

Dynamics of Eastern Europeanisation and the Impact of “Membership Credibility” in EU Enlargement Rounds

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Abstract Research on EU enlargement-led Europeanisation has extensively focused on countries from Central Eastern Europe (CEE) and only recently enriched with studies dealing with specific issues and/or countries of the Western Balkans. Yet, a more comprehensive study across current and previous potential member-state countries is needed. This article assesses to what extent EU candidate countries from Eastern Europe have been able to bring their policies and institutions – both in formal and practical terms – in line with EU requirements. By tracing the progress of all countries from Eastern Europe (1998-2012) this work shows Europeanisation asymmetry among enlargement rounds. This work argues that “EU membership credibility” is an important factor in EU enlargement-led Europeanisation performance.

Keywords: Central Eastern Europe, Eastern Europeanisation, EU Enlargement, Membership Credibility, Western Balkans

Introduction

The enlargement of the European Union (EU) eastward was a historic decision to unify the continent. The 2004 accession of the Central Eastern European (CEE) countries was only the beginning of the overall eastward enlargement project. The project of unifying the continent proceeds by the accession of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007, the accession of Croatia in 2013 and the on-going preparation of the rest of

the other Western Balkan (WB) countries. Although the EU committed itself to further enlarge eastward, the approach toward CEEs and WBs was different. The EU launched an enlargement strategy for the countries of the WB, giving them the membership perspective, only in 2000, whereas the countries of CEE gained their perspective membership in 1993. The reason for this differentiation is attributed primarily to the different transitions experienced by the CEEs and WBs.¹ Today, the countries of CEE have already become EU member-states. Thus, the next step in fulfilling the overall 'project of unifying the continent' remain the enlargement of the Union towards the WB countries. What differences, if any, can we notice with regards to the degree and speed of Europeanisation among enlargement rounds? And, what are the factors that may influence the dynamics of Eastern Europeanisation outcome?

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Many concerns and doubts have been raised about the Europeanisation capacity of the Western Balkan countries. The scepticism becomes more pronounced as EU enlargement conditionality and its 'transformative power' has been put into question. Most of the academic contributions speak of the limited impact of the EU incentives into the WBs.² Others argue in favour of a strong EU leverage in the Balkan region as a result of different incentives, thus specific 'policy conditionality' matters more than 'membership conditionality'.³ Still, the question rests on how to produce generalised results and with what to compare whether the WB region has progressed, or not, in terms of Europeanisation. The few studies on the Europeanisation of the WB provide important insights on the differential EU enlargement impact on the specific (group of) countries and/or issues. Yet, they are insufficient for capturing the overall dynamics of the process in the region. The understanding of Europeanisation in the Western Balkans is lacking, especially when compared with that of the Western or Central Europe.⁴ Moreover, empirical studies on the CEE Europeanisation record, offers an ambivalent picture.⁵ Regardless of the growing literature on the Europeanisation of the potential member-states, comparisons among EU enlargement rounds are missing.⁶

To address these gaps in the literature and glean comparative insights on Eastern Europeanisation dynamics, this work reports and compares the qualitative data gained from European Commission reports on the progress of all Eastern European countries. By tracing the progress of all the potential member-states (1998-2012) this work

shows asymmetry among and across EU enlargement rounds in adopting and implementing the EU *acquis*. In this respect, 'membership credibility' is an important factor in Europeanisation performance among and across EU enlargement rounds if the group of countries in the same EU enlargement rounds is considered. The credibility of EU accession matters and have major implications for the dynamics of the EU enlargement-led Europeanisation.

Getting Europeanisation Right in Potential Member-States

The more rigorous use of the concept of Europeanisation is closely linked to European integration. Europeanisation refers to the domestic changes attributed to the European integration process in the case of the member-states and by analogy, to the EU enlargement process in the case of the potential member-state.⁷ Eastern Europeanisation research focused on the *impact of enlargement*, analysing the effects the process of EU enlargement brings in the potential member-states.⁸ It answers the question *how* and *to what extent* and in *what ways* EU enlargement has transformed the candidate states.⁹ There are two key characteristics of the EU impact on member-states that are comparable to those on potential member-states: First, the significant extent to which EU actors and institutions direct and enforce the adjustment process, even though instruments differ; and secondly, the comprehensive nature of adjustment to cover the entire *acquis communautaire*.¹⁰ Potential member-states are subject to adoption and implementation of EU policies the same degree as current member states. Although the process of Europeanisation in the potential member-states is similar to those in the member-states, the circumstances are different.¹¹ Given the candidacy status, the EU's influence on the applicants has the added dimensions of the membership conditionality and of the accession negotiations.¹² These circumstances give a distinctive characteristic to the Europeanisation of the potential member-states regarding first, the instruments used by the EU to influence and monitor the adjustment process and secondly, the asymmetrical relation process.¹³ Furthermore, the effects of Europeanisation in potential member-states although similar in nature with those in EU member-states are much broader and deeper in scope.¹⁴ The EU agenda for institutional and policy change in the candidate countries has been extensive. Candidate states must not only adopt and implement the *acquis communautaire*, they should also have stable democratic institutions, competitive

market economies, and respect human and ethnic rights.¹⁵

The overall process, where European integration has an impact on to-become a member-state country is referred to as “Eastern” style or “EU Enlargement-led” Europeanisation. Thus, in the case of the potential member-states we can speak of pre-Europeanisation. All adjustments and transformations are not only ‘anticipatory effects’ preparing for accession but at the same time they are ‘anticipated effects’ having long-term implications of the eventual EU membership.¹⁶ The distinct pre-accession pattern of Europeanisation is, in principle, a transitional phenomenon. EU conditionality will remain an external force as long as the candidate countries are not yet full EU members. Once the country acquires full membership rights, the Europeanisation substance and mechanisms are expected to progressively approximate those in the member-states.¹⁷

In this context, Europeanisation is nothing but member-state building. In very general terms, candidate countries had to become Europe-like. Or in more concrete way, they had to adopt and implement new legislation and institutions conform to EU standards prior to accession. The association process requires the fulfilment of political and economic criteria as well as compliance with the *acquis* requirements on specific domestic legislation and policies.

Measuring the Formal and Behavioural Aspects of Europeanisation

If consensus exists on what process the Europeanisation concept describes, it is questionable what its outcomes may be. This is primarily because EU enlargement has affected many *aspects* of the domestic political spheres being them rather institutional structure, policy-making processes and representative politics; whereas the *forms* of adaptation may be either communicative, formal or/and behavioural changes.¹⁸ Terms like compliance, implementation, transposition, adoption, approximation or adaptation have been used interchangeably when speaking about the outcomes of Europeanisation. Moreover, vast units of measuring them have been used, such as *transposition time* (rates of prompt transposition, delay in transposition), *occurrence of infringement procedures* (notifications, reasoned opinions, referrals and judgments of the European Court of Justice), or domestic *performance in adoption and implementation*.

Dynamics of Eastern Europeanisation and the Impact of “Membership Credibility” in EU Enlargement Rounds

Europeanisation outcome, being a complex concept, is very difficult to pin it down to only one concrete indicator. So, at best, it can be used to summarise the association among different observable components. Facing such an issue, one has to make choices and narrow the scope of investigation by analysing only certain aspects of the Europeanisation outcome. To argue for a more comprehensive Europeanisation outcome, this work follows Radaelli's suggestion for a more dynamic analysis, by considering not only policy change but also macro-institutional structures.¹⁹ Thus, this work considers that Europeanisation effects might take place not only on the formal level of adopting legislation but also on the behavioural level of implementation.²⁰ We code formal rule *adoption* and their practical *implementation*, separately. Then, both components (adoption and implementation) are reconnected using Boolean logic according to conjunctive 'and' model. In the Boolean 'and' logic, all components should be present, thus none of them does substitute the other.²¹ The conjunctive 'and' model, that is taking the minimum value of all the components, account not only for the formal aspects (adoption) but also the aspect of practical application (implementation) of the EU requirements. This is a balanced strategy for keeping the full representation of the concept and at the same time have clear and concrete indicators to measure it.

We use the European Commission progress reports to provide data for measuring both the adoption and implementation of the EU acquis conditionality in the candidate countries. In 1997, the European Commission gave its first opinion on CEE countries' application for membership. From then on, the European commission published annual regular reports assessing adoption and implementation progress by each of the candidate countries. They are in the form of strategy, composite and comprehensive papers. In 2002, the European Commission published its first annual report on the Stabilisation and Association process for the Western Balkan countries. From 2005 onwards, the key findings of the progress are published in the format of Memos. All these reports offer a very useful source of systematic and aggregate information on a yearly base.²² The qualitative data of the reports are comprehensive and unique. They evaluate the progress of each potential and candidate country with regard to not only the formal transposition of EU laws and policies (adoption) but also the aspect of their practical application (implementation).²³ The reports used distinct qualitative phrases to describe "progress" with regard to adoption and implemen-

tation of EU requirements.²⁴ The outcome corresponding to adoption and implementation in each of the European progress reports can be grouped into four main qualitative categories. We distinguish them according to the assessment scale of i) no progress; ii) little, few, limited or some progress; iii) progress; iv) and good or significant progress.

*Dorian
Jano*

TABLE 1 QUALITATIVE DATA ON ADOPTION, IMPLEMENTATION AND EUROPEANISATION OF THE POTENTIAL MEMBER-STATES (1998-2012)

Year	Country	Adoption	Implementation	Europeanization
1998	Bulgaria	Progress	No Progress	No Progress
	Cyprus	Progress	Progress	Progress
	Czech Rep.	Little progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Estonia	Good Progress	Progress	Progress
	Hungary	Good Progress	Good Progress	Good Progress
	Latvia	Good Progress	Progress	Progress
	Lithuania	Progress	Progress	Progress
	Malta	-	-	-
	Poland	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Romania	Progress	No Progress	No Progress
	Slovakia	Little Progress	No Progress	No Progress
Slovenia	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress	
1999	Bulgaria	Good Progress	Progress	Progress
	Cyprus	Little progress	No progress	No Progress
	Czech Rep.	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Estonia	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Hungary	Good Progress	Progress	Progress
	Latvia	Good Progress	Little progress	Little Progress
	Lithuania	Progress	Good progress	Progress
	Malta	No progress	No progress	No Progress
	Poland	Little progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Romania	Progress	No progress	No Progress
	Slovakia	Good progress	Little progress	Little Progress
Slovenia	Good progress	Little progress	Little Progress	
2000	Bulgaria	Good progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Cyprus	Progress	Progress	Progress
	Czech Rep.	Good progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Estonia	Progress	Progress	Progress
	Hungary	Good progress	Progress	Progress
	Latvia	progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Lithuania	Good progress	Progress	Progress
	Malta	Good progress	Progress	Progress
	Poland	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Romania	Progress	Progress	Progress
	Slovakia	Good progress	Progress	Progress
Slovenia	Good progress	Progress	Progress	
2001	Bulgaria	Good Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Cyprus	Progress	Progress	Progress
	Czech Rep.	Good Progress	Progress	Progress
	Estonia	Good Progress	Good Progress	Good Progress
	Hungary	Progress	Progress	Progress
	Latvia	Progress	Little progress	Little Progress
	Lithuania	Good Progress	Progress	Progress
	Malta	Progress	Progress	Progress
	Poland	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Romania	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Slovakia	Good progress	Progress	Progress
Slovenia	Good progress	Progress	Progress	

CEJSS
4/2013

2002	Albania	Little Progress	No Progress	No Progress
	B&H	No Progress	No Progress	No Progress
	Bulgaria	Good Progress	Progress	Progress
	Croatia	Good Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Cyprus	Good Progress	Good Progress	Good Progress
	Czech Rep.	Good progress	Progress	Progress
	Estonia	Good Progress	Progress	Progress
	Hungary	Progress	Good Progress	Progress
	Kosovo	Little Progress	No Progress	No Progress
	Latvia	Progress	Progress	Progress
	Lithuania	Good progress	Progress	Progress
	Macedonia	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Malta	Progress	Good Progress	Progress
	Poland	Progress	Progress	Progress
	Romania	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	S&M	Little Progress	No Progress	No Progress
Slovakia	Good Progress	Good Progress	Good Progress	
Slovenia	Good Progress	Good Progress	Good Progress	
2003	Albania	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	B&H	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Bulgaria	Good Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Croatia	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Cyprus	Good Progress	Progress	Progress
	Czech Rep.	Good Progress	Progress	Progress
	Estonia	Good Progress	Progress	Progress
	Hungary	Good Progress	Progress	Progress
	Kosovo	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Latvia	Good Progress	Progress	Progress
	Lithuania	Good Progress	Progress	Progress
	Macedonia	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Malta	Good Progress	Progress	Progress
	Poland	Good Progress	Progress	Progress
	Romania	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	S&M	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
Slovakia	Good progress	Progress	Progress	
Slovenia	Good progress	Progress	Progress	
2004	Albania	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	B&H	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Bulgaria	Progress	Progress	Progress
	Croatia	Progress	Progress	Progress
	Kosovo	Progress	Progress	Progress
	Macedonia	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Romania	Good Progress	Progress	Progress
S&M	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress	
2005	Albania	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	B&H	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Bulgaria	Good Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Croatia	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Kosovo	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Macedonia	Good Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Romania	Good Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
S&M	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress	
2006	Albania	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	B&H	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Bulgaria	Good Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Croatia	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Kosovo	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Macedonia	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Montenegro	Little Progress	Progress	Little Progress
	Romania	Good Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Serbia	Good Progress	Progress	Progress
2007	Albania	Progress	Progress	Progress
	B&H	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Croatia	Progress	Progress	Progress
	Kosovo	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Macedonia	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Montenegro	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Serbia	Progress	Good Progress	Progress

2008	Albania	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	B&H	Little Progress	Progress	Little Progress
	Croatia	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Kosovo	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Macedonia	Good Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Montenegro	Progress	Progress	Progress
2009	Serbia	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Albania	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	B&H	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Croatia	Good Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Kosovo	Little Progress	No Progress	No Progress
	Macedonia	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
2010	Montenegro	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Serbia	Progress	Progress	Progress
	Albania	Progress	Progress	Progress
	B&H	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Croatia	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Kosovo	Little Progress	No Progress	No Progress
2011	Macedonia	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Montenegro	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Serbia	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Albania	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	B&H	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Croatia	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
2012	Kosovo	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Macedonia	Progress	Progress	Progress
	Montenegro	Progress	Progress	Progress
	Serbia	Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	Albania	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress
	B&H	Little Progress	Little Progress	Little Progress

Dynamics of Eastern Europeanisation and the Impact of “Membership Credibility” in EU Enlargement Rounds

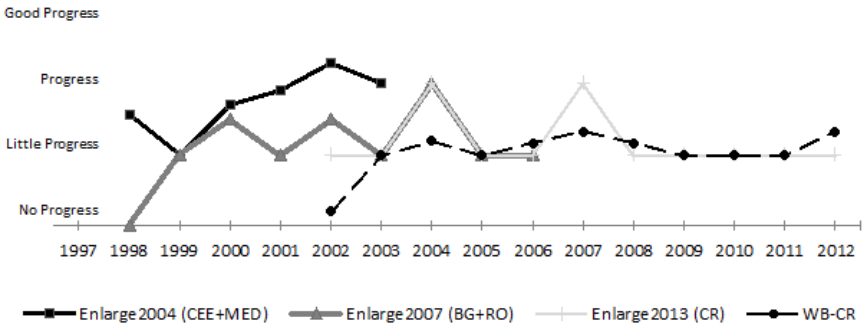
Source: Qualitative data extracted from Commission Opinion, Composite Paper, Annual Reports and Memos on Key Findings (1998-2012). Here we consider only the general progress evaluations on the EU standards/acquis sections, not the progress on the political and economic evaluation section. Note: B&H - Bosnia and Herzegovina, S&M - Serbia and Montenegro.

Eastern Europeanisation Dynamics in EU Enlargement Rounds Compared

Referring to Table 1, we find variation on the outcomes of Europeanisation. Similar to what has been observed in member-states, and different from previous argumentation on the CEE case, the Eastern Europeanisation outcome is neither homogenous and neither does it proceed at the same pace in all candidate countries.²⁵ Progress in adoption and implementation of the EU’s acquis varies significantly among countries and has its ups and downs through the years depending on the domestic conditions. In general, adoption records better than implementation scores. This is because, implementation does not relate only to the political will of the potential member-states but it needs also to be backed up with administrative and budgetary resources.

We construct and compare the index of Europeanisation of the EU enlargement rounds using the compensatory “average” model.²⁶ The average Europeanisation index represents trade-offs among the annual progress of the countries of the same EU enlargement rounds. Figure 1 reports the different average indexes for Eastern Enlargement rounds. The first index (enlarg2004) includes all eight countries of the CEE including also the Mediterranean countries of Cyprus and Malta, the second index (enlarge2007) represents the countries of Bulgaria and Romania, while the third index (enlarge2013) considers Croatia. Another index is compiled considering the average progress of the rest of the Western Balkan countries (WB-Cr).

FIGURE 1: EUROPEANIZATION AVERAGE SCORE OF GROUPS OF COUNTRIES ACCORDING TO THEIR EU ENLARGEMENT ROUNDS



If referred to the average qualitative data, some important conclusions can be drawn on Europeanisation dynamics according to EU enlargement rounds. First, if we refer to the overall performance in adopting and implementing the acquis we notice a tendency of progress for all enlargement groups albeit the progress in the case of SEE is slower. There is an overall steady growing trend of Europeanisation in countries of the 2004 EU enlargement round. The 2004-enlargement group made rapid progress after accession negotiations with the second block of CEE countries started in 2000.²⁷ Yet, the change is not very substantial to reach full compliance. Differently from CEE’s rapid Europeanisation, the countries of the WBs and even Bulgaria and Romania lag behind. Their Europeanisation scores are lower throughout the examined period, often to only some progress. However, the tendency of improvement can be clearly noticed given that each year some progress is achieved. What is more problematic in the case of

SEE, is the slow pace at which the process of Europeanisation in those countries proceeds.

These findings offer important insights into the general debate of the EU's "transformative power" in candidate countries. If we consider all the countries of Eastern Europe (1998-2012) in a comparative perspective, we can argue that the EU has had a relatively stronger transformative power among the CEE countries rather than in the countries of SEE. The EU differentiated impact in Eastern Europe can be seen more with regards to the pace of progress than to the absolute values of change. Moreover, the differentiated dynamics of the Europeanisation performance can be seen not only among but also within EU enlargement rounds. Thus, it is important to look at the determinants of the differentiated dynamics of EU Enlargement-led Europeanisation.

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Tracing the Process:

The Impact of Membership Credibility on the Dynamics of Eastern Europeanisation

It is important to trace the factor(s) that may explain the different Europeanisation trends, considering the ups-and-downs in the progress average scores of the different EU enlargement rounds. In addition to the candidate countries' domestic factors, the broad explanatory argument in the literature is that the successful EU's enlargement impact will depend on a credible membership incentive.²⁸ High membership credibility is an effective tool to overcome domestic obstacles, and thus a determinant in the candidate countries' Europeanisation performance²⁹ According to Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier's (2005a) external incentive model, Europeanisation performance will depend, among other factors, on the credibility of delivering or withholding the membership reward and the size and the speed of the entire process of EU accession. The quicker and the more credible the process is, the more adaptation to *acquis* is expected.

In terms of credibility of the enlargement process, two major political enlargement decisions have to be considered; the decision to open association negotiations (Europe Agreements for CEE countries and Bulgaria and Romania; and the Stabilization and Association Agreements for WB countries) and the decision to open accession negotiations³⁰ The EU, through opening of association/accession negotiations, creates the expectation that the applicant country will at some

moment join the Union, given that it has satisfied the conditions of membership.³¹ Moreover, the opening or closing of negotiations with some states increases also the credibility of rewards for all other candidates, as it demonstrates the EU is willing to proceed with enlargement process.³²

In the case of CEE, the EU's impact intensified once accession negotiations were open (after 2000)—evidence that EU's membership incentive was credible in this year. Tracing the progress of those countries (see figure 1) we notice that in the years when membership is more credible, the CEE had the tendency of greater progress. The membership credibility and as a consequence the Europeanisation performance slow down once the date of accession is set.³³ We find the Europeanisation performance of CEE (after 2002) and of Bulgaria and Romania (after 2005) to fall as the accession date is fixed. This is because the credibility of the EU's threat of withholding membership is very low. The tendencies of negative impact on rule adaptation were observed in the late stage of accession even with the so-called CEE front-runners because they did not fear exclusion.³⁴

The novelty in the context of the latter enlargements is that previous EU enlargement rounds matter and may potentially influence membership credibility and, as a consequence, also determines the domestic impact of enlargement. The argument of the importance of EU accession credibility is more obvious and pronounced in the case of the latter enlargements rounds. The very low performance of the SEE countries, and much more of the WBs, relates to the uncertainties of the membership reward. The accession of the WB countries is questionable or at best it is very distant, given the general enlargement fatigue of the EU to absorb other countries. In their overall low performance, the countries of Bulgaria and Romania (enlarge2007), Croatia (Enlarge2013) and the rest of WB progressed better towards adoption and implementation only when accession treaties with other applicants were signed (in 2004 and 2007). After a slow down in progress, the performance of the WBs gets a further push when the accession of Croatia was decided (2012). The overall Europeanisation progress of the WB countries is very low but greater progress performance is achieved when the EU enlargement process is more credible as a result of the accession of the other applicant countries. It is plausible to think that the potential candidate countries would not perform well when membership is very distant. While they would make efforts to comply

with EU requirements, mostly when the EU successfully demonstrates its commitment – through opening/closing association/accession negotiations – to enlarge further.

So, the Western Balkans can be Europeanised as Demetropoulou argues and the Commission data confirms.³⁵ The WB had made some progress, a persistent trend that is slow but with greater performance when membership is more credible. The temporal dimension of membership credibility creates at least incentives for domestic adjustment processes although not a uniform impact across all countries since their domestic conditions count and has to be taken into consideration. Thus, in addition to domestic conditions, the EU enlargement process and membership credibility should be kept high and credible for achieving good results in Europeanisation outcome.

Dynamics of Eastern Europeanisation and the Impact of “Membership Credibility” in EU Enlargement Rounds

Concluding Remarks

The debate on the impact of the EU in Eastern Europe focuses on the question of how much the EU enlargement process has, and can, transform the entire region. The literature is divided on the issue. As we argue in this article, the transformative power of EU is comparatively greater in CEE countries, thus producing no homogenous and convergent outcomes across Eastern Europe. Yet, the variation on Europeanisation performance between EU enlargement groups is more obvious in terms of time rather than on the level of progress. The countries of SEE are experiencing also a process of transformation and their progress has a tendency of improvement, although at a slower pace than in the case of CEE. In addition to domestic conditions, the credibility of EU accession has been a factor for better and speedy Europeanisation.

The dynamics of Europeanisation vary among, and within, EU enlargement rounds depending on the credibility of EU membership. The transformative power of Europe works better at certain external conditions. If the membership conditionality is credible, then Europeanisation follows. Otherwise, if membership is too distance or close to certain then Europeanisation outcomes decreases. In addition to the explanatory factors linked to domestic preferences and capacities, we have argued in this article that the credibility of membership is an important explanatory factor for explaining Eastern Europeanisation dynamics. By tracing the progress of countries in the same EU enlargement rounds and considering the temporal key political enlargement

decisions made, we find Europeanisation progress to score better when membership credibility is high. That is, when the EU opens or closes association/accession negotiations with potential member-states, Europeanisation performance is better. The accession of CEE countries, and later of Bulgaria, Romania and more recently, Croatia, are important political events making enlargement process credible, and as consequence increasing also Europeanisation performance in the other countries of the Western Balkans waiting to join.

This finding has policy consequences. For the EU to repeat its CEE success story in the Western Balkans the membership credibility should be kept high on the policy agenda, despite all uncertainties and domestic difficulties. The speed as well as the progress of Europeanisation in the WB region will mostly depend on the credibility of membership.

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Notes

- 1 Dorian Jano (2008), 'EU-Western Balkans Relations: The Many EU Approaches,' *The Journal of the International University Institute of European Studies* 2:1, p. 143 ft3.
- 2 See Gergana Noutcheva (2009), 'Fake, Partial and Imposed Compliance: The Limits of the EUs Normative Power in the Western Balkans' *Journal of European Public Policy* 16:7, pp. 1065-1084; and Tina Freyburg and Solveig Richter (2010), 'National Identity Matters: The Limited Impact of EU Political Conditionality in the Western Balkans', *Journal of European Public Policy* 17:2, pp. 262-280.
- 3 See Stephan Renner and Florian Trauner (2009), 'Creeping Membership in Southeast Europe: the Dynamics of EU Rule Transfer to the Western Balkans', *Journal of European Integration* 31:4, pp. 449-465; and Florian Trauner (2009), 'From Membership Conditionality to Policy Conditionality: EU External Governance in South Eastern Europe', *Journal of European Public Policy* 16:5, pp. 774-790.

- 4 Othon Anastasakis (2005), 'The Europeanization of the Balkans', *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 22:1, p. 80.
- 5 Frank Schimmelfennig and Florian Trauner (eds.) 'Post-accession compliance in the EU's new member states', *European Integration online Papers* 2:13.
- 6 Ulrich Sedelmeier (2011), 'Europeanisation in new member and candidate states', *Living Reviews in European Governance* 6:1, p. 30.
- 7 Many scholars occupying with Eastern Europe refer to the process of transformations and changes that EU was causing to CEE countries but term it otherwise. For example in their edited book (Ronald Linden (ed.) (2002), *Norms and Nannies: the Impact of International Organisations on the Central and East European States*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers) the authors refer and conceptualize the process of EU (and other international organizations) impact as "international socialization". In the same way, Schimmelfennig and his colleagues (Frank Schimmelfennig, Stefan Engert and Heiko Knobel (2006), *International Socialization in Europe: European Organizations, Political Conditionality, and Democratic Change*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan) refer to "international socialization" while analyzing the process in which CEE states are induced to adopt the constitutive rules of international community in light of the European experience. Other scholars speak of "domestication of Europe" to uncover the impact of the EU in the domestic political transformations of CEE. "External governance" has been another term used to study the transformative power of EU external policies in Eastern Europe or even the impact of EU to CEE countries, more particularly in relation to implementing the *acquis* (see: Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (2004), 'Governance by conditionality: EU rule transfer to the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe', *Journal of European Public Policy* 11:4, pp. 661-679; Sandra Lavenex and Frank Schimmelfennig (2009), 'EU Rules Beyond EU Borders: Theorizing External Governance in European Politics', *Journal of European Public Policy* 16:6, pp. 791-812). The today attention, even from scholars previously not referring to Europeanization, has been directed to describe the process or at least link it to Europeanization.
- 8 Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (2002), 'Theorizing EU Enlargement: Research Focus, Hypotheses, and the State of Research', *Journal of European Public Policy* 9:4, pp. 504-507; and Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (2005c), 'The politics of EU Enlargement: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives', in Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (eds.), *The Politics of European Union Enlargement: Theoretical Approaches*, New York: Routledge, pp. 6-9.
- 9 For the argument on EU Enlargement theory as an ontological stage of research and Europeanization as its post-ontological stage on candidate countries see Grabbe [Heather Grabbe (2003), 'Europeanization Goes East: Power and Uncertainty in the EU Accession Process', in Kevin Featherstone and Claudio M. Radaelli (eds.), *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 309-310; and Heather Grabbe, (2006), *The EU's Transformative Power: Europeanization through Conditionality in*

Dorian
Jano

Central and Eastern Europe, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 47-49.] who makes an analogy with the same argument Radaelli [Claudio M. Radaelli (2000), 'Whither Europeanization? Concept Stretching and Substantive Change', *European Integration online Papers* 4:8.] used for Europeanization in the member states as being post-ontological stage, different from the ontological stage of EU integration. The point here is that Europeanization would not exist without European integration or EU enlargement in the case of (potential) candidate states.

- 10 Sedelmeier (2011), p. 6.
- 11 Simon Bulmer (2007), 'Theorizing Europeanization', in Paolo Graziano and Maarten P. Vink (eds.), *Europeanization: New Research Agendas*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 54.
- 12 Heather Grabbe (2001), 'How does Europeanization affect CEE governance? Conditionality, diffusion and diversity', *Journal of European Public Policy* 8:6, p. 1014; and Adrienne Heritier (2005), 'Europeanization Research East and West: a Comparative Assessment', in Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (eds.) *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, pp. 199-209.
- 13 Sedelmeier (2011), p. 6. In order to induce adjustment EU institutions cannot rely on the treaty-based sanctions or through financial penalties imposed by the European Court of Justice (ECJ), but rather on other instruments such as conditional incentives, normative pressure, persuasion or framing. Furthermore European Commission, different from the infringement procedures used in member state, publish Regular Reports as a way to monitor the process of compliance with EU conditions in candidate countries.
- 14 Grabbe (2003).
- 15 In the Enlargement process, the requirements to be fulfilled as set out in the Copenhagen European Council meeting (1993) are Political (i.e *stability of its institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities*), Economic (*the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union*), as well as Legal (*ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union*).
- 16 Barbara Lippert, Gaby Umbach, and Wolfgang Wessels (2001), 'Europeanization of CEE Executives: EU Membership Negotiations as a Shaping Power', *Journal of European Public Policy* 8:6; Klaus H. Goetz (2001), 'Making Sense of Post-communist Central Administration: Modernization, Europeanization or Latinization?', *Journal of European Public Policy* 8:6, p. 1036; Klaus H. Goetz (2007) 'Territory', in Paolo Graziano and Maarten P. Vink (eds.), *Europeanization: New Research Agendas*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, p.75.
- 17 Klaus H. Goetz (no date), 'Europeanisation in West and East: A Challenge to Institutional Theory'.
- 18 Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (2005a), 'Introduction: Conceptualizing the Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe', in Frank

- Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier, *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, pp. 7-8.
- 19 Claudio M. Radaelli (2004), 'Europeanisation: Solution or problem?', *European Integration online Papers* 8:16, p. 7.
 - 20 Note here that following Radaelli's suggestion, we leave out what Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2005a, pp. 7-8) consider as a third form of change, the communicative or discursive aspect of Europeanization.
 - 21 Jay Verkuilen (2005), 'Assigning Membership in a Fuzzy Set Analysis', *Sociological Methods and Research* 33:4, p. 471.
 - 22 Although the reports are compiled by the Commission they are based on information gathered from many sources including information and contributions from the Commission delegations in each country's capital, the national governments of the potential member-states and the EU member-states, European Parliament reports as well as assessments made by various international organization, in particular Council of Europe, OSCE, International Financial institutions, and other non-governmental organizations.
 - 23 The indicator for measuring adoption and implementation, and as a result Europeanization, is the *positive change* in terms of both formal rule adoption and implementation compare to the previous status quo at a given point in time rather than assessing the actual degree of convergence achieved. This because the misfit with European norms and rules has been deep and full convergence requires time to be achieved.
 - 24 'Progress' is measured on the basis of decisions taken, legislation adopted and measures implemented. This approach ensures equal treatment across all reports and permits an objective assessment. See Methodology of the Progress Reports.
 - 25 Most of the literature argues that, Europeanization in the potential member-states, because of time pressures of accession, proceeded at a much quicker pace than in the member-states and it also produced more homogenous and convergent outcomes. See: Grabbe (2001), p. 1014; Grabbe (2003), p. 306; Heritier (2005); Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (2005b), 'Conclusions: The impact of EU on the Accession Countries', in Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (eds.) *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, p.225; and Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (2007), 'Candidate Countries and Conditionality', in Paolo Graziano and Maarten P. Vink (eds), *Europeanization: New Research Agendas*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 98.
 - 26 See Verkuilen (2005), p. 471 on the compensatory "average" model.
 - 27 The first CEECs countries that start accession negotiations in 1998 where Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia (Cyprus was also included). The rest of the countries Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia (Malta also included) started accession negotiations in 2000.
 - 28 Sedelmeier (2011), p. 22.
 - 29 Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2005a), p.12.
 - 30 Frank Schimmelfennig (2008), 'EU Political Accession Conditionality after

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- 31 Bernard Steunenberg and Antoaneta Dimitrova (2007), 'Compliance in the EU Enlargement Process: The Limits of Conditionality', *European Integration online Papers* 11:5.
- 32 Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2005b), p. 215.
- 33 Steunenberg and Dimitrova (2007).
- 34 Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2007), p. 93; (2005b), pp. 216-217.
- 35 Leeda Demetropoulou (2002), 'Europe and the Balkans: Membership Aspiration, EU Involvement and Europeanization Capacity in South Eastern Europe' *Southeast European Politics* 3:2-3, pp. 87-106.