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to the doctoral dissertation titled

**PRACTICE AND THEORY OF THE
ENLARGEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN
UNION—THE CROATIAN CASE**

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*„The enlargement of the European Union will not only challenge our notions as to „what Europe is” but will fundamentally alter the nature of politics on the Old Continent”
(Hayward – Menon 2003)*

1. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE DISSERTATION

The enlargement is one of those political processes that characterises the whole story of the Community. Till the period of democratic transformation neither the intensity nor the number of accessed states (6 new members) was remarkable. From the end of the cold war on accession gained more and more importance and has been on the political agenda on regular basis. In 1995 three former-EFTA member states were accessed followed by eight Central and Eastern European states plus Cyprus and Malta, then Bulgaria and Romania gained membership status on 1 January 2007. In a nutshell, 12 member states within 12 years and the Union came to be a 27-member-state Community. Though, the end of the process is very far, since in 2005 – due to the proposal of the Commission – the EU started the accession negotiations with Turkey and Croatia as well. Furthermore, the countries of the Western Balkan are also strong candidates.

The prior aim of the present dissertation is to present the next station of this enlargement i.e. the chances and challenges of the Croatian accession after the democratic transformation. The thesis is about to investigate how an old-and-new member state is searching for its identity, and what a bumpy road it has to cope with in order to get involved in the European space.

The polemy of the accession to the European Union has been present throughout the country’s history from the 1990s till today. The actuality of the topic is proved by the fact that while writing the present thesis the substantial investigations started between Croatia and the EU and are still in progress. Therefore, a certain line needs to be drawn; as such the thesis concentrates on the period till the end of the Slovenian EU presidency (till 30 June 2008).

The Croatian integration is a very complex process, therefore the topic is tackled from three different points of view – namely from trans-national, regional and national – going from the macro to the micro environment till reaching the Croatian accession.

On the trans-national level it is the enlargement policy of the EU, its influencing factors, the ever changing criteria worth considering; bringing the special situation and characteristic features of the countries that had gone through the democratic transmission into

sharp focus. Those dilemmas, opposing elements and economic rollercoasters are highlighted that influence the accessions.

The Croatian accession is very much influenced by the regional aspect i.e. the status of the Western Balkans that is considered in the second phase of the dissertation. The region is examined through its characteristic features, heterogeneity and of the common points. This last aspect helps understand why the EU tackles Croatia as part of the Western Balkans, which generates further problems regarding the integration.

The enlargement policy of the EU and the problems of the regions serve as a background to describe the national characteristic features, and to fit the Croatian accession in the whole process of the enlargement of Europe. The aim of this part is to present the longish process of Croatian accession full of hardships and sudden stops that the independent Croatia has had to face with from the good start of the 1990s on. The present thesis does not aim to describe the technical elements of the Croatian accession; on the contrary, the aim is to show the process, the general characteristic features that are also relevant to the Western Balkans region.

The dissertation aims to provide a comprehensive study that serves as a practical roadmap of the accession mechanism – i.e. how the structure is built up – through the concrete example of Croatia. Showing the empirical side of the same coin may help the reader understand the essence of the EU's nature, its working mechanism and the dilemma of enlargement or deepening. Regarding that the next phase of the integration will be Croatia; it seems to be of high relevance to follow the specialities and realization of the Croatian situation. What is more, in the Hungarian foreign and EU policy good relation with the countries in our neighbourhood has high priority. Among these the Croatian-Hungarian relation is exemplary due to the common historical-cultural-economic roots and the coexistence of the borders for centuries. Relying on these common features, the thesis examines how the from-2004-on EU member Hungary can facilitate the Croatian accession.

2. THE STRUCTURE AND HYPOTHESES OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation describes the changes in the EU's enlargement policy, the notion of the Western Balkans region used from 1999 on, its chances and challenges of integration, primarily focusing on the Croatian accession process. All this reflect the result of my 5-year-long research and teaching in this field. The approval of the hypotheses and the scientific analysis is built up by five main elements.

In the Introduction part of the dissertation beyond the hypotheses and the basic questions related to the topic, the scientific bibliography and the methodology are also introduced.

The theoretical background of the thesis is provided by the theories and experiences of different schools of integration that serve as a base for the Croatian accession. In the 1st chapter the different theories of integration and their characteristic features are examined in order to predict the chances of the Croatian accession. Analysing the further enlargement the differences between the above mentioned theories are highlighted, since they are relevant in the Croatian dimension. It goes without saying that each theory has different attitude towards the EU of 27 member states and towards the further enlargement of the Community. The theoretical dispute over the working methodology and further integration of the EU goes back to four decades, during which each theory has changed a lot. Some lost importance others gained relevance through gaining historical evidence. Nevertheless, it is more important that in the 1990s there is some kind of convergence between the opposing theories, which shows the common grounds of them.

In the theoretical background it is deeply considered what predictions do different schools of European integration theories form, especially regarding the Central and Eastern European region. Related to this, it is neither an aim to describe the polemic nature of different theories and the influence of them, nor to qualify or give a rank of them. This dissertation is looking for the answer to the question: Which are those theories that have sewn the seeds of eastern and southern integration.

Within the theories, high priority is given to the two influential approaches of international organisations that also provide background to present day EU enlargement policy – namely the rationalist and constructivist institutionalist theories. The reason for this, on the one hand is that these provide the primary milestones of eastern and southern integration; on the other hand explain the hardships of the Community's decision-making

process to decide over enlargement. Owing to these two theories the enlargement can be analysed not only from the cost-benefit but also from the ideological-political points of view. The latter is given more importance to since in case of the Croatian accession it is evident that the EU is not driven by economic interests, rather geopolitical, security political and cultural reasons. Although neither of them give a full response to the questions of enlargement, it is clear that they help to conceptualize it, and emphasise why it is important to an international organisation to enlarge and to the third states to access to the community. According to the rationalist institutionalist school the main driving forces in the enlargement – both from the EU's and the candidate's point of view – are the costs and benefits of it that differs much depending on the interests and preferences. Contrarily, the constructivists do not think that the financial interests would be so influential, but the ideological-cultural overlap, more precisely that both the member and the candidate states have the common European identity, values and norms.

On the basis of the theoretical approach it gains evidence that the scientific community of European integration hardly – or just marginally – tackles the theoretical background of the enlargements. The importance of this factor of influence has been evaluated just in the last period as a result of the dilemmas of the eastern enlargement. Therefore the present thesis tries to fulfil this hole and clear the polemies related to the topic. The presupposition is that the enlargement is a progressive, horizontal, systematic process. The changing factors are shown in order to analyse and compare the accessions took place so far, which also provides us with models for the accession waves in the future. Notwithstanding, the existing scientific bibliography of integration deals with the individual accession process of a country or a group of countries. The number of works analysing the accession of EFTA countries is significantly high, as well as that of the results of the CEE accession wave focusing on the worries that preceded the opening of the EU's gates in front of them. The major deficiency of these works is that they ignore the follow-up of the changes in the EU's enlargement policy. The scientific bibliography does not an analysis of a general enlargement strategy and the long-run effects of an enlargement period, in the background of which the lack of a comparative analysis can be detected. In the present thesis this need can be met only such an extent that helps explain the further integration of the EU, more especially the Croatian accession.

On the 2nd chapter the enlargement policy of the EU is analysed, focusing on the dilemma of enlargement and/or deepening. In the phase the different waves of integration are described, that show an ever harder process from the first accessed to the CEE countries. The

special characteristic features of separate enlargements are examined, the different criteria of different waves are compared, and the future-member states as well as the EU's aims are detected. The last eastern enlargement is given more emphasis to, the result and experiences of which are the most influential in the future. It is presupposed that the former enlargements' methods and schedules are irrelevant in the eastern phase, which is proved by emphasising the special characteristic features of the previous accessions. Instead of wasting the paper to the technical elements of previous accession mechanisms, I focus on those factors that might influence the Croatian accession. The general experiences and features of the enlargements are tried to be detected, while those elements are highlighted that might determine the Croatian accession. I

It seems to be evident that the whole process of European integration can be separated into two main phases. The first phase lasts till the accession process in 1995 that affected the western part of Europe by accepting countries with working democracy and capitalist market economy. The second period already concerns Eastern European countries in the middle of democratic and economic transmission. During the whole process the EU had to face the dilemma of integration or deepening when admitting more and more states to the Community, which is also of high relevance in case of the Croatian integration. Through the analysis of the waves of enlargement, the dissertation is about to prove how the criteria and the methodology of the enlargement changed from one group of countries to another. The increase of the number of criteria and the results of them are emphasised, that made the accession process harder and harder till it resulted in the enlargement strategy in case of the CEE countries. The question needs to be answered whether there is any concept or strategy in the EU enlargement policy?

In the 3rd chapter the seemingly next phase of the EU enlargement, the Western Balkans is introduced. The starting point should be to define the notion of the Western Balkans that is the most disputed border planning all over Europe due to the geographical-religious-ethnic-cultural heterogeneity of the region. The Western Balkans sub-region is a notion created by the euro-policy in 1999 integrating those states that are not members of the Union yet but are keen on being parts of the Community. On the one hand those common characteristic features are shown that supports the idea to tackle them as an inseparable whole; on the other hand, the extreme heterogeneity is also exemplified. This inner contradiction presupposes the hardships of the integration of the Western Balkans into the EU. What is more, it can also be detected in the inconsistent common policy-making as well.

The milestones of the EU's Western Balkans policy are also presented, including the most important documents of the process, from the Stability Pact through the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) till the Accession Partnership accepted in March 2008.

Describing the process helps to analyze the method of enlargement and to explore the underlying reasons and characteristic features. It is revealed that the EU strengthened the criteria of admission and decreased its financial instruments at the same time when the accession of the CEE countries after the democratic transition came onto the agenda. The financial instruments of the EU are also examined that aimed to help the region close up to the European mainstream. These are analyzed in three groups, set up according to time and content, namely: between 1991 and 1999 was the first stage of ad hoc support, between 2000 and 2006 as part of the SAP the first structured financial and technical aid program, the CADRS was introduced, and parallel with it the pre-accession funds remained in force, and last, from 2007 on the new era of support began with the introduction of IPA that made the whole system of aids given to candidate countries and potential candidates more transparent. The chapter is closed by the presentation of the Western Balkan countries' hard way and results along the road of integration.

The 4th chapter is dedicated to introduce Croatia and to summarize its general characteristic features. The process and whole topic of Croatian accession with plenty hardship can not be understood without the analysis of its political-social-economic status. The country-study is based on the study project called "Hungary's potential role in the Central and Eastern and South-Eastern European countries' regional development cooperation" thanks to the help of Prof. János Rechnitzer and dr. Tamás Hardi, my consultant. This Croatia country-study came to be the base for the description in the thesis. Introducing Croatia, the same guidelines are followed like in the country-study, plus the priority aspects of the EU and the fields assigned in the criteria of accession. As such the changes in the Croatian population and society, the political parties of the independent state, its democratic political institutes and working mechanisms are examined, and the question of minorities within the refugee theme is highlighted. An individual sub-chapter tackles the transformation of the Croatian economy that is based on the analysis of macro-economic figures.

An individual sub-chapter is committed to economic transition in Croatia, analysed on the basis of major macro-economic figures (economic criteria). Among the critical remarks come up from year to year the most significant ones are the over-representation of the state and the centralised state, therefore the first steps against these deficiencies are highlighted in

order to decentralise the state, to enforce the subsidiarity principle and to create the statistical regional system. Regional policy is not only emphasised because of the admission process but also due to my studies in the Doctoral School.

Detecting and analyzing the rules and general features of the enlargement process made it possible to draw these consequences and to adapt them to the Western Balkans region and Croatia. Thus the 5th chapter is about to introduce the special character of the Croatian accession. Two separate phases of the whole integration process could be separated. The first term is from the declaration of independence (26 June 1991) till the death of president Franjo Tudjman (10 Dec 1999), when beyond building a democratic country and state, Croatia also tried to identify and manage the priorities of its independent foreign policy that was only partially related to the euro-atlantic integration. The priorities of Croatia's foreign policy were the establishment of national identity and the independent state even through aggressive methods in order to create the most probable ethnically clean state. This nationalist, expansionist strategy resulted in the international isolation of the country, and as such its ability to enforce its foreign policy interests came to be rather low. After isolation, the delay of negotiations with the Union for several times and the unsuccessful European pressure made it clear that the situation will remain unchanged till the death of president Tudjman. Therefore Croatia turned the millennium without having any official agreement with the European Union.

The next phase is mainly characterised by the development and deepening of relations between the EU and Croatia from the death of the president on. At the beginning, progress was extremely intensive – it seemed as if the country had wanted to make up for lost time in the 1990s in order to catch up with the Central and Eastern European countries. This was confirmed by the public opinion that supported the accession significantly either on governmental level or in case of political parties or the society. Contrarily, when the first progression started to come to a sudden stop and it became clear-cut that Croatia will not be accessed to the Community together with Romania and Bulgaria, and the accession negotiations also started to slow up – even though political parties and politicians remained faithful to the EU accession – the social support started to fall abrupt. According to public opinion polls, hardly 50% of the country is devoted to the EU accession, which is in total contradiction with the general political opinion. Nowadays Croatia seems to be close to the end of the longish process. Rather often even the EU tells positive opinion about the country, and also the date of accession has been mentioned several times. In my opinion the date of

accession does not depend on the Community, but rather on the intensity of development and cooperation of Croatia.

The dissertation is concluded by the proof and evaluation of the hypotheses.

The scientific aim of the dissertation is to provide a comprehensive picture about the EU's enlargement policy, its ever-changing mechanism and its practical realisation through the Croatian example. In order to present this, the dissertation follows the next hypotheses:

1. A presumption is that scientists dealing with European integration theories only marginally tackle the question of background of enlargement.

2. It presupposes that the enlargement of the European Union is a continuous and horizontal process of institutionalisation.

3. It presupposes that the Community does not have any general, well-built, constant enlargement strategy. The changes in accession are due to the from time to time reformed union and the changing factors.

4. It supposes that the methods, criteria and schedule of enlargements before 2004 can only be partially adapted to the Eastern and further enlargements. Therefore the enlargement process of the EU can be segmented into two phases.

5. It supposes that the EU is dedicated to fully integrate the regional states, though the preferences of individual states differ significantly, and further enlargement depends largely on the challenges that the Community has to face with, more especially on the dilemma of enlargement or deepening.

6. It supposes that considering the Western Balkans as a region stands in contradiction with the heterogeneity of the area, that ambiguity may serve as a reason for the vagueness of the accession of the countries in the region.

7. It supposes that as far as the economic-social relations and regional policy of Croatia – as part of the Western Balkans region – is concerned, it is more developed than the other states in the same region, and is rather good in fulfilling the criteria of the EU.

8. It supposes that the Community goes along the principle of differentiation, thus Croatia does not have to wait for the other regional states, but it can be accessed to the Union according to its development and fulfilling the criteria.

9. *It supposes that it will not create a new breaking line in the Western Balkans, on the contrary, it hopes that Zagreb will serve as a good example for the neighbouring countries. What is more it could act as a bridge between the EU and the region, thus facilitate the accession process of the whole region.*

10. *It supposes that the inter- and intraregional relations, the bilateral relations with the neighbouring countries – especially with Hungary – play a crucial role in the successful accession of Croatia to the European Union.*

3. THE METHOD AND SOURCES OF THE RESEARCH

Due to the wide range of related topics the present dissertation is a multidisciplinary one, since a historic, political, economic, legal, cultural, security political and geopolitical perspective need to be introduced in order to give an extensive analysis. The research is based on historical scholarship, as periodisation and the geographic situation are very important organising principles. According to the historic aspect the research deals with a certain period, i.e. from the pre-accession period, from 1973 till today putting the emphasis of the countries after democratic transition, more especially on Croatia.

The comparative approach is given priority, according to which, the common and the contradictory features of enlargements before 2004, the CEE countries accession and the would-be Croatian accession can be detected.

In depicting the Western Balkans and the enlargement potential of the EU it is geopolitics and regional policy that helps the author of the dissertation.

The legal background of enlargement is analysed *relying on primary sources*, basically on EU law, resolutions, decisions and country-reviews. As a result of the *functional approach* used in the legal analysis the realisation of theoretical, legal principals can be detected in the example of the Croatian accession.

The other principle of great importance throughout the whole dissertation is depicting the whole process of EU enlargement, and *the Croatian accession as a process*.

Basically, the dissertation is a theoretical work, providing the comprehensive analysis of the enlargement of the European Union, focusing on the Croatian accession, and the bibliography of them. On the one hand, the study is partially relying on Hungarian sources, but is rather based on international researches, primary and secondary sources. On the other hand, the empirical part of the work is based on personal, empirical investigations; namely on

interviews and disputes over the Croatian accession with the experts and stakeholders of the topic, like with Hungarian and Croatian university teachers and researchers, two Hungarian ambassadors -- changing each other -- accredited to Zagreb, the head of department of the Croatian Ministry of Foreign- and European Affairs, the member of the delegate of negotiations, the officers of the Hungarian Military Intelligence Office, the members of the Hungarian-Croatian Chamber of Economy, students of international studies at the University of Zagreb and average Croatian people. As far as the unwritten sources are concerned, the conferences and lectures held in the Doctoral School, not to mention dr. Tamás Hardi's, my consultant's directives also played an inevitable role. Thanks to the help of dr. Tamás Hardi I had the chance to get familiar with the work and research of the Western Hungarian Scientific Institute of the Centre of Regional Studies, where I got crucial support from Zoltán Hajdú, especially in case of the country-analysis.

Lately, the national research community also gives special attention to the Balkans region, thus several centres of research was established devoted to this field. Among these, I am an active member of the CEU Centre for EU Enlargement Studies – established in 2005 by Péter Balázs –, I usually participate on the lectures held by the Balkan Studies Centre, led by Ferenc Glatz, and I am aware of the excellent scientific work and published works of the East-Mediterranean and Balkan Studies Centre of the Institute of Geography on the Janus Pannonius Scientific University.

I also had a wide range of secondary sources. It is mainly foreign bibliography that deals with the theories of integration; at the same the variety of Hungarian literature is rather poor. Among the works of Hungarian authors the work of Tamás Kende, titled “European public law and politics” („Európai közjog és politika”) and the volume of Tibor Palánkai, titled “The economy of the European Integration” („Az európai integráció gazdaságtana”) has helped a lot to understand and distinguish between the theories of integration. Additionally, the work of Ferenc Gazdag, titled “The Foreign- and Security Policy of the EU” („Az Európai Unió közös kül- és biztonságpolitikája”) introduces the theories of integration, just like Tibor Navracsics, that examines the special features of different schools of integration in the introductory chapter of his work, titled “European internal policy” („Európai belpolitika”). Lastly, Péter Balázs compares the characteristic features of different theories of integration with the integration of the CEE countries into the European common space in his work titled “European integrity and modernisation” („Európai integritás és modernizáció”).

It is significant, that the Hungarian authors examine the theories of integration only in one chapter of their bigger works, foreign researchers – especially of English or German origin – analyse the question in more details, in whole volumes. These were selected into groups on the basis of different schools of integration theories in the preparatory phase of the present dissertation. From the representatives of federalists present from the very beginning of European integration I relied mainly on the works of John Pinder, Altiero Spinelli, Hendrik Brugmans, Carl J. Friedrich, Peter J. Burgess, Andrea Bosco, Murray Forsyth and Paul Graham Taylor; in case of functionalism the studies of David Mitrany, Ernst B. Haas, Leon Lindberg and Stuart S. Scheingold were analysed. Regarding the intergovernmental theory the works of Andrew Moravcsik, and in case of constructivist school the works of Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane served as a starting point.

Considering that the doctoral dissertation focuses on enlargement and its effects on the Croatian chances the theories of integration are examined from the point of view of enlargement. After having detected the bibliography of the topic it seemed to be evident that the theoretical background of enlargement is a white whole. Only some researchers are about to establish it in case of eastern enlargement, among whom the most outstanding are Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier.

The theoretic approach of the topic is properly represented by the comprehensive work of Ben Rosamond (Theories of European Integration) and that of Jakoby Wade (The Enlargement of the European Union and NATO, 2004). In the focal point of the latter work stands that the CEE region has such special characteristic features that enable it to simply copy the standards of Western Europe. The works of Helen Wallace (2000) EU Enlargement: a Neglected Subject and Antje Wiener – Thomas Diez (2004) European Integration Theory do not only introduce the features of different schools, but also highlight the deficiencies of them.

On the contrary, there is plenty literature available regarding the European integration and enlargement, in the majority of the cases in English. As the enlargements are cyclically present in the history of the EU – since the last has already been the 5th enlargement wave –, thus the topic is steadily among the mainstream topics of the EU-specialists. Therefore it was hard to select the vast majority of literature. The documents of those European institutions that play an important role in the enlargement process – like the European Commission and the European Council – and the Treaties were used as primer sources.

The analysis of the national and international literature regarding the general history of the EU also played an important role, among which only the most often used works can be mentioned. As far as the Hungarian authors are concerned the work of Zoltán Horváth, titled Handbook on the EU („Kézikönyv az Európai Unióról”) has helped a lot to follow the development of integration, the last edition of which already involves a separate part about the Eastern enlargement. It was backed by Jenő Horváth’s work titled The History of the European Union from day to day („Az európai integráció története napról napra”) that provided a good chronology of the theme, and the book of László J. Nagy titled The Political History of the European Integration (“Az európai integráció politikai története”) that also contains a sample of related documents. The perfect work of Ferenc Gazdag titled The Institutions of the European Integration (“Az európai integrációs intézmények”) provides a good historical introduction, and the study collection of László Kis J. The Europes of 25s (“A Huszonötök Európái”) helped to study the relationship of each country to the EU. Among the foreign authors the most useful proved to be the work of Derek W. Urwin that was published in Hungarian edited by Tibor Palánkai. However, these works do not give an overall picture about the nature of the enlargements, since the aim of them is to research the deepening of the integration.

Within the bibliography of the enlargement of the Community I put the emphasis on the works of foreign authors, the majority of which deals with the legal and economic aspects and results of each enlargement. There is a lack of comprehensive work that analyses each and every detail. The most relevant are the following works: Christopher Preston (Enlargement and Integration in the European Union, 1997), Graham Avery and Fraser Cameron (The Enlargement of the European Union, 1998), and Richard Baldwin (Towards an Integrated Europe, 1994) – that give a global analysis of the period before 2004. There is much less study on the Eastern enlargement, the majority of which focuses on the difficulties, questions and threats of the countries after the democratic transition. The works of Cameron Fraser, Heather Grabbe and Lykke Friis are looking for the answer to the question, how the Eastern enlargement will transform the Community, its working mechanism, which way the EU will integrate further, and which place the bigger EU will be able to gain in the world rank order. Regarding the time passed after the last enlargement, the bibliography contains the most accepted experts’ works that focus on one segment of the topic. Among these, the work of Cameron Ross (Perspectives on the Enlargement of the European Union, 2002) and Cameron Fraser’s collection (The Future of Europe: Integration and Enlargement) and the

work titled *EU Expansion to the East* edited by Hilary Ingham and Mike Ingham worth to mention. As for the Hungarian authors, it is Attila Ágh who considers the problem of the further enlargement of the EU and the components of its crisis. These are published in English either within the OTKA researches or related to the projects of EU-CONSENT Constructing Europe Network.

In order to present the process of the Western Balkans integration I used the publications of Zoltán Hajdú, Péter Györkös and Attila Ágh and the lectures held by the experts of the Hungarian Military Intelligence Office at Kodolányi János University College in 2006. Several studies were used in this chapter as well from those who are from different parts of the region, like the works of David Phinnemore, Radovan Vukadinović, Davor Vuletić and Tom Gallagher. The integration of the Western Balkans was also reconstructed from the primer documents of the European Commission and the European Council.

As for the economic and social circumstances in Croatia, several Hungarian authors' work served as a relevant background material, especially regarding the problems of the 1990s after the democratic transition, the wars and political parties. Among these the publications and lectures of József Juhász and Imre Szilágyi have to be highlighted, not to mention the lectures held in the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs. As far as the Croatian researchers are concerned, the works of Damir Grubisa, Nenad Žakosek, Igor Vidačak and Mirjana Kasapović have helped a lot. The analysis of the mainstream economic processes, changes and problems is based on the data of the Croatian National Bank and the Statistical Office, on the reports of the World Bank and the IMF and on the quarterly analysis of the Balkan ICEG. The yearly report of the European Commission, the document titled "Croatia in the 21st century" and the National Program published by the Croatian government since 2002 also gave necessary information. The latter sources and the publications of the Croatian government and the Ministry of Foreign- and European Affairs were also used as a background to the chapter dealing with the accession. The Croatian changes and its results on the integration are analysed parallel with the criteria of the EU – from legal, economic, institutional perspective and the negotiations and accession – in a four-item work edited by Katarina Ott.

The publications of Višnja Samardžija and Damir Grubisa analyze deeply the process of Croatian accession, let it all, that I had the chance to meet with them personally; therefore they helped me to understand the whole topic in this way as well. I consider it crucial that I had the chance twice to carry on research in Croatia, in the natural environmental. For the first

time, I was teaching on the Faculty of Political Sciences at the University of Zagreb thanks to the CEEPUS lecturers' mobility program, parallel with which I managed to conduct researches as well. Then, in June 2007 I was examining the Croatian accession in the documentation of IMO (Institute of Foreign Relations).

In the list of the above quoted not exhaustive bibliography I had to mention the large number of publications and analysis that are incomplete due to the fact that the Croatian accession has not been realised and accomplished yet. The majority of this consists of the periodicals specialised in the Western Balkans that give the analysis of one small segment of the compound topic. I have been monitoring the works published in the following scientific magazines: *Európai Tükör*, *Europolitics*, *Journal of European Public Policy*, *Official Journal of the European Communities*, *Journal of Public Policy*, *East European Politics and Societies* and *Journal of Common Market Studies*.

4. THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

In the dissertation 10 hypotheses were set up and deeply analysed throughout the work. In the following the results of the research are presented according to the hypotheses.

1. A presumption is that scientists dealing with European integration theories only marginally tackle the question of background of enlargement.

According to theoretical studies' logic it is the analysis of the stabilisation of the integration that should stand in the focus at the establishment of the Community and they totally disregard the option of further enlargement. This perfectly fits to the European Economic Community. By the first enlargement of the EU in 1973 the classical theories had already done their work and were in the declining phase. Afterwards, neither the cohesion theories in the 1990s nor the theoretical dispute about supranational versus intergovernmental Europe dealt with the question of enlargement, but they all insisted on deepening.

The other reason for the classical integration theories not coping with the adaptability of the Western European model, since it did not even come to their mind till the structural change and social-economic-political transformation of CEE countries. This is due to the fact that till the democratic transition only those states were accessed to the Union that belonged to the "West" side of the old continent regarding their political institutions, economic potential and ideological background, thus their integration did not mean any difficulty. On the contrary, with the application of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern European countries the

Community had to face a challenge like never before. As a result, the integration theories did not even know the answer, since the experiences of the previous enlargements could not be adapted to this region. The first problem was that the previous enlargements were based on the similar character and common roots of the states. On the one hand, this is proved by the neo-functionalist school by stating that the integration is nothing else but the unification of market economies that do not differ from each other. On the other hand, the federalist theory also underlines that all members of the integration have civic-democratic structure. Therefore, the geographical expansion of the Community counts to be one of the black holes of the classical theories.

Even if the integration theories of the EU have partially dealt with the question of enlargement, for a long time they were only focusing on economy, since the ECC was born as an economic integration. Accordingly, in case of enlargements only the economic advantages and disadvantages were taken into account. After Maastricht, by the deepening of the cooperation the political integration intensified, thus the dimension of the integration multiplied and more theories – like the rationalist institutionalism and constructivism – extended their research to the enlargement. Related to the accession of new member states several new factors came into being, like the question of autonomy, the chance of reelection of governments after the accession, the power of different groups of interest, national identity and the collective identity of the continent.

On the basis of this my presumption proved to be true, that is backed by the fact that the majority of related works only deal with a special situation instead of summing up the background of the enlargements. Therefore, there is a need to extend the theoretical research of enlargements, the comparison of different accessions, and to detect new fields of research, like the politics of the member and the candidate states, the substantive dimension and the results of the enlargement.

2. It presupposes that the enlargement of the European Union is a continuous and horizontal process of institutionalisation.

Proving the process-like nature of enlargement was not a hard task to do. The enlargement of the EU is a process that accompanies the whole history of the Community, since 1961 – from the British application on – it is continuously on agenda, and now new aspirants are knocking on the doors, like Croatia. Another proof of the process-centred character is that the accession of new member states is always longish, an each-time more

time-consuming way on which the applicants should go along step by step. The other element of the definition is progressivity. The would-be member states have to adopt the EU's norms and criteria progressively: this begins well before applying, and does not finish at the moment of accession and with the full-member status since the admission and adaptation of the community law is a very long process. The progressive and horizontal institutionalisation during the enlargements process means that there is such a relationship between member states and candidate states that could lead to accession. Horizontal institutionalisation means the enlargement of the Community, and vertical integration means strengthening and deepening the relationship between different layers of the Union. Therefore horizontal versus vertical integration is equal to enlargement versus deepening, one of the most difficult dilemmas of the day. According to the principle of horizontality an institution remains the same throughout the enlargement, and only the group of stakeholders extends. Institutionalisation is a permanent process that could be present in relation to any third country.

3. It presupposes that the Community does not have any general, well-built, constant enlargement strategy. The changes in accession are due to the from time to time reformed union and the changing factors.

The legal background of enlargement defines the accession of new member states as a complex and ever-changing factor. This is based on the changes in the codified law and in the Treaties of Accession, not to mention the constant growth of soft law. In case of non-codified law the changes in the criteria and rules of accession, in the stakeholders and their roles and in the schedule of the enlargement proved the truth of my hypothesis. The Copenhagen Criteria and related documents, the Pre-Accession Strategy, the yearly progress reports of the Commission highlight the expansion the system of requirements that is also affected by the fact that the Union itself changes constantly as well. Though the Community has previously also laid down some political criteria for the candidate countries, these did not affect the substantive elements of the accession never before. In case of the countries after the democratic transition the criteria have changed and become stricter. To top it all, the Union even insisted on the strict and consistent adherence to them, which also resulted in changes in the inner policy of the Union.

4. It supposes that the methods, criteria and schedule of enlargements before 2004 can only be partially adapted to the eastern and further enlargements. Therefore the enlargement process of the EU can be segmented into two phases.

Both the continuously changing principles and the process-like nature of the enlargement – discussed above – can be separated into two phases. The first period begins in 1973 and lasts till the enlargement of 1995. In this term only those countries were accessed to the Union that are situated west from the “iron curtain” having almost the same political-economic system, based on democracy and market economy. Between 1973 and 1995 the Community was enlarged four times. Although the process generated several questions and disputes, the necessity of enlargement was out of question. It was so much indisputable that the EC signed the Accession Partnership even with Turkey (1963), Malta (1970) and Cyprus (1972) that were far from the European model.

The next phase began with the democratic transition. It is still a relevant problem for the Community even today that it could not react properly to the demand of application of the CEE countries. It lasted till 1993 to decide over the eastern enlargement and 5 another year passed before they started the accession negotiations. The root of the Union’s anxiety can be detected in the instable political system, the incomplete democratic and economic transition of these countries. This threat was intensified by the fact that the CEE countries hoped to be able to finish the transition successfully due to their EU membership. As a result of the comparative analysis of the two phases several differences came into focus, like – as the previous hypothesis has already proved fact – the longer term and stricter criteria, the insecure end of the accession, the stop of opt-out chance, the introduction of new instruments and techniques, furthermore, the negotiating position of the Union strengthened, meanwhile that of the candidate countries weakened. Therefore, the eastern enlargement is not the pursuance of the previous expansion, but it should be considered as the new phase of the integration process.

5. It supposes that the EU is dedicated to fully integrate the regional states, though the preferences of individual states differ significantly, and further enlargement depends largely on the challenges that the Community has to face with, more especially on the dilemma of enlargement or deepening.

The EU has to face with the inner problems of the Community and with the challenge of the enlargement and the new tasks generated by them at the same time. Until it gives the

answer to the questions “Where are the geographical borders of Europe?” and “Where are the boundaries of the deepening and sustainability of common policies?”, the process of enlargement will remain a longish process. What is more, it has to cope with the challenges of the accession of new member states regarding the institutional and financial system and political questions so that the enlargement would not generate contra-productive processes. Thus, enlargement depends largely on the integration capacity of the EU. The whole process is continuously and dynamically questioned by the euro-scepticists. All these result in tiredness about the enlargement and “reflection” period, which hinders the accession of the Western Balkans.

On the other end of the scale, there is the urging euro-atlantic integration of the region, and the threat that without getting accessed to the EU, the political, economic and institutional reforms of the region may slow down, resulting in the deepening of the development gap, and the strengthening of euro-scepticism and instability.

The EU influenced by two contradictory parts forgets about its inner problems in order to demonstrate strength in the world arena and to support the full integration of the region. Though, it is also clearly seen that the EU does not want to get engaged to the region as much as to the Central and Eastern European region, it refrains from concrete promises regarding membership or its date, there is a lack of schedule for each candidate state, not to mention that the amount and time of pre-accession support are also unknown. An example of this statelessness can be detected in such expressions in the European rhetoric like it is an “open ended process” and “the date of the accession is not defined till the end of the accession negotiations”.

The Western Balkan states have gone through serious reforms in the economy and in the political life. Though, it is a question, how long the EU will be able to facilitate the reforms without concrete political commitment.

6. It supposes that the Western Balkans as a region stands in contradiction with the heterogeneity of the area, that ambiguity may serve as a reason for the vagueness of the accession of the countries in the region.

The democratic transition in the CEE region also challenged the model of security policy. As a result of this stability vacuum the EU handled the Western Balkans as a unity from the perspective of European security policy. This subdivision was changed in Helsinki in 1999, where Romania and Bulgaria was separated from the region, thus dividing the Balkans

on the basis of euro-politics to two parts resulted in the artificial establishment of the Western Balkans sub-region. Under the notion Western Balkans – as a political space of the European enlargement policy – those states are understood that are not members of the Community, but a priority of their foreign policy is the euro-atlantic integration. The region is characterised by geographic, historic, political, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious and economic heterogeneity. Although it is in constant change – at the moment of its establishment it covered 5 states, and today 7 states – it is tackled as a single entity in the EU's enlargement strategy. This is strengthened by the geopolitical situation of the Western Balkans; as an island in the EU bordered by EU member states from each side. This geographical closeness makes its integration actual and inevitable, since the recent conflicts may be transported to the territory of the Community. Therefore, the EU elaborated a strategy to the whole region consisting of the Stability Pact, and then the Stabilisation and Association Agreement.

From the point of view of the Union the region should be handled as a homogeneous entity because of such common features like all the regional states have to face with the problems of transition to a democracy, market economy and the establishment of a nation state. These are strongly hindered by the growing new-nationalism, organised crime, the lack of relation with the other Western Balkan states and the dependency on great power politics. It has to be added that these common features are not present in the states of the region at the same intensity and depth, having even specific characters. Researchers mention this heterogeneity as a reason for the longer and harder process of accession than in case of the CEE countries. The differences are reflected in the fact that different states of the Western Balkans are on different levels of integration (e.g. Bosnia-Herzegovina has just signed the Stabilisation and Association Agreement in 2008 and Croatia has been doing its accession negotiations from 2005 on).

7. It supposes that as far as the economic-social relations and regional policy of Croatia – as part of the Western Balkans region – is concerned, it is more developed than the other states in the same region, and is rather good at fulfilling the criteria of the EU.

Croatia – the second more developed state of the ex-Yugoslavia – had good background to successfully go through the democratic transition. Due to the hard war fought for independence, its social and economic consequences and Franjo Tudjman's centralised and anti-democratic state, the dynamic change and reforms could be launched only after the change of regime, i.e. after 2000. Today's Croatia is characterised as a working democracy, with well-based institutional system, constitutionality, functioning market economy and

constant reforms that make it possible for the state to keep up with the competition within the EU. My presupposition, that Croatia is the most developed and democratised state of the region, is also proved by the reports and country analyses of the Union and other international organisations like the World Bank and the IMF. Regarding the macro-economic indexes it is high above in the rank of the region, and it is usually a good exemption from the general criticism of the whole region. Nevertheless, it has still much to do concerning the executive and the judicial branches of power, the structural reorganisation of the economy and its minority policy. The main tasks of the country are to solve the problems of agriculture, to modernise the taxation system, to decrease unemployment, develop regional policy, the privatisation of state-owned companies, to decrease public aids, to reform the judicial branch, to take anti-corruption measures in politics and to facilitate the return of refugees.

8. It supposes that the Community goes along the principle of differentiation, thus Croatia does not have to wait for the other regional states, but it can be accessed to the Union according to its development and fulfilling the criteria.

It seems to be a trend in the enlargements of the Union that it prefers when countries are accessed to the Community in small groups – 2-3 countries at the same time. There are of course exemptions like the case of Greece that was accessed as a single state, or the other extreme was the Eastern enlargement, when 10+2 states were accessed to the EU.

It is easy for the European Union to select the best countries on the basis of the strict system of criteria of the enlargement in 2004, thus starting the negotiations only with the properly developed and modernised states. So, a new feature of enlargement was introduced, i.e. the *principle of differentiation* that was very influential at the beginning of the accession negotiations and really motivated the candidate countries to compete, since it has not been clear for long which states would be in the first round. In case of the CEE countries after the democratic transition it was hard to make compromise between the different interests of the Community and of the candidate countries; therefore, it seemed to be an easier solution to tackle the region as a block instead of using the principle of differentiation. In 2001 the Union simply forgot about the principle of differentiation and started to enforce the principle of “equity” and decided for the “Big Bang”, since it was important for the EU that the countries after the successful democratic transition could be accessed to the Community as one block. With this solution the EU managed to get rid of the problem of the eastern enlargement, while all the wishes of the candidate states were fulfilled, since the “favourite” of everyone was accessed and no new artificial breaking line was created in the region.

As far as the Western Balkans is concerned, as the Stabilisation and Association Agreement was offered to each state of the region, it seemed for a long time as if the strategy of the eastern enlargement would be repeated, which would have been equally beneficial for both sides. Not to mention, that in this way the EU could postpone the date of accession largely, thus getting rid of the problem of such ambiguous countries like Croatia for a while. Provided that the EU would stick to this policy, this would question the ideology and criteria of the enlargement, and would launch contra-productive processes in case of the best candidate, Croatia. (The first signs of which can already be seen in the drastic fall of the public support of EU-accession.) Though, starting the negotiations with only one Western Balkan state, Croatia in 2005, the EU has voted for differentiation again. From then on it has been put down in several official documents that it can only be the individual development that determine the date of accession. This would mean for Croatia to get accessed to the Community as a single state after the first example of Greece in 1981. The EU would support the worth of Stabilisation and Association Process as well, since SAP is to be the bridge between the integration strategy of the Western Balkans and the enlargement strategy of the EU. It backed up the importance of such principles as the individual development, differentiation and the possibility to catch up with the other, let alone the opportunity to select new candidate countries.

9. It supposes that it will not create a new breaking line in the Western Balkans, on the contrary, it hopes that Zagreb will serve as a good example for the neighbouring countries. What is more, it could act as a bridge between the EU and the region, thus facilitate the accession process of the whole region.

In case of the enlargement of both the Eastern and Western Balkan states one of the major anxiety of the Union has been that differentiation would lead to new breaking lines within the region. In the first case this was the reason for accessing all the ten countries at the same time. Though, two states – Romania and Bulgaria – were skipped from the first round, the negotiation process did not doubt the intention of the EU.

The integration of the Western Balkans generates questions regarding security policy, thus it means an even bigger dilemma whether to separate Croatia and access it to the EU. It is reasonable why each document of the Community highlights the importance of stable and consolidated relationship between the states of the region. Although there are some contradictions these days, none of them threatens with the break-out of an armed conflict, since there is a tendency to tackle these problems in a peaceful manner.

Croatia has wide-ranging relationship with all states of the region, which secures that its accession would not mean a fall-back in this field. On the contrary, a basic element of both the Croatian and the European rhetoric is that the good Croatian example could motivate the other states, since the euro-atlantic integration is a priority of every country's foreign policy. Croatia would prove that the efforts of the country to fulfil the requirements of the EU worth it, which would be a positive message to the Western Balkan states. In this way Croatia could be a factor of stabilisation in the region, thus its accession is the interest of the Union as well. Its accession would not mean a new breaking line; on the contrary, it would be a bridge between the region and the EU.

10. It supposes that the inter- and intraregional relations, the bilateral relations with the neighbouring countries – especially with Hungary – play crucial role in the successful accession of Croatia to the European Union.

The independent Croatia had to establish its own foreign policy and its international relations. Today Zagreb has active multi- and bilateral regional relations. Its international relations can be divided into two main groups on the basis of its direction, aims and participants. On the one hand, it participates in the community programmes aiming the EU membership, which results in a cooperation with countries that are already members of the EU. On the other hand, as part of the neighbourhood policy, it cooperates with the Western Balkan countries aiming cohesion and coherence of the region. Basically, these are the two most influential priorities of the Croatian foreign policy.

In its inter-regional relations its cooperation with Hungary is exemplary that is based on hundreds of years of common historical and cultural relations and the intensive relations with those living in the border-regions. From the political perspective, the relationship of the two countries is perfect, thus the economic cooperation has increased and activated a lot since 2000. This is also backed by the active Hungarian support of the Croatian EU accession, more especially the successful cooperation in handing over the experiences of the accession, the more and more frequent high-level meetings, the joint Hungarian-Croatian government meetings, the widening economic-, cultural-, environmental- and cross-border cooperation.

Croatia's participation in the EU, her wide regional- and outside relations let Croatia be introduced to Europe. What is more, it also helps handing over and implementing the experiences of accession and best-practice, fulfilling the EU's criteria of accession, thus perhaps the last difficulties may be eliminated in order to be accessed to the European Union.

5. Publications and scientific conferences related to the dissertation

5. 1 Publications

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