a great potential to eventually lead to democratic changes in Russia. The post-Soviet countries in the east, which were previously seen as destined to continue in an endless authoritarian darkness, suddenly emerged as a promising extra space of democracy in Europe (the EU) which contained a vast amount of possibilities for Estonian foreign policy. This kind of drastic U-turn definitely deserves closer examination.

A traditional approach would probably use the 'EU-Russia' dichotomy or the prism of great power politics when looking for an explanation for it. Such an approach would most likely consider the launch of the ENP as an initiative of the UK and Germany – the two large EU member states most interested in the post-Soviet space in terms of geopolitics – backed by the USA. A journalistic conspiracy theory may state that it was primarily the USA that was behind the Georgian and Ukrainian events of 2003–2004. Logically, in such a context Estonia only had to follow an inroad made by the most influential powers in the EU and the global leader of the time – the USA.

But is this enough to explain the Baltic states' ENP/EaP activism in the following years?

TOWARDS A CONSISTENT FOREIGN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION?

From a democracy promoter to a model reformer: the rise of the Estonian messianic foreign policy

The understanding that Estonia has a special experience that it can share with the partner countries of the Eastern Partnership is deeply connected to the current Estonian foreign policy. The common Soviet heritage is rather ex-

tensively stressed in this context. It is widely argued that since both Estonia and the partner countries of the Eastern Partnership 'come from similar Soviet backgrounds', the experience Estonia can offer is much more relevant than any experience offered by the EU member states beyond the former Soviet borders.

Democracy promotion was very much in the center of Estonia's policies towards the future Eastern Partnership partner countries in 2003–2008 and 2010. The 2003 events in Georgia and particularly the 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine boosted the Estonian view that a genuine democratic change is also possible in those parts of the former Soviet Union that, unlike the Baltic states, lacked the historical experience of democratic statehood. The events in Tbilisi and Kiev were seen in Tallinn as landmarks introducing completely new political developments as well as opportunities to the space of the former Soviet Union.

The Estonian ambassador to the USA Jüri Luik said it particularly bluntly in his analysis of the 2003 Georgian Revolution of Roses: 'What happened in Georgia has a capacity to change the whole nature of the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States – VM). Georgia has a similar status of a torchbearer as the Baltic states had in the former Soviet Union /.../ We in Estonia should seriously consider how we can assist the new democratic government of Georgia' (Luik, 2003).

Another high-ranking Estonian diplomat, Kaupo Känd, who worked in 2004–2005 as an expert in the EUJUST THEMIS program in Tbilisi under the EU Special Representative in the Southern Caucasus Heikki Talvitie, clearly stressed the need for Estonian assistance to Georgia. According to Känd the Georgian government had the 'short-term goal' to join NATO while the EU-membership was put in a 'longer perspective'. For this reason Georgia needed to both learn from the Estonian reform experience and get help from Estonian experts working on the basis of bilateral projects as well as in the international organisations assisting Georgia (Känd, 2005a, 2005b: 58).

Analysing the outcomes of the 2004 Ukrainian Orange Revolution, Estonian policy analyst Aili Ribulis stated that a 'new Ukraine' had been born from the events in Kiev of November 2004: 'Ukraine now urgently needs the EU's assistance. Only this can prevent Ukraine from backsliding into Russia's sphere of influence' (Ribulis, 2005).

Against this mental background Estonia enthusiastically entered the anticipated democratisation processes in its immediate neighbourhood. These processes promised to open for Estonia a new wide opportunity for aquiring both new like-minded allies from among other countries and a sphere of influence. In addition, Estonia could see itself as a legitimate partner in the European/Western democracy promotion effort (Made, 2007/2008). The Estonian government strategies in regard to EU policies started to stress the importance of the European Neighbourhood Policy from 2004. Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia were indicated as priority countries. Estonia's political relations to Belarus remained very limited until 2009, when an Estonian embassy was opened in Minsk and the first high-level visits between the two countries took place. Estonia has always observed the developments in Armenia and Azerbaijan, but due to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict it has preferred to exercise a low profile in the political cooperation with these countries.

The strategy for 2004–2006 particularly stressed democratic development and stability/security as the keywords of the EU's eastern neighbourhood.[8] Then the 2007–2011 strategy already paid more attention to economic development and deeper EU-integration while stressing continuously the need for democratisation.[9]

A number of events and processes in 2008–2010 shifted Estonia's attention from democracy promotion to promoting itself as a model country in terms of its economic and societal reforms. The Georgian-Russian war in 2008, the global financial crisis of 2008–2009, and the Ukrainian presidential elections in 2010 made the Estonian policy focus shift more towards non-political issues.[10] A return of authoritarianism was anticipated, and concentrating on economic, social and administrative reforms was considered safer than democracy promotion.

For reform promotion the launch of the Eastern Partnership in 2009 presented further opportunities. Being promoted by Poland and Sweden the Eastern Partnership emerged as a project with a heart and mind in Estonia's home region.

Estonia maintained that the experience they had acquired from the transition, reform and EU integration during the past decade could be exactly the kind of experience that could help to boost the reform processes in the Eastern Partnership partner countries. For example, Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs Urmas Paet has stressed that Estonia has a lot of transition experience to offer to the Eastern Partnership countries and that within the last decades hundreds of officials from the Eastern Partnership countries had been trained in Estonia.[11] Shortly afterwards, the official Estonian position vis-à-vis the Eastern Partnership started to stress the importance of 'practical solutions'.[12] This stress on practical solutions embraces a wide scope of different areas – from democratic institutions and elections to different sectors of socio-economic reform. Estonian models of e-governance, taxation, social security, health care, public administration build-up, domestic coordination of EU-related decision-making, transport and logistic systems, management of EU assistance and structural support, etc. are all areas that were closely linked to the EU-integration process of Estonia in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In these areas, one may see a promising tool for building up Estonia's image of a reform-related knowledge-provider in the former Soviet space.

On the other hand, applying for the status of an ENP-EaP specialist is the least stressing approach for Estonia's participation within the EU decision-making. The ENP and EaP are quite harmless policy areas demanding little domestic, including financial, input from Estonia but offering at the same time rather wide and risk-free opportunities to increase the image profile of the small EU member state.

Estonian assistance policy and NGO engagement

Development cooperation is Estonia's key tool in implementing its policies towards the partner countries of the Eastern Partnership. The Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance Department in the Estonian MFA manages the Estonian develoment cooperation and humanitarian assistance (DC/HA) budget since 2006. Then the budget was 11.5 million Euros. In 2010 the Estonian DC/HA budget amounted to 14 million Euros.[13] The budget is being spent either through the UN agencies (UNDP, etc.) and other international organisations of humanitarian assistance (the EU through EuropeAid, OECD, IBRD, EBRD and other development banks) or through the projects implemented by the Estonian NGOs.

Among the Baltic States Estonia spends slightly more on development cooperation than Latvia (12 million Euros in 2010) but considerably less than Lithuania (28 million Euros in 2010). From among the EU member states only Latvia and Malta (7 million Euros in 2010) spend less on development

cooperation than Estonia.[14] The Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance Development Plan for 2011–2015 envisages an increase of the Estonian DC/HA budget to 22 million Euros by 2012.[15] The EU suggests that the member states should spend at least 0.33% of their GDP on DC/HA. Estonia plans to bring this figure to 0.17% by 2015.[16]

However, judging by its 2010 per capita expenditure on foreign aid Estonia is ranking relatively better than the impression from the total aid figure may indicate (see Table 2). Estonia's 20th place on the list of the 27 EU member states' per capita foreign aid contributions places it at the forefront of the aid donors list for the states who have joined the EU in 2004 and 2007. Here only Cyprus, Slovenia, Malta and the Czech Republic scored better.

Table 2: Per capita foreign aid of the EU member states in 2010

Ranking	State	Total Aid in 2010 (in Million of Euros)	Population in 2010 (in Millions)	Aid per capita in 2010 (EUR/ person)
1.	Luxembourg	301	0.5	602
2.	Denmark	2,164	5.5	393.5
3.	Sweden	3,418	9.2	371.5
4.	Netherlands	4,795	16.4	292.4
5.	Belgium	2,265	10.7	211.7
6.	Finland	1,008	5.3	190.2
7.	United Kingdom	10,391	61.7	168.4
8.	France	9,751	64.3	151.6
9.	Ireland	676	4.5	150.2
10.	Germany	9,606	82	117.1
11.	Austria	905	8.3	109.0
12.	Spain	4,467	45.8	97.5
13.	Portugal	489	10.6	46.1
14.	Cyprus	34	0.8	42.5
15.	Italy	2,349	60	39.2
16.	Greece	378	11.2	33.8
17.	Slovenia	48	2	24
18.	Malta	7	0.4	17.5
19.	Czech Republic	169	10.5	16.1
20.	Estonia	14	1.3	10.8
21.	Slovakia	56	5.4	10.4
22.–23.	Hungary	85	10	8.5
22.–23.	Lithuania	28	3.3	8.5
24.	Poland	285	38.1	7.5
25.	Latvia	12	2.3	5.2
26.	Bulgaria	31	7.6	4.1
27.	Romania	86	21.5	4

Sources: Total aid figures: aidwatch.concordeurope.org/genuine-aid-levels.
Population figures: europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index_en.htm.

Afghanistan is by far the largest individual recepient of Estonia's development cooperation assistance. However, the partner countries of the Eastern Partnership combined capture almost half of the DC budget (45% in 2009).[17] Estonia's aid contributions to individual Eastern Partnership partner countries in 2007–2011 are presented in Table 3. The prioritisation of Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova is very clear in the figures. However, Belarus, Armenia and Azerbaijan are still mostly an 'unexplored territory' of Estonia's development cooperation.

Table 3: Estonian assistance to the Eastern Partnership partner countries in 2007–2011

EaP partner country:	Estonian assistance (in Millions of Euros)
Georgia	2.3
Ukraine	1.3
Moldova	1.1
Belarus	0.5
Armenia	0.08
Azerbaijan	0.01
Total:	**5.29**

Source: rakendused.vm.ee/akta/andmed.php.

From among the Estonian DC projects carried out for the Eastern Partnership partner countries, the educational and training projects occupy the

largest part. Also, the institutions with an educational/training/research focus are the most active project implementers (the Estonian e-Governance Academy, the Estonian School of Diplomacy, EuroCollege of the University of Tartu, the University of Tallinn, the Open Estonia Foundation, the Archimedes Foundation, the Estonian NATO Association, and various vocational training associations as well as municipalities and regional cooperation organisations).[18]

There is also an umbrella organisation – the Estonian Round-Table for Development Cooperation (ERDC)[19] – that unites some but not all Estonian NGOs active in the field of DC/HA. The ERDC is also the main provider of criticism towards the MFA-directed DC/HA policies, maintaining that Estonia spends too little money on DC/HA and pays too little attention to poverty reduction (the UN's millennium goals).[20]

In short, while Estonia continues to invest strong political support into the Eastern Partnership and sees this as one of its key 'niches' within the EU, the actual implementation of this policy goal is very much in its beginning phase. It is very obvious that in the matter of the Eastern Partnership, Estonia needs to both present policy initiatives and cooperate with the EU member states, the EU institutions and the 'group of friends' of the Eastern Partnership (the USA, Canada, Norway, Iceland, Japan, Turkey, etc.).

CONCLUSION: TWO COMPETING DISCOURSES FOR EXPLAINING ESTONIA'S NATIONAL INTERESTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

This article has indicated the emergence of two competing discourses in explaining Estonia's national interests in the context of the Eastern Partnership. On the one hand there exists the traditional discourse based on geopolitical reasoning and stressing Estonia's rather problematic positioning between Russia and the EU. On the other hand it is possible to present a discourse which directs attention from the Estonian-Russian relationship to the Estonian EU membership. In this light, the Eastern Partnership can not only be seen as a part of Estonia's geopolitical struggle for survival with its large eastern neighbour but also as a part of Estonia's emerging self-identification within the EU.

The discourse change does not necessarily mean that the position of Russia as a geopolitical player in Europe, as well as in Europe's North and in the countries of the Eastern Partnership, is being neglected. There is rather an indication that the 'EU-Russian dichotomy' is not the 'only game in town' when an attempt is made to analyse the current Estonian foreign policies.

Judging by the European Commission's May 2011 review of the state and perspectives of the European Neighbourhood Policy, we can look rather optimistically to the future of the Eastern Partnership. In the EC communication's preamble, Moldova and Ukraine are pointed out as the success stories of the ENP process. From the beginning of 2011, the anti-enlargement rhetoric has gradually disappeared from the official EU communications on the Eastern Partnership. Finally, new versions of the key elements of the EaP – Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTA) and visa facilitation agreements – are now being proposed for the EU's southern neighbours.[21]

Therefore Estonia may have made the right choice when it selected the Eastern Partnership as its 'specialism' within the EU. After all, the EU's success in the Eastern Partnership may become a bridge to more flexible and cooperation-minded EU-Russian relations.

ENDNOTES

[1] The principles of the Estonian development cooperation were laid down by the decrees of the Parliament of 1998 and 2003. However, the first project with Ukraine was carried out in 2000. In 2005 the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs adopted the first development cooperation and humanitarian assistance strategy for 2006–2010, and the strategy pointed out Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova as Estonia's priority countries of development assistance. See Estonian MFA (2005).

[2] Urmas Paet's statement at the meeting of the EU/EaP foreign ministers in Sopot, Poland in May 2010. Estonian MFA press release 24. 05. 2010. Online: www.vm.ee/?q=node/9504.

[3] Estonian MFA press release 08. 12. 2009. On-line: www.vm.ee/?q=node/8763.

[4] For the most recent argumentation see the collection of articles from fifteen authors in the *Baltic Defence Review No. 11* (Baltic Defence College, 2004); Ehin–Kasekamp (2005); Kononenko (2006); Ehin (2006); Nielsen (2007); Mouritzen (2009).

[5] 'Eesti julgeolekupoliitika alused [Foundations of Estonian Security Policy]', Estonian Parliament decree 12. 5. 2010. Online: www.vm.ee/sites/default/files/JPA_2010.pdf. See also the special development cooperation-focused issue of *Riigikaitse* (the state defence supplement of the daily *Eesti Päevaleht*), 1. 9. 2011.

[6] The discussion about Estonia's 'specialisms' within the EU's common policies emerged gradually along with the country's adaptation to the Union's decision-making process. The discussion is related to Estonia's limited human and financial resources, which do not allow the country to be an active initiator in all EU policy areas. As a part of this discussion, the Estonian MFA has strongly advocated the idea of the Eastern Partnership being a particular Estonian 'specialism' within the EU since 2009. With this aim, the Estonian Center of Eastern Partnership was established in 2011 in Tallinn (www.eceap.eu). See Made (2009/2010).

[7] The main Estonian newspapers *Postimees* and *Eesti Päevaleht* were daily publishing a vast amount of 'pro-Orange' news, comments, and analyses of Ukrainian events. Marko Mihkelson, then the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Estonian Parliament, and the Member of Parliament Silver Meikar emerged as the spokesmen of the Estonian lobby supporting the anticipated Ukrainian democratic change. Among the Estonian civil society organisations, particularly the Open Estonia Foundation and the Estonian European Movement emerged as active supporters of the 'Orange' Ukraine. See the Ukraine issues of the monthly *Diplomaatia* from October 2004 and January 2005 and also Meikar (2006).

[8] Valitsuse Euroopa Liidu poliitika 2004–2006. Vabariigi Valitsus, 22. 4. 2004. Online: valitsus.ee/UserFiles/valitsus/et/riigikantselei/euroopa/eesti-eesmargid-euroopa-liidus/eesti-euroopa-liidu-poliitika-2007/Valitsuse_Euroopa_Liidu_poliitika_2004_2006.pdf.

[9] Eesti Euroopa Liidu poliitika 2007–2011. Vabariigi Valitsus, 25. 10. 2007. Online: www.riigikantselei.ee/failid/ELPOL_2007_2011.pdf.

[10] See Merle Maigre's (2009) account of the 'Ukraine-fatigue' that started to emerge in Western capitals in 2008–2010 because of the general feeling of disappointment with the results of the Orange Revolution.

[11] For Urmas Paet's speech during the opening ceremony of the Estonian Center of Eastern Partnership in Tallinn on 26 January 2011. Online: www.valitsus.ee/et/riigikantselei/euroopa-liit/euroopa-liidu-uudised/23432/valisminister-paet-avas-eesti-euroopa-liidu-idapartnerluse-keskuse. For Urmas Paet's speech on Estonia's foreign policy priorities at the Estonian Parliament on 11 February 2010. Online: www.vm.ee/?q=node9000.

[12] See the Estonian Government Goals in the EU during the EU presidencies of 2009–2011. Online: valitsus.ee/et/riigikantselei/euroopa-liit/eesti-eesmargid-ja-poliitika/valitsuse-eesmargid-euroopa-liidus-eesistumisperioodiks.

[13] 2011 AidWatch report of the CONCORD network, 19. 5.2011. Online: aidwatch.concordeurope.org/.

[14] 2011 AidWatch report (ibid.).

[15] Online: www.vm.ee/sites/default/files/Rakendusplaan_2011-2015.pdf, p. 4.

[16] Online: www.vm.ee/sites/default/files/arengukoostoo-humanitaarabi_arengukava_2011-2015.pdf, p. 27.

[17] Online: www.vm.ee/?q=et/node/8630#projpartner, p. 2.

[18] For an exhaustive list of the 2006–2010 Estonian DC/HA projects, project amounts and implementing organisations. Online: www.vm.ee/sites/default/files/abi-aruanne-2007-08.pdf. The 2011 Estonian DC projects can be seen on www.vm.ee/?q=node/11327, and the HA projects on www.vm.ee/?q=node/11675.

[19] Online: www.terveilm.net.

[20] See: 'Raport: Keegi ei tea, milline on Eesti arenguabi mõju' ['Report: Nobody Knows the Actual Impact of the Estonian Development Cooperation']. Online: www.terveilm.net/?id=1&archive=true&blog=655.

[21] In its May 2011 communication on the progress and perspectives of the European Neighbourhood Policy the European Commission stresses 'the encouraging progress made by /…/ the Republic of Moldova in its reform efforts, [and] Ukraine in the negotiations of the Association Agreement'. See European Commission / High Representative (2011: 1).

The Challenges of Lithuanian and Latvian Policy Towards the Eastern Neighborhood

Katerina Kesa

When the 15 Soviet Republics regained their independence in 1991, one of their first challenges was to redefine their identity, rebuild their economy and reestablish their statehood on new bases. The newly independent states, with the exception of the Baltic States, soon established a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The Balts instead chose to follow a different route and look towards the West by preparing for their membership in the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Joining these organizations in 2004 was considered by the Baltic States as a unique and concrete way to guarantee their security and to be considered as 'true' Europeans.[1]

Since they regained independence, the three Baltic States tried to rid themselves of the 'post-Soviet' or 'Eastern European' label while increasing their contacts with Western Europe and trying to reorient their trade exchange from the other post-Soviet countries' markets to those of countries like Germany, Sweden, Finland and Denmark. All their efforts became dedicated to creating new ties with Western states and to adopting 'European' and Western norms. Once they had become members of the EU and NATO, their foreign policy had reached a situation of 'zero gravity'.[2] It therefore became necessary for the Baltic States to redefine their foreign policy priorities and to participate in European foreign policies as new members of these organizations.

As we will further discuss, the 'rapprochement' with several ex-Soviet countries such as Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus, and the involvement of the Baltic States starting in 2003–2004 in assisting in the development of these countries and promoting their membership in these western organizations can be considered, on the one hand, as part of the logic of redefining the foreign policy priorities of the Baltic States and, on the other

hand, as the continuation of their desire to become 'true' Europeans. Indeed, we argue that the Latvian and Lithuanian foreign policy identities consist of both a 'first order identity', a *political identity* (based on dominant political priorities, the 'political *self*'), and a 'second order identity', the *historical identity* (based on memory and narratives of common history) (cf. Tulmets, this book).

While there is no doubt that this new policy towards the 'new' Eastern European countries has become a real priority in Lithuanian and Latvian foreign policy, this article tries to analyse the consistency/coherence between Lithuania and Latvia's expression of political solidarity with the Eastern Neighbourhood based on the countries' shared history, their attitude towards their common neighbour, Russia, and Latvia and Lithuania's real desire to help the post-Soviet countries to adopt the European values of democracy, rule of law and market economy. In order to draw a comparison between the official motivations of Latvia and Lithuania's foreign policy and what is done in practice within the framework of their policy, this study proceeds as follows: Firstly, it analyses the way Lithuania and Latvia have redefined their foreign policy since their accession to the EU and NATO and tries to understand what caused these states to become active promoters of Western norms in the 'new' Neighborhood of the EU. Secondly, through the study of Latvian and Lithuanian official discourses, it attempts to highlight how solidarity towards this Eastern neighborhood is expressed by the political elites and what kind of message this support carries. Thirdly and finally, leaving behind the theory and discourse, the article gives a descriptive overview of how the assistance policies are implemented by Lithuania and Latvia.[3]

LATVIA AND LITHUANIA AS ACTIVE PROMOTERS OF THE EASTERN NEIGHBORHOOD

Almost immediately after Latvia and Lithuania[4] joined the EU and NATO, and the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) was announced, they sought to renew their relations with several post-Soviet states and started to proclaim that an active and successful ENP should be their foreign policy priority. The decision of Latvia and Lithuania to take an active part in this new policy is based on a range of complex political and identity related calculations.

The expression of a Baltic foreign policy identity

The present study is based on the post-structural constructivist approach of international relations. This approach argues that the conceptualization of identity is discursive, political, relational, and social, and thus it implies that 'foreign policy discourse always articulates a *Self* and a series of *Others*' (cf. Tulmets, this book). The study of Lithuania and Latvia's foreign policies towards the Eastern Neighborhood is based above all on the way these two Baltic States view their place in the world (geopolitically and as small states), how they perceive their surrounding '*Other*' (including both positive and negative views) and how they build their own identities (their '*Self*') in relation to this '*Other*'. In the case of Lithuania and Latvia's self-identity construction, it is important to take into account the multiple different identity circles or spheres to which they belong and which, in one way or another, have an impact on defining the political identity of these countries. We can distinguish here between 'external circles of affiliation', i.e. the different alliances to which they belong or have belonged before, and 'internal circles of affiliation', which refer to their cultural and historical identity – or how they identify themselves.

Their accession to the EU and NATO in 2004 officially made Latvia and Lithuania a part of the Western international community. However, because they were a part of the Soviet Union for fifty years and because they have common borders with Russia and Belarus (the latter is a direct neighbor of Lithuania and Latvia), Latvia and Lithuania continue, in a way, to feel that they are still considered a part of the post-Soviet region by the outside world. It is this feeling that gives them an inferiority complex and consequently the need to prove to others that they are just as European as any Western European country. Maria Mälksoo has characterized the Baltic States as 'liminal entities whose belonging to the community is contested and ambiguous' as they are 'Europe but not quite Europe', being positioned on the 'borderline between Russia and the West' (Mälksoo, 2009).

Culturally and geographically, both of these countries are Baltic because of their languages – Latvian and Lithuanian belong to the Balto-Slavic branch of the Indo-European language family – and also because of their geographical position by the Baltic Sea. Notwithstanding this similarity, a fundamental difference between the self-identifications of Latvians and Lithuanians

should be mentioned. As Latvians are attached to their Baltic image, and Latvia has a geographic position between Estonia and Lithuania, Latvians are the only Baltic people who continue to emphasize the common past and future of the Baltic States and the need to preserve the Baltic unity. As Latvia is stuck between two political identity orientations that correspond to the North and the South respectively – Estonians are keen to assert their Nordic identity, and Lithuanians their Central European identity – Latvians do not have any other choice than to prefer the trilateral cooperation (Yurkynas, 2005). Whereas Latvia has no problem with identifying itself as a Baltic country, Lithuania, due to its more important historical heritage as part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 14th Century and its closeness to Poland (largely because of the Commonwealth of Lithuania and Poland in the 18th Century), constantly prefers to refer to itself as a Central European country, or at least to show its plural affiliation. In his annual report to the *Seimas,* the Parliament of Lithuania, on 18th of February 1997, Algirdas Brazauskas, the then president of Lithuania, declared the following:

> In spite of our differences, the unity between Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia as well as the cooperation between our countries should survive and constitute one of our priorities. At the same time, this cooperation should not in any case be a closed space in which Lithuania locks itself. […] we belong simultaneously to many regions: to the space around the Baltic Sea, to Central Europe and to the Baltic States. The development of our relations with Central Europeans consolidates the historical place of Lithuania in Central Europe.[5]

On the basis of the theory in which the '*Other*' in international relations is usually a neighbor and in which there can be both negative and positive '*Others*', we can say that for a long time, and especially before Lithuania and Latvia's NATO and EU accessions, one of their '*Others*' was the post-Soviet world dominated by Russia. This '*Other*', from which they wanted to move away, was perceived at that time as a source of instability and even a potential threat to its 'near abroad'.[6] Europe and the Western community in general were and are still perceived by Latvian and Lithuanian elites as a source of security, stability and modernity, and as an opposition to this negative 'Other'. Thus Latvia and Lithuania desired to get closer to the West. Today

after their accession to the EU and NATO, although Russia is no longer perceived as a direct threat to the two countries' independence[7], it continues to have an indirect influence on Lithuanian and Latvian relations with the EU and the EU Eastern Neighborhood countries, and by having this influence, it also has an impact on the definition of the new Latvian and Lithuanian foreign policy identities.

The Latvian and Lithuanian foreign policies were in a situation of 'zero point' or 'zero gravity' after having reached their most desired goals in 2004. It thus became necessary to define new strategies. The EU's new external policy instrument, the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), proved to be exceptionally well suited for defining the new foreign policy objectives of Latvia and Lithuania (Yakniunaite, 2009). It is fair to say that the first incentive to engage in this kind of assistance policy came from the Nordic countries, who had been actively assisting the Baltic States in their transition and 'Europeanization' process and to whom the Baltic States owe much for their success. Therefore, this new policy corresponds to a certain sense of duty and ethics which could be summarized as *'we have received a lot of help; it is now our turn to do the same'*. Another incentive came from the United States, which, at the time when the ENP was not yet created, were seen as an active actor interested in *extending the stability and security in this region*. The involvement of the Baltic States in the East even seemed to some of the Baltic elites as a kind of guarantee that the United States would support them in case of threats against their own security.[8]

The Eastern neighbourhood as a means to find a place in the EU

This new policy appears to be a response to the need for recognition by others: Latvia and Lithuania's membership in EU and NATO officially made the two countries part of European/Western society and it was felt as a response to their security dilemma/concern:

> The goal of Latvia's foreign policy in the past decade was to ensure permanence for Latvia's statehood. This goal has been attained. Now, in the early years of the 21st century, Latvia finds itself in a fundamentally new and different situation. For the first time in history Latvia is living without the shadow of a threat from abroad and this opens up opportunities for accelerated development.[9]

In the view of these countries, the membership in the EU and NATO appears as a sign that they have reached the same level as other Europeans and that they should now be considered as having an equal position and equal rights inside the international community. This willingness to be considered as equal to others is constant in Latvian and Lithuanian official declarations: *'The broader significance of this day both in our history and now is Latvia's acceptance in the international community of states as an equal partner with all concomitant rights and duties*.'[10] However, despite this new status, due to the two countries' historical past, their geographical position of being in between two worlds – the Western and the Eastern world – and their existence as 'small states' (Galbreath–Lamoreaux, 2008), Latvia and Lithuania seem to continue to see themselves as vulnerable and inferior parts of Europe: 'Baltic States are Europeans yet not fully. This perception makes the Baltic States to constantly confirm their Europeanism and to seek confirmation of their aspiration from Western Europe' (Jakniunaite, 2009: 119). Therefore, the definition of the new Latvian and Lithuanian foreign policies, in particularly the policy of assistance towards the Eastern neighborhood, has to be understood as a willingness of the two countries to identify themselves as more European and to define anew their relations with Europe, Russia and the post-Soviet zone.

For both Lithuania and Latvia, their active participation in the neighborhood policy is supposed to make them better heard and to give them the possibility to find their place within the EU. Since 2004, Lithuanian and Latvian politicians tend to perceive the fact that their respective countries are 'liminal' countries (Mälksoo, 2009) as an advantage rather than as a weakness. Indeed, this situation of 'liminality', when added to the two countries' recent experience of transition from the status of post-Soviet countries to that of countries that have adopted the so-called 'European model', is considered as offering the Baltic States an opportunity to play the role of a 'bridge' (Galbreath–Lamoreaux, 2007) between Western and Eastern Europe in the matter of 'exporting' the values of western democracy and market economy to Eastern Europe (Kasekamp–Pääbo, 2006). Lithuania, which, of the three Baltic States, is probably the most ambitious in promoting the ENP (Jakniunaite,

2009), declared its wish to become 'the regional leader' in this policy immediately after gaining EU membership:

> Our geographical location and experience of living at a crossroads of regions and civilizations opens up most probably the first opportunity in history to bridge the East and the West and make Lithuania a center of gravity in a geographically culturally diverse region.[11]

Through this, Lithuania portrays itself as 'an active country, visible in the world and influential in the region', and tries to distinguish itself not only from the other Baltic States but also from its bigger south-eastern neighbor, Poland. The latter constitutes an additional important '*Other*' in Lithuania's identity construction for historical reasons. Indeed, Poland and Lithuania have shared a common past: in 1569, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had been established in Lublin, Poland, replacing the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Therefore, the Lithuanian identity is closely connected with the Polish identity. However, Lithuania tends to perceive itself today as competing with Poland in the Eastern neighborhood (Jakniunaite, 2009) even if Lithuanian leaders construct their discourse towards the neighbourhood around the promotion of Western values:

> [Lithuania should become] a dynamic and attractive center of interregional co-operation, which spreads the Euro-Atlantic values and the spirit of tolerance and co-operation across the borders and unites cultures and civilizations.[12]

Latvia also declares itself a 'responsible member of international society'. It has been keen, since gaining membership in the EU, to encourage and assist other states in the process of 'Europeanization', and in doing so, it hopes to find a place in the EU. Hence, for Latvia, this policy does not seem to be founded on an ambitious logic of 'leadership' or competition with neighboring states, as it is for Lithuania. Unlike its southern neighbor, Latvia cannot boast about its history, and being stuck between two Baltic States, it has fewer opportunities and less leeway. We argue that in the case of Latvia, the factor of being small is probably more prevalent and that her active participation in some European policies, like the ENP, is supposed to give her an opportunity to overcome the negative self perception related to her small size.

Indeed, as Thorhallson (2006) argues, small states are not always limited in their action: in spite of their size, their membership in international organizations 'increases their capacity of influence inside and outside of these organizations' (Lamoreaux–Galbreath, 2008).

While some differences in the ways Latvian and Lithuanian political elites consider their role towards the Eastern neighborhood countries can be noted, we can say that both of these countries try to make their development and assistance policy their key specificity or 'niche'. Politicians from both countries believe that their country's historical experience of being a Soviet Republic and its recent transition experience of 'desovietization', 'marketization' and 'Europeanization' put them in a better position to understand the challenges that the other post-Soviet republics are facing today. Latvia or Lithuania is consequently supposed to offer them more adequate solutions than what some Western European states like France or Germany, for instance, could offer. According to some political leaders from Lithuania and Latvia, Georgians, Moldavians, Ukrainians and Belorussians accept pieces of advice and 'lessons' more easily when they come from people that have known a similar history. In their opinion, this assistance from Baltic States to Eastern Europe is viewed more like a 'partner to partner' relation than a 'teacher to student' relation.[13]

On the whole, we can say that Lithuania, through its 'normative' discourse, and, probably to a lesser extent, Latvia have both sought to change the geopolitical influences in this region by engaging in the development of the Eastern Neighborhood and by diminishing the Russian and strengthening the European (Western) influence. To this, one can add that the relatively difficult and strained relations between the Baltic States and Russia (Fofanova, Morozov, 2009) have most likely contributed to strengthening the Baltic solidarity towards other post-Soviet states. Thus one now needs to examine the rationale behind the solidarity expressed by these two countries towards the Eastern neighborhood.

LATVIAN AND LITHUANIAN SOLIDARITY TOWARDS THE EASTERN NEIGHBORHOOD

Both Lithuania and Latvia have expressed their desire to extend the EU and NATO borders to other post-Soviet countries since 2003–2004. Their political declarations of support towards the 'Color Revolutions', and their par-

ticipation in pro-western alliances and organizations where they could speak in the name of Georgia, Ukraine or Moldova clearly demonstrate their willingness to influence the process of 'Europeanization' (adoption of European norms and values) and to help the Eastern states get closer to the EU and NATO. However, it is interesting to examine what their declarations of support reflect in reality: is this solidarity based only on values or also on a common history, identity and geopolitics?

A new solidarity with origins in the past

In order to understand the rationale that lies behind Latvia and Lithuania's solidarity towards the Eastern neighborhood, a solidarity which can be analysed through the political discourses of Latvian and Lithuanian political leaders after 2004, one should have in mind that this solidarity is to be understood rather as a continuation and a 'reactivation' of a solidarity that takes its origins in the past. Since the 19th century, there were demographic movements between the Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian populations on one side and the Georgian and Armenian populations on the other. During the 20th Century, some collaboration and solidarity between Baltic and South Caucasus anti-communist activists developed abroad (Plasseraud, 2006). In the late 1980s, there was an attempt to 'export' the 'Singing Revolutions' and the model of the Baltic Popular Fronts from the three Baltic states to other Soviet Republics.[14] According to the Latvian researcher Nils Muiznieks, these late 1980s movements had had an *'indirect influence on the progression of independent movements in other Soviet Republics'* (Muiznieks, 1995). These are just some examples that show that some kinds of solidarity between the Baltic States and some of the other post-Soviet countries already existed over the course of the last two centuries. The 'new' solidarity which was established 15 years after the collapse of the USSR is thus part of Latvia and Lithuania's *'historical identity'* (a long term identity) as well as their *'political identity'* (a short term identity). As a political solidarity, it reflects their willingness to share European norms and values with the Eastern neighbourhood. However, being at the same time a historical solidarity that is based on the two groups of countries having a common history and common representatives, the solidarity of Latvia and Lithuania tends to be ideological rather than neutral, and it expresses the two countries' own geopolitical vision.

The 'Coloured Revolutions': a push to Latvian and Lithuanian involvement in the Neighborhood

The 'Coloured Revolutions' which took place in Georgia (2003) and Ukraine (2004) can be considered as having provided a new starting point which renewed the relations between Lithuania and Latvia and the other post-Soviet states. For Lithuanian and Latvian politicians, these events appeared as a sign that important changes could take place in the region, which had since 1991 been dominated by Russia and the CIS. Political leaders became aware of the opportunity to influence future developments in this region that was given to them. For example, after Viktor Yushchenko's official election, the Latvian president made the following promise to him: *'In the name of the people and government of Latvia, I assure you of our full support, I assure you of our sympathy for your aspirations and values, I assure you of our readiness to assist your nation in every possible way.'*[15] The official declarations made during that period clearly show that the Baltic States identify the revolutionary movements which took place in Georgia and Ukraine with the 'Singing Revolutions' that had developed in the Baltic States at the end of the 1980s. Or more specifically, in the view of the Baltic States, the Coloured Revolutions represent a logical continuation of the peaceful revolutions of the 1980s:

> This Orange Revolution of Ukraine now takes its historic place alongside the Singing Revolution of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia (…) All these movements, as powerful manifestations of the will of the people, have been peaceful revolutions that have radically changed the fate of their nations, that have transformed the political landscape of our whole continent.[16]

Lithuania and Latvia recognize that the assistance and support that came from some western countries[17] for their transition and 'Europeanization' process had strongly contributed to their success. Thus, in their view, it is now their duty to help the countries that had not undergone a similar evolution. Declarations by Baltic political leaders to Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus indicate that the leaders are keen to encourage these countries in their efforts to pass reforms and adopt democratic values. The leaders even promise that they will be ready to help them in this process: *'Latvia is eager to see Moldova develop as a prosperous and democratic nation. We will stand*

by you and are also ready to assist you in your efforts to establish closer ties with the Euro-Atlantic community (…).'[18]

However, it is important to take into account that the declarations of support often carry a message that goes beyond neutrality and a willingness to help these countries become more democratic.

The need to choose between two alliances

In their statements and actions, Lithuanian and Latvian politicians not only demonstrate their desire to assist the Eastern Neighborhood countries in their democratic developments, but very often they tend to take a clear position in systematically opposing two main actors, or '*Others*', who are interested in this region – Europe/the United-States and Russia. The first '*Other*', Europe and the Western world, appears as a symbol of a stable, modern and pacific space by its opposition to the second '*Other*', the post-Soviet space or CIS, which is perceived as an unstable and unpredictable space that is subject to a negative influence from Russia. Latvia and Lithuania today see the Eastern neighborhood as being in the same situation as they used to be in the beginning of the 1990s, when they had to make a choice between the East and the West – the neighborhood could either link itself with the CIS and Russia or strive to enter Western institutions. The Baltic States, as we know, have refused to become part of the CIS from the very beginning. It is on the basis of this political identity that they ask the post-Soviet countries to make the choice between the two 'others' today. Indeed, according to them, it is impossible to be a part of two 'contradictory' organizations – the CIS and EU/NATO – at the same time*: 'I don't see any real possibility for these Eastern countries to be coherent with Russian politics if they want to enter the EU at the same time. Either they move towards the West or they move towards the East.'*[19] From this political standpoint, it seems easier to understand the positive reaction by some political leaders in Lithuania and Latvia in September 2009 to Georgia's withdrawal from the CIS after the Russian-Georgian conflict in August 2008. During his visit to Tbilissi in 2009, the former President of Lithuania Vytautas Landsbergis congratulated Georgia on this important step, declaring that *'Georgia has formed into a truly independent state after it left the CIS. This was achieved through a lot of hard experiences and sacrifice from the side of the Georgian people'*.[20]

The support of further EU and NATO accessions

Lithuanian and Latvian politicians are conscious that for these 'new' Eastern European countries, it will not be possible to withdraw politically and economically from the post-Soviet alliances if they are not offered further inclusion or membership in the EU and NATO:

> The EU's strict withdrawal from further enlargement would encourage Russia to pursue an aggressive policy in relation to these countries, seeking to keep them inside its sphere of influence. […] Therefore, the Baltic States and other Eastern EU Members States constantly stress the necessity to keep the doors open for the Eastern direction countries and that the ENP should become the initial stage of the enlargement process rather than its substitute.[21]

In this respect, it should be mentioned that the earlier conception of the ENP that sought to *'reinforce relations with neighboring countries to the East and to the South in order to promote prosperity, stability and security at its borders'* was felt as a great disappointment by Lithuania and Latvia because it did not allow for a special EU policy towards the Eastern neighbors. These Baltic countries, and in particular Lithuania (together with Poland), thought that a special neighborhood policy aimed towards the Eastern European neighbors should have the EU enlargement to the East as its final objective (Raik–Gromadzki, 2006). Therefore, Lithuania was one of the initiators of a special policy for the EU's Eastern neighborhood, preparing draft papers for what became the 'Eastern Partnership' in 2009. The Eastern Partnership includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

In order to show their support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and 'europeanization' of these Eastern Neighborhood countries, Latvia and Lithuania participate in various pro-western alliances in the region (Tulmets–Kesa, 2012), like the *Baltic Sea-Black Sea Axis,* which waslaunched by Mikheil Saakachvili and Viktor Yushchenko in 2005 to support the membership of Georgia and Ukraine in the EU and NATO while at the same time diminishing the influence of the CIS in the region. They are also members of the *Community for Democratic Choice*, an intergovernmental 'politico-declarative' organization that was created in 2005 and which aims to promote de-

mocracy and security in the region, and of the non-official structure called *the New Friends of Georgia group of countries.* In parallel to these interstate alliances, they support some Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), like the *Baltic to Black Sea Alliance (BBSA)*, which is composed of journalists, researchers, NGOs, and Latvian, Georgian and Ukrainian politicians. This NGO was created in October 2008 in reaction to the Russian-Georgian War of August 2008. According to one of its initiators, Martin Murnieks, this alliance was made to *'answer to Georgian needs in allies and in support'*.[22] The activities of this NGO consist essentially in organizing conferences and public debates with the objective to *'defend Georgian interests'*. Indeed, for many Lithuanian and Latvian political leaders, the Russian-Georgian war served as a warning of what could happen to a country situated next to Russia, as they refer to Russia as a threatening and unpredictable country.

In their official declarations, Latvian and Lithuanian leaders did not hesitate to take a clear position on this war, as they systematically condemned Russia for its aggression and did not really question the Georgian actions in it:

> Using the above mentioned pretext for launching military action, the Russian Federation has violated the sovereign rights of another state and is endangering the territorial integrity of Georgia. Such actions are deplorable. It seems to me that it is clear to everyone that we are talking about warfare by the Russian Federation within the territory of Georgia, not in the territory of the Russian Federation.[23]

On the 13th of August, 2008, immediately after the start of this war, Latvian and Lithuanian political leaders together with three other Eastern European political leaders made a joint declaration stating that *'Georgia should be put on the path to NATO membership to prevent future attacks by Russia'*. In this declaration, Valdas Adamkus, then President of Lithuania, said that *'the only option to prevent similar acts of aggression and occupation of Georgia in the future is to give (it the) NATO Membership Action Plan'*.[24]

We can see from all these political declarations and standpoints that Latvian and Lithuanian political leaders clearly tend to express their desire to help the eastern neighborhood countries to swing from the Russian influence to the Western/European influence. More globally, this standpoint seems to

represent the Baltic countries' own vision of the two 'others' – the Russian/post-Soviet space and the European/western space – that surround this region. This solidarity expressed vis-à-vis Georgia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, which is based on political as well as historical considerations, as we have seen earlier, should be taken as part of the construction of Lithuania and Latvia's own self-identification in relation to these 'others'. In this respect, we can note that the Baltic States' policy-makers are heavily influenced by the structure of the geopolitics in the post-Soviet region, where the Russian Federation remains an important actor. At the same time, these policy-makers are equally influenced by their own personal experiences and historical legacies. Through these prisms, the Baltic foreign policy-makers reinterpret and project their own vision of regional politics through their standpoints and declarations addressed to the evolution of the Eastern Neighborhood (Galbreath–Lamoreaux, 2008, Amsterdam: 10). Therefore this solidarity is based not only on values but also, to a larger extent, on the countries' common history, identity and geopolitics.

A MODEST BUT ACTIVE ASSISTANCE POLICY

If there is no doubt about the willingness of the Latvian and Lithuanian political establishment to assist the Eastern Neighborhood countries in becoming more 'European' and help them get closer to the Euro-Atlantic organizations, this solidarity most frequently remains at the level of politico-declarative dialogue and cooperation. To measure the extent to which this policy has had an impact on the development of the Eastern neighbourhood countries, it becomes necessary to study what was done in practice, i. e. the concrete steps – on both a bilateral and a multilateral level – that Latvia and Lithuania have taken to implement this assistance policy.

Since 2003–2004, development assistance towards several post-Soviet states has become one of Lithuania and Latvia's foreign policy priorities. This policy, which is part of their European development and cooperation aid policy, is done on both the multilateral and the bilateral level. The shares of Latvian and Lithuanian financial allocations to the assistance policy are as follows: in 2009, Latvia's official development assistance (ODA) amounted to 15 million Euros, representing 0,08% of the GNI. 90% of Latvia's ODA

has been disbursed through multilateral channels (the EC, UN agencies, the International Development Association, IDA, etc.), while the rest of the ODA has been implemented bilaterally through various different technical assistance projects.[25] Lithuania's official assistance in 2009 amounted to 0,11% (30 million Euros) of its GNP. It consists of 0,30% of the common EU assignment for development cooperation, contribution to multilateral organizations, humanitarian aid and bilateral development cooperation projects funded by Lithuanian Institutions.[26]

The multilateral level of assistance: technical aid and lobbying

Already during 1998–1999, when the negotiations about the EU membership were opened, the Baltic States had started to manifest through official declarations their undivided support for the candidacy of several ex-Soviet states, such as Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, to the Euro-Atlantic institutions. However, it was not until the Baltic States themselves became members of these organizations in 2004 that they really got involved in promoting the candidacy and the 'Europeanization' of these states (Tulmets–Kesa, 2012). During the period when the EU was preparing a new strategy and policy towards the 'new' neighborhood – *Wider Europe*, which later become the ENP – the Baltic States, in spite of their little financial means, were actively participating in the definition of this new EU external policy. For example, Lithuania supported Poland in its willingness to define a special policy towards the Eastern neighbors, prepared several political propositions addressed to the European Council in 2003 and did some important lobbying in order to stop the EU's isolationist policy towards Belarus (Tulmets–Kesa, 2012).

The three Baltic States as member states make good use of the possibility to participate in the round tables or negotiations and speak on behalf of further inclusion of the Eastern Neighborhood. Indeed, after the ENP was already launched, the Baltic politicians did some important lobbying in order to include the Southern Caucasus countries in the policy. In the same manner as that in which the Nordic countries had supported the Baltic States' candidacy during the informal and formal meetings within the EU, these new members support the Eastern neighbors in their efforts to come closer to the EU. In practice, they organize informal meetings before the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) together with the Baltic-

Nordic group of countries, the *Visegrad* group or some representatives from the Eastern Partnership countries. Lithuania and other 'new' member states have initiated informal meetings before the GAERC with some 'old' member states of the EU that are interested in the Eastern neighbourhood countries. The two Baltic countries have also had opportunities to play their desired role of 'bridging the East and the West' when representing some 'older' EU states in Eastern Neighbourhood countries, like it was the case in 2006 when Latvia represented Austria, during its EU presidency, in Belarus (Raik–Gromadzki, 2006). In parallel to this lobbying, the Baltic States also participate in the EU's assistance policy and missions, in particular in the management of border control and in the training of the civil servants of the partner countries. In this context, one may give the example of the work of Lithuanian (and Estonian) experts in implementing the EUJUST Themis mission in Georgia (2004–2005), which consisted in assisting and advising the Georgian government during its carrying out of important criminal justice reforms. Experts from Lithuania and Latvia have also participated in the EU border assistance mission (EUBAM) in the control and management of Ukrainian and Moldavian borders (Tulmets–Kesa, 2012). The two Baltic States are also very active in the implementation of the Eastern Partnership, which was launched in May 2009 (a multilateral co-operation between Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine in the fields of transport, energy and visa facilitation; a cross-border cooperation program between Latvia, Lithuania, and Belarus, etc.).

Transfer of Latvian and Lithuanian skills and experience at the bilateral level

On the bilateral level, an important part of Lithuania and Latvia's assistance policy consists of 'transferring' their model of transition and reforms. Lithuanian and Latvian civil servants and experts are conscious of how little their countries' financial contributions are compared to those of the Nordic countries, for instance. Therefore, they put emphasis on the 'added value' of their skills and non-material assistance, their recent experience of reforms and the process of moving towards the Euro-Atlantic institutions, or, again, their comprehension of the challenges that the post-Soviet states face. In Latvia, a special division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) called 'Development Cooperation' is responsible for the management of the projects, while

in the Lithuanian MFA, the corresponding department is called 'Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion'. The MFAs cooperate and finance the assistance projects with other ministries, NGOs, universities, study centers or independent advisers. Several public institutions and NGOs from partner countries participate in the implementation of the projects. The main fields of the assistance policy concern the following: the promotion of democracy, human rights and good governance; the strengthening of administrative capacities; economic development; education; and preparing the partner states for moving closer to European structures.

Despite the fact that the projects that Lithuania and Latvia develop in the framework of their own bilateral assistance policies are rather similar in their nature and that the priority partner countries are nearly the same, it should be mentioned that there is very little, if any, coordination of the two Baltic countries' assistance programmes. However, some coordination between the two countries informally exists within the group of Baltic-Nordic countries and also within the group of Baltic-Visegrad countries.

Table 1: Latvian development and cooperation projects per country in 2008[28]

Partner country	Number of projects in 2008	Total amount
Georgia	9	Approx. 150 578 Euro
Moldova	10	Approx. 276 846 Euro
Ukraine	9	Approx. 988 237 Euro
Belarus	6	Approx. 82 287 Euro

Latvia's priority countries in the Eastern neighbourhood are Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine and Belarus. Latvia has developed a 'Development Cooperation Plan' with each of these countries (see Table 1). Out of these four priority countries, the ones that Latvia is most keen to develop projects with are Georgia and Moldova. Because of Latvia's small size, Latvian officials often tend to compare their own country with Moldova. The projects towards Moldova range from Latvian assistance to the Border Guard Service of the Republic of Moldova to development of local government in Moldova, support for the enhancement of the Moldovan judicial system, and improving the penitentiary and prisoners' rehabilitation systems.[27]

In addition to these four countries – Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine and Belarus – Lithuania's assistance partners from the Eastern Neighborhood countries also include Azerbaijan as well as some other countries not included in the ENP like Afghanistan, Russia, and Turkmenistan (see Table 2). As a direct neighbor of Belarus[29], Lithuania has always been the most ardent promoter of stability and democracy in this country. In 2008 the majority of Lithuanian projects vis-à-vis Belarus were those of democracy and human rights promotion (86% of all the projects). A number of projects assisting Belarusian society in the field of democracy and open society have been developed by Lithuania. From these projects, we can mention the strengthening of grassroots organizations in Belarus by the *Eastern Europe Studies Center* (*EESC*) in Vilnius or the creation of an independent cable television channel (TV BELSAT) in Belarus by the Polish Information Center in Vilnius. At the same time, Lithuania has been eager to stabilize its neighbor because this Baltic country wants to have the same economic rules as Belarus in order to facilitate trade and the movement of people between itself and its neighbor.[30]

Table 2: Lithuanian bilateral development shares for partner countries in 2008[31]

Partner country	Number of projects	Budget (Lt)	% of total financial allocation
Afghanistan	36	4,041,281	38.6%
Belarus	29	1,905,824	19%
Georgia	22	1,032,723	10%
Ukraine	13	546,707	5%
Moldova	11	455,556	4%
Russia	17	342,173	3%
Armenia	4	123,623	1%
Azerbaijan	3	105,187	1%
Turkmenistan	1	29,467	0.3%

In the framework of the assistance policy towards the East, more and more governmental and non-governmental actors insist that it is important that the 'demand' for help come from the partner country and that assistance should not be imposed on the partner country. We also observe that Lithuania and

Latvia exert almost no pressure and impose almost no constraints on the partner countries as conditions for assisting them.

A closer look at the assistance policies of Lithuania and Latvia, however, shows that there is an important difference in the two countries' attitudes towards the assistance provided to the Eastern Neighborhood: while the Latvian assistance and its Eastern policy seem to be more pragmatic, as the proclaimed foreign policy objectives focus primarily on the need to 'strengthen economic ties and cross-road cooperation', the Lithuanian assistance (with the exception of some projects related to Belarus, which are more pragmatic) seems to carry a more normative and value discourse oriented line. This observation seems to confirm the impression that Lithuania has an ambition to have a leadership position in its direct neighborhood. It also confirms, in a way, this country's need for self-confirmation in front of others. This, in turn, raises the question of whether the self-declared 'partner to partner' relationship that we saw before is rather not actually more like a 'teacher to student' relationship in the case of Lithuania.

On the whole, the study of how this assistance policy is implemented by Lithuania and Latvia shows that compared to their expressions of strong political solidarity with the countries they are assisting, their development assistance is rather more pragmatic, reasoned and modest. Indeed, except for maybe the action of *lobbying* that Lithuanian and Latvian representatives perform within the EU and NATO to further the inclusion of the Eastern Neighbourhood in these institutions, the method of assistance used by these two Baltic States is rather flexible and not constraining. The projects aimed at introducing economic reforms, good governance, and media freedom and regulating border controls are all concrete steps and instruments that support more democracy and freedom in the post-Soviet states.

CONCLUSION

Since obtaining their membership in the EU and NATO, Lithuania and Latvia have made their development assistance towards several of the post-Soviet states one of their main foreign policy activities. Their assistance policy allows them to fill a gap which appeared in their foreign policy strategies after they had achieved all of their original desired goals by becoming members of the two organizations in 2004. At the same time, this policy is part of the endless desire of these countries to be seen as 'true' Europeans and distinguished from 'Eastern Europeans', a term that has always had a pejorative meaning in the view of the Baltic States. On the one hand, the official status of being an EU/NATO member can be considered as a real change for Lithuania and Latvia, as it certainly gives these states the possibility to play a bigger role within the international community, and with it, they can ambitiously attempt to obtain the prestigious role of a 'bridge' or link between Europe and its Eastern neighborhood. On the other hand, this need for recognition, even after 2004, shows that there are still signs, albeit in a different form, that reflect a continuation of their previous foreign policies.

The question of the consistency between the two Baltic countries' expression of solidarity with the post-Soviet countries in their foreign policy and the Baltic countries' actions on the ground is ambivalent. The type of solidarity expressed by Latvian and Lithuanian leaders shows their willingness to have Western/European influences and values spread to the post-Soviet region. The messages they send clearly reflect their own vision of the post-Soviet space. Their assistance projects and actions aim to 'export' the European model to the states of the Eastern neighborhood and, in doing so, move these countries closer to Europe. Nevertheless, we note that compared to their strong political-ideological standpoint and solidarity, the implementation of their assistance policy (which consists primarily of advising and training their partners) is in reality much more modest, pragmatic and flexible. Although this policy helps Latvia and Lithuania to better define themselves as Europeans and modern states, it has its limits. Being too 'one-way' oriented and not completely neutral (the two Baltic countries often criticize Russia but avoid criticizing the pro-western heads of state of this region), today this foreign policy seems to serve the interests of the Baltic States rather than the interests of the other post-Soviet states. Finally, without a perspective of membership, the latter do not have enough motivation to implement the necessary reforms. They cannot define a more clear-cut relation towards the EU and its member states as easily as the Baltic States did.

ENDNOTES

[1] Maria Mälksoo has written about the Baltic States' struggle to be recognized as 'true' Europeans (Mälksoo, 2006), while Elena Fofanova and Viatcheslav Morozov talk about the Russian official discourse that qualifies the Baltic States together with Poland as a 'false' Europe (Fofanova–Morozov, 2009).
[2] This expression was used by Dovilé Jakniunaite to describe the absence of any foreign policy goal (Jakniunaite, 2009).
[3] It should be noted that while this paper is a study of Lithuania and Latvia's policies towards the Eastern neighborhood countries, it does not have the ambition to provide a full comparison of the two countries' respective policies, even if it does underline some of the similarities and differences in how they carry out their respective policies.
[4] Although the present study analyses the case of Latvia and Lithuania, it should be mentioned that they define their foreign policy goals in a similar way as Estonia does.
[5] Declaration of Algirdas Brazauskas (quoted in Yurkynas, 2005: 15).
[6] The expression 'near abroad' (*ближнеезарубежье*) is used in Russian foreign policy language to refer to the newlyindependent republics which emerged after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.
[7] The Russian-Georgian conflict in August 2008 was an exception to thisas several political elites declared that this event could have an impact on changing the paradigm in Europe.
[8] Interview with a fellow researcher in Vilnius, May 2010.
[9] Speech made by Latvia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sandra Kalniete, 'Latvia's Foreign Policy at the Crossroads of Change', at University of Latvia on the 27th of January, 2004.
[10] Sandra Kalniete, January 2004, op. cit.
[11] Speech made by Arturas Paulauskas, acting President of Lithuania from April to July 2004, on 'Lithuania's New Foreign Policy' at Vilnius University on the 24th of May, 2004.
[12] The Agreement between Political Parties of the Republic of Lithuania, 2004, in Jakniunaite (2009: 126).
[13] Interviews at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, Vilnius and at the MFA of Latvia, Riga, April–May 2010.
[14] Discussion with Gia Jorjoliani of the *Center for Social Studies* and Ivane Djavakhichvili University in Tbilissi, who is also the leader of the Georgian oppositional party *Social Democrats for Development,* in Paris, November 2009.
[15] Address by H. E. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of Latvia, at the inauguration ceremony of President Viktor Yushchenko in Kiev, Ukraine, January 23, 2005.
[16] Vaira Vike-Freiberga, 2005, op. cit.
[17] In particular, Germany, the Nordic Countries, and the United States.
[18] Extract from a speech by Vaira Vīķe Freiberga given during the conference 'Latvia and Moldova: Facing the Challenges of the Modern World', Academia of Public Administration, Chisinau (Moldavia), April 4th, 2006.
[19] Discussion with a Fellow Researcher at the Institute of International Relations and Political Sciences in Vilnius, April 2010.
[20] Declaration of Vytautas Landsbergis, first President of Lithuania and member of European Parliament, pronounced during his meeting with Giorgi Baramidze, Vice-Prime Minister of Georgia, in Tbilissi, on the 2nd of October, 2009. Declaration available on: eu-integration.gov.ge/index.php?que=eng/news&info=176.

[21] Extract from a declaration made by Juozas Jaruševičius, member of the Lithuanian delegation at the Baltic Assembly in Riga, 23 November 2007.
[22] Interview with Martin Murnieks from the Latvian Soros Foundation in Riga, May 2010.
[23] Extract from the Latvian Minister of Foreign Affairs Maris Riekstins' speech at an extraordinary session of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia on 14 August 2008.
[24] 'Eastern Europeans want Georgia in NATO'.
[25] 'Latvia's contribution to development assistance', available on: www.mfa.gov.lv/en/DevelopmentCo-operation/finance/.
[26] 'Lithuania's Official Development Assistance'.
[27] Information about the Latvian Development Cooperation. Online: www.mfa.gov.lv/en/DevelopmentCo-operation/.
[28] The exact figures and details for each project and partner country are available on: www.mfa.gov.lv/en/DevelopmentCo-operation/info/Projects/projects2008/.
[29] The border between Lithuania and Belarus is 678 km long.
[30] Interview at the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius, April 2010.
[31] The figures come from 'Lithuanian development cooperation projects by partner country' (2008) from the Lithuanian Development Cooperation.

Slovakia's Eastern Policy: A Blend of Pragmatism and Solidarity

Lucia Najšlová

In a recent interview Milan Ježovica, the state secretary at the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), declared, 'Development assistance has several goals. The first one is that it is a means to stick the Slovak flag in the world and spread the good name of this country and its inhabitants' (Balážová, 2011). Ježovica's prioritisation of the 'Slovak flag' is a fitting illustration of the factors underlying the Slovak engagement in the EU's Eastern neighborhood. While there is an undeniable dose of solidarity and a sincere effort to assist Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus to become better governed, the Slovak Eastern policy is also motivated by Slovakia's desire for self-promotion and its desire to reestablish its self-confidence and (re)gain the respect of other international players. This chapter argues that Slovakia's efforts to shape the EU's Eastern policy have been a blend of solidarity and pragmatism, a permanent renegotiation between the 'logic of appropriateness' and the 'logic of consequentialism' (March–Olsen, 1989; 1998). Ever since the beginning of the Slovak involvement in the Eastern neighborhood, the majority of the Slovak governing elite and intellectuals have been repeatedly highlighting that Slovakia's experience of democratic transition and Euro-Atlantic integration is an asset in understanding and helping the Eastern neighbors. At the same time, they frequently argued that Slovakia's membership in the EU and NATO has placed new responsibilities on the country, and sharing its transition experience is one way to respond to the challenge of becoming a mature international player. The rationale of solidarity in the Slovak policy ran as follows: 'we will help you because you are like us – you experienced a similar past, and, moreover, we were also helped by the others'. At the same time, there has been a two-fold pragmatic push in the background. On one hand the Slovak discourse reflects the reasoning that a democratic and free neighborhood with good governance corresponds more to the Slovak national interest than one which is poor, unstable and conflict-ridden. But on the other hand, and more importantly, Slovakia's pragmatism can be felt in another realm as well – by its prioritisation of the East and its highlighting of the relevance of its transition experience, Slovakia has been looking for a way to establish itself in the international arena in general and in the EU in particular. This is the pragmatic element – 'we will help you because by doing so, we can find a relevant place for ourselves on the international scene and gain the recognition of key international players'. This pragmatism is part of Slovakia's effort to reclaim its self-confidence by making the 'others' see 'us' as equal, mature and relevant. Minding what others think and might think about 'us' and trying to shape these perceptions is an important element of creating one's identity (Diez, 2004).

Being small in terms of size, economy and international influence, Slovakia has been looking for a niche where it could make a specialised and visible imprint on the EU policies. It has chosen the 'transition experience' as a major realm of this sort, and in this realm it has centered its contribution to the EU and its foreign policy. In addition to that, it should be emphasised that the EU membership remains at the backdrop of Slovakia's Eastern policies – i.e. Slovakia understands its policy towards the East as a contribution to the EU Eastern policy. At the same time, foreign policy has been a major area for Slovakia, and Slovakia has so far prided itself on its contribution to the Union.

Identity (including foreign policy identity) in this article is understood as 'imagined' (Anderson, 1991) and as renegotiated or 'debated' (Calhoun, 2002). Moreover, it is a 'category of practice' as opposed to a 'category of analysis' (Brubaker, 1998; Brubaker–Cooper, 2000; Brubaker, 2002). In other words, the statements and policies of Slovakia and its representatives about what Slovakia is (or who Slovaks are) and why it acts in a certain way are not taken as the only evidence of how the Slovak foreign policy identity is constructed. As highlighted in the introduction to this book, there are other factors that need to be taken into account in an effort to understand the present rhetoric and action towards the East. These include Slovakia's self-perception and its understanding of its past. The current debate on how identities of states or larger abstract entities are created draws largely on the social identity theory developed by Tajfel and Turner and the conceptualisation of social representations developed by Moscovici (Moscovici, 1990; 1994). In the creation of a foreign policy identity of a country or a larger abstract entity (such

as Europe), self-perception is an important factor, and for self-identification, the *Other* is an important reference frame (Neumann, 1999; Lucarelli, 2007; Lucarelli–Fioramonti, 2009).

But is this *Other* spatial or temporal? While the obvious spatial *Other* would be Russia, and, indeed, this idea was occasionally floated in off-the-record interviews, based on the analysis of the discourse and policies employed by Slovakia towards the Eastern neighborhood, this paper emphasises the temporal dimension of the *Other*. Thus, in the temporal view, the *Other* is the past, the authoritarian, communist, unprosperous past in which Slovakia did not 'belong' and did not matter – it was invisible or ignored. This past is contrasted with Slovakia's present, in which it is seen as a successful country whose 'story is an inspiration' for Eastern countries (supposedly) struggling with similar challenges (Ježovica in Balážová, 2011).

FOREIGN POLICY IDENTITY AND CAPITALIZING ON 'EUROPEANNESS'

The first part of this chapter explores the reasoning and interests (as well as the historical factors) that underlay Slovakia's emergence as a promoter of the EU's engagement in the East. It briefly covers the reasoning behind Slovakia's joining of the European Union and the subsequent formulation of its priorities inside the EU. The implementation of Slovakia's Eastern policy is then discussed in the second part of this chapter.

Return to Europe: a vocation of pragmatism, values and the need to belong

Slovakia's EU vocation began even before the country existed. The so-called Euro-agreement (*Eurodohoda*), or the Association Agreement between the European Community and Czechoslovakia, was signed in 1991 yet it never entered into force. The demise of the communist regime opened plenty of new questions for the Czechoslovak elite: how to deal with the proponents of the old regime; how to modernise; how to achieve the standards of the West. The path of modernisation via accession to the European community soon became a major alternative that was considered in the debate of pro-democratic forces, especially since the EU accession process was seen as a tool

that could help Slovakia do away with the authoritarian tendencies of Vladimir Mečiar and the circles around him. As Haughton (2007) has pointed out, the key driving force was Slovakia's desire 'to be a *normal* European country' – and the EU process was seen as a way to achieve this goal.

Although Slovakia's joining of the EU tends to be treated as if this goal were really stated and embraced already at the onset of Slovakia's democratisation process, the fact remains that at the beginning of the process, neither the democrats in Czechoslovakia nor the EC representatives knew how the newly free countries in Central Europe should be dealt with and what the final goal of the EU policy towards them should be (Gower, 1999: 3).

What was clear to some intellectuals and members of the elite, though, was that the country needed to become integrated with the West or 'return to Europe' (Henderson, 1999). Such streams of thought followed the idea of Central Europe being the 'kidnapped West', as described by Kundera (1984): Central Europe had always belonged to the West (culturally), yet it was stolen from it by an oppressive regime. However, the need to belong to the West, as we will show later, was not motivated only by cultural considerations ('we are like you'), but also by pragmatic considerations ('we want to be where the decisions are being made'). In the end, the 'West' is a contested concept – geographically and culturally – and in the pragmatic understanding, there was more of a desire to belong to 'Western institutions' than to whatever values they may embrace. As Probyn (1996) has noted, belonging is not merely about *be-ing*, but also about *longing* (Probyn in Bell, 1999). Thus, Slovakia's gradual drive towards the membership in the EC was motivated by visions of better standards (economic standards, human rights standards), but more importantly, and this is an aspect which often tends to get overlooked in the literature, an important consideration in this process was Slovakia's struggle to be 'taken seriously'. The practical interplay between the logics of appropriateness and consequentialism suggests that they do not have to be exclusive (Risse, 2000), and, in practice, even rationally inspired behavior might bring about solidarity as a consequence, as we will see later in the paper.

While a large part of the public debate in the early post-communist years concentrated on resolving the relations within the Czechoslovak federation, it is only from 1993 onwards – after Czechoslovakia split into the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic – that we are speaking about Slovak foreign

policy. Yet, the emergence of the independent Slovak state still did not mean a clear consensus on Slovakia's 'European future'. Quite the contrary – soon after gaining independence, Slovakia slid into a period of illiberalism, the so-called era of *Mečiarism*, which lasted from 1994–1998. This period was characterised by a number of breaches of civil and political rights (Szomolanyi, 1999; Kollar et al., 2000; Lesna, 2011). Bútora–Mesežnikov–Bútorová (1998) cite examples of Slovakia-related headlines from the foreign press in that period, e.g. 'The Clock in Slovakia Goes Backward' (New York Times) or 'Extremist Rehabilitation of Command Control in Central Europe' (Wall Street Journal). While the governing elite was inward looking and frequently employed nationalist rhetoric, the opposition and a large part of the society would have welcomed a fast-track adoption of the EU norms. During this period the Slovak pro-EU elite experienced how the mechanism of external pressure works, as in this period the European Union was issuing frequent *démarches* to Slovakia, and these were sometimes based on information received from the Slovak opposition (EC, 2000).[1]

The EC-Slovakia Association Agreement was signed on October 4, 1993 and entered into force in February 1995, well into the era of Mečiar's reign. Although Mečiar's government did declare that Slovakia's EU membership is a strategic priority to be achieved by 2000 (Government of the SR, 1994), the European Commission did not recommend the opening of negotiations with Slovakia until it started fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria. Thus, although Slovakia filed its application for EC membership at the Cannes summit in 1995, the Luxembourg summit in 1997 recommended opening negotiations only with the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Hungary, Estonia, Poland and Slovenia. Slovakia, rejected for its failure to meet the Copenhagen political criteria, was left as the only member of the Visegrad Four (V4) outside of the EU door. Given the fact that one of the main reasons for the establishment of the V4 was cooperation towards Euro-Atlantic integration (Visegrad Group, 1991), the international isolation into which Slovakia descended was remarkable, and it even strengthened the push among the democratic opposition for Slovakia to 'belong' to a 'respected club'. The 1997 rejection only strengthened the conviction of the anti-Mečiar opposition that the EU process could help to defeat illiberalism in Slovak politics.

The 1998 elections were another restart for Slovakia – the coalition under the leadership of Mikuláš Dzurinda and the SDK (Slovak Democratic Coalition), which emerged victorious, campaigned not only on domestic issues, but also on the Euro-Atlantic future of Slovakia, which resonated in the campaign. After the 1998 elections, Slovakia emerged out of a 'black hole' (as Madeleine Albright called the period of Mečiarism) and undertook fast reforms. The 1999 Helsinki summit then recommended the beginning of Slovakia's accession negotiations with the EU. Given the fact that painful reforms were undertaken in the public sector, though, the foreign policy remained one of the few issues on which the post-1998 government could pride itself (Strážay, 2000).

Radaelli and Pasquier describe what was happening during the accession period as a process of 'Europeanisation' – 'the institutionalization of norms, beliefs, formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, "ways of doing things" that are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy processes and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies' (Radaelli–Pasquier, 2007: 35). While there have been actors who saw the EU process as a way to assure the exercise of human rights and rule of law, there have also been those who understood the adoption of these principles only as a ticket that needed to be bought before the country could enter the 'power club'.

The Slovak transition experience is thus two-fold: On one hand it is the experience of doing away with the communist regime and adopting the EU standards, and of establishing rule of law, free market economy and respect for human rights. On the other, it is the experience of doing away with the post-communist authoritarian regime of Vladimír Mečiar and catching up with the Central European neighbors. It is the experience of an outsider who has twice emerged as an insider. Yet, still, while the political rhetoric of Slovakia's leaders argues that this experience is the source of Slovakia's solidarity with and efforts to assist the Eastern neighbors, one should not omit pragmatism as another reason for this policy. Similarly, Slovakia's 'return to Europe' was, on one hand, a value-based policy (as expressed in numerous declarations and statements) and, on the other, a pragmatic policy – belonging to the EC was understood as belonging to a 'club that matters' and improving the economic situation. It would then be wrong to imagine that the pragmatic part of the policy suddenly evaporated after accession.

As we will see in the second part of this article, doing 'the right thing' and trying to pursue one's interests do not necessarily have to be in contra-

diction, and interest-motivated (logic of consequentialism) behavior can in the end produce similar benefits as behavior motivated by solidarity or altruism. Thus, the approaches of constructivists and rationalists do not necessarily have to be at odds in all cases (Checkel, 2001).

As suggested in the introduction, one of the driving forces of Slovakia's own transition (and, later, a driving force of its Eastern policy) has been its desire to distance itself from the *Other*. It is common to assume that this *Other* is geographical and spatial, and that it is Russia. In the case of Slovakia, though, the threat perception of Russia is not that high.[2] Thus, although there have been political splits over how to approach Russia, and the governments of Vladimír Mečiar (1994–1998) and Róbert Fico (2006–2010) would occasionally use different vocabularies and suggest different policies than the governments of Mikuláš Dzurinda (1998–2006) and Iveta Radičová (2010–2012) in this respect, in the Slovak debate one might actually observe more reflection on the past as the (temporal) *Other* than on Russia as the (spatial) *Other*.[3] This is also the realm where Slovakia mirrors (rhetorically) the East European *Others* – in the sense that they have similar experiences. Yet this mirror might already be distorted, as there are increasingly more voices in both the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe that suggest that these two regions underwent considerable change in recent years and that it is thus analytically wrong to see them as the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe of 1989.[4]

Post-2004 priorities: they're watching, we have to help

In 2004 Slovakia became a member of the European Union. However, earlier, in 2002, it had joined the OECD and as a member of this organisation, it had to start thinking of contributing to development assistance. In parallel, as the goal of EU membership was reached, it was natural for the Slovak elite to start thinking in terms of contributions, and not only in terms of gains. But despite these changes, it would still be wrong to interpret Slovakia's efforts to support the EU's Eastern neighbors merely as a sign of altruism and solidarity.

Slovakia suddenly found itself as a would-be member in a community (the thinking on the Eastern involvement started well before Slovakia's actual EU membership) where every other member was active in specific foreign policy areas (e.g. Spain in Latin America; France in North Africa). Thus, it was natural that Slovakia looked for a domain where it could come up with a specific contribution, and the EU's aspirants – in the Balkans and the East – proved to be an apt domain of this sort since they were previously quite forgotten in EU policies. The East in particular represented a specific niche where Slovakia, together with other new member states, could make a difference.

Again, the effort to make a contribution and a difference was not motivated merely by goodwill, but also by Slovakia's internal need to belong and be treated as an equal member, as it could not be treated as a learner and a follower forever. This need was not always declared explicitly in Slovakia's political rhetoric (speeches and documents), yet it was always tangibly present. This also explains why Slovakia has become a staunch supporter of democratic reforms in the EU's Eastern neighborhood.

Around 2002, the think-tanks in various Visegrad countries, including Slovakia, began to initiate a debate on the post-2004 foreign policy priorities. In Slovakia the prominent promoter of this issue had been the Slovak Foreign Policy Association. As a key foreign policy think-tank, it has organised several conferences and hearings with representatives of Slovak ministries, including international events that involved joint brainstorming by think-tankers from various parts of the world. These debates provided opportunities for brainstorming in regard to the prioritisation of geographical regions of operation as well as their thematic focus. In parallel to the debate on foreign policy priorities, Slovak development organisations formed a joint Platform of Non-Governmental Development Organisations (or the Slovak NGDO Platform) in order to strengthen their coordination and the dialogue with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the geographical and sectoral prioritisation of development assistance.

In the first phase the Slovak policy-makers prioritised those countries that had similar experiences as Slovakia and also the countries in its geographic vicinity – hence, they prioritised the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe. The focus on these countries came as a consequence of various other factors as well, such as the strategic interests of the Slovak Republic and the capacity of the countries in question to absorb Slovak assistance. The major recipients of Slovakia's development assistance have been the countries in the Western Balkans, especially Serbia, which has, since the beginning of the Slovak ODA, been the number 1 individual recipient of Slovak aid. Before Slovakia's EU membership, the majority of the discourse on its foreign policy pri-

orities had been concentrated on working jointly with these two regions, since here Slovakia could combine its niche ('here we can provide our unique expertise') and its perceptions of similarity between itself and the other countries ('they are struggling with similar phenomena as we have struggled with in the past'). Likewise, the long-term activities of Slovak non-governmental organisations have generally been focused on the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe (see charts 1 and 2 for an illustration of the geographical and sectoral disbursement of the bilateral development assistance in 2009).

At the same time, it should be noted that although the post-2004 consensus on priorities was created and mostly upheld no matter which parties were in government, there were differences in the parties' accents. The foreign policy in the periods 1998–2002 (SDKU, KDH, SMK, SOP), 2002–2006 (SDKU, KDH, SMK, ANO) (the period when Slovakia joined the EU), and 2010 – the present (SDKU, KDH, MOST-Hid, SAS) has been rhetorically different from the foreign policy in 2006–2010, when the country was ruled by the coalition of SMER [Direction] – Social Democracy, HZDS (the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, Mečiar's party) and SNS (the Slovak National [and nationalist] Party) under the leadership of Prime Minister Robert Fico (SMER). The shift to be detected in this coalition was in its accentuation of priorities.

In relation to this matter, two particular instances deserve our attention: that of PM Fico's statements during the 2008 Russia-Georgia war and that of his statements during the Russian-Ukrainian gas dispute in 2009. In the first case, PM Fico stated that the war was provoked by Georgia (Aktualne.sk, 2008; Hospodárske noviny, 2010), which ran not only counter to what the rest of the EU leaders were saying, but also counter to the thinking in the Slovak MFA (Economist, 2010). Yet even during Fico's tenure in office, the first 'SlovakAid' projects for Georgia were approved and started to be implemented, and Georgia received a similar percentage of the Slovak ODA for 2009 as Moldova or Belarus (SlovakAid, 2009). In fact, in 2009 Georgia appeared on the list of priorities of the Slovak ODA for the first time. Thus, despite Fico's rhetoric, Slovakia did provide assistance to Georgia.

In the second case, Fico argued that not Russia, but Ukraine was to blame for the dispute, and since the dispute ended in a considerable economic loss for Slovakia, Fico called for a reevaluation of Slovakia's support for the Euro-integration ambitions of Ukraine. In the end, the Slovak-Ukrainian relations were cold until the new Ukrainian government took office in 2010 (Duleba, 2011).

To sum up, the post-1989 and post-2004 priorities of the Slovak diplomacy and foreign assistance came to be defined as a blend of pragmatism and solidarity. That said, while the speeches and declarations of the Slovak leaders do tend to stipulate the notion of solidarity and moral duty, as noted in the introduction of this article, the references to solidarity should not be understood as analytical categories but as categories of practice (for an explanation of this term, which was introduced by Bourdieu, see Brubaker–Cooper, 2002). The rhetorical usage of 'solidarity' fits into the discourse on values – and Slovakia's EU presence as a value-oriented issue. Yet, while one might use the notion of solidarity in statements, it is not possible to prove whether this usage is sincere or merely a public relations strategy – a statement or reference produced to look good in the eyes of the international community.

The current Slovak foreign policy thinking is well grasped in the following excerpt from a recent speech by Mikuláš Dzurinda, the former Prime Minister and current Minister of Foreign Affairs. Of particular relevance are two principles that he highlights: first, the Slovak assistance to the East is framed within the Euro-Atlantic integration, and secondly, Slovakia sees itself (and the V4) as an example to follow. The first principle clearly puts the Slovak Eastern policy in the EU-ropean context and stipulates Slovakia's ambition to influence the EU policy:

> I want to reconfirm that the Slovak priority is to have a meaningful and visible EU policy in the Eastern neighbourhood through the Eastern Partnership. Our key goal is to have a stable, democratic and prosperous neighbourhood. [...] 20 years ago the V4 countries decided to join forces in their efforts to integrate into the European and Transatlantic community. Today, we are joining our efforts in promoting our European values further to the East (Dzurinda, 2011).

The emphasis on EU policy as opposed to Slovak policy can be explained by the size of the country as well. As Malová and Haughton (2011) have pointed out, since Slovakia is not a big country, it understands that by 'acting through EU channels it may have more influence'. In the other principle

outlined by Dzurinda one can observe an identification with the V4's common past and a view of the past as a joint other (for the V4 and the East):

> The added value of the V4 in the Eastern Partnership is our unique transformation experience. Our countries underwent the whole process of transformation and made deep and painful structural reforms. Our countries established a precedent worth following – we provide an example of successful enlargement, a tangible success of European ideas and values (Dzurinda, 2011).

FOREIGN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This part analyses the political and civil society efforts towards Slovakia's Eastern neighbors in the post-2004 period. Scrutinising the documents, the rhetoric of the leaders, and the activities of the political representation and civil society, it argues that even though the Eastern policy is not fully motivated by a logic of appropriateness (doing what is right and what brings benefits to others), but also by a logic of consequentialism (doing what brings benefits to Slovakia), the result can be considered to be beneficial to the EU's Eastern neighborhood.

Political effort: Many honest declarations

Slovakia's political engagement with Eastern Europe ran largely in the framework of supporting its integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions. On the bilateral level a number of meetings have taken place, especially with Ukrainian leaders, the Belarussian opposition and, recently (after 2010), Moldovan leaders. The exchange with the Southern Caucasus remains limited, though. On the multilateral level, Slovakia has supported all the major EU initiatives towards the Eastern neighborhood (the European Neighborhood Policy, the Eastern Partnership, the Black Sea Synergy). Although it has taken part in their creation, it has not been a leader in their activities for most of the time, although the year 2011 was special for it, as during this year Slovakia hosted a V4 summit on Eastern Partnership in Bratislava and initiated EU-level sanctions against the Lukashenka regime. Out of all the Eastern countries,

Ukraine received the most visible long-term attention from Slovakia – after the Orange Revolution, the Slovak Prime Minister presented the Ukrainian Prime Minister Jurij Jekhanurov with a *Plan of Slovak Assistance to Ukraine to Fulfill the Goals of the EU-Ukraine Action Plan*, which was largely prepared by the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (RC SFPA 2005). The SFPA, as an independent NGO, has played a key role in the prioritisation of the East in the Slovak foreign policy.

The attention to the East (including the support for its Euro-Atlantic integration) has also been articulated in multilateral fora. In 2006–2007, Slovakia held a non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council. Although the Council agenda did not prioritise the EU's Eastern neighborhood given its global scope and a number of more pressing issues in international politics, two particular issues that required the Council's attention did appear in this respect – the secessionist conflicts related to Georgia and Moldova. In its positions on the conflicts, Slovakia emphasised its support for the Euro-Atlantic integration of both countries (MFA SR, 2005). At the same time (in 2006–2007), Slovakia held the V4 presidency during the important period of the introduction of new EU tools towards the Eastern neighborhood. However, the Slovak V4 presidency in the period July 1, 2010–June 30, 2011 was probably more visible. Although the core of the priorities was centered on intra-Visegrad issues, the Eastern partners did receive the attention of the presidency, explicitly as part of the solidarity principle (MFA SR, 2010a). Specifically, the Slovak priorities related to the Eastern partners include sharing transition experience, support for the reform processes in the countries of the Eastern Partnership and facilitation of the visa regime. At the same time, the program acknowledges the need for joint efforts at the EU level and the inclusion of the V4 effort and experience into the EU strategic documents, notably the 'inclusion of the experience from implementation of sector policies as a part of the dialogue with countries of the Western Balkans and the Eastern partnership' (ibid.). The most important part, however, was the 'mini-summit' that took place in Bratislava in March 2011, which was attended by Angela Merkel and adopted an important joint declaration on the Eastern Partnership.

Regarding the issue of Belarus, after the December 2010 presidential elections and Lukashenka's crack-down on his opponents, Slovakia led the effort at the EU level to adopt sanctions against the Belarussian regime. Although Slovakia also supports the Belarussian opposition bilaterally (by expressions

of solidarity, issuing invitations to conferences, and raising the issue at EU fora), Slovakia's EU level activities in this matter have gained the Slovak diplomacy acknowledgement but also shadows of a doubt as to whether such a mission really is bound to succeed – as the *Economist* comments, 'Slovakia is punching above its weight' (the Economist, 2011). Yet, it seems that it indeed is bound to succeed – the June External Relations Council in Luxembourg saw the adoption of sanctions 'that concern a concrete person connected with the regime and specific companies that cooperate with the establishment' (MFA SR, 2011b). The Slovak Foreign Ministry seems to be convinced that these measures adopted by the EU (in combination with the deteriorating economy of Belarus, which has recently seen a multifold inflation) might bring about the last days of the regime.

Assistance policy: a commitment to the East not always underpinned by money

As already noted, the main priority for the Slovak assistance has been the Western Balkans – the respective amounts of resources invested so far in the Balkans and the East are incomparable. For example, in 2009 Serbia alone received 39% of the Slovak Official Development Assistance (ODA), while all the eligible Eastern partners combined received 10%. Yet, some activities have been taking place between Slovakia and the Eastern neighbors in recent years. The Slovak ODA has prioritised Ukraine and Belarus in 2006, and recently (in 2010), Moldova. Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine all received assistance from Slovakia. Each of the first three countries of the second group received assistance in the amount of 2% of the total Slovak ODA for 2010, while Ukraine received 4% (191,430.49 EUR) (Slovakaid, 2009). There have been no significant links with the countries of the South Caucasus, although in 2009 the first three projects for Georgia were approved, and this was followed by the approval of three more projects for Georgia in 2010.

Since its establishment, the Slovak ODA has undergone several reforms (see Tables 3 and 4 for a brief list of the mid-term and annual priority countries). The review of basic ODA documents reveals how the assistance has been communicated and confirms the thesis that the Slovak cooperation with the EU's neighbors is indeed a pragmatic endeavor. The first Slovak ODA

strategy for the years 2003–2008 does not include any of the six EaP countries as a priority. However, it should be noted that until 2006 Ukraine and Belarus were not on the OECD/DAC list of ODA eligible countries, and thus, Slovakia offered assistance to them via OA – the Official Assistance (SlovakAid, 2006). The main priorities are Serbia and Montenegro, and the other priorities are countries in the Balkans, Central Asia and Subsaharan Africa. It is, however, interesting to look at the reasoning behind the ODA (why Slovakia needs ODA), and this reasoning is purely pragmatic. The first ODA strategy argues that it is essential to provide ODA for the following reasons: 1) Slovakia should join the OECD and thus it needs to harmonise its policy with the donor community; 2) Slovakia needs to fulfill its international commitments; 3) Slovakia has an interest in solving global questions and helping the developing world. The altruistic 'helping' is mentioned only as the last subreason of the third reason, and particular attention should be dedicated to the reasoning in point 2:

The second important incentive for providing development assistance is the fulfilment of obligations (mostly of a moral nature) and promises resulting from Slovakia's membership in international organisations and from the accession to international documents. Even though these are mostly recommendations and moral obligations, the international community carefully observes how they are respected (MFA SR, 2003).

The strategy could just as well say, 'We would not have to do it, but they are watching us, and we want to look good'. This excerpt from the ODA strategy is a fitting illustration of the need for international recognition as an important motivation of Slovakia's engagement abroad in general and in the East in particular. As noted in the first part of this article, this 'need to belong' has important roots in Slovakia's perception of its own past, as in the past, it felt oppressed and ignored by other countries.

Even more telling are the goals of the Slovak ODA, which consist of the following: 1) transfer of Slovak experience and know-how; 2) engagement of Slovak experts in international development projects; 3) expansion of economic cooperation with developing countries; 4) support of Slovak minorities abroad (MFA SR, 2003: 8). Note the emphasis on the Slovak interest – this can, on one hand, be explained by the concern to communicate the ODA to the Slovak public. On the other, it can be interpreted in line with the argu-

ments introduced in the first part of this chapter. In this interpretation, Slovakia understood its EU membership and the duties stemming from it as a way to become a part of the 'in-group', a part of the circle that decides.

The second Slovak ODA strategy for the years 2009–2013 (adopted during Fico's government) offers a slightly altered set of justifications for the Slovak ODA: 1) the shared responsibility for global development; 2) the interest in being an active subject of international politics and an active member of the donor community; 3) the moral duty and commitments that are related to membership in international organisations, especially the EU. This strategy, which is more detailed than the previous one, already includes the Eastern neighbors – Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. They are, however, left in the second tier (as 'project countries'), while the more important 'program countries' are Afghanistan, Kenya and Serbia.

Based in this strategy, the National Program for Slovak ODA of 2010 specifies the following priorities for EaP countries: 1) support for projects aimed at legal approximation to EU law; 2) support of 'integration ambitions and building of administrative capacities'. In the case of Georgia two more priorities are added: 'strengthening of regional security and stability' and support for internally displaced persons – IDPs (SlovakAid, 2010).

The year 2011 brought further changes to the Slovak development assistance – the list of countries eligible for bilateral development assistance has been cut, and out of the Eastern partners, only Moldova remained. At the same time, a new program called 'technical assistance' was created. Under this program the countries of the Western Balkans and those grouped under the Eastern Partnership (with the exception of Armenia and Azerbaijan) are eligible to receive support with the goal of supporting reforms and European integration. Apart from calls that are to be published by the Slovak Agency of International Development Cooperation (which is responsible for the distribution of Slovak aid), a new program was formed in the MFA. This program is called CETIR – the Centre for Transfer of Experience of Transition and Integration. The goal of this program is to 'deepen the contacts of Slovak experts with representatives of state and civil society in the countries of the Western Balkans and EU's Eastern Partnership. The emphasis will be laid on consultations on specific questions related to their reform and integration processes. CETIR will try to respond promptly to partner country demands' (SlovakAid, 2011: 7). The program, which is estimated to last until the end

of 2012, has a budget of 300,000 euro. It has nine recipient countries – 5 from the Western Balkans and 4 from the Eastern neighborhood – Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia (SlovakAid, 2011c). The program is specifically aimed at representatives of state and local administration, and although civil society may benefit from it as well, the focus on official authorities underlines Slovakia's awareness that although civil society support is relevant, the reforms can be implemented only by the official institutions in the end. This in itself is an important lesson from Slovakia's transition.

Diplomacy and NGOs working hand in hand: the National Conventions

A particularly interesting case of Slovakia's assistance to the EU's Eastern neighbors is that of the 'National Convention on the EU'. The project, which emerged in Slovakia shortly before its accession to the EU, has come to be implemented in Serbia, Montenegro, Ukraine and Moldova as a joint effort of the Slovak diplomacy and a non-governmental organisation – the Slovak Foreign Policy Association. At the moment the National Convention is Slovakia's flagship initiative in the priority countries of the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe.

The project is based on the philosophy that all major stakeholders in the country should take part in a structured debate on its future. This means that representatives of state, regional and local governments, businesses, academia, civil society and the media should all have the opportunity to take part in the formulation of national positions in key areas of importance. The National Convention, which has a plenary assembly and thematic working groups, provides for exactly this kind of forum.

In Slovakia, this project emerged shortly before the EU accession, and its main goal was to facilitate Slovakia's European integration. It, however, continued (although with a break) even after Slovakia joined the Union, and its newer version was focused on facilitating the priorities of Slovakia's role inside the European Union. This 'export' of the National Conventions abroad is evidence of a fusion of solidarity and pragmatism in the Slovak Eastern policy (and Slovakia's foreign policy in general). The projects do respond to the needs of the countries in which they are implemented. Their initial phases have been funded by SlovakAid. At the same time, they serve as a powerful tool of the country's public diplomacy, since the Conventions are visible and

attended by senior representatives of state, and thus they contribute to Slovakia's image in other countries as well.

In Moldova, the National Convention on the EU was launched on November 9, 2009 (National Convention in Moldova, 2011). The project is implemented by the Slovak think-tank SFPA, the Moldovan Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (Viitorul), the Foreign Policy Association and the analytical centre Expert Grup. For now, three working groups have been established in relation to it: 1) Visas, Borders and Transnistria; 2) Agriculture and Regional Development; 3) Trade, Services and Competition. The National Convention on the EU in Ukraine was launched in the fall of 2010, and it follows a similar pattern like the ones in Slovakia and Moldova – it is a joint state-civil society initiative aimed at facilitating the harmonisation of legislation with the EU standards, and it produces recommendations for the government. It has four working groups: 1) Relations with the EU and the European Integration Strategy for Ukraine; 2) Free Trade Agreement and Regulatory Approximation with EU Acquis; 3) Justice, Freedom and Security and 4) the Regional Dimension of Ukraine's European Integration Strategy: Regional Development and Interregional Cooperation (National Convention in Ukraine, 2011). The project is implemented jointly by the SFPA and the Ukrainian partners – the National Institute for Strategic Studies and the Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research.

That said, Slovakia is sharing its own experience upon the request of the neighborhood governments. At the same time, the National Convention on the EU is still, in a revamped form, running in Slovakia as a dialogue between the government, businesses and civil society. To illustrate the scope and depth of the debates, its recent (May 2011) session in Banská Bystrica was focused specifically on the Eastern Partnership, and the recommendations, addressed to the Slovak government, have been very detailed and very technical in nature. That said, they did not include much reasoning as to *why* Slovakia should be involved in the East – that is already taken as a matter of course. The focus was on *how* Slovakia could best be engaged. The recommendations specifically outline that by far the most important country is Ukraine, and not for the reasons of solidarity, but for pragmatic reasons related to the state and economic interests of the Slovak Republic. The geographic proximity (Ukraine is a direct neighbor) is indeed a strong factor that

influences Slovakia's interest in the cooperation. Plus, supporting Ukraine is a way to reduce Slovakia's liminal position in the EU:

> In the case of the European integration of Ukraine, or at least in the case of the signing of an Association Agreement, such as the free trade agreement which the EU offers to Ukraine via the Eastern partnership, it is justified to argue that the trade balance between the SR and Ukraine might increase several times and, at the same time, that a free trade zone between the EU and Ukraine will have an extraordinarily positive impact on the economic development of Eastern Slovakia... which belongs to the most backward Slovak regions (National Convention, 2011).

Besides the clear prioritisation of Ukraine, the Convention recommendations stipulate that it is essential that the EaP partners get a voice (e.g. via observer status) in EU working groups targeting specific sectoral policies, that the Slovak Republic reevaluates the visa regime, and that the specific experience of the SR might help Ukraine fulfill the Action Plan.

Apart from the Convention on the EU, there are many other activities that are carried out by the Slovak NGOs operating in the Eastern neighborhood. They mostly work with the support of the Slovak government funds designated for this purpose and also the international grant schemes, including the International Visegrad Fund, an intergovernmental fund created by the V4 states which has special funding schemes for cooperation with the East. The 'European future' for the East stands at the backdrop of their efforts. The NGOs operate either domestically, by raising awareness about the situation in the EaP countries (e.g. the MEMO 98 project slovenskoukrajina.sk), at the EU level (e.g. the advocacy activities by Pontis or SFPA), or directly in the EaP countries. Many of them have been active in issues related to the EaP countries even before Slovakia's EU accession. Regarding their domestic involvement, one should not overlook the NGOs' agenda-setting function and efforts to shape the policy. The important annual conferences, such as the GLOBSEC (organised by the Slovak Atlantic Commission) or the Annual Conference on Evaluation of the Foreign Policy (SFPA and MFA), always dedicate separate panels to Eastern Europe and the Balkans, the two

foreign policy priorities. Similarly, the relevant Slovak publications (e.g. *International Issues*, *Zahraničná politika*) dedicate considerable attention to these two regions.

Given the broad area of priorities outlined in Slovak development assistance strategies, the activities in the East have gained a variety of ranges and scopes. To illustrate the dispersion of the resources, we could use the case of Georgia – a country that has not received significant attention from the Slovak diplomacy and development assistance until 2008 and 2009, when Slovakia, following the rest of the donor community, decided to contribute to Georgia's reconstruction and modernisation. The divergence of the implemented projects, however, shows that the assistance to Georgia was not well premeditated. Presently there are six Slovak projects running in Georgia (contracted in 2009 and 2010), spanning from support for enhancing of water quality monitoring to provision of assistance to internally displaced persons.[5] Although there are not many reasons to doubt the usefulness of all the above activities, it is questionable whether such a small donor as Slovakia should have such a diversified portfolio of support activities. However, as in the case of other countries, despite the lack of coherence of the policy, the implemented efforts are a clear reflection of the solidarity to Georgia.

Finally, at the EU level, apart from their advocacy, the Slovak NGOs strive to take part in pan-European civil society networks. A case in point would be the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (CSF). Yet, although a representative of SFPA took part in the CSF's preparatory steering committee, no representatives of Slovak NGOs took part in the 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 steering committees, and SFPA and the Pontis Foundation participated only in the first (2009) EaP CSF[6] (EEAS, 2010).

Again, just as the activities of the state towards the East should be understood as a blend of pragmatism and solidarity, the activities of Slovak non-governmental organisations cannot be conceived merely as expressions of altruism. SlovakAid has proved an important source of funding for the Slovak NGO sector, and although their activities cannot be considered as mainly donor-driven (the state consults the ODA with the civil society), they too are competing for funding.

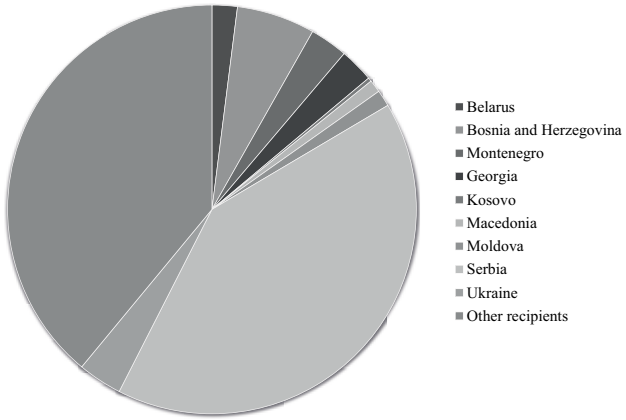
That said, it would be imprecise to understand government and NGO activities as separate or unrelated in this case. In the end, the NGOs do try to shape the government agenda in the East, either as think-tanks or as potential

recipients and implementing agencies. The NGOs and the government thus frequently engage in consultations on the Eastern policy and the structure of funding. On the other hand, the NGOs do depend on government money to survive. There are several reasons for this – the SlovakAid resources, for example, are more accessible than EuropeAid, which has more complicated application materials and more demands on the capacities of the implementing organisation. In the end the Slovak NGDO Platform – the association of Slovak NGOs that implement the development assistance projects – was formed to represent the *interests* of its members (Platforma MVRO, 2007). At the same time, although it is often suggested that civil society plays a vital role in international relations, and indeed, cooperation with civil society is essential if a country wants to have 'soft power' (Nye, 2008), the relevance of its large-scale activities remains rather understudied (Götz, 2008).

CONCLUSIONS

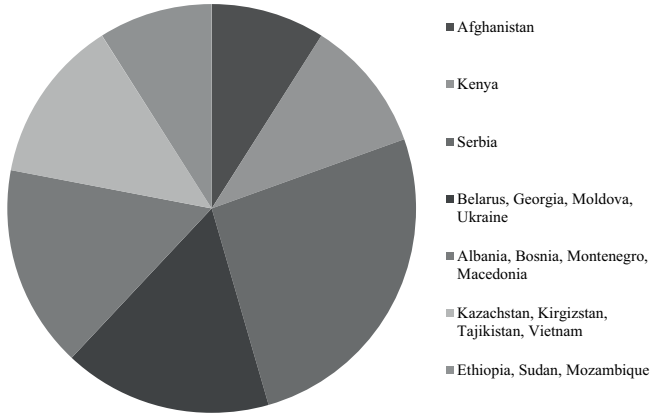
This article has argued that the Slovak policy towards the EU's Eastern neighbors should be understood as a blend of altruism and pragmatism, following both the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequentialism (March–Olsen, 1989, 1998). The very fact of Slovakia's engagement – on the governmental and the NGO level – points to a genuine goodwill on its part to help the less reformed countries, especially since Slovakia itself has experience of democratic transition and Euro-Atlantic integration. On the other hand, however, its prioritising of the East has a strong pragmatic element. Ukraine, which is Slovakia's direct neighbor, is its only non-EUropean neighbor. Thus, Slovakia, in terms of security and economy, would prefer if this neighbor were integrated in the Euro-Atlantic space. One of the most important elements in this relation is energy security – as Russian oil and gas are transferred to Slovakia via Ukraine. Besides Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus have received attention from the Slovak foreign policy as well, while the Southern Caucasus has remained marginal so far. There is, however, one more pragmatic consideration, and that is Slovakia's own role in international relations and in the European Union. The East is considered as a specific niche where Slovakia can make a contribution to European politics and thus increase its visibility.

Table 1: Slovak official development assistance in 2009 (based on SlovakAid statistics, for the sake of clarity we emphasize Eastern European and Western Balkan aid recipients)



Source: Slovakaid, statistics for 2009. Online: www.slovakaid.sk/?p=3918.

Table 2: Slovak official development assistance – bilateral projects in 2009



Source: SlovakAid, Approved bilateral projects of ODA in 2009. Online: www.slovakaid.sk/?p=3918.

While the path towards the European Union was frequently communicated by the Slovak leaders as a path towards democracy, human rights and 'shared values', at the same time it was a move towards becoming respected, towards regaining respect. In this sense, regaining respect means that one does not remain a recipient of policy and assistance, a passive actor, but instead becomes an active one – the one who participates in decision-making and shaping policy. At the same time, the European Union already operates in such a way that some countries or small groups of countries are more strongly involved in some areas than in others. For example, Spain has particularly strong relations with Latin America, while the United Kingdom and France have been active in the Middle East and North Africa. Finally, Slovakia, like the other post-communist EU members, has chosen the post-communist countries of Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans as the countries that it wants to be involved with on the grounds that they have experienced a similar past – and could consider the Slovak story inspiring when shaping their future. The past then is the major other in Slovakia's identity formation and in determining its policy preferences for the future.

Table 3: Developments in prioritisation of the ODA recipient countries in 2003–2011 based on mid-term strategies of the Slovak ODA

Period	Priority countries
2003–2008	*Program country*: Serbia and Montenegro *Project countries*: Afghanistan, Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgisztan, Macedonia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Sudan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
2009–2013	*Program countries*: Afghanistan, Kenya, Serbia *Priority countries*: Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Montenegro, Ethiopia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgizstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Vietnam

Table 4: Priority countries of the Slovak development assistance (bilateral projects) based on National Programs of Official Development Assistance for the years 2004–2011

Year	Priority countries
2004	*Program countries*: Serbia and Montenegro *Priority countries*: Afghanistan, Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kirgizstan, Macedonia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Sudan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
2005	*Program countries*: Serbia and Montenegro *Priority countries*: Afghanistan, Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kirgizstan, Macedonia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Sudan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan *Pilot opportunity to propose projects for*: Cambodia
2006	*Program countries*: Serbia and Montenegro *Priority countries*: Afghanistan, Belarus, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kirgizstan, Mongolia, Mozambique, Sudan, Ukraine (no open calls for the remaining priority countries: Albania, Macedonia, Tajikistan) *Pilot opportunity to propose projects for*: Senegal
2007	*Program countries*: Republic of Serbia and Republic of Montenegro *Priority countries*: according to NP for 2007, the resources will be allocated 'primarily' to Afghanistan, Belarus, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Kenya, Kazakhstan, Ukraine; for the other priority countries – i.e. Albania, Kirgizstan, Macedonia, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Sudan and Mozambique – 'a part of the budget will be reserved and grant calls will be announced without defining a concrete recipient country'
2008	*Program countries*: Republic of Serbia and Republic of Montenegro *Priority project countries*: Afghanistan, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Ukraine *Other project countries*: Albania, Kirgizstan, Macedonia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Sudan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
2009	*Program countries*: Afghanistan, Kenya, Serbia, *Project countries*: Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Montenegro, Ethiopia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vietnam
2010	*Program countries*: Afghanistan, Kenya, Serbia *Priority countries*: Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Ethiopia, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Sudan, Ukraine
2011	*Priority countries for bilateral development assistance*: Kenya, Sudan, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Montenegro, Moldova *Priority countries for technical assistance*: the Western Balkans & the Eastern Partnership (Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine)

Source: Slovakiad 2004–2011 (see references). In 2004 and 2005 Ukraine was not on the OECD/DAC list of ODA eligible countries; thus, Slovakia contributed to it with Official Assistance.

ENDNOTES

[1] Haughton (2007) cites the key demarches of 24 November 2007 and 25 October 1995. Apart from these, however, the representatives of the EU and its member states kept regular contact with the opposition.

[2] Interestingly, despite the recentness of the Soviet past and the distance of the Austro-Hungarian past, the Hungarian is a much more significant 'other' than the Russian in Slovak discourse.

[3] If there is a spatial other, then it is Hungary – a frequent target of complaint of Slovak nationalist circles. This is so despite the fact that the 'Austro-Hungarian' past and the period of 'Hungarisation' are much less recent than the period of Soviet influence and oppression.

[4] I owe thanks to Olga Shumylo-Tapiola (Carnegie Europe) and Dejan Jovic (University of Zagreb) for drawing my interest to this subject.

[5] 1) 'Support for improvement of quality management in water quality monitoring and information systems, as a tool for the decision-making process in water protection policy in Georgia' (worth 116,774 EUR); 2) 'Management of public finance on the local administration level in Georgia' (190,612 EUR); 3) integration of resettled communities in Kobi (150,165.02 EUR); 4) 'Assistance for Georgia in post-war reconstruction and prevention of local conflicts' (139,700 EUR); 5) support for marginalised IDPs (149,723 EUR); 6) support for IDP Youth Clubs (140,692 EUR) (SlovakAid, 2011b; Najslova, 2011, forthcoming).

[6] This can be explained by many factors, including the fact that Slovak NGOs have limited travel funds, the fact that they are understaffed and cannot attend every event (even if the event is highly relevant), and, finally, the possibility that they are so well networked with the Eastern partners that they do not necessarily see the EaP CSF as an added value.

New Eastern Perspectives? A Critical Analysis of Romania's Relations with Moldova, Ukraine and the Black Sea Region

Irina Angelescu[1]

There has been a notable absence of Romania in public debates about the Eastern neighborhood despite the fact that the country is the second largest new European Union (EU) member state and geographically located in the strategic Black Sea region. Unlike the Eastern foreign policy actions of Poland, which even before its EU accession was a strong supporter of what was to become the Eastern Partnership (EaP), Romania's Eastern foreign policy actions have not been very prominent. Its efforts were rather focused on relations with Moldova and the Black Sea region, where Romania put forward a rather modest proposal for an informal regional consultative process called the Black Sea Forum for Partnership and Dialogue (BSF). What could explain this situation? Does Romania have an 'Eastern vocation' in its foreign policy, and how is it manifested? How has Romania's foreign policy been affected by its membership in the EU and other transatlantic organizations, like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the Council of Europe (CoE)?

Following the approach of this book, the present article will analyse Romania's current foreign policy towards Eastern Europe through the lens of the country's (foreign policy) identity. Of course, foreign policy decisions are based on a variety of factors, and any separation of 'identity' from other geopolitical, economic and social considerations is somewhat artificial. However, in line with the identitarian discourse, the article argues that Romania's foreign policy positions and actions towards its Eastern neighbors – including those cases where Romania did not take a clear position or action – have until recently been guided by the country's denial of its geopolitical location. During its history as a modern state, Romania has generally not identified with the Central and Eastern parts of the continent. It is only after the fall of communism – and particularly after its accession to the EU and NATO – that Romania has started looking for its 'Eastern vocation'. In the introduction to this book, Elsa Tulmets talks about 'solidarity' in foreign policy, which is driven by a sense of shared identity. According to this understanding, Romania expresses a form of solidarity with most of its neighbors on the basis of a political identity that it shares with them. As will be shown, Romania's path of accession to Euro-Atlantic institutions has consolidated this liberal-democratic form of its political identity and had beneficial consequences for the country's relations with its neighbors. The exception to this pattern is Moldova, as the Moldovan-Romanian relations provide a case in which historical identity lies at the basis of the two countries' relations.

The article follows Ruxandra Ivan's (2009) distinction of three periods in Romania's foreign policy after 1989: the first is the period of confusion immediately after the Romanian revolution, and the second is the period of general consensus and support for Romania's membership in the Euro-Atlantic institutions. The third phase began after Romania's accession to NATO and the EU, and it still continues at present. In this phase, the country is reformulating its foreign policy goals and role. This article argues that only during this last phase Romania has started to re-conceptualize its role in the East and that the county's memberships in the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have provided a 'psychological comfort' and a new impetus for defining these relations.

In terms of its methodology, the article presents Romania's position towards its Eastern neighborhood by analysing discourses and public statements of Romanian foreign policy makers.[2] This approach permits one to find out whether public declarations on the foreign policy towards the East are followed by symbolic and material actions. The article begins by offering a brief presentation of Romania's foreign policy before and after 1989. It argues that the country's decision to join the Euro-Atlantic institutions has deeply affected not only the country's domestic policy, but also its relations with its neighborhood. In this sense, as a consequence of its accession bid, Romania had to engage its neighbors to consolidate peaceful and friendly relations with them. The article then looks specifically at the bilateral relations between Romania and its two direct neighbors among the EaP states, Mol-

dova and Ukraine. These two cases have the advantage of illustrating the two forms of Romanian foreign identity and the resulting solidarity. A section on the Black Sea region is also included as this region is an area of concern and priority in Romanian foreign policy and an issue which Romania is hoping to insert into the EU foreign policy agenda. It is an area which reflects not only a form of historical and political identity, but also more rational economic and energetic interests.

INVESTIGATING ROMANIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IDENTITY

On Romania's politics of identity

Throughout its history, Romania has never been a great power, but it has always gravitated towards great powers (Ivan, 2009: 18). In modern times, the country lay at the crossroads of several big empires (i.e. the Ottoman, Russian, Habsburg and later Austro-Hungarian empires). In the twentieth century Romania was part of the land area that Germany and Russia struggled over, 'a "buffer zone" characterized by political instability, economic disarray and "security vacuum"' (Baleanu, 2000: 2). Given Romania's location among these great powers, many of the country's transformations in modern history have been due to events that took place outside its borders and that were beyond its direct control. As Baleanu points out, it was Germany's defeat in World War I that made possible the creation of the 'Greater Romania' in 1918 while the 1939 Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact led to the seizure of the Romanian regions of Bukovina and Bessarabia and the latter's incorporation in the Soviet Union as the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova (Baleanu, 2000: 2). The end of WWII led to the installment of communism in Romania, a political movement which had very few local supporters. Even in more recent times some scholars argued that Romania's accession to NATO and the EU was not so much a result of the country's own efforts as a result of international events and the threat of instability in the region (Gallagher, 2005).

In general, we can identify a shift in the country's identity and self-perception that occurred during the past two centuries. Starting with the Middle Ages, when religion was the preeminent form of identification, Romanians orbited towards the East, given their Orthodox faith. Thus, when Romania

identified itself as an Orthodox country, it was 'at ease' and 'at home' as part of Eastern Europe and the values associated with it (Boia, 2002: 66). However, starting with the nineteenth century, when ethnic identity became the norm for national identification, Romanian elites re-discovered the nation's 'Latin roots' and wanted a geopolitical shift westwards towards Rome, Paris, Vienna and Berlin (Mureseanu, 2010: 49). Romanians began to look at Bucharest as 'the Paris of the East'. When in the nineteenth century, the Romanian political and intellectual elite adopted a discourse of Romania as a 'Latin island in the middle of the Slavic sea', they looked at their Slavic and Hungarian neighbors with suspicion. Far from engendering solidarity and cooperation with neighbors, this view lead to competition. Thus, from then on, one can talk of a 'quasi-permanent hostile' national position towards Russians and Hungarians on the part of Romanians (Hurezeanu, 2010: 39).

It is worth stopping here to look at the role of Russia in the formation of Romania's foreign policy identity. As mentioned above, in the past Romania's Orthodox faith brought it closer to its big neighbor, the Russian empire. Romanians used the Slavonic language in church and the Cyrillic alphabet in public life (the Latin one was only officially adopted in 1860). However, after the modern Romanian state was formed and gained its independence in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the political elite began to look at Russia with increased suspicion. As pointed out above, Romania's 'new' identity as 'a Latin island in a Slavic sea' put it at odds with its biggest Slavic neighbor, the Russian empire. Furthermore, the annexation of Bessarabia by the Russian empire in 1812 raised questions about the geopolitical interests of the latter (Boia, 2007). To a certain extent, it could be said that Russia – as the largest Slavic state – is the constitutive 'other' of the Romanian national identity. But it would be farfetched to suggest that Romanian elites and the Romanian society have ever attempted to portray an independent Romania as the alternative to the Russian dominance, given the power imbalance between the two states. Even in the twentieth century, communist Romania was careful to walk a fine line that would not bring it too close to its 'big Soviet brother' or create conflicts with him.

In the latter half of the 19th century, Romanian leaders tried 'to break from the part of Europe to which they belonged' and looked westward (Boia, 2002: 66–67). This desire to 'belong' and 'return to Europe', which was connected with feelings of nostalgia, would continue well into the twentieth century. Ro-

manians now remember the Cold War as a time when their 'destiny was not their own' (*President Iliescu's speech*, 22 August 1994), as a time when Romanians were 'waiting for the Americans' who had previously failed to arrive during World War II to save them (Kast–Rosapepe, 2009: 25–27). After the fall of communism, Romanians' enthusiasm for their 'return to Europe' (i.e. 'the West') was expressed in their high support for their country's EU and NATO membership. The paradox of this situation, though, is that Romania has been wanting to be(come) a Western country, but at the same time it has traditionally been a rural society with patriarchal values and mentalities (Boia, 2002: 67).

Romania's foreign policy after 1989: the Western consensus

A series of internal and external factors made Romania eventually choose the Western path in order to preserve its security and stability. On the internal front, the interethnic clashes in Transylvania, the miners' strike in Bucharest at the beginning of the 1990s and the precarious economic situation raised the need to consolidate the country's democratic credentials and market economy with Western help. On the international front, the dissolution of the USSR and Romania's geopolitical location between two unstable regions – the Balkans and the post-Soviet space – effectively eliminated the option of an Eastern orientation and made Romania look westwards for support and security guarantees (Ivan, 2009: 10).

On Europe's Day in 1994, President Ion Iliescu emphasized that Romania was engaged in the 'decisive step' of European integration through the adoption of concrete measures alongside public declarations of support (*President Iliescu's speech*, 9 May 1994). Less than half a year later, he addressed the Council of Europe and confirmed Romania's dedication to a 'return to Europe' through Euro-Atlantic integration, a decision he called 'normal and natural', given Romania's belonging to the 'European culture and civilization' (*President Iliescu's speech*, 4 October 1994). A commission was created in Romania in February 1993 with a mandate to elaborate a European integration strategy. The resulting political declaration stipulating this Western consensus was signed by representatives of all the major Romanian political parties in Snagov on 21 June 1995. It identified Romania's membership in the EU as a 'national strategic objective' and a 'crucial point of convergence of

the political and social forces of the country, a historic chance to promote the fundamental interests of the Romanian people, their identity and traditions' (*Declaratie*, 21 June 1995).

Once the decision to embark on the Euro-Atlantic path was made, the consensus at the elite and society level was unquestioned and unbreakable. This 'Euro-Atlantic consensus' was constantly reiterated in public declarations by the political class and inscribed in official documents, as Title VI of the 2003 Romanian Constitution (*Constitutia Romaniei*, 2003) and the 2007 Romanian National Security Strategy indicate (*Strategia de Securitate Nationala a Romaniei*, 2007). In his first New Year's Eve address to the Romanian people after the EU accession, President Basescu emphasized that Romania's integration had been the result of the desire of the entire Romanian people to join (*President Basescu's speech*, 1 January 2007). The next day, in Sibiu, he reinvoked the leitmotif of Romania's EU membership as a 'return to Europe' (*President Basescu's speech*, January 1, 2007) – a theme he reiterated again just a few weeks later in front of the European Parliament (*President Basescu's speech,* 31 January 2007). All these official public declarations can be seen as an acknowledgement of the Euro-Atlantic institutions in the consolidation of Romania's liberal-democratic political identity.

After Romania fulfilled its foreign policy goal of becoming a member of the Euro-Atlantic organization, the country had to revise and reformulate its foreign policy priorities. A collection of speeches and interviews released by Foreign Minister Mihai-Razvan Ungureanu – who was in office immediately before and after Romania's accession to the EU – offers an insight into the challenges Romania faced in formulating its foreign policy as an EU member state. In 2006, the year before Romania became an EU member, Ungureanu offered his vision of this policy:

> On the international front, post-2007 Romania will be a European state with the potential to specialize in specific issues and geographical regions of foreign policy, and it could play the part of a liaison between the West and certain regions located in strategic proximity to the Euro-Atlantic space. A European Romania with a consolidated and selective global vocation is the country we have all been dreaming of and which we have the historic duty to create (Ungureanu, 2008: 118).

What were the 'specific issues' and 'geographical regions' that Romanian diplomats considered the country to be best fit to tackle? The political class focused on Romania's beneficial geography: 'either the Black Sea or South-Eastern Europe, a geography in which Romania has competency, a respected presence and, not least, expertise' (Ungureanu, 2008: 19). Foreign Minister Teodor Melescanu had suggested that Romania could become 'an ideal trans-atlantic port to the Black Sea' (Melescanu in Motoc–Cioculescu, 2010: 57). Romanian elites decided to 'actively lobby the relevant institutions in Brussels' to put the two new 'neighbors' – the Black Sea region and Moldova – on the EU's agenda, especially since the EU lacked a specific policy for the Black Sea region (Ungureanu, 2008: 72). The Black Sea would provide the answer to some specific issues that Romania would put on the table – energy security, tackling 'new' threats like organized crime and terrorism, and proliferation of narcotics – since the Black Sea region would be the 'front line' for combating the problems (Asmus–Jackson, 2004: 7).

Romania's post-membership foreign policy was conceptualized through the lens of its obligations. For example, Chapter 21 of the Romanian 2009–2012 Program of Government, which sets out Romania's priorities in both domestic and foreign policy, begins by putting an emphasis on the need to take advantage of Romania's membership in NATO and the EU. It explicitly mentions the need to turn the Black Sea into a strategically relevant space for the EU and NATO. And last but not least, Romania emphasizes the need to further engage its 'European partners' in order to 'diversify the EU presence' in the East European and Caspian regions so that regional stability would be enhanced and solutions would be sought for the 'frozen conflicts' in the regions. It is hard not to notice the difference in the tone of the document when it addresses the bilateral relations with the U.S. and France, as opposed to the tone it uses in discussions of other 'new' EU member states and Russia. Whereas for the former, there is a long list of comprehensive examples of co-operation, for the latter countries, all references to cooperation are defined as 'pragmatic' (*Programul de Guvernare 2009–2012*).

Whereas the preceding sections presented the general lines of Romania's foreign policy identity, the second part will focus on some concrete examples of Romania's interactions with its neighborhood. The second part will begin by emphasizing the role of Romania's membership in the EU and NATO for consolidating the country's liberal-democratic political identity

and defining its policy in the neighbourhood. The relations between Romania and Ukraine will be analysed as an illustration of the solidarity resulting from this form of identity. Similarly, the case of Romania's relations with Moldova will be analysed as a result of the countries' historical identities, which are related to their common past. Finally, Romania's intention of bringing the Black Sea region into the international limelight will be presented as a manifestation of Romania's foreign policy identity, which combines political interests, more 'rational' forms of interest, and some elements of Romania's historical identity.

A SELECTIVE ROLE IN THE EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

The impact of the EU and NATO membership (quest) on relations with the neighborhood

The pursuit of membership had beneficial consequences for Romania's domestic politics and foreign relations, the first of which is its relation with its neighborhood. As part of its quest for EU and NATO membership, Romania had to sign basic treaties with all its neighbors, and thus it had to address sensitive issues such as the delimitation of borders and the treatment of national minorities (Linden, 2000). Romania's commitment to Euro-Atlantic integration also had negative consequences for its neighborly relations. For example, President Constantinescu's decision to support the NATO mission in Kosovo – which he saw as a pre-condition for Romania's accession to the organization – damaged Romania's relations with Serbia, one of its closest allies in the region.

The incentive of Euro-Atlantic integration also changed the way Romania carried out its foreign policy. For example, during President Emil Constatinescu's time in office (1996–2000), Romania began to increasingly rely on trilateral forms of foreign policy (e.g. Romania–Greece–Turkey; Romania–Ukraine–Poland; Romania–Bulgaria–Turkey; Romania–Moldova–Ukraine and Romania–Hungary–Austria). This approach to the management of foreign relations was based on a vision of 'variable geometry' and meant to present Romania as a credible partner in the eyes of NATO (Ivan, 2009: 128).

The process of 'Euro-Atlantic integration' made Romania deeply involved in regional affairs. By the end of the 1990s, the country was fully engaged in numerous international forums and meetings, increasing its visibility and exposure to international events (Ivan, 2009: 131). President Constantinescu's first visit abroad was to Poland, and the Romanian Foreign Minister at the time, Adrian Severin, had a strategic vision that Poland and Romania would act as NATO's Northern and Southern fronts, to the North Sea and the Black Sea respectively (Ivan, 2009: 127–128). In October 2000, it was agreed that Romania would create the first headquarters of an international organization in Bucharest, the Initiative for the Cooperation in South Eastern Europe. In 2001, Romania assumed the OSCE Presidency. The country also became an active participant in the Pact for Stability for South Eastern Europe, which was created in 1999 after the Kosovo crisis (Ivan, 2009: 130).

In Romania's self-perception, federalism is seen as a dangerous solution to its problems, since it is viewed as the first step towards the dismemberment of the nation (Boia, 2002: 29). This indicates a distrust of not only outside actors, but also of the country's internal workings – in this case, the status of national minorities. This belief is reflected in the Romanian Constitution, which defines the country as a 'unitary state', in the tensions with its national Hungarian minority in Transylvania, and in the country's refusal to recognize Kosovo or the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states. To a certain extent, this view also explains why Romanians feel strongly about Romanian minorities living abroad and the special relationship with Moldova.

In general, Romania is in favor of a more coherent and coordinated EU engagement in the region, one that would not preclude the partner countries from eventually gaining membership (Ungureanu, 2008: 57). The following sections will be devoted to exploring Romania's relations with Moldova and Ukraine and to Romania's efforts towards increasing the visibility of the Black Sea region at the international level.

Relations with Moldova

Among Romania's neighbors, Moldova is the one with which it has the most affinity and, to a certain extent, the most complicated relations. At the core of the relationship between Romania and Moldova is the issue of the possible

of reunification of the two countries, which have similar languages, histories and cultures. Since 1989, the evolution of their relations resembled that of a bell curve: while at the very beginning many symbolic gestures were made, the relations became tense after 1993, and after the tensions passed, the relations have been gradually, but slowly, improving.

The history of Moldovan-Romanian relations is very complex and dates back many centuries. The territory of the contemporary independent state of Moldova has been an integral part of the Romanian Moldovan Principality roughly from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century. It was part of the Russian Empire for five decades in the nineteenth century, and then it was an integral part of the Romanian independent state for the most part until 1944, when it became part of the Soviet Union.

According to Serebrian, these geopolitical shifts have resulted in Moldova's inhabitants having a 'regional' rather than a 'national' identity, as in Moldova, politics *per se* has been replaced by discourses about identity (Serebrian, 2010: 218–222). Indeed, the question of identity is at the heart of the relations between Romania and Moldova, and the 'confusion' as to the nature of the Moldovan identity is to a certain extent still present today. It can partly explain the ups and downs of Romania's relations with Moldova since 1991, when the latter became an independent country. Romania was the first country to recognize Moldova's independence and it soon started referring to it as a 'Romanian state'. These types of declarations were followed by many other symbolic gestures which suggested the possibility of reunification.

The reunification itself never materialized, though, due to domestic (i.e. economic costs) and international reasons (i.e. Romania's Euro-Atlantic aspirations). However, the possibility of reunification led to dramatic consequences. In the words of V.G. Baleanu, 'it is no secret that the Transnistrian leaders expertly play the card of their opposition to Moldova's possible unification with Romania' (Baleanu, 2000: 14). The possibility of reunification made Moldova's national minorities very uncomfortable and led to the 'hot' war of Transnistria at the beginning of the 1990s, and the resulting 'frozen conflict' is still being perpetuated today. After the Transnistrian war, Romania participated in the four-party peace talks, but it withdrew from the talks in 1993, after its relations with Moldova were severed (Ivan, 2009: 123).

The question of identity affected not just the talks about a possible reunification but more general relations between Moldova and Romania. In 1992,

when the two countries negotiated a basic treaty, they could not agree on how to call it or on how to define the nature of the relations (whether they are 'brotherly' or 'neighborly'). In the 1990s, as Moldova constitutionally stipulated that Moldovan is the state language, and Romania released strong declarations criticizing Moldova's foreign relations, Moldova began to visibly detach itself from the politics of the 'two Romanian states' (Ivan, 2009: 123-4). Consequently, when President Ion Iliescu addressed the Moldovan Parliament, he called Romanian-Moldovan relations 'special, privileged' and said that they were a matter of priority, but he made no reference to the 'two Romanian states' at that point (*President Iliescu's speech*, 5 July 1996).

The so-called 'privileged relationship' between Romania and Moldova concretely amounts to no more than an engagement on Romania's side to promote Moldova's integration efforts alongside its own (Baleanu, 2000: 19). Indeed, in a recent interview with the Romanian newspaper *Adevarul*, President Basescu declared that considering the contemporary circumstances, it is not 'realistic' to talk about a possible reunification between Romania and Moldova (Adevarul, September 16, 2011). When it became clear that the reunification was no longer in the cards, Romania expressed its support for an 'open door' policy of EU enlargement and suggested that the two countries could 'reunite in the EU' (*President Basescu's speech*, July 1, 2006).

A sign of the delicate nature of the relations between Romania and Moldova is the fact that the two countries have been unable to sign a basic treaty. One such treaty was negotiated and finalized in 2000, but the Romanian Prime Minister Adrian Nastase decided not to sign it at the last minute. He justified his decision based on the fact that there were 'no disputes' between the two countries (Ivan, 2009: 134). However, the timing of this treaty speaks of the importance of the Euro-Atlantic integration: it coincided with some progress being made in Romania's path to EU accession and Moldova's desire to deepen its relations with the EU (Baleanu, 2000: 19). Several years later, Prime Minister Nastase declared that Romania's European integration did not mean that it would abandon the territories that used to belong to it (Nastase quoted in Teodorescu, 2004: 183).

It was Romania's membership in the EU that brought to the surface another very sensitive issue in the relations between the two countries – dual citizenship. The Russian media in Chisinau presented this issue as 'the tacit assimilation of Moldova by Romania' (Baleanu, 2000: 18). Romania's dual

citizenship law was mostly adopted to 'soften the blow' of Romania's EU membership for the freedom of movement between the two countries. Romania's accession to the EU meant that it had to introduce visas for Moldovan citizens – who until then did not even need a passport to travel to the country. To make the situation easier for Moldovans, the dual citizenship law made it possible for qualified Moldovans to obtain Romanian citizenship, but it also meant that Moldovans could now travel visa-free in the Schengen space. This law was met with protests from other EU member states. Romanian officials responded that the law respected international obligations, and that Romanian citizenship was granted on a case-by-case basis. It was estimated that 17,000 Moldovans acquired Romanian citizenship in the first half of 2010 (Euractiv, August 16, 2010). On a parallel track, negotiations between the EU and Moldova, led in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) launched in 2003, also helped with the freedom of movement. In October 2007, the EU and Moldova signed an agreement on visa facilitation on the basis of which Romania could grant free visas to Moldovan citizens. Moldova is currently implementing the visa liberalization action plan, which should result in visa free travel for Moldovan citizens.

The year 2009 put additional strains on the relations between Romania and Moldova. Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin accused Romania of trying to overthrow his government and of wanting to annex Moldova in the aftermath of the protests following the parliamentary elections in April (Euractiv, April 9, 2009). But the coming to power of the current pro-European Moldovan government has dissipated some of the tensions with Romania. More rational reasons could also explain the tense relations between Romania and Moldova. In 2011 work on a gas pipeline between Romania and Moldova began. Discussions about this pipeline date back to 2007, but the January 2008 gas crisis accelerated the negotiations. The pipeline should help Moldova's energy security. Symbolically enough, this project is partly funded by EU money as part of the border cooperation program between Romania and Moldova (Hotnews, April 26, 2011).

In terms of economic relations, trade between the two countries has generally increased since the beginning of the twenty first century, although the trade relations suffered from the 2008 financial crisis. Thus, as can be seen from the table below, while in 2002 trade between the two countries amounted to a little over $150 million, this figure rose to over $1.1 billion

in 2008 and fell to $700 million in 2009. What characterizes this trade dynamics is the predominance of Romania's exports to its eastern neighbor. In 2009 there were 650 Romanian companies registered in Moldova, which invested approximately $68 million in the country (*Ambasada Romaniei la Chisinau*). According to the Moldovan Ministry of Economy and Trade, Romania ranked in the top ten foreign investors in Moldova between 1994–2008, with €38.8 million in investments (Ministry of Economy and Trade of the Republic of Moldova). Romania pledged €100 million in aid for Moldova for the period 2011–2014, split into four equal parts. However, as of May 2011 Romania only donated $7 million out of the $25 million promised for 2011 – a fact which can be partly explained by the country's lack of experience as a donor (*Balkan Insight*, 24 May 2011). In other words, Romania is trying to match its political declarations with concrete policy and economic measures, although it still needs to make much progress on this front. A study from March 2011 suggests that 52% of Moldovan experts see Romania as a credible promoter of Moldova's integration in the EU and 80% of them think that Romania's support for Moldova in the EU is both important and relevant. At the same time, they express concern about Romania's efficiency in matching its words with deeds and indicate that there is more room for improvement in concrete projects related to investments in infrastructure and local development as well as study scholarships and supports for Moldovan NGOs (Dinu, 2011).

Table 1: Romanian-Moldovan trade relations

Amount (in mil. of USD)									
	2002	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
Total	159,9	220,7	282,3	411,2	564	882,2	1178,4	700,0	795,8
Export	109,6	136,9	205,2	326,0	427	632,5	824,4	520,9	611,9
Import	503,0	83,8	77,1	85,2	137	249,7	354,0	179,1	183,9
Trade balance	**+59,3**	**+53,1**	**+128,1**	**+240,8**	**+290**	**+382,8**	**+470,4**	**+341,8**	**+428,0**

Source: Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE, 2011).

Relations with Ukraine

Relations between Romania and Ukraine were also not very positive immediately after the Romanian revolution, and their problematic state was foreshadowed by the two countries' mutual distrust before the revolution (Baleanu, 2000: 20). The fall of the Soviet Union brought to the forefront territorial disputes, the issue of the protection of Romanian minorities in the country's bigger neighbor and the condemnation of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact.

Credit for positive progress in the relations should be partly given to the prospects of Euro-Atlantic integration. As part of Romania's bid for NATO accession, it had to have basic treaties with all its neighbors. Hence, in June 1997, just weeks before the NATO Madrid Summit, where it was to be decided whether the organization would open its doors to Romania, the country signed a treaty with Ukraine. Romanian public opinion was deeply divided over this signature between those who saw it as a necessary step toward acceding to NATO and those who saw it as 'historical treason' against Romania's reunification ideal (Ivan, 2009: 128). The treaty recognized the borders of the Romanian-Soviet treaty of 1961 (whereby territories that were previously parts of Romania and that had substantial Romanian populations were recognized as belonging the Soviet Union), but Romania managed to include Article 1201 of the Council of Europe on the treatment of minorities in the treaty (Ivan, 2009: 129). However, the treaty did not solve the issue of territorial waters or the continental plateau.

President Constantinescu paid an official visit to Ukraine in May 1999, which was the first official visit of a Romanian president to this country. During a press conference, he declared that an independent, sovereign and powerful Ukraine is in Romania's national interest (Baleanu, 2000: 22). After the signature of the treaty, Romania and Ukraine continued negotiations on a settlement over Snake Island. A 17 hectare piece of land in front of the Sulina arm of the River Danube, this island became part of Ukraine after the fall of the Soviet Union. Agreement on whether Snake Island was inhabited or not was critical for exploration and drilling rights in the Black Sea, as this area was believed to be rich in oil reserves (Baleanu, 2000: 21). Because the two countries could not reach an agreement on their own, Romania brought this

matter in front of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2004, and five years later, the ICJ gave a ruling in Romania's favor.

Although there have been other issues of tension between the two countries, such as the Ukrainian unilateral decision to begin building the Bastroe Channel to the Black Sea in 2004, their relations have improved. Besides the territorial tensions and the treatment of national minorities, relations between the two countries are generally good. For example, Romania has been a strong supporter of Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations. During the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, Romania supported Ukraine's (and Georgia's) membership bids.

The Orange Revolution of 2004 engendered much sympathy in Romania. However, Romania itself was absorbed in its own national elections at this time. After the first round of elections Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana expressed his concerns about their fairness (Amos News, 24 November 2004). Conversely, on 28 December the newly elected Romanian President Traian Basescu congratulated Viktor Yushchenko on his electoral victory and expressed Romania's commitment to good neighborly relations, given Romania's position as 'a neighbor and NATO member' (MAE, 2011).

Table 2: Romanian-Ukrainian economic and development cooperation

	Amount (in mil. of USD)				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	31. 8. 2011
Total	1526,5	1991,7	813	1426,7	1560,5
Export	741,5	1220,16	487,2	706,7	784,2
Import	784,9	771,55	325,8	720,0	776,3
Trade balance	**– 43,4**	**448,61**	**161,4**	**– 13,3**	**+7,9**

Source: Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE, 2011).

Contemporary economic relations between the two countries are good – but, just like in the case of Moldova, they have suffered from the impact of the world economic crisis in 2008. Consequently, while in 2008 the trade relations totaled over $1.9 billion, they totaled only $813 million in 2009 – but with a positive trend since then (in 2010 the total figure of trade relations was

over $1.4 billion). As of 31 December 2010, Romania had invested $11.8 million in Ukraine, ranking 52nd in the list of top contributors of foreign direct investments to Ukraine, and, as can be seen from the table above, investments have been slightly on the rise since (MAE, 2011). In other words, Romania does not distinguish itself among the trading partners of and investors in the country. This is certainly a reflection of Romania's economic interests and considerations, but also of a certain level of its political distrust of – and, hence, its insufficient political solidarity with – Ukraine.

Champions of the Black Sea Area Cause?

Romania's geopolitical influence in the Black Sea region results from its control of the Danube Delta and its channels (4,200 km) and approximately 245 km of the sea shore and the corresponding territorial waters. At present, Romania is attempting to promote its own vision of Black Sea cooperation, guided by and in connection with the objectives of NATO and the EU (Ionescu, 2006: 373). However, the precise shape of this vision remains to be defined. As noted above, immediately after 1989 Romania's Western orientation was not a given. The country turned its attention towards the East, and its first consultations on Black Sea cooperation began in 1990 with Bulgaria, Turkey and the Soviet Union (Ivan, 2009: 118). After its 'Euro-Atlantic consensus', Romania started to look at and present the Black Sea region as one of the geostrategic interests of the transatlantic community. When addressing the U.S. Congress in 1998, President Constantinescu said that his country wanted to be 'an anchor of stability in South-Eastern Europe' (*President Constantinescu's speech*, 15 July 1998). At the NATO summit in Vienna he emphasized the role Romania would continue to play for regional cooperation and stability in the interest of the transatlantic community (*President Constantinescu's speech*, 21 June 1998).

Historically, initiatives of regional cooperation in the Black Sea region date back to the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century (Maior, 2002: 115). Cooperation in the Black Sea region has flourished in the twentieth and twenty first centuries, ranging from the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, the Conference of the Balkan State Foreign Ministers (Balkan Multilateral Cooperation), the Process of Stability and Good Neighborly Relations in South-Eastern Europe, the South-East Euro-

pean Cooperation Initiative, and the Stability Pact for South-East Europe to forms of military cooperation such as BLACKSEAFOR, MPFSEE and CENCOOP (Maior, 2002: 116). So far, the main forms of regional integration in the Black Sea area have all been led by other regional actors, such as Turkey (the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization and the BLACKSEAFOR) and Ukraine (GUAM). In 2007, the European Union launched its own initiative for the region, the Black Sea Synergy.

In October 2006, the Romanian Chamber of Commerce and the Center for Security and International Studies (CSIS) organized an event in Washington DC on the economic and security cooperation in the Black Sea region. On this occasion President Basescu gave a speech in which he called the Black Sea region 'indispensable' for Euro-Atlantic security and emphasized Romania's commitment to creating a space of stability and security in the region. In his speech, he suggested that Romania has matched its words with actions after having launched the Black Sea Border Security Initiative (BDI) in 2004 by hosting the Center on the Initiative for South-Eastern Cooperation (SECI). Another expression of Romania's interest in and commitment to the region was the Black Sea Forum for Partnership and Dialogue (BSF) in 2006, which was meant to complement existing initiatives and forms of organization in the region by providing an informal platform for communication. Furthermore, President Basescu emphasized the energy security dimension represented by the Black Sea region, which at the time provided 50% of the European gas supplies – and he also took the opportunity to warn against the Russian energy monopoly and its consequences for Europe. Furthermore, he pledged that Romania would use the European Neighborhood Policy to support the democratic development of the neighboring countries (*President Basescu's speech,* 31 October 2006).

Romania's 2007 National Security Strategy has a chapter specifically dedicated to the Black Sea region. In it, Romania presents itself as a 'dynamic vector of democratic security and stability, as well as economic prosperity', which has 'a fundamental strategic interest in the wider Black Sea region being stable, democratic and prosperous, and closely connected to the European and Euro-Atlantic structures'. As part of this more general interest, the document explicitly mentions the strategic objective of ensuring a European and Euro-Atlantic engagement in the region. Far from considering this area a 'buffer zone' or a frontier region, Romania looks at it as a 'strategically important connector' for the Euro-Atlantic community (*Strategia Nationala de Securitate,* 2007: 32, author's translation).

No matter what initiatives are undertaken in the Black Sea area, Russia remains a dominant player there (Ionescu, 2006: 365). Most recently, Romania's attempts at mending relations with Russia were followed by a worsening of diplomatic relations between the two countries. For example, in September 2005, in an address to a group of the Romanian diaspora, President Basescu said that the Black Sea should not be turned into a 'Russian lake' and argued that Russia was trying to achieve that because it is afraid of the internationalization of conflicts (9AM News, 17 September 2005). Also, in 2006, Basescu accused Russia of using the monopoly on gas supplies that it has over Europe as a tool to preclude European cooperation in the Black Sea region (9AM News, 2 November 2006).

For Romania, the Black Sea region represents not just an area for the consolidation of Europe's energy security, but also an area for the resolution of the so-called 'frozen conflicts'. This is a cause to which the current Romanian presidency is increasingly committed. Its actions in this respect range from attempts to re-engage in the Transnistria peace talks to the refusal to recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The declarations made by President Basescu on the resolution of the Nagorno-Kharabak were based on the principle of territorial integrity and minority protection, but the declarations were met by Armenian protests (Gandul, April 20, 2011). Indeed, one of the reasons why Romania gave only a lukewarm welcome to the Easter Partnership (EaP), launched in 2009 under the Czech EU presidency, was because it saw it as distracting attention from the Black Sea region. As evident from official speeches made before the creation of the EaP, Romania had been a strong supporter of the 'ENP+' and the creation of an Eastern policy of the EU that would include a component for the resolution of the 'frozen conflicts' (Ungureanu, 2008: 57).

Romania has also been a strong supporter of the Black Sea Synergy, the 2007 EU initiative to enhance regional cooperation with the countries in the Black Sea area (European Commission, 11 April 2007). Interestingly enough, the *rapporteur* for Romania in the German *Bundestag* criticized Romania for not being more involved in the elaborating process of the Synergy. The Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs replied that they were happy with the results because they reflected the Romanian approach to the region (Eura-

ctiv, April 12, 2007). Together with the European Commission, Romania also helped elaborate the Black Sea Environmental Partnership, which was launched in March 2010. However, despite official declarations, the Synergy has made limited progress. It has even been suggested that 'it is now almost dead' as the EaP initiative seems to be developing more (Najšlová, 2010: 34). Romania is also calling for a clear implementation of the differentiating principles of the Black Sea Synergy and the multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership (MAE, 2011).

CONCLUSIONS

Through a selection of speeches, declarations and policy analyses, this article has shown that contemporary Romania has been in search of its Eastern vocation. Not since the Middle Ages has the country identified with the values of Eastern Europe and felt like it belonged there. Since the nineteenth century, the country has adopted a form of self-identification that brought it closer to Western Europe. This self-perception helped it reach the 'Euro-Atlantic' consensus after 1989 and made it want to 'return to Europe'. The consensus and the role of the Euro-Atlantic institutions have helped consolidate Romania's liberal-democratic political identity post-1989, which, in its turn, helped enhance its relations with its neighborhood. However, this form of solidarity was generally limited to a 'normalization' of relations through the signing of status treaties settling territorial disputes and the status of minorities (as shown in the analysis of the country's relations with Ukraine). So far, Romania has not expressed a form of political solidarity that would lead to closer regional cooperation in the Eastern neighborhood. So, while the Euro-Atlantic integration helped Romania institutionalize its forms of interaction with other countries, it was not sufficient to make it search for a deeper level of cooperation with other countries in the region. To put it bluntly, Romania is not a part of a group like the Visegrad cooperation, and even the forms of cooperation it participates in in the Black Sea region – including the one Romania itself proposed, the Black Sea Forum for Partnership and Dialogue (BSF) – are fairly loose and informal.

At the same time, Romania's historical identity lies at the basis of its relations with Moldova. As shown in the relevant section analysing their re-

lations, immediately after 1989 this historical identity manifested itself in a form of solidarity with Moldova that even went so far as to suggest a reunification of the two countries. But various different considerations that went beyond identitarian reasons led to a different outcome. Ironically, it appears that historical identity has actually complicated relations between the two countries, as Romania was unable to sign a treaty with the other country – unlike in the case of its relations with Ukraine. In a more recent development, though, Romania's accession to the EU has opened a new possibility – that of a 'reunification' of Romania and Moldova in the EU, which mostly translates into Romania's support for Moldova's Euro-Atlantic path.

The two policy issues that Romania has been attempting to bring to the European level have been Moldova and the Black Sea region. The issues at stake are varied, ranging from peace and stability in the region to the resolution of the so-called 'frozen conflicts' and energy security. So far, limited progress has been achieved on both fronts. Romania lacks the foreign policy experience and the domestic conditions to successfully 'upload' these issues on the EU agenda while the EU itself does not have a unified policy on these foreign policy issues. Individual member states have different interests, while other actors in the region (e.g. Russia and Turkey) carry their own foreign policy agendas. However, Romania is at the beginning of its road and, as it has proved since 1989, it is a fast-learner that could use its traditional negotiation and adaptation skills to engage more successfully with the Eastern neighborhood.

ENDNOTES

[1] The author would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers of *Perspectives* for their useful comments and suggestions.

[2] All the presidential speeches quoted in the text are available on line at www.presidency.ro. The translations of parts of these speeches from Romanian in the text have been made by the author.

A Limited Priority: Hungarian Policy in the Eastern Neighbourhood

András Rácz[1]

This chapter intends to give an overview on the foreign policy of Hungary towards Eastern Europe[2] in the post-1989 period by using an approach focusing on the role of identity. In general, identity plays an important role in a nation state's foreign policy, though there are wide debates among various scholars about the exact interpretation of this role. Following the definition given in the introductory chapter of this book, the author will use the categories of first and second order identities in the overview. First order identity refers to a certain political order. It is based on a set of political norms that are accepted by all mainstream actors of the domestic political community. First order identity may originate from both domestic evolution and outside influence. For example, in the East Central Europe (ECE) region the process of 'Europeanization' has significantly changed domestic political landscapes and also the norms and institutions of policy-making, including foreign policy-making. However, besides these fundamental norms, history also plays a role in a nation's identity in the form of various narratives and widely agreed (or disagreed) upon interpretations of the nation's past. These elements are what is referred to as the nation's second order identity. The distinction between *self* and *other*, in terms of both first and second order identities, has a key influence on the definition of a nation state's foreign policy.

The link between identity and concrete national foreign policy is studied in this paper through the lens of solidarity. Solidarity here is meant as a mirror expression of first and/or second order identities. In terms of foreign policy, in many cases it expresses a belonging to various elements of the *self* that are abroad, whether they be historical, ideological or ethnic ones. Solidarity may also be defined against a certain *other* that fundamentally differs from the *self*. In the Hungarian case the solidarity felt towards some ethnic elements of the *self* – namely towards the Hungarians living in the neighbouring countries –

has been of key importance for Hungarian foreign policy since 1989. On the other hand, the titular nationalities of the neighbouring countries (e.g. Slovaks, Romanians, etc.) are often perceived as *others*, while their ethnic difference from the Hungarians living in these countries is taken into account.

The main research questions which the paper seeks to answer are the following. First, what is the role of first and second order identity elements in the foreign policy of Hungary towards Eastern Europe? To what extent can the Hungarian foreign policy towards Eastern Europe be described by using the concepts of solidarity and identity? Second, are there any other motivations that shape this policy? These two questions lead to the third one: Which countries are the prioritized countries of the Hungarian Eastern policy? In order to answer these questions, the paper discusses not only the historical connections of Hungary with Eastern Europe, but also the development of the Hungarian Eastern policy in the light of key governmental documents on foreign policy since 1989. The practical implementation of the Hungarian foreign policy is then analysed by studying the diplomatic presence in the region and the related development aid activities in order to define the prioritized countries.

Most of the sources used for the chapter are official documents, either those that were issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1989 or those that are related to the Hungarian EU presidency of 2011. Besides these, several speeches and declarations of leading politicians are also taken into account. In addition, the chapter also examines some articles that were published in scientific journals and periodicals and written by prominent Hungarian politicians and/or diplomats before and during the EU presidency. This dominance of primary sources is a consequence of the relative lack of secondary ones. Modern Hungarian foreign policy in general is surprisingly under-researched, even in terms of publications in the Hungarian language. Beside some academic articles, the publications by Dunay–Zellner (1998) and Gazdag–Kiss (2004) represent the notable exceptions to this lack. Questions of the Hungarian foreign policy identity remain even more under-researched by the domestic scientific community. Though in the early 2000s a series of three books was published by the Teleki László Foundation, and one of these dealt specifically with the foreign policy identities of countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Kiss, 2003), interestingly enough, the Hungarian foreign policy identity was not discussed at all in this volume. Furthermore, when it actually

comes to studying the Hungarian foreign policy identity, most of the scientific attention is paid to the historical shock that was caused by the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. The large loss of territory and population is widely studied by many authors, for example, by Romsics (2001) and Pritz–Gergely (1998). However, it remains difficult to find academic publications on the role of Eastern Europe in the Hungarian foreign policy identity.

The paper is divided into three main parts. In the first part the Hungarian foreign policy identity is discussed in a historical context. The second part studies the concepts and objectives of the Hungarian neighbourhood policy towards Eastern Europe. Finally, the third part deals with certain concrete aspects of implementing the Hungarian foreign policy in Eastern Europe.

THE HUNGARIAN FOREIGN POLICY IDENTITY AND EASTERN EUROPE

This part gives an overview of the construction elements of the Hungarian foreign policy identity towards Eastern Europe. The main argument here is that Hungary does not have any historical or minority-related elements in its secondary identity that would particularly connect Hungary to Eastern Europe. In accord with the introductory chapter of this publication, the relationship with Russia is touched upon only marginally.

'Eastern winds' – the current Hungarian concept of the East

In Hungarian foreign policy thinking, the general term 'East' (*Kelet* in Hungarian) lacks a widely agreed upon meaning. There is not a single interpretation of the 'Eastern' – including Eastern Europe – in Hungarian foreign policy thinking that would be similar to the Polish '*Kresy*'. When Hungarian officials and analysts speak about the 'East', this may mean any country from Russia to China, or from Turkey to India. Each and every time the word is used, a separate definition needs to be given first in order to specify the actual meaning of the 'East' in the given context. All in all, the 'East' in Hungarian discourse lacks a particular, concrete definition and may mean practically anything from Ukraine to Japan.

However, in some cases Russia is definitely counted as a country that belongs to the 'East' in the Hungarian discourse. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán,

in power since May 2010, has declared several times that 'Eastern winds are blowing in the world economy' (Orbán, 2010). As he explained, in terms of Hungarian foreign policy this means that Budapest has to intensify her foreign relations with the Eastern countries, including Russia, China, Japan, South Korea and also Central Asia. The strategic aim behind this idea is to intensify Hungarian foreign trade with these large partners and also to attract investments from them (Orbán, 2011). Orbán used the explicit term of '*Opening up towards the East*' (*keleti nyitás*) in Paris in May 2011. This opening up towards the East also includes plans to intensify relations with Azerbaijan and open an embassy in Uzbekistan, and frequent visits of Hungarian high officials to China. Thus, the term 'Eastern winds' is, of course, much wider than the Eastern neighbourhood itself is.

In this policy-related case the Hungarian concept of the 'East' indeed includes Russia as well. Therefore one may come to the conclusion that it is the Western borders of the Hungarian concept of the 'East' that are uncertain. The current government, just like the previous ones, categorizes Russia as an important partner in the opening-up efforts; consequently Russia belongs to the East. But the Hungarian government is often selective about which Eastern neighbours belong in the 'East' as, for example, Ukraine, a direct Eastern neighbour, is hardly ever mentioned in this 'Eastern winds' context.

Limited commitment towards Eastern Europe

Besides the lack of a unified understanding of the East in general, in the case of Hungary, there is no lasting, historically motivated commitment towards the Eastern European region like in the case of Poland, as the Polish *polityka wschodnia* (Eastern policy) originates from Poland's commitment to Eastern Europe. Hungary has no elements in her second order identity that would connect Budapest to Eastern Europe. There is practically no shared meaning of history, constitutional practices and institutions between Hungary and this region. If Hungary has such ties at all, they are mostly with the Western Balkans region.

The main reasons for this particular identity are historical and geographical. Neither the Kingdom of Hungary in the Middle Ages nor the Hungary of the Austro-Hungarian Empire had any significant ambitions or even a clear strategic vision for the region now called the 'Eastern neighbourhood'. The

peaks of the North-Eastern and Eastern Carpathian Mountains have proved to be a firm and stable border that separated Hungary from the East for centuries. Even after the Ottoman armies were pushed out of the country in the early 18th century, the Habsburg Empire, to which Hungary became subordinated, had the Balkans as the main direction of her Eastern policy, and not Eastern Europe (Romsics, 2007).

Hungary's minority-related connections are also weak. Following the end of the First World War, Hungary lost two thirds of her territory and one third of her population. Approximately 2,5 million ethnic Hungarians became citizens of other countries (Romsics, 2001). From then on, a new dimension has emerged in Hungarian foreign policy – the commitment to the national minorities living abroad. This dimension has always been present in the Hungarian foreign policy thinking and identity since then, though with varying intensity (Kiss, 2007). Minority policy has also been a key element in the foreign policy identity of the modern, democratic Hungary.

However, since there are no Hungarian minorities living east of the Carpathians, this strong minority dimension has not helped when it came to Hungary's need to form a comprehensive foreign policy commitment towards Eastern Europe. The only (partial) exception to this pattern is Ukraine, due to the small Hungarian minority that lives in the Trans-Carpathian (*Zakarpattya*) region (approx. 150,000 Hungarians).

In this aspect, the Hungarian case significantly differs from the Polish and Baltic ones, as neither a shared history nor minority-related issues connect Hungary strongly to the post-Soviet Eastern Europe. Budapest's view of Eastern Europe is that 'it is different from us.' Russia, as the most important Eastern *other*, defines the Hungarian Eastern policy by moderating it, as the intention not to alienate Russia limits the Hungarian activities toward the East. The key factors that shape Hungary's Russia policy are well discussed in the book *A Power Audit of EU-Russia Relations* (Leonard–Popescu, 2007). However, as this study is focused on the Hungarian foreign policy towards Eastern Europe, the relationship with Russia is not going to be discussed here in detail.

Romania is a different type of *other* in the context of the Hungarian foreign policy towards Moldova. Hungary has supported those political forces in Moldova that are pushing for the independence of the country, and thus for decreasing the Romanian dominance there (Bába, 1994).[3] As we will see, though, this Hungarian attitude was originally motivated by the minority-related problems between Budapest and Bucharest in the 1990s, as supporting Moldovan pro-independence forces was a tool for putting pressure on Romania (ibid.).

THE HUNGARIAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY TOWARDS EASTERN EUROPE: CONCEPTS AND OBJECTIVES

This part focuses on Hungary's discourse on its neighbourhood policy, which will be examined together with the relevant strategic documents from the pre-accession era.

The Hungarian neighbourhood policy towards Eastern Europe 1990–2004

Following the transition in 1989, the new Hungary has defined her foreign policy along three main pillars. These were 1) the Euro-Atlantic integration, 2) good relations with the neighbouring countries, and 3) responsibility towards the Hungarian minorities living abroad (Hungarian Government, 1990). Some experts argue that the first government, though it made important steps towards the Euro-Atlantic integration of the country, failed to realize how strongly the three priorities were interconnected. Thus minority policy became an absolute priority between 1990 and 1993 (Dunay, 2004). In terms of identity and foreign policy shaping, in this period the promotion of minority-related norms dominated the Hungarian foreign policy towards Slovakia, Ukraine and Romania. Yugoslavia was, of course, a different case, as there the Hungarian priorities quickly shifted from minority rights promotion to a highly securitized discourse.

In the first years after 1989, the Hungarian foreign and security policy was generally quite securitized. The most important reason for this was the Yugoslav civil war that went on right in the Southern neighbourhood of Hungary. The instability of Ukraine in the East and the security challenges of the Russian transition (the coup d'état effort of August 1991, the October 1993 crisis, etc.) also contributed to the perception that securitization was required, together with the violent Romanian transition and the peaceful Czechoslovak transition. The unstable regional environment was well reflected in de-

tail in the Parliamentary Decree 11/1993 (III. 12.) on the principles of Hungarian security policy (Hungarian Parliament, 1993). Without mentioning any country concretely, the document named the main challenges of regional security at the time, such as the dissolution of federal states, inter-ethnic conflicts, the development problems of the newly born democracies, the unsettled situation of ethnic minorities, etc.

In the Soviet times Budapest had established institutionalized diplomatic relations only with Moscow, while its contacts with the other Soviet Socialist Republics were very limited. Thus after the Soviet dissolution, Hungary's relations with the other newly independent countries of Eastern Europe had to be built up practically from scratch.

The priority countries then were Ukraine, a direct neighbour of Hungary, and, to a smaller extent, the Republic of Moldova (Bába, 1994). Supporting the stability of Ukraine has been in the forefront of the Hungarian foreign policy ever since the break-up of the Soviet Union. There were both security and value-based motives behind this attention paid to Kyiv. Budapest strived to ensure the peaceful political transition of Ukraine, and also to foster the protection of the Hungarian minorities living in the *Zakarpattya region* of Ukraine. The agreement on the mutual protection of national minorities was signed already on 31 May 1991, when Ukraine was still an entity that belonged to the Soviet Union. The Hungarian-Ukrainian Basic Treaty was signed in the same year on 6 December (SVKI Institute, 1999).

Hungary established diplomatic relations with Moldova in 1992, and in the same year an embassy was opened in Chisinau. Following the end of the Moldovan civil war, Hungarian-Moldovan relations started to develop rapidly because of two main reasons. First, in Moldova the pro-independence political forces were interested in counter-balancing the influence of Romania, and Hungary seemed to be an ideal partner for this when taking into account the tensions in the Hungarian-Romanian relations during the 1990s over the rights of the Hungarian minority in Romania. Second, as explained by the well-known analyst and politician Iván Bába, Hungary was interested in fostering the relations to Moldova in order to counter-balance her bilateral tensions with Romania (Bába, 1994). According to Bába, Budapest intended to demonstrate that the problems with Romania were not based on any historical aversions to Romanians in general, and that they were rather about concrete questions. Thus Hungary's good relations with the Romanian-

speaking Moldova were, in a way, the result of the Hungarian-Romanian tensions. The political situation of today is, of course, fundamentally different than the one of the early 1990s. Contemporary Hungary is interested in and pushing for the pro-European reforms in Moldova. Budapest supports Moldovan administrative and judiciary reforms, provides transformation experience to Chisinau, and, in general, encourages the Europeanization of the country. However, one may say that Budapest expresses solidarity towards Moldova because it is still interested in keeping Moldova in a state in which it perceives Romania as an *other* rather than a *self*.

In general, Hungary paid very limited attention to the other countries of Eastern Europe. Diplomatic relations with them were established in 1991–1992, but besides a few mid-level visits, practically no progress was made in this respect during the early nineties. This was mostly due to the fact that while the Hungarian foreign policy was looking westwards, concentrating on the NATO and EU integration, the countries of Eastern Europe oriented themselves mostly towards the East, that is, towards Russia. According to a Hungarian diplomat, this period could be characterized as one of mutual indifference: 'We were not interested in them, and they were not interested in us. None of us were interested in the other too much.'[4]

Besides this, Hungary's foreign policy towards the broader Eastern Europe always had certain limits. The first limit has been the sheer lack of resources. This means not only shortages of funding, but also shortages of trained personnel and infrastructure, and a lack of knowledge. However, theoretically all these shortages could be reduced or eliminated, though a lasting political commitment would be necessary. Embassies could be opened or strengthened, new experts and diplomats could be trained or redirected, etc. Nevertheless, there has also been another limiting factor in the relations – Russia.

Regarding the role of Russia, in the Hungarian case Moscow is not the *other against which* the Hungarian Eastern policy is defined. It is actually the opposite: Moscow is an *other whose opinion has always been taken into account* while the Eastern foreign policy of Budapest was being formulated. In other words, Hungarian foreign policy actions towards Eastern Europe have a specific de facto prerequisite to fulfill: not to alienate Moscow too much. This is particularly true in the light of the 'opening up towards the East' policy of the current government, which was mentioned earlier.

The above mentioned policy of indifference toward the countries of Eastern Europe started to change with the NATO-integration of Hungary. In 1997, when Hungary got invited to accede to NATO, Hungary started to declare that the Euro-Atlantic integration of all the neighbouring countries was in the essential interest of Hungary (SVKI Institute, 1999). However, the still low general importance of the whole Eastern Europe for Hungarian foreign policy was well documented in the parliamentary decree nb. 94/1998 (XII. 29.) on the principles of Hungarian security and defense policy (Hungarian Parliament, 1998). The document stated that 'besides the Euro-Atlantic integration, Hungarian foreign policy focuses on the neighbourhood policy and the wellbeing of Hungarian minorities abroad' (Hungarian Parliament, 1998). This meant that out of the six countries of post-Soviet Eastern Europe, only Ukraine was present on the screen of the Hungarian foreign policy, while the others were not mentioned at all. However, in the case of Ukraine, a certain solidarity-related element was present, namely the reference to the well-being of the Hungarian minorities there.

The new National Security Strategy adopted in 2004 – thus already after the NATO – and EU-accessions – did not change this situation significantly. Regarding Eastern Europe, it was declared in the document that 'We consider the situation of Russia and Ukraine as of crucial importance from the point of view of security in the region and are therefore particularly interested in the stability of these two states and in the advancement of their democratic reforms, as well as in the success of their economic and social modernization processes' (Hungarian MFA, 2004) One may note that in this particular case, Russia was included in the definition of Eastern Europe yet again. About Ukraine the strategy specifically stated that 'Hungary has an interest in the successful socioeconomic transformation of an independent and democratic Ukraine' (ibid.). However, neither Moldova nor Belarus was mentioned in the document at all. The South Caucasus was addressed only in a very generalizing way, basically by listing the security-related problems of the region, while none of its countries were concretely mentioned. Generally speaking, the National Security Strategy of 2004 used a security-based and thus rather functional approach towards Eastern Europe, with not much presence of any solidarity element.

Hungarian and EU neighbourhood policy in the post-enlargement context: partially overlapping priorities

Compared to the pre-2004 period, since the EU accession Hungary has significantly intensified its presence and activities in Eastern Europe. The EU accession offered Hungary the chance to become a *policy maker*, and thus to depart from the pre-accession position of a *policy taker*. This applied also to the neighbourhood policy dimension. However, the priorities of the European Neighbourhood Policy and those of the Hungarian neighbourhood policy were only partially overlapping. While the EU promoted the relationship with both the wider Eastern and the Southern Neighbourhood, the Hungarian neighbourhood policy focused on the integration of Romania and Croatia, and when it came to the Eastern neighbourhood, it focused only on the reforms conducted in Ukraine and Moldova (Kiss, 2007).

However, even this post-accession transformation did not start immediately. Several analysts point out that the Hungarian foreign policy became passive for a while following the EU accession (Dunay, 2006): the main primary goal was achieved by 1 May 2004, and the question remained how to go on, make foreign policy in the European Union, and contribute to the European Neighbourhood Policy in particular.

The already mentioned National Security Strategy from 2004 concretely named the opportunity to use the European Neighbourhood Policy for supporting the Hungarian objectives in Eastern Europe, though interestingly enough, this concept of Eastern Europe included not only Ukraine, but also Russia (Hungarian MFA, 2004). One has to keep in mind that when this strategy was drafted in 2003, only the '*Wider Europe*' concept was planned, and the concept also included Russia (European Commission, 2003).

As a reaction to the changed environment, the first Gyurcsány government, in office in 2004–2006, re-shaped the three main pillars of the Hungarian foreign policy. In an interview given to the daily *Népszabadság*, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs Ferenc Somogyi declared that the EU-accession had transformed the neighbourhood policy of Hungary. As a result, the three traditional pillars of Hungarian foreign policy also had to be modified. Here the minority-focus still prevailed. As Minister Somogyi put it, 'the

well-planned implementation of these three foreign policy tools may provide us with good chances for pursuing our political interests and economic goals and also for realizing our efforts aimed at improving the situation of the Hungarian minority communities' (Somogyi, 2005). Hereby an element of solidarity could be tracked, but it applied only to the Hungarians living in the neighbouring countries, and not to Eastern Europe in general. Somogyi also declared that the geographical focus area of the Hungarian development policy should be Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Besides this, he stated that Hungary should influence the European Neighbourhood Policy, the enlargement and also the engagement of the EU in the Western Balkans in such a way that these activities would include a more effective protection of minority rights, and that infrastructural development projects should focus on the territories populated by Hungarian minorities (Somogyi, 2005). However, regarding Eastern Europe, this approach included only Ukraine and Moldova.

The other four countries of Eastern Europe were still hardly present among the foreign policy priorities of Budapest at this point. In relations with them, the unofficial strategy was simply to follow the European mainstream in general, and the regional player Poland in particular. For example, regarding Belarus, a background strategy document prepared in 2007 in order to draft a new External Relations Strategy for Hungary suggested that the Hungarian interests regarding Belarus could be realized best by supporting the political efforts of Poland (Magyarics, 2007). Regarding the three South Caucasian countries, the same document recognized the value of the 3+3 efforts of the Baltic States but did not make any concrete suggestions for Hungary in this respect (Magyarics, 2007). Another background study from the same group that dealt with the neighbourhood policy discussed only the three Western countries of Eastern Europe, while the three South Caucasian ones were only mentioned briefly without specifying any particular Hungarian interest or action in the region.

All in all, one may well see that there are significant differences between the Hungarian and the EU concept of neighbourhood policy. Since the EU-accession of Romania in 2007, the Hungarian concept of neighbourhood policy applies only to Ukraine in the East, and Serbia and Croatia in the Western Balkans. In contrast, in the EU discourse, the countries of the Western Balkans do not belong to the neighbourhood policy, while all the six states of Eastern Europe do. Thus the Hungarian and EU concepts of the Eastern

neighbourhood policy are completely overlapping only in the case of Ukraine and partially overlapping in the case of Moldova.

The External Relations Strategy, drafted in 2007 and adopted in 2008, prescribed that Budapest needs to 'reinforce her presence in the Eastern partner countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy' (Hungarian MFA, 2008). Moldova and Ukraine are concretely mentioned as countries whose integration efforts are to be supported by Hungary. About this element, the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared, 'We regard strengthening the eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood policy as an important objective, and we regard Ukraine and Moldova as special partners in doing so.', besides stating that the Euro-Atlantic integration of the neighbouring states, namely of Croatia, Serbia and Ukraine, is a key Hungarian interest (Hungarian MFA, 2007). The strategy also uses clear wording regarding the role of the EU in the Hungarian foreign policy: 'The European Union is the most important framework for Hungarian foreign policy and action' (ibid.).

The document concretely mentions not only Ukraine, but also Moldova, stating that 'Hungary encourages an effective European Neighbourhood Policy, which builds balanced relations based on co-operation and risk-handling in the eastern and southern direction, and leaves open the opportunity for EU accession for East European countries, Ukraine and Moldova among them, helping their preparation by political and practical means' (ibid.). Besides expanding the sphere of Hungarian activity in Eastern Europe by concretely adding Moldova to it, the document also clarified the place of Russia: it was to be handled separately from Eastern Europe.

The increased level of engagement prescribed by the External Relations Strategy was mostly connected to the influence of the EU accession, and also to the expectations originating from the trans-Atlantic partnership with the United States (U.S.). Regarding the EU, Hungary needed to contribute to the Common Foreign and Security Policy and also to the ENP. Concerning the United States, fostering close bilateral relations with Washington was always a definite priority for Budapest. As the promotion of democratic values has been high on the U.S. agenda, particularly during the two Bush administrations, it also had a prioritized role in Hungarian foreign policy. As an analytic report prepared by the Republikon Institute think tank put it, 'Hungary may well count on receiving European and American urges, recommendations, and sometimes even pressure to play an active, legitimating role in the

future and dedicate resources to reaching the common objectives and supporting activities aimed at promoting and strenghtening democracy and reforms' (Dérer, 2007).

However, another report, which was written by Gergo Medve-Bálint and prepared in 2010 for the CEU Center for Policy Studies, pointed out that the Hungarian society in general was not very satisfied with the results of the domestic democratic transition. As a result, public interest in and support for external democracy promotion were very low. Besides this, as the report stated in connection with the low domestic support and also the shortage of financial resources, 'Hungarian officials do not perceive democracy promotion as a policy that may serve the country's interests' (Medve-Balint, 2010). Thus one may state that the Hungarian engagement in promoting certain first order identity elements (particularly democracy-related ones) in the broader Eastern Europe has mainly been externally motivated. In fact, a brief look at the bilateral relations indicates that the Hungarian policy towards the Eastern neighbourhood is more motivated by rational reasons than by ideational ones.

IMPLEMENTATION OF HUNGARIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN EASTERN EUROPE

The implementation of the increased involvement prescribed in the External Relations Strategy started already in 2007–2008. New Hungarian embassies were opened in Baku, Tbilisi and Minsk. In addition to this, Hungary has set up an NGO called the International Centre for Democratic Transition (ICDT), which deals specifically with democracy-promotion. This NGO was Hungary's first insitutionalized effort for the promotion in Eastern Europe of norms of first order identity that are wider than the 'traditional' minority rights: democracy, rule of law, etc.

Besides these acts, in order to raise awareness of and increase the level of popular knowledge about Eastern Europe, a large-scale scientific research program that focused on the post-Soviet space was launched in 2007. The project was jointly financed by the Office of the Prime Minister and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS) and was hosted by the HAS Institute of World Economics (FÁK projekt, 2007). In the framework of the project, several international workshops and conferences were organized, and until now,

altogether eight volumes were published of the newly launched periodical *Kelet-Európa Tanulmányok* (East European Studies).

Diplomatic representation and high-level visits

To have a comprehensive look at the implementation of the Hungarian foreign policy in Eastern Europe, one needs to focus on the infrastructural background. Out of the six Eastern European countries, five have Hungarian embassies, as Armenia is the country that still lacks one, even though Yerevan is covered by the Tbilisi embassy. However, the embassies in Belarus, Georgia and Azerbaijan were opened only relatively recently (in 2008).

The chart below provides an overview of the Hungarian diplomatic representations in Eastern Europe.

Table 1: Hungarian diplomatic presence in Eastern Europe[5]

Country	Diplomatic relations established	Hungarian embassy opened	Highest level bilateral visits from the Hungarian side	Current number of staff[6] (D: diplomatic, A: administrative personnel)
Armenia[7]	1992	–	Minister	–
Azerbaijan	1992	2008	Prime Minister	4D + 2A
Belarus	1992	2008	Minister	4D + 7A
Georgia	1992	2008	Speaker of Parliament, Minister	3D + 3A
Moldova	1992	1992	Prime Minister	6D + 7A[8]
Ukraine	1991	1991	Prime Minister, President of the Republic	26D (13D in Kyiv + 8D in Uzhgorod general consulate + 5D Beregovo consulate)

Out of all the Hungarian diplomats in Eastern Europe, the largest number are working in Ukraine. Actually Hungary was among the very first coun-

tries that recognized the independence of Ukraine, as Hungary recognized it as early as in December 1991. Besides this, a Hungarian embassy in Kiev was opened immediately after Ukraine gained its independence. This was achieved by upgrading the Hungarian general consulate there to the rank of an embassy. In addition to this, Hungary runs two consular representations in the *Zakarpattya* oblast: in Uzhgorod there is a general consulate, while in Beregovo a consulate is operating.

Besides Hungary's intensive diplomatic presence in Ukraine, several high-level visits took place between the two countries. Already in September 1990 the then President of Hungary Árpád Göncz traveled to Ukraine, and the visit was returned by Leonid Kravchuk in May 1991. The Hungarian-Ukrainian Basic Treaty was signed in December 1991. Since then, all the Hungarian Presidents and practically all the Hungarian Prime Ministers (except Péter Medgyessy and Gordon Bajnai, but these two were in office only for a very short time) visited Ukraine, and the visits were returned by their Ukrainian counterparts. In addition to these, ministerial and state-secretary-level visits between the two countries have taken place very often. Out of the six countries of Eastern Europe, Ukraine is the most important external trade partner of Hungary. The Hungarian external trade turnover with Ukraine in 2010 was more than four times higher than the turnover with the other five Eastern European countries altogether.[9] Besides this, the technical cooperation between the two countries is also very intensive, particularly in the fields of cross-border cooperation, disaster management and environmental protection. All in all, these factors well demonstrate the primary importance of Ukraine in the Hungarian Eastern policy.

In terms of importance for the Hungarian Eastern policy, Ukraine is followed by Moldova, which is largely due to both the level and the duration of the Hungarian diplomatic representation there. Since 2007 the first EU Common Application Center has been in operation in the Hungarian embassy in Moldova. Here one may apply for short-term (type A and C) Schengen visas to travel to fifteen EU countries[10] that either have no diplomatic representation in Chisinau or work only with a very limited personnel in this respect. Moldovan high-ranking officials are frequently visiting Hungary, especially since the pro-Western turn in Moldovan domestic politics in 2009. Since then, Moldovan Minister of Foreign Affairs Iurie Leanca visited Budapest six times already in addition to several lower-level delegations that were ex-

changed between Budapest and Chisinau. Hungary also plays an active role in supporting the administrative and judicial reforms in Moldova. Plus, the EU Special Representative to Moldova was Hungarian, and so was the first commander of the EUBAM mission.

In the case of Belarus, the relations have been very moderate since Alexander Lukashenko came to power. A slow improvement in the relations has started in 2007, though, in parallel to the efforts of the Belarussian foreign policy to open up to the West. This tendency became further intensified following the 2008 war in Georgia. In this period a Hungarian embassy was opened in Minsk, Belarussian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Martynov visited Hungary, and several Hungarian visits took place in Belarus (the visiting Hungarians had the ranks of state secretary and deputy state secretary). However, since the December 2010 elections in Belarus and the brutal repression of the opposition demonstrations, the Hungarian-Belarussian political relations have become practically frozen.

Out of the three South Caucasian countries, Hungary has by far the most intensive relations with Azerbaijan, though this intensification in the relations has begun only in 2007. Since then, a Hungarian embassy was opened in Azerbaijan, and several high-level visits between the two countries also took place, including the visits to Azerbaijan of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán (in 2010), Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány (in 2008) and Minister of Foreign Affairs Kinga Göncz (in 2007). Besides these visits, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev visited Hungary in 2008. This was the first ever Azerbaijani presidential visit to Budapest (Hungarian Embassy in Azerbaijan, 2011). However, one has to add that the Azerbaijani-Hungarian diplomatic relations are focused almost exclusively on economic issues, or more concretely on energy issues. Hungarian foreign policy decision-makers perceive Azerbaijan as a source of natural gas supplies that may mean an alternative to the current double dependency on Russia as a supply country and Ukraine as a transit route. The Hungarian-Azerbaijani relations have started to become more intensive in 2007, following the shock of the first Russia-Ukraine 'gas war' that also affected Hungary. In May 2007, Minister of Foreign Affairs Kinga Göncz visited Baku, while Azerbaijani Minister of Energy Industry Natiq Aliyev attended the first Nabucco conference to be organized in Budapest in September of the same year. In the last three years there were two Hungarian Prime Minister-level visits to Baku. In 2008, Ferenc Gyurcsány travelled to

the Azerbaijani capital, and Viktor Orbán visited Baku in September 2010, when he attended the Ministerial Meeting of the AGRI (Azerbaijan–Georgia–Romania Interconnector) gas transit project and made Hungary join it. The President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, also paid two visits to Hungary: he was invited by the then President of the Republic László Sólyom in 2008, while in 2009 he participated in the second international Nabucco conference, which was organized in Budapest.[11]

The two other South Caucasian countries, Armenia and Georgia, receive very little attention in the Hungarian foreign policy. This tendency is highly unlikely to change, even though Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili paid a visit to Hungary in 2011. Both people-to-people contacts and trade activities between Hungary and these two countries are very limited.

Development assistance

As declared in the External Relations Strategy, Hungary intends *'to actively support the broad respect for democratic values' and 'support democratic development'* (Hungarian MFA, 2008). However, as Áron Horváth points out in his paper on Hungary's democracy assistance policy (Horváth, 2008), a clear strategy defining the objectives, priority areas, options and ways of the democracy assistance is still missing. Though the government intends to coordinate its democracy-related activities with international development cooperation, not much has been seen of the realization of such plans. There is no separate budget for democracy assistance programs; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs handles the funding for these programs together with the development cooperation funds. According to the criticism of the AidWatch Report 2011, the structure of the funds is overly fragmented, and the management of the funds is not very transparent (AidWatch, 2011).

Some outlines of the Hungarian development policy, in a document titled 'Hungarian International Development Cooperation Policy' (Hungarian MFA, 2003), were already adopted by the government in 2003. This strategy prescribed that providing transition experiences should be one of the main focus points of the Hungarian development cooperation, besides assistance in education, knowledge-transfer, agriculture, healthcare, water management and infrastructure planning. The strategy openly declared that the Hungarian development assistance should be planned in accord with the coming EU-accession and that the EU and OECD development principles should be taken into account in the process (ibid.).

The geographical focus of the international development cooperation and democracy assistance conducted by the Hungarian government is oriented mostly towards the Balkans. Out of the Eastern European countries, Moldova and Ukraine are the main partners. Until 2008, both were declared to be strategic partners, but due to the financial crisis, the funding for the partnership was cut; thus now the status of Ukraine is that of a project-based partner country.

Table 2: Hungarian development assistance in Eastern Europe in 2009 (Hungarian MFA, 2010)

Country	Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget (HUF)			Contributions of other state organizations	Altogether
	International development cooperation	Humanitarian aid	Democracy assistance		
Armenia				238,000	238,000
Azerbaijan				5,091,050	5,091,050
Belarus			225,000	952,701	1,177,701
Georgia	9,239,399			238,000	9,477,399
Moldova	19,421,388	4,006,331	4,500,000	4,567,214	32,494,933
Ukraine	18,502,887			346,209,259	364,712,146
Eastern European countries together	47,163,674	4,006,331	4,775,000	357,296,224	406,684,478
Total Hungarian bilateral development spending	883,754,733	276,000,000	63,283,970	136,701,669	4,509,422,136

As is visible from the table above, in 2009 the overall share of Eastern Europe in the Hungarian bilateral development cooperation represented only 10% of its budget. As compared to the approx. 406 million HUF spent on

Eastern Europe, Afghanistan alone, which was the absolute priority for Hungary, received more than 1700 million HUF in 2009. Out of the six countries of Eastern Europe, clearly Ukraine and Moldova were the prioritized ones. In the case of Ukraine, most of the expenses were related to the procurement of health care equipment for a hospital in the Trans-Carpathia region, while in Moldova the Hungarian development cooperation was much more diverse and ranged from humanitarian aid to democracy promotion (ibid.). The other four countries of Eastern Europe were represented only by marginal sums in the budget. This tendency also reflects Hungary's choice of priority countries in Eastern Europe.

Table 3: Hungarian development assistance in Eastern Europe in 2010 (Hungarian MFA, 2011)

Country	Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget (HUF)	Contributions of other state organizations	Altogether
	Bilateral projects, humanitarian assistance and democracy assistance		
Armenia	0	3,333,599	3,333,599
Azerbaijan	0	11,074,234	11,074,234
Belarus	0	9,613,432	9,613,432
Georgia	0	4,952,026	4,952,026
Moldova[12]	17,627,125	32,575,500	50,202,625
Ukraine	22,000,000	796,487,508	818,487,508
Eastern European countries together	39,627,125	858,036,299	897,663,424
Total Hungarian bilateral development spending	489,390,733	n.a.	n.a.

The year 2010 brought significant changes to the Hungarian development assistance policy. First, the Hungarian parliamentary elections took place in

April. Due to the government-forming process and the subsequent changes in the administration, all development assistance spending was suspended in the first eight months of the year. Second, the legal environment of the development assistance was also changed, which induced further delays. Third, the financial crisis hit Hungary particularly seriously, and thus the resources available for development assistance activities were significantly reduced.

Regardless of these problems, it is clearly visible from table 3 that the overall amounts spent on development assistance in the countries of Eastern Europe increased to a significant extent compared to 2009, with the sole exception of the amounts spent on Georgia. The change is particularly spectacular in the case of Ukraine, where the Hungarian assistance was more than doubled compared to the previous year. These shifts are partially connected to the efforts of the government to 'streamline' the development assistance policy and turn more attention to those countries and regions which have a higher importance for Hungary (Hungarian MFA, 2011).

However, if one takes a closer look at the composition of the funds allocated to Ukraine (which produced the highest increase from the previous year), it becomes clear that these resources were spent almost exclusively on the support of the Hungarian minorities living in the Trans-Carpathian region (ibid.). Hence, the spectacular increase in the case of Ukraine indicates more the growing importance of minority issues in Hungarian foreign policy than the growing importance of Eastern Europe in the view of Hungary in general.

Though Hungary is not too active in the other four countries of Eastern Europe in terms of bilateral relations, the multilateral dimension of its relations is different in this respect. The recent Hungarian governments, regardless of their party composition, have always been in favor of the Visegrad cooperation and the International Visegrad Fund (IVF) in particular. Even in the times of the financial crisis, it was beyond question in the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the IVF contribution was always to be paid fully and completely.[13] Budapest has always been supportive to the suggestions – which usually came from Poland – that the International Visegrad Fund should extend its presence and activities in Eastern Europe. As an example, one may name Hungary's political and financial support for the scholarship programmes for Ukrainian and Belarusian students provided by the IVF (Visegrad Group, 2011). Another particularly recent example is the V4-Eastern Partnership cooperation that was launched on 16 June 2011 in Bratislava.

Hereby the four Visegrad states agreed to raise the budget of the Fund by 250,000 EUR per country and dedicate this sum to various cooperation projects in the Eastern Partnership framework (Visegrad Group, 2011). The motivation behind Hungary's support for this is probably three-fold. First, Budapest is interested in strengthening the Visegrad Cooperation in general, and a more active presence in Eastern Europe on its part also contributes to the overall strength of the cooperation. Second, Hungary's contribution may also be accounted as an EU-level contribution to the Eastern Partnership. Third, by supporting the Visegrad initiative, Budapest may well compensate for her limited activities outside of Ukraine and Moldova.

Another multilateral project that is of high importance for Budapest is the Danube Strategy (European Commission, 2010), which gives Hungary an opportunity to link the two prioritized regions of its neighbourhood policy. Both the Western Balkans in the South and Ukraine and Moldova in the East lie along the Danube River, and thus they are included in the strategy.

The Eastern Partnership and Hungary

The Hungarian government has actively participated in the elaboration of the Eastern Partnership concept. During the drafting phase of the initiative, Hungary strongly supported the inclusion of Belarus in order to encourage the already visible, pro-European changes in the attitude of the regime and support the reforms. Among the 'Eastern partners' of the EU, Moldova is a country that is of special importance for Hungary (Európai Tükör, 2011). Budapest has warmly welcomed the official launch of the initiative in May 2009. Following the ceremony, the then Prime Minister Gordon Bajnai pointed out that 'the Partnership is especially important for Hungary and the EU because it improves energy security' (EurActiv, 2009). As this statement shows, it is again the case that an interest-driven commitment is visible instead of a value-based one.

Another element of the Hungarian enthusiasm was that the second Eastern Partnership summit was to take place in Budapest right during the Hungarian EU presidency. Even according to the official presidency programme, this event was supposed to be one of the most important events of the Hungarian presidency. The official presidency programme used the following words: 'The EaP Summit to be held in May 2011 will be one of the highlights of the Hungarian Presidency' (Hungarian Government, 2010). In October 2010, Minister of Foreign Affairs János Martonyi declared the Eastern Partnership summit one of the two top foreign policy priorities of the Hungarian presidency, the other being continuing the enlargement process with Croatia (Hungarian Parliament, 2011). And in the beginning of 2011, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán also declared the Eastern Partnership one of the priorities of the Hungarian presidency (Orbán, 2011b).

However, since in mid-February 2011 it was decided that the summit was to take place in Poland instead of Hungary, the whole Eastern Partnership initiative has practically disappeared from the Hungarian foreign policy discourse. After that, in the declarations and articles of Hungarian officials the Eastern Partnership was either completely missing or only mentioned in explanations that were given for the loss of the summit. At most, the officials gave short generalizing statements about the overall importance of the initiative. Perhaps the only exception was Deputy State Secretary Péter Sztáray, who, in an interview, pointed out the particular Hungarian interests in the region in relation to effects of migration pressure and environmental security. He particularly stressed the importance of Ukraine for Hungary due to the Hungarian minorities living there (Európai Tükör, 2011).

The fact that Budapest so easily abandoned her activities related to the Eastern Partnership demonstrates that the commitment towards the broader Eastern Europe was not a core element of the Hungarian foreign policy. The commitment towards Ukraine and Moldova still prevails, and the relationship with Russia has, of course, also remained a key priority of Hungary, which was proven also by the 'Eastern winds' concept, among other things, but the importance of the broader Eastern Europe for Hungary has significantly decreased.

When he evaluated the first half of the Hungarian presidency in the Parliament, Prime Minister Orbán was asked about the transfer of the Eastern Partnership summit to Poland. In his answer, he declared that 'it would have been pointless to turn half of Budapest upside down to disable the life of the city because of an event that is doomed to fail' (ATV 2011). And the official website of the Presidency listed only five news items under the tag 'Eastern Partnership' ('Keleti Partnerség')[14]. This indicates that the overall coverage of the Eastern Partnership initiative was very scarce. This in a way indicates the generally low importance of the Eastern Partnership initiative for the Hungarian Presidency.

This does not mean that Budapest has given up all its policy objectives related to the countries of the Eastern neighbourhood, though. The previously mentioned recently launched Visegrad-Eastern Partnership cooperation demonstrates this well. One has to add, though, that even in the Eastern Partnership framework Budapest pays the most attention to Ukraine and Moldova, which was also visible in the development assistance trends (Rácz, 2010). Regarding the other four states, Budapest is likely to follow the general lines of EU foreign policy, but no significant bilateral initiatives are visible in this respect.

In summary, one may well conclude that concerning the overall implementation of the Hungarian Eastern policy, Budapest is more engaged in multilateral frameworks than in bilateral ones. This corresponds to the above mentioned trend of Hungarian democracy promotion activies being mostly externally motivated. Hungary's bilateral activities focus more on technical assistance and knowledge transfer, for example, through the activities of the ICDT, even if they are not limited to this area. It remains to be seen how the 'Eastern winds are blowing' concept described earlier may influence the wider Hungarian Eastern policy.

CONCLUSION

The wider Eastern European region plays only a limited role in the foreign policy of Hungary. This is partially due to the lack of historical connections, which also results in a vague and often unsure conceptualization of the 'East' in the Hungarian political discourse. Another hampering element is the fact that the EU and Hungarian interpretations of the 'neighbourhood' differ significantly. For Budapest, the term 'neighbourhood' currently means the Western Balkans in the South and Ukraine in the East. Before her EU-accession, Romania also belonged to the Hungarian Eastern neighbourhood policy. Out of the two regions, clearly the Western Balkans is the priority region. In contrast, in the EU discourse, the Western Balkans does not belong to the neighbourhood policy at all. Thus the Hungarian and EU concepts of 'neigbourhood' only partially overlap as the two common priorities are Ukraine and, to some extent, Moldova.

An additional reason for the limited Hungarian attention to Eastern Europe is that there are practically no Hungarian minorities living in the region. Though the responsibility towards the Hungarians abroad has been one of the defining factors of the Hungarian foreign policy since the democratic transition, due to the lack of Hungarian minorities in Eastern Europe, this factor did not play a policy-shaping role in Hungary's relations with it. The only exception to this pattern is Ukraine, as there is a Hungarian minority in the Trans-Carpathian (*Zakarpattya*) region, which is south-west of the Carpathian Mountains.

Another Eastern European country that is a priority for Hungary is Moldova. In the early nineties the Hungarian-Moldovan relations started to develop mostly because both countries had certain tensions with Romania, and this made them natural allies. Since Hungary's EU-accession, Moldova has become the only country in Eastern Europe where Hungary may aspire to a 'policy shaper' role due to Hungary's very active involvement in supporting the pro-European political and administrative reforms in the country.

Thus, if one intends to answer the first research question, when it comes to Hungary's relations with the six countries of Eastern Europe, the concept of solidarity is a motivation for Hungary only in its national foreign policy action towards Ukraine and, to a limited extent, Moldova.

Concerning the second research question, while the concepts of identity and solidarity are only of limited use in describing the Hungarian foreign policy towards Eastern Europe, one may also point to the rational motivations that shape this policy. Thus, energy security is the answer to the second research question, as energy considerations also influence the Hungarian foreign policy towards Eastern Europe. They particularly influence the foreign policy towards Ukraine and Azerbaijan. Ukraine contains the only transit route through which Russian oil and gas supplies can reach Hungary. Hungary is heavily dependent on the security of the Ukrainian transit, as was demonstrated during the 2009 gas crisis. On the other hand, Azerbaijan is perceived by Hungarian decision-makers and analysts as a possible alternative source of energy supplies. The growing importance of Azerbaijan in Hungarian foreign policy is well demonstrated by the opening of a Hungarian embassy in Baku in January 2009, and also by the September 2010 visit of Viktor Orbán to Baku. However, except for the energy security ties, the Hungarian-Azerbaijani relations in general remain very limited.

Thus, as an answer to the third research question, Ukraine and Moldova clearly represent the two priority countries of the Hungarian Eastern policy. This prioritization is reflected also in the infrastructural background of the Hungarian foreign policy making, e.g. in the size of the embassies and the number of diplomatic personnel. The development assistance of Budapest in Eastern Europe is also concentrated on these two countries (Ukraine and Moldova), with Belarus receiving a minor share of the development assistance that is smaller than their shares. However, in terms of its foreign policy engagement towards Belarus and the three South Caucasian countries, Budapest relies mostly on a multi-lateral regional cooperation, namely on the Visegrad Cooperation and EU-level actions such as the Eastern Partnership.

ENDNOTES

[1] The views expressed here are the author's own, and they in no way represent the official position of the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs.
[2] The post-communist Eastern neighbourhood includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.
[3] Interview with former Hungarian ambassador to Moldova, 5 May 2011, Budapest.
[4] Interview with a Hungarian diplomat, Budapest, April 2011.
[5] The figures are retrieved from the websites of the embassies and consulates.
[6] Excluding the local staff employed, such as drivers, cleaners, etc.
[7] In Armenia, Hungary is represented by the embassy in Tbilisi.
[8] Excluding the personnel working in the EU Common Application Center.
[9] The figures are retrieved from the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH) (2011).
[10] Common Application Center. Available at: www.cac.md/about_en.html.
[11] Information retrieved from the website of the Hungarian Embassy in Baku: www.mfa.gov.hu/kulkepviselet/AZ/en/mainpage.htm.
[12] Including the microprojects that were directly financed by the Hungarian embassy in Chisinau.
[13] Interview with a Hungarian diplomat, 12 October 2010.
[14] One was from the very beginning of the presidency, from 26th January 2011, when Hungary was still planning to prepare for the Budapest summit, and the Minister of State for EU Affairs Enikő Győri addressed the situation in Belarus. The second mention was from 10th February, following the bilateral meeting of Martonyi and Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs Konstantyn Khritsenko. The third mention was from 17th February. This was a short declaration on the delay of the summit. The fourth article was about the review process of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The most recent article was about a Polish-Hungarian agreement signed on 20th June 2011 which stated that during the Warsaw summit, only Hungarian wines would be served. For more details, see www.eu2011.hu .

Mapping Slovenian Policy in the Neighbourhood

Polona Bunič, Zlatko Šabič

It is impossible to begin a study of Slovenia's foreign policy and development assistance with regard to the Eastern Neighbourhood[1] without first asking the basic question of what Slovenia's perception of its place in Europe is. Identity is important, no matter how 'imagined' the community to which we feel we belong may be (Neumann, 1999: 147). Slovenia sees itself as a European state – throughout its integration process, which started with its membership in the Council of Europe and ended with its accession to the European Union, Slovenia was considered as having adopted European norms and values. Furthermore, Slovenia has also successfully represented the European Union (EU) when it was the holder of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (cf. Kajnč, 2011). Of course, Slovenia has other identities too. As pointed out by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dimitrij Rupel, Slovenia also sees itself as a Mediterranean state and 'above all a Central European state' (Rupel, 2011: 336). Although the EU enlargement has had implications for the Central European co-operation, he believes that Central Europe retains a particular importance for Slovenia (Rupel, 2011: 339).

Conspicuously absent from this 'list' is the Balkans, with which Slovenia shares the largest portion of its borders. Indeed, as one author has said, the (Western) Balkans was seen primarily as an 'obstacle' to identity formation in Slovenia (Bojinović, 2005: 20; see also Patterson, 2003). However, this is in stark contrast with the empirical data that suggest where Slovenia truly 'sees itself'. The figures about official development assistance (ODA)[2] are just one of various indicators (for trade, see, e.g., Drulák–Šabič, 2010) that suggest a close relationship between Slovenia and the Western Balkans. In 2010, Slovenia directed 74% of its bilateral ODA (9.48 million EUR) to this region, and only roughly 2% or 0.27 million EUR to Eastern Europe, the

Caucasus and Central Asia combined (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia – hereinafter also MFA, 2011k).

Economists and political scientists in Slovenia agree that Slovenia's orientation towards the Western Balkans is driven not by sentiments or solidarity, but primarily by pragmatic and strategic motivations. History (between 1918–1990, Slovenia was a part of Yugoslavia), geographical proximity, political instability, business networks, and Slovenia's knowledge of the market and local habits of the Western Balkans are listed as factors that stimulate a proactive policy towards that region (National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, 1999; Jazbec et al., 2002; MFA, 2011a). In July 2010, the Slovenian government further emphasized its interest in the Western Balkans by adopting a set of guidelines aimed at pursuing three objectives: stability of the region; EU accession; and a positive climate for doing business in the region (Government of Slovenia, 2010: 1). This approach to the Western Balkans was subsequently confirmed by the Slovenian Parliament in a declaration that it made in July 2010 (National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, 2010b).

So how does the Eastern Neighbourhodd feature in Slovenia? Until recently, very little information has been available to suggest that Slovenia might consider a departure from its foreign policy orientation towards the Western Balkans and, consequently, a redistribution of its development assistance. Slovenia has an elaborated regional approach to the Western Balkans; but this is not the case with regard to the Eastern Neighbourhood. In fact, at the time of writing, no political document concerning the Eastern Neighbourhood has been adopted either by the Slovenian Government or by the Parliament.[3] Recent developments indicate, however, that Slovenia began to direct part of its bilateral ODA away from the Western Balkans. Out of the eight bilateral agreements on development cooperation that Slovenia has concluded, two of them are with countries of Eastern Neighbourhood – Moldova (signed in 2004 and ratified by Slovenia in 2007) and Ukraine (signed in 2008 and ratified by Slovenia in 2009).

In the context of the present book, it is worth to evaluate these recent developments. What has contributed to Slovenia's (timid) orientation towards the Eastern Neighbourhood? Why would Slovenia, a Mediterranean and Central European country with a traditional strategic and business focus on the Western Balkans, be at all interested in assisting countries such as Ukraine

and in particular Moldova, which has little strategic importance for Slovenia, a weak economy and no impact on the stability in the Western Balkans?

We will attempt to answer these questions under the assumption that European integration is a complex process that would be hard to sustain without an active foreign policy and assistance towards countries that share borders with the Union. We will argue that Slovenia already contributes a fair share of its assistance to countries of the Western Balkans. However, since it is a member of the European Union, Slovenia's external borders are shared not only with the Western Balkans; consequently, it is to be expected that Slovenia will offer its assistance to other regions as well. Further, we will analyse the claim that to evaluate Slovenia's interest in assisting countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood, focusing on the normative aspects of the Slovenian development assistance policy towards Eastern Neighbourhood is not enough, and other considerations, such as strategic and commercial interests, should not be overlooked.

In this chapter, we will examine various factors affecting Slovenia's development assistance policy towards the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood, in particular history, solidarity, identity, domestic constraints, Europeanization, and other forms of international socialization, commercial interests and actions of third countries.

The chapter will be structured as follows. The first part will look at the development of the Slovenian foreign policy discourse on development assistance in general and the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood in particular. The second part will look at the concrete implementation of Slovenia's assistance policy with respect to all of the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood, and the specific factors that affect the content and the dynamics of that assistance. Greater attention will be paid to Ukraine and especially Moldova. These two countries from the Eastern Neighbourhood have been mentioned explicitly in official documents of the Parliament and the Government concerning Slovenia's assistance policy as well as other Slovenian foreign policy discourses more often than other countries. We will also look at the (in) coherences between discourse and policy implementation. Following that, we will offer some concluding remarks to our study.

SLOVENIA'S FOREIGN POLICY DISCOURSE ON DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE AND THE COUNTRIES OF THE EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

Political discourse is particularly relevant for an analysis of the ideational factors that might have affected a country's assistance policy, be they endogenous (history, solidarity, identity, domestic constraints) or exogenous factors (Europeanization and other forms of international socialization).

Table 1: Factors affecting the development of Slovenia's assistance policy towards the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood

	Endogenous	Exogenous
Ideational	• History • Solidarity • Domestic constraints • Identity	• Europeanisation • Other forms of international socialization
Material	• Comercial interests	• Actions by third countries

After gaining its independence, Slovenia was preoccupied with defining its own foreign policy identity. The first strategic Slovenian foreign policy document, the 'Key Elements for a Foreign Policy Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia', which was adopted by the Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia in March 1991,[4] outlined Slovenia's foreign policy orientation – to facilitate co-operation with Central Europe at all levels and the membership in the European Union (National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, 1991). This orientation was shared by other former communist countries; in the literature on Central Europe it is often argued that co-operation among Central European states in the 1990s was 'a viable way of re-Europeanizing the area' (Schöpflin, quoted in Neumann, 1999: 147). The 'Declaration on Foreign Policy of the Republic of Slovenia', adopted by the Slovenian Parliament in 1999, sees Slovenia primarily as a Central European country with one mission – to help stabilize South Eastern Europe (SEE). The same vision of Slovenia's foreign policy emerges from the document 'Ten Years of Independent Slovenian Foreign Policy', which was prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2000 (MFA, 2011j). The Stability Pact for SEE, which was launched at a Summit

Meeting in 1999, included Moldova, which is still its only member belonging to the Eastern Neighbourhood; Ukraine was granted an observer status.[5] Slovenia, which was also a member, attached a considerable importance to the Pact, although its attention was mostly focused on the members of the Pact from the Western Balkans area (MFA, 2011a).

In October 2002, a document called 'Appropriate Foreign Policy' was adopted by the Slovenian Government (Jazbec et al., 2002). It saw Slovenian foreign policy as being focused on the following pillars: the EU and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), which were seen as essential; the neighbouring and SEE countries, which were considered as key; and countries of the Arab world, Israel, Asia, Africa and Latin America, which were viewed as important. The document also stated that within the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), Slovenia should focus on the SEE and the Mediterranean, since the Slovenian knowledge of the situation in the region represented a great advantage for Slovenia that could in turn benefit the European Union (ibid.). The document also mentioned that international development assistance should become an important part of Slovenia's foreign policy.

The Eastern Neighbourhood did not enter into the Slovenian foreign policy discourse until 16 April 2003, when Slovenia signed its Accession Treaty with the EU, which, in turn, made it an insider in the European integration process. Consequently, the Slovenian government began to develop its own agenda regarding the continuation of the enlargement and the relations with the countries neighbouring the EU.

In his speech on 14 May 2003, during a visit to Slovakia, Slovenian Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel reiterated Slovenia's traditional foreign policy orientation towards the SEE and the Western Balkans respectively. However, in another speech, on 13 October 2003, he also reacted to the Commission's paper on 'Wider Europe', published in March 2003, which outlined a plan for co-operation with the 'new neighbours'.[6] In response to this document, Rupel mentioned that as a future member of the European Union Slovenia should pay attention to other areas in the EU neighbourhood as well (MFA, 2011a).

In 2004, Slovenia continued to support the concept of Wider Europe, which became the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Ukraine was mentioned as an increasingly important economic partner. It was emphasized that Slovenia would try to assist with the stabilization of the SEE region, the Mediterranean and the countries of the new EU neighbourhood (MFA, 2011a).

On 12 May 2004, the Slovenian Parliament adopted the 'Declaration on Positions for the Functioning of the Republic of Slovenia in EU Institutions in 2004'. Two other annual declarations of this sort were adopted in 2005 and 2006 respectively. In 2007, the practice of adopting periodical declarations began, so that the adopted declarations were in line with the trio Presidencies. The importance of these declarations should not be underestimated. They represent Slovenia's internal political agreement concerning its orientations on issues in the EU decision-making process. At the same time, during the period for which a declaration is adopted, government representatives are bound by the declaration, and their positions expressed within various EU bodies have to be in line with it.

In this respect, it is worth pointing out that the Declaration for 2004 continued to voice Slovenia's support to the ENP as well as to the inclusion of the countries of the Southern Caucasus in it. It also mentioned that as Slovenia would hold the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) chairmanship in 2005, it would devote special attention to Eastern European countries such as Moldova and Belarus.

The OSCE chairmanship had a notable impact on shaping Slovenia's support and development assistance policy towards the Eastern Neighbourhood. Recalling the adoption of the Action Plans with the ENP countries,[7] the Parliament Declaration for 2005 emphasized that, among other things, it would be important to have a coherent policy towards the Eastern Neighbourhood if the OSCE chairmanship were to be successful. As can be seen from the documents and speeches during the OSCE chairmanship, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did indeed pay more attention to the Eastern region. Thus, the Foreign Minister mentioned his visits to Ukraine and the role the OSCE could play in helping Moldova and resolving the Transnistrian problem. He reiterated the importance of the ENP in the OSCE region with respect to economic growth as well as the OSCE's contribution to the peaceful settlement of the disputes in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan (MFA, 2011a). In this context, he also recalled the commitment agreed at the External Relations Council in May 2005 that new member states would increase their development assistance to at least 0.17% of the gross domestic product (GDP) by 2010 and to at least 0.33% of the GDP by 2015. He also stressed the importance of the ENP, in lieu of the EU membership, for Moldova, Ukraine, and Belarus as well as for the countries of the Southern Caucasus (ibid.).

In 2006, the Parliament agreed in its Declaration that Slovenia should participate actively in the implementation of ENP Action Plans and strive for a deepening of its relations with ENP countries as well as a stronger relation between the EU and Russia as one of the key factors for the stabilization of the EU Eastern border. The Declaration also provided that Slovenia would increase its GDP share of ODA.

The period from 2006 to 2008 brought about the concretization of Slovenia's development assistance policy.[8] In June 2006, the International Development Cooperation Act was adopted by the Slovenian Parliament; in July 2008, the Resolution on International Development Cooperation until 2015 followed. The Act provided that the national coordinator of Slovenia's international development policy would be the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Resolution confirmed that, with respect to its economic development and EU membership, Slovenia had become a donor of ODA, and that, as an EU Member State, Slovenia had made a commitment to strive to increase its share of ODA to 0.17% GDP in 2010 and 0.33% GDP in 2015. It defined three geographical priority areas for Slovenia's ODA (the Western Balkans; Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia; and Africa). It also provided that within the second priority area, the cooperation in the short term would be focused on Ukraine and Moldova (National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, 2008b).

The 2008 Slovenian EU Presidency did not play a particular role with regard to Slovenia's policy towards the EU's Eastern neighbours. In the more or less inherited agenda, jointly agreed with the other two countries of the Presidency Trio, Germany and Portugal, Slovenia focused primarily on the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, the Slovenian Presidency Program made reference to the Black Sea Synergy Initiative, and in the final report, the implementation of the initiative was positively evaluated (MFA, 2008a and 2008b).

Finally, in 2009 and 2010, two framework programmes of international development cooperation and humanitarian assistance were prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The first programme was adopted for 2010, and the second for the period 2011–2012. In the Programme for 2010, 8% of the funds for Slovenian bilateral ODA were earmarked for the second geographical priority, where activities were mainly focused on Moldova and Ukraine. However, within the Programme for 2011–2012, only Moldova was men-

tioned regarding the second geographical priority, in the sense that it was one of the four partner countries (the others being Macedonia, Montenegro and Cape Verde) with which Slovenia was going to develop a programmatic development cooperation in the period 2012–2015. This kind of cooperation entails the preparation of a strategic programming document, which means it will be more intense in comparison to the usual project-based bilateral development cooperation (MFA, 2011c and 2011d).

The Parliament Declaration for the period July 2008–December 2009 expressed support to the Eastern and Southern dimensions of the ENP as well as to the Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative. In addition, the Parliament Declaration for the period January 2010–June 2011 finds that with respect to Slovenia's economic interest in Moldova, Ukraine, and Belarus, Slovenia should support the European integration of these countries. In his speeches during these two years, while mentioning Slovenia's partner countries in development cooperation, the Slovenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Samuel Žbogar also underlined the need for a stronger connection between Slovenia's development assistance policy and its economic diplomacy (National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, 2008a and 2010a; MFA, 2011a).

The timeline of the changing focus of Slovenia's foreign policy orientation and development assistance to the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood suggests that the year 2004 was the 'turning point'. As a new member of the European Union, Slovenia quickly responded to the situation by supporting the ENP. The OSCE chairmanship in 2005 provided an additional significant experience for Slovenia, as it found itself in a dual role – the role of an advocate of the EU's ENP and that of a 'pupil' who was learning about the policies, interests, and preferences of the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood. By 2010, the support to EU initiatives aiming at co-operation with the Eastern neighbours has become institutionalized, and concrete decisions regarding Moldova and Ukraine have been adopted.[9] By looking at the available data in the next section, we will further analyse the nature of Slovenia's assistance to the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood. Is the assistance EU-driven, are there endogenous (commercial) interests behind it, and why is Slovenia focusing on Moldova in the most recent years?

SLOVENIA'S ASSISTANCE POLICY TO THE EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD: POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

A general overview of trade between Slovenia and the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood shows that the combined trade of Slovenia with these countries is less than 1% of Slovenia's total trade. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the trade has increased substantially in the last decade, in particular the trade with Ukraine and Belarus (Table 1).

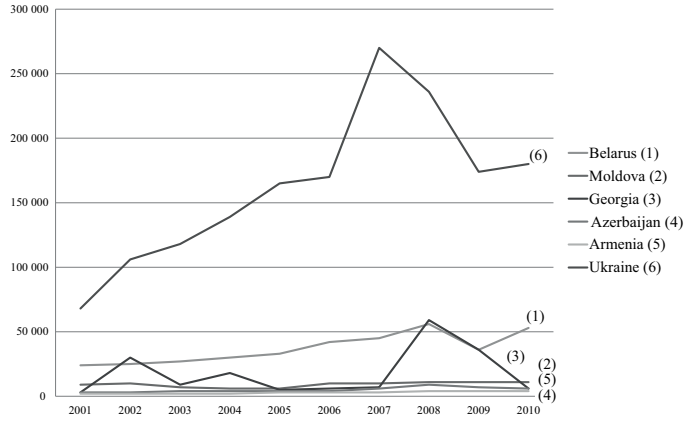
Table 2: Total trade (export + import) between Slovenia and the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood, 2001–2010

in 1000 EUR	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Armenia	844	662	621	858	2,181	2,367	4,621	6,426	8,322	5,114
Azerbaijan	4,203	1,933	1,716	1,813	4,982	3,381	5,555	8,909	6,436	6,438
Belarus	21,773	22,754	29,043	32,295	31,063	41,081	41,644	54,082	37,191	52,903
Georgia	3,247	27,399	10,122	17,263	3,631	7,730	5,877	58,796	38,006	8,135
Moldova	8,466	11,407	8,174	8,535	11,145	13,535	13,031	12,484	11,874	12,619
Ukraine	68,591	104,899	118,573	142,680	163,091	173,243	68,949	240,871	175,587	178,853

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, own calculations.

If we convert these data into a chart, we can see that the trade with Georgia has experienced the largest fluctuations. The trade with Moldova has been growing steadily since 2001, but in relative terms, it lags much behind the trade with Belarus and Ukraine.[10] This, in turn, suggests that Slovenia's decision to offer development assistance to Moldova has little if anything to do with economic incentives.

Chart 1: Trends in the total trade between Slovenia and the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood



With respect to the consistency of the direction of Slovenia's development assistance, the annual reports of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the ODA distribution between 2006–2009 show mixed results (Table 3 below).

Table 3: Bilateral ODA given by Slovenia to individual Eastern Neighbourhood countries in the period 2006–2009

in EUR	2006	2007	2008	2009
Armenia	16,691.70	–	–	< 5,000
Azerbaijan	29,210.48	< 5,000	–	–
Belarus	–	16,369.39	32,344.03	6,505
Georgia	152,072.68	7,815.90	130,382.75	83,629
Moldova	11,536.63	45,939.64	–	16,514
Ukraine	329,939.00	54,284.87	65,425.38	80,102

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia (2011f, 2011g, 2011h and 2011i), own calculations.

Also, if we look at the substance of the development assistance, we see that there is little consistency; individual projects seem to prevail. For example, the funds directed to Georgia in 2006 can be attributed to factors other than a structured development cooperation. Namely, the amount of bilateral ODA to Georgia in 2006 included the costs of the care for migrants (116,923 EUR), co-financing of assistance programmes for refugees within the framework of the European Refugee Fund (18,458 EUR) and projects within the framework of the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance – ITF (16,692 EUR) (MFA, 2011f, 2011g, 2011h and 2011i). In 2008, the funds were directed to care for migrants and conflict assistance, and in 2009 to cooperation in the EU Monitoring Mission and the care for migrants. With respect to its development cooperation with Ukraine, Slovenia contributed to the establishment of a national programme of clean production (299,000 EUR), scientific cooperation (11,335 EUR), and rehabilitation of children (19,604 EUR) in 2006. Projects in 2007 and 2008 included rehabilitation of children, scientific cooperation and care for migrants; funds were also used for high school education, assistance with respect to the new flu outbreak and rehabilitation of children. Concerning Moldova, the development cooperation during this period included the cooperation in the framework of the South Eastern Europe Health Network, technical assistance, care for migrants, and seminars. In the same period, other funds were directed to co-financing within the framework of the European Refugee Fund as well as scholarships, co-financing of research cooperation and the care for migrants (Belarus) and projects within the framework of the ITF (Armenia and Azerbaijan).[11]

Recent developments suggest that Slovenia plans to move from an ad hoc to a sustained support for individual countries, Ukraine and particularly Moldova. In 2007 and 2009 respectively, the government of Slovenia ratified cooperation agreements with the two governments (National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, 2007a and 2009). The Framework Programme of International Development Cooperation prepared by the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 2010 provides that within the second geographical priority area of Slovenia's development assistance, Moldova and Ukraine should be the focus (MFA, 2011d).

However, the programme for 2011–2012 focuses solely on Moldova. The document projects a preparation of a strategic programming document which

will, for the period of 2012–2015, define the financial framework, areas, dynamics and implementing bodies of the cooperation. The programme provides that in the year 2011, 122,500 EUR of development assistance will be given to Moldova; of these funds, 47,500 EUR are earmarked for the co-financing of activities of Slovenian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in Moldova, 40,000 EUR for activities concerning trade liberalization, 30,000 EUR for a training and education project in the field of e-governance and 5,000 EUR for supporting local NGOs working for the empowerment of women (MFA, 2011e). This signifies a more structured development cooperation that is in line with Slovenia's thematic priorities in development cooperation (cf. MFA, 2011b).

Slovenia's assistance to the region of the Eastern Neighbourhood focusing on Moldova might seem a bit difficult to explain, particularly if we take into account that Moldova has not been one of those Eastern Neighbourhood countries that have received the highest amount of Slovenia's assistance in the past and that Moldova has almost always been mentioned together with Ukraine in Slovenia's discourse on the Eastern Neighbourhood. Authors who have studied the orientations of the new EU Member States' regarding development assistance mention similar historic experiences, geographical ties, high levels of political relations, absence of other donors and comparative advantages such as transition know-how among the factors that could explain why particular new Member States' decide to include particular (in our case, Eastern Neighbourhood) countries among the main recipients of their development assistance (Bučar et al., 2007: 39; Lovitt and Rybková, 2007: ii). Some of those criteria would bring Slovenia 'close enough' to Moldova, the only Eastern neighbour country member of the Regional Cooperation Council, the successor of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe.

Nevertheless, the concrete reason for prioritizing Moldova over Ukraine seems to be more prosaic – it stems from the given political realities. The report on Slovenia's development cooperation in 2009, prepared by the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, states that the agreement on development cooperation between Slovenia and Ukraine (which was signed in 2008) has not yet been ratified by Ukraine (MFA, 2011i: 4). This statement is repeated in the report on Slovenia's development cooperation in 2010 (ibid., 2011k: 9). Both statements appear as footnotes to texts in which Slovenia's decision

for a closer development cooperation with Moldova is described. In other words, it appears that Slovenia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs explains the choice to give preference to Moldova through the fact that Ukraine was not available for a closer development cooperation. This has actually been confirmed through an interview.[12]

How much will Moldova actually benefit from this assistance? The overall situation in the EU is difficult, considering the global financial crisis, which started in 2008 and, at the time of writing, shows no sign of ending. The Programme for Development Cooperation in the period 2011–2012 itself became a victim of the Slovenian government's restructuring of its budget due to the ongoing financial crisis in Slovenia as it is planned to be reduced by 25% (MFA, 2011e: 2). Moreover, the 2010 report on Slovenia's development cooperation was conspicuously silent on furthering the development cooperation with Moldova (ibid., 2011k). As the government plans further budget cuts in the future, it is unrealistic to expect that any major shift in the Slovenian bilateral ODA policy would take place in the given circumstances and in the immediate future. Nevertheless, we can conclude that according to the available data and in spite of the economic difficulties in recent years, a slight diversification of the direction of the Slovenian bilateral ODA has taken place after all.

In this respect, it is worth adding that Slovenia's bilateral ODA is not implemented only by various Ministries and Government Services, but also by six different institutions that have been founded or co-founded by the Slovenian Government. These are the Centre for European Perspective (CEP), the Centre of Excellence in Finance (CEF), the ITF, the 'Together' Foundation – the Regional Centre for the Psycho-social Well-being of Children, the Centre for International Cooperation and Development, and the Centre for eGovernance Development (CeGD). Each of these institutions has been created to cover the day-to-day implementation of particular areas where Slovenia has identified its partners' development needs (e.g. mine clearance) or its own strengths as a donor (such as good governance, experiences with the EU, and human rights). Three of these institutions (the CEF, the ITF, and the CeGD) are cooperating with countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood, among others (CEF, 2011; CeGD, 2011; ITF, 2011a and 2011b).[13]

In addition, as mentioned above, NGOs are becoming involved in Slovenia's development cooperation with the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood. In the years 2008 and 2009, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with other Ministries and Government Services, has prepared public tenders for NGOs in the field of development cooperation in excess of 350,000 EUR. Within these public tenders, 22 projects were selected, covering Africa, the Western Balkans, and the Eastern Neighbourhood. This practice continued in 2010, when 60,000 EUR were earmarked for the activities of Slovenian NGOs in Eastern Europe (MFA, 2011b and 2011c).

Finally, in recent years, tenders have been published for the involvement of companies in the implementation of development assistance. The question whether such a large number of institutions involved in the implementation of development assistance in Slovenia might increase the risk of fragmentation and loss of focus would thus be well placed. Indeed, as Bučar (2011) argues, with respect to Slovenia's assistance to the region of the Western Balkans, for example, the actual implementation of development assistance shows results that are markedly different from the declared priorities; while Montenegro and Macedonia have been officially chosen for a closer – programmatic – development cooperation, most aid is actually being channelled to Croatia. If we compare these findings to Slovenia's development policy concerning the Eastern Neighbourhood (cf. the latest report on Slovenia's development assistance, MFA, 2011k), there is a striking resemblance: while on the political-declaratory level, Moldova is prioritized, most of the funds have gone to Georgia and Ukraine.

This short review shows that if we look at the region of the Eastern Neighbourhood as a whole, the concrete Slovenian policy implementation concerning the Eastern neighbours has been quite consistent at the declaratory level: Slovenia has officially begun to channel part of its assistance to the Eastern Neighbourhood, even if only after its own entry into the EU. However, the official discourse has not been consistent with the actual policy implementation, which becomes evident when we look at which countries in the Eastern Neighbourhood have received the most assistance from Slovenia. So far, there are no signs that the situation might change in the future, although the current economic crisis will surely influence the dynamic of that change.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that the Slovenian foreign policy focus has been rather traditional in most of the years since Slovenia gained its independence. Due to political-strategic and economic reasons, Slovenia's main preoccupation was and still is the Western Balkans. By the same token, Slovenia's development assistance has been largely offered to countries in that region too. However, in the past few years, Slovenia's foreign policy discourse and development assistance policy have seen some changes – more attention is paid to the development needs of the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood. The change has taken place due to a set of endogenous and exogenous factors, both ideational and material. As far as development assistance programmes are concerned, Slovenia's identity *per se* played a rather marginal role. Slovenia sees itself as a (democratic) European, Central European and Mediterranean state. Still, if we do not take into account EU and NATO membership, which for years has been in the core of the Slovenian foreign policy, most of its attention went to the region of the Western Balkans – to which Slovenia does not see itself as belonging, ever though it shares a lot of history with region, given that Slovenia had been part of Yugoslavia for more than seven decades.

The shift in Slovenia's development assistance policy, albeit a modest one, took place only after Slovenia accomplished EU membership in 2004. As an EU member, Slovenia was quick to embrace EU preferences in this regard. Consequently, it can be said that Europeanization played an important role in making Slovenia attentive to the development needs of other countries that share borders with the Union, in particular Ukraine and Moldova. On the other hand, solidarity does not seem to have played a major role; most of Slovenia's development assistance was project-driven. In other words, and reflecting the introduction to this book, although there have been some signs of solidarity towards the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood (particularly Moldova) in Slovenia's foreign policy discourse and policy implementation, this kind of solidarity is not connected to any kind of second order (Marcussen, 1999) or historical identity – it is, if anything, of much more recent origin.

In addition, our findings suggest that commercial interests did not play a role in identifying the recipients of Slovenia's development assistance; nor

can it be said that Slovenia's assistance was driven by actions or consideration of important third countries such as Russia. This should come as no surprise, since Slovenia was one of the constituent republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia until 1991. Yugoslavia defined itself as a 'non-bloc' country after its expulsion from the Cominform in 1948 and went on to become a co-founder of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961. Because of this, Slovenia, unlike some of the other new member states of the EU, did not come to see the Soviet Union as a (threatening) Other. On the other hand, the non-action by Ukraine (its non-ratification of the agreement on development policy) has played a role in Slovenia's 'choice' of Moldova for future closer development cooperation.

Furthermore, the role of wider international socialization through international institutions, notably within the OSCE, was an important factor that helped to articulate the interest of Slovenia in the Eastern Neighbourhood. And last but not least, one should also mention the domestic consensus; the Slovenian Parliament has continuously showed support not only for assisting the Western Balkans but also for the Eastern Neighbourhood.

In sum, Slovenia may not play a big role in assisting the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood – but it does play one. It has formulated its development assistance policies, which were influenced partly by the historical experience (the Western Balkans) and partly by the European Union's own development assistance programmes and initiatives once Slovenia had become a member. Finally, Slovenia is working on a concrete programme to assist in the development of perhaps the most vulnerable country in the Eastern Neighbourhood – Moldova. Even though Slovenia's focus on Moldova has so far not been as consistent as its gradual turning towards the Eastern Neighbourhood as a region in need of assistance, the development assistance to Moldova can also be seen as a symbolic gesture that exemplifies Slovenia's growing sense of identity as a responsible partner in the processes of European integration.

ENDNOTES

[1] It is worth recalling that the European Neighbourhood Policy has two dimensions – a Southern one and an Eastern one. The Southern Dimension was very much present during Slovenia's EU Presidency in the first half of 2008 (which also culminated in the inauguration of the European Mediterranean University in Slovenia in June 2008), but it has become less prominent after the 2008 elections, in which the centre-right Social Democratic Party of Slovenia lost to the centre-left Social Democrats.

[2] Hereinafter, the ODA will be considered as a bilateral assistance which includes all those forms of assistance that are directly given by the donor country to the recipient country (Mrak et al., 2007: 52).

[3] Currently, Slovenia's approach to the region of the Eastern Neighbourhood is limited to sectoral development policy stemming from the Resolution on International Development Cooperation (National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, 2008b).

[4] Slovenia declared independence on 25 June 1991, which means that the Elements were actually a document of one of the republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. They are, however, important because they delineated the basic orientations followed by Slovenia's foreign policy until the adoption of the Declaration on Foreign Policy of the Republic of Slovenia by the Slovenian Parliament in 1999.

[5] The Pact was replaced in 2008 by the Regional Cooperation Council, which has 46 members – countries, organizations, and international financial institutions (www.stabilitypact.org and www.rcc.int).

[6] Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, *'Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*', COM(2003) 104 final of 11 March 2003. This document is not to be confused with the Wider Europe Initiative launched by Finland in 2009.

[7] The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was elaborated by the Commission in the Communication '*European Neighbourhood Policy Strategy Paper'*, COM(2004) 373 final of 12 May 2004. It targeted the Eastern as well as the Mediterranean neighbours of Europe and recommended the preparation of an Action Plan between the EU and each of the neighbouring countries. These Action Plans would be concerned with defining priorities for action and the ways of implementing them.

[8] Slovenia had been a donor before becoming an EU member (it helped, for example, Bosnia and Herzegovina – cf. Mavko, 2006), but the consolidation of its development policy began only after it had started accession negotiations.

[9] It therefore appears that Slovenia is differentiating between two dimensions of the Eastern Neighbourhood at least when it comes to development policy, since Ukraine and Moldova are repeatedly mentioned in the discourse, but not, for example, Georgia, Armenia or Azerbaijan.

[10] For aggregate data on exports and imports see 'Some Important Statistics on Slovenia', Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, p. 23, www.stat.si/doc/pub/PSP/00-PS-912-1104.pdf.

[11] Reports on Slovenia's development cooperation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, 2011d, 2011e, 2011f, 2011g, 2011h, 2011i, and 2011k) do not mention Slovenia's role in the EU or other multilateral programmes in the region apart from the participation of two Slovenian election observers within an OSCE project in 2009. This may be attributed to the fact that Slovenia, as a new donor, still gives the majority of its development assistance (62% of all ODA or 27.49 million EUR in 2010) in the form of multilateral ODA, most of which (78% of all Slovenian multilateral ODA) goes to the EU development programmes.

[12] The non-ratification of the agreement is the main reason why Ukraine was dropped (interview with an official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 2011).

[13] Examples of such cooperation include the Regional Mine Victims Rehabilitation Programme in Azerbaijan, the setting up of the mechanical demining capacity in Armenia and the General Mine Action Assessment in Georgia (ITF, 2011c and 2011d); the ICT Summit to discuss international and national trends and challenges facing the ICT industry (Centre for eGovernance Development, 2011); and the Project Capacity Building on Public Accounting in Moldova (Centre for Excellence in Finance, 2011b).

Bulgarian Foreign Policy in the Neighbourhood on the Brink of the 21st Century: Between Identity and Solidarity

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Modern Bulgaria is situated in Southeastern Europe, in the Balkan Peninsula – a busy crossroads of ancient cultures. For centuries, the roads passing through the territory of the country have been connecting Europe with Asia and Africa. Bulgaria is one of the oldest European countries, with a history that goes back 20 centuries, and it was officially recognised by the Byzantian Empire in 681 A.D. During the 10th century it was the strongest country in the region, reaching its biggest territorial expansion with an outlet of three seas – the Black, the White, and the Adriatic Sea. Between 1393 and 1878 it was part of the Ottoman Empire. After the Russian-Turkish war of liberation, Bulgaria restored its independence in 1879 and became the biggest country on the Balkan Peninsula. Its independence was confirmed by the Berlin Congress of 1878, but then the country was divided into several parts. Two of them – Macedonia and Edirne Thrace – remained in the hands of the Ottoman Empire, while Serbia, Greece and Romania had a hold on the Bulgarian territories and population. Nearly half of the Bulgarian nation used to live under alien domination, and thus Bulgarians recognised their endeavor to realise their national union as something natural. It is precisely this separation that formed the country's national doctrine and determined Bulgaria's foreign policy at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.

The Russian-Turkish wars and the wars Bulgaria has led for its union during the 19th and 20th century led to the detachment of several Bulgarian communities, which became a part of the so-called 'near abroad' of today – Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, and Greece. Thereafter an autonomous principality under the ultimate suzerainty of Istanbul declared its full independence as a monarchy in 1908. The endeavor

towards achieving a full national union of the Bulgarian people caused the country's governments to side with Germany during WW I and WW II. After losing the two World Wars as a German ally, Bulgaria saw a communist takeover in September 1944, and until the end of 1989, it remained part of the Soviet satellite system of states, and it was also a republic since 1946. The People's Republic ended in 1989 with the collapse of the USSR. In 1990 Bulgaria held its first free election since 1931. The election was won by a moderate faction of the Communist Party.

Today Bulgaria is working towards creating a prosperous free-market economy and stabilising its newly found democracy. In Bulgaria, however, socialism is not as negatively viewed as it is in Poland, Hungary or the Czech Republic. The reason behind this is that Russia is traditionally given a large amount of credit and trust as it is seen as the liberator of the country from Ottoman slavery. What is more, it is considered that during the time of socialism the backward agrarian country that Bulgaria had been at the end of WWII was being industrialised and educated. To this we could add the fact that in Bulgaria there has never been a deployment of Soviet troops which the people would regard as an occupying force.

Since 1989, Bulgaria has held multi-party elections and privatised its economy. However, the economy has faced tremendous difficulties due to corruption. Following several years of vacillation in reforms after 1989, Bulgaria has been determinedly reforming since 1997 in the direction of market economy and democracy. Bulgaria set the goal of achieving membership in the EU and NATO as one of the main priorities of its international policy. A NATO member since 2004, the Republic of Bulgaria became a member of the European Union on 1 January 2007. The full integration of the country into those two structures, which made the country get behind the fence of the EU, gave the country grounds for regaining its political positions and becoming a factor in the development of the EU policies towards the Black Sea Region and the Eastern Partnership. The motives of Bulgaria in setting the Black Sea Region as one of its priorities are primarily historical. The country made attempts to restore its strategic location and importance by defining itself as a factor for the development of the foreign affairs and international trade in the region. This paper aims to find an explanation for the priorities, interests and outcomes of the Bulgarian foreign policy in the region.

THE MAIN PRINCIPLES OF THE FOREIGN POLICY

Being a small country, Bulgaria could hardly develop and implement an independent economic policy, an independent trade policy and an independent foreign policy. Historically, the country has always relied on allies. As a full EU member, Bulgaria still wanders between its desire to express its individuality and independence in defining its foreign policy decisions and being an equal EU and NATO partner. Bulgaria is making attempts to maintain its strategic location and importance by defining itself as a factor for the development of the foreign and trade affairs in the Balkans. The main objective of this position is to make the country a leader in the development of these affairs and make crucial contributions to the development of the EU policies regarding the Western and Eastern Balkans.

With Bulgaria's EU accession on January 1, 2007, the strategic foreign policy priority of the agenda of a chain of Bulgarian governments has been realised. After Bulgaria's EU accession, what is now on the agenda is Bulgaria's full and successful integration into the mechanisms for multilateral coordination and decision making of the Union, as well as a clear laying down of the country's position on the problems under discussion. In the foregoing tasks, Bulgaria concentrates on actively participating in implementing the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). As a NATO member, Bulgaria works toward its adequate and effective participation in the process of defining the Alliance's policy and decisions as well as toward a successful integration of its national interests in this process. Therefore, Bulgaria continues to assert the Alliance's 'open door' policy. According to Nikolay Mladenov, a Bulgarian foreign minister (in office from 2009 until the present), Bulgaria holds to its principled position of pushing for a more active engagement with the security problems in the Black Sea region on the part of NATO and the EU, as well as for making the existing security initiatives in the region more specific and filling them with content (Mladenov, 2010). One of its main foreign policy priorities is defending human rights and the main human freedoms and abiding by the common international standards in this matter. Our country supports the view that human rights are universal, inseparable, interdependent and interconnected. In such a context, Bulgaria in principle supports the reforming of the existing system of international mechanisms and

organs of control and protection of human rights with the aim of raising their efficacy.

Bulgaria has an exclusively active position in its cooperation with the Balkans, the Black Sea region and the Caucasus. It provides comprehensive support on political and expert levels in order to deepen the cooperation of the countries of those regions with NATO and the EU. It is also a priority for the country to realise big infrastructural projects with regional and supra-regional significance in the areas of energetics, fuels, transportation and telecommunications.

Cooperation in the Western Balkans as Bulgaria's main foreign policy aim

As of January 1, 2007, the Balkans have a new political architecture. With the EU membership of Bulgaria and Romania, the EU represents one inseparable whole from the northern parts of Europe to the south of the Balkan Peninsula. At the same time, in the north, south, west and east, the Western Balkans border with the EU. Bulgaria is developing good neighborly relations with all the countries in the region of the South-Eastern Balkans. Due to its geographic location, it is included in all the regional initiatives and organisations, and five of the ten infrastructural trans-European corridors stretch through its territory. Bulgaria therefore supports the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of the Western Balkans countries as the main way to establish long-term stability and security, economic prosperity and good neighborly relations in the region.

The main priority of Boyko Borissov's government,[1] which presently runs the country, is focusing on the Bulgarian foreign policy on South-Eastern Europe.[2] Bulgarian regional policy remains defined in the context of the common European priorities, but according to the government's view this does not mean that Bulgaria cannot define its own priorities so that they would be realised bilaterally. According to Bulgaria, the process of integrating the Western Balkans into the EU should be realised on the basis of the Thessaloniki Agenda. It is necessary to seek a mechanism for the realisation of the aims, including the aims of the significant regional infrastructural projects,[3] which are a key element for the region's stability and prosperity.[4] The Thessaloniki Agenda mainly recommends for the Western Balkans countries to

make progress in the areas of education, social development and culture as a way of affirming tolerance and the forming of contemporary democratic societies. This should be done through, among other things, initiatives for an objective reconsideration of Bulgarian history text-books. The agenda expresses the view that the Western Balkans have a vocation to join the EU as a whole. Bulgaria has experimented with the accession process, but a country can accede to the EU only when a certain amount of conditions and requirements are met. According to Bulgarian politicians, not all of the Western Balkans countries stand on the same level when it comes to fulfilling these conditions (Mladenov, 2010). As a matter of fact, the Western Balkans countries find themselves at different stages of the European accession process. However, the Bulgarian government is ready to help these countries on their way to the EU. It provided a significant cooperation for the liberalisation of the EU's visa regimes and supports the countries' efforts to gain NATO membership.

As a Balkan EU and NATO member state, and one that immediately borders with the Western Balkans at that, Bulgaria still bears the peculiar responsibility of guaranteeing (with Greece) the EU application countries' compliance with contemporary Euro-standards for good neighboring relations, as well as putting the bilateral relations between Bulgaria and the Republic of Macedonia on a sound and lasting footing. The main Bulgarian attitudes toward and views on the series of questions related to Bulgaria's policy toward Macedonia – as well as the related aspects of Bulgarian relations with third countries, especially Greece, Albania, Kosovo and Serbia – are formed in different historical moments and are the products of different historical realities. For this reason, they are internally contradictory and hence they impede every eventual attempt at a continuous and pro-active policy. What is more, these attitudes and views in no way reflect the newest realities after January 1, 2007, when Bulgaria, in addition to being a NATO member, became a part of the EU, while Macedonia still did not join the EU.

The Bulgarian-Macedonian relations continue to suffer because of history's layers. Bulgaria and its people continue to consider Macedonia as an inseparable part of the historical Bulgarian nation and see its EU integration as an opportunity for going beyond the division between the two countries. On the other hand, in Macedonian society one can still observe the still living stereotypes from the times of Tito's Yugoslavia. At the same time, though,

the recognition of Macedonia with its constitutional name on the part of Bulgaria contributed a lot to Macedonia's positioning in the international community while the debate about Macedonia's name raged on.

Meanwhile, Bulgaria's membership in the European Union positively affects the bilateral trade and business between the two neighboring countries. The business partnership provides many opportunities and easier access to the EU market for Macedonian goods, and the requirements and standards are rising. The cooperation opportunities are biggest in the domains of trade, industry and services, but smaller in the areas of construction and agriculture.

BULGARIA'S RELATIONS WITH THE EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

Bulgaria insists on maintaining friendly and cooperative relations with Russia, Ukraine and the other countries[5] of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)[6] while the main task is to achieve a mutually advantageous understanding between the countries on questions of economic cooperation and the realisation of several infrastructural projects with significance for the entire continent. The priority of Bulgaria is the relations with Ukraine and Moldova. The latter two countries have certain historical connections with Bulgaria as they were involved in the liberation movement and the mass migration of Bulgarian communities during the 19th century, which were the result of the Russian-Turkish wars.

The development and deepening of friendly relations and partner relations with Moldova occupies an important place among Bulgaria's foreign policy priorities. Between the two countries, there are no problems of a political or other character. There is a fruitful cooperation between them both in the bilateral relations and in the frames of the international organisations of which they are members. The cooperation in the area of European and Euro-Atlantic integration is a key element in the relations between the two countries. As an EU member, Bulgaria contributes to the development of the EU's relations with Moldova in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the negotiations between Moldova and the EU on an Association Agreement that started on 12 January 2010. Bulgaria supports the reforms and the democratic government in Moldova and also the pro-European orientation of the

country. Also, Moldova is of priority for Bulgaria within the frames of the international cooperation for development.

Ukraine is one of the main trade partners of Bulgaria. This is mostly motivated by historical reasons. On the territory of Ukraine, more than 200 years ago, a Bulgarian diaspora has formed, and it represents the historically biggest Bulgarian community outside of Bulgaria's territory. It is thus a reason for expanding the cooperation in the economic domain between the two countries. During the last years, one can clearly notice the countries' tendency to increase the mutual trade and Bulgarian exports to Ukraine. A number of ministries are working toward preserving and developing the national uniqueness and culture of the ethnic Bulgarians who are living on Ukraine's territory. The Ukrainian legislation creates certain conditions for preserving their national self-consciousness. Since 1990, in Bulgarian universities and other schooling institutions, Ukrainian youth of Bulgarian descent are being educated, mostly in the disciplines of Bulgarian language, literature and history. The Bulgarian language and literature are also being taught in a number of Ukrainian universities. Through its foreign policy mechanisms Bulgaria provides active support to the efforts of Bulgarian communities abroad to save and develop their national identity, culture and spiritual values. But the main political goal in this area is to create the necessary conditions for Bulgarian citizens to use the legal rights provided by their own country abroad in order to work and study or travel there under conditions of effective protection.

FROM THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION TO THE BLACK SEA SYNERGY

For Bulgaria the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) is an opportunity to affirm its leadership role in the Black Sea region. The entire eastern border of the country is right next to the Black Sea. Although the macro-economic situation in the region is quite dynamic, and the structures and tendencies of the countries' economies are very different, there are some common tendencies: a high and sustainable economic development in most of the BSEC countries, which is supported by the sustainable development of the internal demand; a sustainable growth of foreign investments; a worsening of external trade balances in some countries in relation to decreases in competitiveness or significant influxes of direct investments; non-sustainable price levels and high inflation in most of the countries, especially during the last year, in relation to the external shocks (petrol prices and foods) and the internal lack of balance; and the relatively good fiscal positions of most of the countries, with balanced budgets or even fiscal surpluses. This creates conditions and incentives for more active investments on the part of the states, including investments into larger trans-border projects. This fact is defined as a leading reason for the growth in competition, for the increase of investments in the region, for the funding development projects there and especially for projects directed at transition countries and the so-called newly arising markets, including projects for regional cooperation. The decrease of regional disproportions and the increase of mutual trade and investment help not only with the economic growth, but also with the overwhelming regional conflicts and other problems of this sort. All these tendencies reveal new opportunities for regional economic cooperation in which Bulgaria would have a leading role.

The Black Sea region has often been defined as a 'bridge' to other regions – to the Danube in the west, and to the Caspian pool and Central Asia in the east. In view of the multiple challenges common to all these regions, Bulgaria supports the establishing of an intense dialogue on questions such as those of environment, transportation and energy.

The Organisation of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) is an international regional economic organisation of the Black Sea region countries. It was initiated in 1992 by Turkey, and in 1999 it received the status of a full-scale international organisation. Presently its member states are Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine. Among the monitoring countries in the BSEC are seven EU member states,[7] and also the USA, Egypt, Tunisia, etc.[8] The partner organisations include the European Commission and the Energy Charter. The BSEC has a series of specialised organs, such as the Parliamentary Assembly of the BSEC, the Black Sea Bank for Trade and Development, the International Center for Black Sea Studies and the BSEC Business Council. The BSEC supports and coordinates the regional cooperation in a wide spectrum of areas – trade, banking, communications, energies, transportation, agriculture, health care, environment, and the fight against organised criminality. In June 2007, a declaration outlining the vision of the BSEC's future

development was signed. The European Commission received an observer status, which was a testimony to the gradual establishment of the dialogue between the two organisations.

For Bulgaria, the future development of the BSEC is defined by several main elements – the reform of the organisation with the aim of greater efficacy; the realisation of some specific projects with regional significance; a strengthening of the BSEC-EU relations; and the Black Sea region's more active interaction with other regions – the Danube, Central Asia and the Caspian pool.[9]

In view of the diplomatic circumstances in the Black Sea region, the BSEC is making efforts towards the reform and adaptation of the region. Along with the internal reform and the simplification of decision making procedures, an important element in this matter is the transition to program-oriented budgeting and the whole vision of transforming the BSEC into an organisation which does not simply serve as a forum for exchanging ideas on an inter-state level, but strives to initiate and realise specific projects. Two similar projects are already in the early phases of their realisation – the building of a highway ring-road around the Black Sea and the development of transport ties between harbor cities.

For Bulgaria, the relations between the BSEC – the most representative regional organisation in the Black Sea – and the EU – an actor with an ever larger role and a significant number of policies in the region – will be of decisive significance in the years to come. In the recently voted upon communication strategy of the European Commission for the initiative Black Sea Interaction,[10] the BSEC was defined as a main partner. It is expected that the details of the two organisations' cooperation will be negotiated – a process in which Bulgaria is ready to actively participate in coordination with the other two EU and BSEC member states – Greece and Romania. 19 years after establishing the first contacts between themselves, the BSEC and the EU are on their way to having a truly functioning dialogue and defining joint areas of cooperation.

As an active participant in the Black Sea Bank for Trade and Development (BSBTD) – a regional institution that provides financial cooperation in order to support the cooperation between the BSEC member-states – Bulgaria could become an initiator of a packet of reforms which would radically change the role and the place of the bank in the region. It is an illusion to think that a small regional institution could become a key factor in the regional cooperation, but it could become a unique center for preparation and funding of strategic projects which would stimulate the Black Sea region's development, which could change the role of Bulgaria in the region.

Romania and Bulgaria have actively participated in the development of an EU initiative in the Black Sea, especially in 2007 when the so-called Black Sea Synergy was launched. Bulgaria could become a strategic centre for discussions of energetic issues through the Black Sea Synergy initiative. Sofia is interested in taking part in projects like the Nabucco project and the Southern Flow project because they will bring in additional income, and the country will be better presented on the European Energy Map because of them. The position of Bulgaria in this matter is that energetic stability can be achieved through modernisation and the building of a new energy infrastructure. Furthermore, the Black Sea Synergy is not a proposal for a separate Black Sea strategy but it is rather an initiative for regional cooperation that aims to focus political interest on the regional level and enhance the ongoing process of cooperation. It has been developed as a flexible framework which is intended to make the policy itself a lot more coherent.

The EU initiative marks the first time since the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU that the EU funds became accessible to the Black Sea coast. The EU Regional Programmes in these two countries will further contribute to improving their competitiveness in the Black Sea region.

THE CHALLENGES OF BULGARIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN THE EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

One of the key interests of Bulgaria's involvement in the Eastern neighbourhood is in the area of energetic security and the diversification of oil and gas suppliers. Although they are economic, these problems are closely related to Bulgaria's foreign policy. Bulgaria is a party to the gas-main projects 'South Stream'[11] and 'Nabucco'[12], in which the EU is interested. The agenda and the project for the Burgas-Alexandroupoli[13] petrol pipeline are still not abandoned either. So with regard to Bulgaria's energetic security one of the future

challenges will undoubtedly be uniting the efforts of diplomats and economists to guarantee Bulgaria's energetic future.

The subject of defining a new policy on the Eastern Partnership became topical after the two great enlargements of the EU – the first enlargement by 10 members and the second one with two new members – Bulgaria and Romania. The European Commission's policy of Eastern partnership, launched in 2009 at the EU Prague summit, is a major change in the EU's relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. This ambitious partnership plans for a significant increase in the level of political engagement, including the perspective for a new generation of Association Agreements, all-encompassing integration in the EU economy, easier travelling through the EU for the citizens of the six partner countries provided that the security conditions are fulfilled, better arrangements of energetic security for the benefit of all the interested parties and increased financial help. The EU proposes a more intense operational support for reforms through the new program of comprehensive institution building and a new multilateral dimension which will bring the partners closer with a view of overcoming common challenges. The Partnership includes new measures for supporting the social and economic development of the six beneficiary countries, as well as five leading initiatives which will be a very concrete proof of the EU support.

During the period January – October 2011, according to data of the National Statistics Institute, the exports from Bulgaria to third countries have grown by 45.5% and exceed 6.1 billion Leva. The main trade partners of Bulgaria are Turkey, Serbia, Russia, Macedonia, China, and the USA, which account for 51.6% of the Bulgarian exports to third countries.

In comparison, Bulgaria's imports from third countries for the first five months of 2011 have grown by 27.8% from the figure for the previous year and amount to 7.3 billion Leva (CIF prices). The exports of Bulgaria to the EU have grown by more than 50% and amount to 7.5 billion Leva. The main trade partners of Bulgaria are Germany, Romania, Italy, Greece and Belgium, which account for 67% of the exports to the EU member-states.

The trade of Bulgaria with third countries and the EU in general in the period January–May 2011 amounts to 15.7 billion Leva. The increase of trade exchange between Bulgaria and the neighboring Balkan countries is a reason for intensifying the economic cooperation and the growth of the country's role in the development of the region.

THE PLACE AND ROLE OF BULGARIA IN THE EU FOREIGN POLICY – BETWEEN IDENTITY AND SOLIDARITY

Bulgaria has made a serious contribution to defining the eastern policy of the EU. Bulgaria has expressed interest in defining its views in regard to and contributing to the common European policy of being a good neighbor and partner toward the Union's neighboring countries. This policy is mainly supported by the Bulgarian socialists, and it is a consequence of the policy of the former government,[14] which also placed an emphasis on the policy of regional cooperation and good neighborly relations. In our region this government, under the leadership of Sergey Stanishev, the leader of the Bulgarian Socialist Party, put efforts into turning this policy into a more clearly defined European policy.

Bulgaria has always insisted on the open character and flexibility of its policies and initiative in Eastern Europe. It is important to keep in mind that the Black Sea region countries are very diverse and that they have to be given the opportunity to participate in separate initiatives within the frames of the Black Sea Synergy and the Eastern Partnership according to their interests. In this way, these two initiatives seek to bring results and be inclusive.

Originally, there was a certain suspicion in Bulgaria regarding the initiative of the Eastern Partnership as it was considered as a new sanitary cordon between the EU and Russia. But gradually, after seeing the open character of the Black Sea Synergy and the Eastern Partnership, Bulgaria started to view it differently, and the attitude of Russia towards it started to change as well (Stanishev, 2009). Moreover, a part of Bulgarian society continues to be attached to Russia, which it sees as Bulgaria's historical liberator, and also to the Russian culture, and it consequently looks at the attempts to limit Russia's influence in the region with suspicion.

At the same time, Bulgaria sees the necessity for more coordination between the two initiatives. There should be a clear delimitation – on the side of the European institutions – regarding the ambitions of both policies and the opportunities for the realisation of both projects.

The Left in Bulgaria, together with the Party of European Socialists, proposed the initiative for the creation of the Black Sea Synergy.[15] According to the idea behind the Black Sea Synergy, by coordinating the separate policies and by creating a synergy between them, the Eastern policy of the EU should

gain the same visibility and thickness as the policy of the Northern dimension and the relations of the EU with the Mediterranean countries.[16]

Bulgaria has been active in relation to these subjects already from the beginning of its EU membership. Such initiatives, which set the frame of the EU in its separate priorities, are forthcoming in the future as well. The aim is to bring more European themes and policies to the debate in Bulgaria.

Bulgaria supported the EU's idea to create a Parliamentary Assembly of representatives from the EP and representatives from the Eastern Partnership, and such an assembly was started in 2011. Four commissions were created within the assembly – a commission on political issues, human rights and democracy; a commission on economic integration and bringing the EU policies closer to each other; a commission on energetic security and a commission on social issues, culture, education and civil society. The foreign minister Stanishev also proposed to create a commission focusing on security (Stanishev, 2009).

From a Bulgarian point of view, the big lesson of integration is taught by Europe in the Balkans. This is why Bulgaria should help the Eastern Partnership countries by providing them with its own experience, and the experience from the Western Balkans could be used for an EU strategy in the South Caucasus (Kirilov, 2010).

The European Neighbourhood Policy was developed with the aim to defy the appearance of new dividing lines between the expanded EU and its neighbors. Bulgaria thus actively supports the opportunity for the ENP countries to participate in various EU activities through a more narrow cooperation in the areas of politics, security, economy and culture.

CONCLUSION

The development of relations with the neighboring countries is a main foreign policy priority of Bulgaria, and Bulgaria is an important factor of stability in the region. At the same time, Bulgaria continues to vacillate between its desire to conduct an individual foreign policy based on its own identity and its desire to fulfill its obligations as a full-scale participant in the political initiatives of the EU and NATO.

The country's main problem is that to this day there is no serious debate on Bulgaria's foreign policy priorities. Our analysis of the Bulgarian foreign policy discourse suggests that the Bulgarian identity played a significant role in this respect. According to the Bulgarian foreign policy priorities, Bulgaria's attention is focused on two regions where it wants to play an important role: the Black Sea region and the Western Balkans. This is due to historical reasons as throughout history, the territory of Bulgaria, the Bulgarian state and the Bulgarian nation exceeded the borders of today's Bulgaria by far.

On the other hand, it does not seem likely that solidarity could play a significant role in Bulgaria's relations with the Eastern neighbors. Although Bulgaria shows some solidarity towards Macedonia, Moldova and Ukraine, this kind of solidarity also has its historical roots in Bulgaria's identity. The Bulgarian attitude towards Turkey is similarly influenced by the past as in most cases it is influenced by the 500 year domination of the Ottoman Empire over the Bulgarians and the Bulgarian nation.

What should be remarked upon, however, is Bulgaria's internal consensus on the integration of the Western Balkans. Nevertheless, a certain part of the Bulgarian society continues to be historically bonded with Russia in terms of the policy towards the Black Sea Cooperation and the Eastern Partnership. This part considers Russia to be Bulgaria's liberator and has respect for its culture; it is suspicious of the attempts to limiting the Russian influence in the region. Meanwhile another part of the society is apprehensive about the restoration of Russia's influence in the region through the countries of the Eastern Partnership.

The accession of Bulgaria to the EU did not contribute to a whole reformulation of its foreign policy, at least for the time being. Despite this, the country is making attempts to become a leader and fully contribute to the development and implementation of the EU policies towards the Western Balkans and the EU Eastern policies alike. The question remains to what extent Bulgarian foreign policy will compete or cooperate with the other EU member states in the process of achieving the common priorities of the EU's external relations and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

ENDNOTES

[1] Borissov was Prime Minister since July 2009; he is a member of Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria – abbreviated as GERB – a Bulgarian centre-right political party established on March 13, 2006 and also a member of the European People's Party.
[2] The Western Balkans will be a major priority for Bulgaria's foreign policy. See: www.euinside.eu/en/news/balkans-will-be-the-main-priority-of-bulagria.
[3] Such as the Nabucco pipeline (also referred to as the Turkey–Austria gas pipeline), the South Stream pipeline or the Burgas–Alexandroupoli pipeline.
[4] For more information on this, see: www.mfa.bg/en/pages/view/24.
[5] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
[6] The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is a regional organisation whose participating countries are 12 of the 15 former Soviet Republics. It was formed during the breakup of the Soviet Union.
[7] Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Slovakia.
[8] The other monitoring countries are Belarus, Croatia and Israel.
[9] For more on this see: www.ips.bg/5.doc.
[10] 'ЕС стартира (2008) "Черноморска синергия"' ['EU Starts Black Sea Synergy']. Online: news.ibox.bg/news/id_1944487424. Published: February 14, 2008.
[11] South Stream is a proposed gas pipeline that is intended to transport Russian natural gas to the Black Sea, to Bulgaria and further to Greece, Italy and Austria. The project is seen as a rival to the planned Nabucco pipeline.
[12] The Nabucco pipeline (also referred to as the Turkey–Austria gas pipeline) is a proposed natural gas pipeline going from Erzurum in Turkey to Baumgarten an der March in Austria, and it is intended to diversify the natural gas suppliers and delivery routes for Europe. This pipeline project attempts to lessen the European dependence on Russian energy.
[13] The Burgas–Alexandroupoli pipeline is an oil pipeline project for the transportation of Russian and Caspian oil from the Bulgarian Black Sea port of Burgas to the Greek Aegean port of Alexandroupoli. It would be an alternative route for Russian oil that would bypass the Bosporus and the Dardanelles. However, in June 2010 it was announced that Bulgaria most likely will not proceed with the project due to environmental and supply concerns.
[14] Formed on August 15 2005 by Sergey Stanishev, the Chairman of the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), a three party grand coalition containing the party of the outgoing Prime Minister Simeon Sax-Cobourg-Gotha and the Movement for Rights and Freedoms, a Turkish minority party, led the government at this time.
[15] The Black Sea Synergy involves Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine and was aimed at developing concrete initiatives in the areas of transport, energy, environment, fishery, migration and organised crime.
[16] See Black Sea Synergy at: eeas.europa.eu/blacksea/index_en.htm

Conclusion

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It may appear challenging to investigate the role of solidarity in foreign policy at a time of economic crisis. While the concept of solidarity is at the heart of the functioning of the Eurozone and was integrated in the Lisbon treaty (title VII, art. 188R) to ensure mutual assistance in the case of a common threat, the reflection developed in this book focuses on the expression of solidarity towards the geographically and historically close countries situated in the EU's Eastern neighbourhood. As the contributions have shown, solidarity takes various shapes: the measures range from political support to assistance policy. Political support and political declarations were particularly used in the case of soft revolutions, like the Rose Revolution in Georgia or the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. Assistance policies refer more to a long-term perspective as they include financial and material help to foster democratisation and economic transformation in the neighbour countries.

The analyses of the various cases indicate very different motivations for the respective expressions of solidarity (or lack thereof) towards the neighbours. If one considers that solidarity is the expression of a foreign policy identity, these differences are best explained by the clear definition of a political *self* – focusing on the promotion of human rights, democracy, market economy, and, in general, EU and NATO norms and values – and the presence or lack of historical links with the neighbours (the historical *self*). In most cases, the strong support for a country or some societal groups in the given country is motivated by the combination of both the political *self* and the historical *self*. This is, for example, the case with the Polish policy towards the Eastern neighbourhood and Ukraine in particular, but it is also the case in the Lithuanian policy towards Belarus or the Romanian policy towards Moldova. However, the contributing country's lack of historical links with the recipient country or region does not hinder the contributing country's actions taken on the basis of its political *self*, which allows for the ex-

pression of solidarity with a country or societal groups asking for similar norms and values. This is the case with the Czech support for democracy in Belarus and the actions of the Baltic States towards the countries of the South Caucasus and Ukraine, but also with the Slovak policy towards Ukraine, and the Slovenian and Bulgarian interests in supporting reforms in Moldova. In the end, what particularly matters is the ability of countries which have gone through a process of dramatic political and economic changes to present and adapt their own experience to the context of other post-communist countries.

One may mention the following outcomes from the contributions to this edited volume: First and foremost, the promotion of the experience of democratic and economic transition, combined with the support for further EU and NATO enlargements, represents the core priority of the ECE policies in the Eastern neighbourhood. Contrary to what one would expect, the political *self* of the ECE foreign policy towards the Eastern neighbourhood is generally not formulated in terms of a rejection of Russia as a specific *other*, but it is rather formulated against a part of a common historical *self*, the Soviet or communist past, and authoritarian rules. The main idea in defining a policy of solidarity towards the Eastern neighbourhood is that integration into Western organisations is seen as an efficient way to modernise and integrate norms and rules, related to democracy and the rule of law, and thus to take distance from the Soviet or communist past, and authoritarian regimes in general. This is the reason why promoting the experiences of transition and EU enlargement often represents one of the foreign policy priorities of the ECE countries. Assistance policy here clearly represents a way to materialise the promotion of EU norms and values, and to integrate the Eastern neighbours into a 'modern' community working with EU (and other international) rules. Furthermore, by following the logic of appropriateness through 'Europeanising' their foreign policies, the ECE countries want to show that they have become 'true Europeans' despite their 'liminal' position in the EU (Mälksoo, 2009; Kesa, this book). They not only want to share this experience with other countries by expressing solidarity towards them, may it be in periods of change (the Rose and Orange Revolutions) or in the longer run (assistance, support of EU enlargement) (logic of appropriateness), but they also want to reduce the socio-economic disparities at their own (and the EU's) Eastern borders (logic of consequentialism).

Second, the longer past still plays a role in the way foreign policy identities are defined in general and how priorities are drawn towards the East-

ern neighbourhood more specifically. Solidarity is often formulated towards countries or regions which used to belong to the same political space or used to share common rules. This is the case with Poland's solidarity towards Ukraine, Lithuania's solidarity towards Belarus, or Romania's solidarity towards Moldova. This kind of solidarity largely embraces the logic of appropriateness. Thus the presence (or lack thereof) of a longer past as a sovereign state seems to be an important factor for the formulation of a consensual foreign policy identity and a policy of solidarity. Countries which were highly dependent on foreign influences in their longer past started to define their role in the East only recently; that is, they did so once they were part of the EU and correspondingly started to act according to the logic of consequentialism (e.g. Slovakia, Bulgaria).

Third, according to the logic of consequentialism, the ECE countries see a policy towards the Eastern neighbourhood as a way to build an imprint in EU policy, to switch from their position as 'policy takers' to the position of 'policy shapers'. All the contributions in this book highlight the fact that the examined ECE countries have chosen the Eastern neighbourhood (and/or the Western Balkans) as their priority region in order to find a 'niche' for themselves in EU foreign policy. The East and the post-communist countries in general thus represent a space where the ECE countries can 'make a difference'. In this way, their approach does not differ from that of the 'older' member states, as both groups of countries are more interested in some parts of the world than in others. The European Neighbourhood Policy and the subregional approaches like the Eastern Partnership, the Black Sea Synergy and the Danube Strategy are clearly seen as a way for the ECE countries to find their place in the European Union and on the international stage in general. Plus, for these countries, holding the presidency of the EU Council represents a way to formulate their national preferences and upload them at the EU level. While expressing solidarity opens the way for assistance and the promotion of national experiences of transition and accession to the EU (along the logic of appropriateness), it also allows the ECE countries to make their place in the EU, assist neighbour countries and develop ties with them on economic, trade and energy issues (logic of consequentialism).

Finally, this publication does not concentrate on collective action and non-governmental activities, but it is worth mentioning that the expression of solidarity is not limited to single EU member states and the nation-state. The

Visegrád Group (V4), which is mentioned in some of the contributions, exemplifies the strong common commitment of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia (and Hungary) towards the Eastern neighbourhood. Furthermore, and this should not be forgotten, EU presidencies and EU-related activities (e.g. the Eastern Partnership, the Black Sea Synergy) also represent a good occasion for non-governmental organisations to promote their own projects. Indeed, non-governmental activities frequently serve as additional expressions of solidarity which very often complement governmental policies and sometimes influence them, as the Czech case shows.

To summarise, the studies gathered here indicate that the ECE countries' identities and solidarities have been formulated and have evolved throughout the 1990s and 2000s, mainly under the process of EU accession. Although this is a generalisation, almost all the contributions (the ones by Made, Kesa, Szczepanik, Weiss, Najšlová, and Angelescu) indicate that a discourse on solidarity is present in the cases of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Romania, but it is present in these cases mainly for political reasons related to the defense of human rights, democracy, and the promotion of EU norms and as a way to take distance from the communist past and authoritarian regimes. The articles by Szczepanik (Poland), Kesa (Lithuania), and Angelescu (Romania) show that the ECE countries' solidarity towards specific countries of the Eastern neighbourhood is also motivated by historical reasons, and that it is followed by political declarations, assistance activities, and the will to influence EU policy. To contrast, Rácz, Šabič/Bunič, and Nachev show that Hungary, Slovenia and Bulgaria have no strong historical links with the Eastern neighbourhood (except for the Hungarian and the Bulgarian minorities in Ukraine) and thus no big ambition to influence the EU policy towards it. This is the reason why there is almost no discourse on solidarity towards the Eastern neighbourhood in these countries.

Finally, even if one considers in a constructivist perspective that the ECE countries' solidarity was formulated on the basis of a dual identity, one cannot totally exclude more rational reasons for their engagement in the Eastern neighbourhood. The role of economic ties and energy issues are mentioned in some of the contributions (those on Hungary and Bulgaria) as important factors that influence the East Central European interests in the region.

As one can see, the chapters of this edited book suggest various fields of investigation related to identity and solidarity in the foreign policy of the East Central European countries and sometimes they even discover entirely new fields of investigation. Despite the difficulty of applying the analytical framework suggested in the introduction, the departure from a constructivist agenda has generated interesting findings. One of them is that solidarity plays a role in foreign policy on the background of both existing political and historical identities. However, its expression does not always follow the idealistic path of foreign policy roles. As a matter of fact, more rationalist arguments have been pointed at in several of the chapters. These rationalist arguments mainly gather around two core ideas: defining a policy of solidarity towards Eastern Europe is a way to find its place in the EU and the international community; it is also a way to answer the questions of more economic and material interests.

As a further step for the research, it would certainly be interesting to look at the ECE foreign policy towards other countries or regions and to see in which situations the East Central European countries have expressed solidarity toward the recipient country through political support or assistance, and which logics were at work in these cases. What is the role of historical links with other previously communist countries, like the Western Balkans? Here, long-term historical relations remain particularly prominent. But what about regions with which the ECE countries share a common past only since the Soviet times? The question would apply to the policies defined towards specific countries, like Cuba or Thaïland, or other Asian and African countries, with which most ECE countries have no traditional links excepting those developed during the Soviet times. In this respect, the development policy defined towards these countries, especially after the ECE countries' EU accession, would be worth analysing in a comparative perspective.

On a different strand, the issue of solidarity would be worth exploring in regard to the relations of the ECE countries with the United States. In this case, it would be more about the ECE countries' political solidarity with the foreign policy actions envisioned by the United States and also NATO, which provides a way for the two sides to share the same ideology in their foreign policy. The analysis would then focus on the ECE countries' involvement

in the wars in the Western Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan, which was a way for them to show that they belong to the same 'imagined' community as the U.S. Enlarging the comparison to other countries and regions would therefore open up a very interesting and promising field for extensive comparative research which has so far been missing in the literature on East Central European foreign policies.

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