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THE EU ENTRAPPED BETWEEN ENLARGEMENT AND DISINTEGRATION

Position Paper By

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to discuss about the problem related to the enlargement and disintegration of the European Union. It underlines existing shortcomings that the EU needs to overcome in order to become attractive. However, Euroscepticism is the main problem within the society, which directly increases popularity of the Eurosceptic parties and significantly effects on the unity of the European Union. Thus, the EU is becoming entrapped between the disintegration and enlargement, while it has five-candidate members.

However, the last part of the paper suggests the recommendations that should be consider. The final discussion based on issue of explaining the final consequences that might cause future enlargement and disintegration process.

Introduction

The consequences of the 1st and the 2nd World Wars taught to European continent one important thing, which is the essence of integration, unity, the things, which will help to overcome further such devastating wars. The integration, which would seem something unrealistic before 1950s, became out of fantasy with Schuman Declaration in 1950, which proposed the creation of European Cool and Steel Community, whose members will merge cool and steel production (Europa.eu). However, the idea of the establishment of this community was to go beyond that cooperation, and to establish further integration of countries, as one of the founders of this Community, Robert Schuman believed: "Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements, which first create a de facto solidarity (Moghadam 2014).

Further pushes towards integration happened after the creation of supranational bodies, which gave to the Union more value than just an economic unity of countries. As a result, executive, legislative and judiciary bodies were established. Geographical enlargement of the Union happened in 1973, when the UK, Denmark and Ireland decided to join to the EC. Gradual positive political changes inside the European continent did not leave without effect the EC integration process, as the Union got: three new members (Spain, Greece, and Portugal) after the change of regimes, FRG with its full territory after the fall of Berlin Wall, and more importantly former communist countries, which joined the family of Union after the disintegration of the USSR.

The establishment of Eurozone, Schengen Area and the achievement of four freedoms (movement, capital, finance, and trade) made the EU such a strong Union, which Europe saw never before. In spite of the reason that it was getting the functions of empire with increasing its supranational functions, for other countries it was an honor to be accessed to this empire. However, the ideal picture of the EU started to diminish after the Eurocrisis happened, as Eurosceptic parties started to get popularity. The things went further in a negative way after the Refugee crises, when most of the countries started to think about the safety of their borders. Currently, the European Union is in the phase of struggling for survival, as the idea of euroscepticism is getting popularity. Furthermore, the EU needs to tackle most of the problems inside it, which by the opinion of most of the specialists can be achieved only through reforms.

Historical background

The idea of a united Europe has occupied the minds of European politicians for a long time and only in the second half of the 20th century, it has found its practical embodiment. Integration cannot be a product of one political will, as certain prerequisites are required for its development.

The transition from simple international European cooperation to the present supranational community began on May 9, 1950, when Robert Schumann came up with an initiative, promulgating the plan developed by Jean Monnet to create an industry unification of countries (France, Germany, Italy and the Benelux countries), the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The novelty of this association was the creation of a European body of independent governments. The next step was the creation on 25 March 1957 of the European Economic Community (the "Joint Market") and the European Atomic Energy Community (ESAE), or "Euroatom".

In 1987, the EEC members put into effect the "Single European Act", which eliminated existing obstacles in economic cooperation, created a unified tax system, and abolished the differences in their legislation. In addition, the EEC countries in May 1992 concluded an agreement with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) on the formation of the European Economic Area (EEA). Capital, goods, services and labor started to freely move inside the EU. On February 6, 1992 in Maastricht (the Netherlands), the member states of the EEC signed agreements on which the functioning of the Single market began on January 1, 1993. At the same time, the Treaty on the European Union (EU) came into force, on the basis of which in 1999 the creation of a single currency space was completed - instead of national currencies, a single "European currency unit" - "euro" was introduced. The community plans to develop a common defense policy and introduce a single European citizenship. Consequently, the European House, which will be led by the European Council, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Court, should be formed.

After completing the fifth round of the enlargement, the European Union continued preparations for the next stage. The group of applicants for the entry includes official (Turkey and Macedonia) and potential candidates - the Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro). Kosovo comes under an individual program, adopted even before the unilateral declaration by the edge of independence. The main problems of the new expansion are basically the same as the previous ones: the EU intends to accept a large group of countries, most of which have a low level of economic development, insufficiently mature political systems, and, moreover, complex inter-ethnic problems.

Macedonia applied for membership in 2004 and in December 2005 received the official status of the candidate. Despite the favorable relations of Macedonia with neighboring Greece, the latter objects for the accession of the country, therefore the European Union is forced to negotiate with the country called the former Republic of Yugoslavia Macedonia (FYROM). The unsettled dispute is not an obstacle to Macedonia's accession to the EU. However, if the parties do not agree, Macedonia will become a member of the European Union under that name.

Turkey since 1963 is associated with the EU Association Agreement, and since 1966 - the Agreement on the Customs Union. The application for membership was filed in 1987, but

only 12 years later, in December 1999, the country received the official status of a candidate. In October 2004, the European Commission recognized that Turkey fully complies with the political criteria for membership and can begin negotiations. Since the fall of 2005, the screening process began, and in June 2006, the first head of the talks was opened. Soon the negotiation process was blocked by Cyprus, which presented a number of demands to the Turkish government. The talks were resumed only in March 2007. Supporters of Turkey's accession are sure that membership in the EU will strengthen democratic institutions in the country, will serve to further modernize its economy and, finally, will become a well-deserved reward for Turkey's longstanding membership in NATO. European companies will have unimpeded access to the vast and rapidly growing Turkish market, which will give impetus to the development of the EU economy as a whole. In addition, admission of Turkey to the EU with its Muslim population will demonstrate to the world that "clashes of civilizations" can be avoided. Opponents of accession believe that Turkey can only conditionally be considered a European country, since only 5% of its territory is in Europe. They draw attention to the fact that the Turkish government refuses to recognize Cyprus becoming a member of the EU, threatens with economic sanctions of Armenia, does not fully observe the principles of liberal democracy and infringes the rights of ethnic minorities (Kurds). In their view, the negotiation process may be negatively affected by the rise of nationalistic sentiments in the country. Another argument against Turkey's accession is the share of a large population (70 million people). The topic of Turkey's entrance into the EU is under the shadow after the dramatic changes in domestic and foreign policy priorities under the president Erdogan. Currently, besides the opponents of Turkey's joining into the EU, official Ankara itself does not show the same interest as it had before for the membership.

Iceland filed an official application for membership to the EU in July 2009. The impetus to this step was a difficult financial situation due to the global economic crisis. The EU Council accepted the application, and in two weeks the EU foreign ministers recommended that the European Commission prepares a report on Iceland's readiness to join the Union. Since 1994, Iceland has been a member of the European Economic Area, and since 2000 - a Schengen group. The country has a developed market economy and a long tradition of democratic governance, so it will easily fulfill the Copenhagen criteria. The only significant problem in the negotiations can be the head of fisheries. In summer of 2010, the European Council granted Iceland the status of an official candidate and allowed to begin negotiations on accession. However, on 13 September 2013 the Government of Iceland decided to withdraw its application for joining the EU.

The beginning of the XXI century was marked by the strengthening of opponents of the European idea and its institutional implementation. The number of Eurosceptic parties has sharply increased, their electoral base has expanded, and the influence on political processes has increased. In the overwhelming majority of EU countries, the Eurocritics were able to convert protest moods into political parties. The symbol of their triumph was the May 2014 elections to the European Parliament, the results of which a number of political experts described as an "earthquake" or "tsunami." Thus, in the UK, the United Kingdom Independence Party had a convincing victory (27.5%), in France the National Front (24.8%) took the first place, in Italy the Movement of Five Stars (21.1%) became the second party, and the newly emerged party "Alternative for Germany" was able to get 7.1% of the votes on the move. Eurosceptics entered the parliaments of Denmark and Sweden, Austria and Belgium, Hungary and Greece. In general, at the beginning of the XXI century Euroscepticism became one of the most significant phenomena of the socio-political life of

Europe. The rapid increase in the popularity of eurosceptics is believed to happen due to a number of negative trends in the EU. First, in the past few years, most economies in the Union have been exposed to crisis phenomena caused by a policy of austerity and solidarity. Secondly, the national identity of Europeans was under threat. In the words of the Dutch politician G. Wilders, this danger is due to two factors: the Islamization of Europe, connected with the growing migration to the EU, especially in recent months in connection with the ongoing wars in the Middle East and the planting of a pan-European consciousness that supersedes the national consciousness. In addition, the insufficient democratic character of the EU governing bodies and the transfer of some of the state powers to supranational bodies play an essential role in reducing the popularity of the European project. Among the conservative and nationalist views, this is perceived as a loss of sovereignty.

Problems regarding disintegration:

The European Union faces a whole series of problems that impel member states to integrate still further or risk a gradual unravelling of what has already been achieved. Popular support for further European integration is diminishing and this trend is being exploited by an increasingly assertive anti-EU, anti-immigrant far right in some EU countries, including Britain. Problem related to the increased number of immigration and refugees and concern about economic-national implications some European countries urge to impose national border control and restoration of socio- cultural homogeneity within national states. This poses a threat to the Schengen pact, which assures the right of free movement of people within the EU. It happens with declination of the trust in the EU in part due to a prolonged economic downturn and crisis. The austerity-driven tendency towards low investment and high unemployment is permanent. The Union seems powerless in the face of other global challenges as well. Meanwhile, progress towards a genuinely Common European Foreign and Security Policy remains painfully slow. The EU has always found it difficult to agree and then implement a common foreign, security and defense policy. In spite of a repeated desire to 'speak with one voice and act together', the reality is often different. Pursuit of 'national interests' still frustrates effective unity over relations with Russia and China. Furthermore, voter participation in elections to the European Parliament has been declining in recent years. Some draw the conclusion that the search for a European demos is doomed to fail and insist that democratic scrutiny of the EU must revert solely to national Parliaments. National parliamentarians acknowledge their systemic failure even to hold national governments properly to account in EU decision-making. Consequently, many citizens feel increasingly remote from EU decision-making and complain about a lack of democratic accountability. However, public understanding and confidence in the complex of the EU system of governance is waning. However, Euro-sceptic populists, nationalists and extremists gradually rises among European countries and within the societies, especially in Britain, France, Germany, and Hungary. Support for right-wing populist parties has grown, so too has visceral opposition to further EU enlargement and Anti-European sentiments even undermines the European unity. However, many nationalist right-wing parties in Europe have relatively long historical roots. The Austrian Freedom Party was founded in 1956 and the French National Front in 1972. Most of these parties with a substantial number of seats in parliament in 2016

emerged between the late 1980s and early 2000s.[1] (Palmer, 2011).

Through the history, In terms of the left–right division, the EU is typically perceived to be mainly a right-wing (neo-liberal) project, yet many on the left and right anticipate that this can change. The prevailing perceptions and anticipations have themselves been changing over time. For instance in the UK, Margaret Thatcher's conservative party at times supported, resisted and sought to shape the European integration process. It has been acceptable in so far as it has fostered market-freedoms and in so far as there has been a perception it can become more free-private-market oriented in the future (justifying some ceding of sovereignty). However, by the time David Cameron became leader, the Euro-sceptic right of the party were becoming increasingly restive and the party more broadly ambivalent about their position. This may have been partly because in the aftermath of the global financial crisis of 2008– 2009, the EU Commission started to advocate financial taxes and stronger regulation of finance. However, another shift, from left to right, concerns the nationalist populist parties. In their anti-establishment rhetoric, these parties have every so often defended nationally based welfare-systems for native citizens[2]. (Patomäki, 2016)

Euroscepticism presented among citizens and political parties in UK have caused the number of factors. Uneasy co-existence of supra-national EU legislation and inter-governmental cooperation has evolved into a hugely complex governance system, which the public find difficult to engage. Besides, citizens of the UK have seen the exit from the EU relatively 'a low-cost option', rather to stay inside. (Palmer, 2011). However, the UK is strong enough to deal with internal or external problems independently and follow its own path in international politics. While, not all EU states are the strong enough to do so. Besides, the institutional cost of exit is also relatively low as an institutional level, while is not participant in Eurozone or Schengen area. However, the Brexit might be the best lesson for the EU in order to make some changes and even to think about revising the treaty of EU. Moreover, concentrate on the importance of the action, rather written suggestions.

Problems regarding Enlargement

The EU's enlargement toward the eastern and the central Europe have proved remarkable success. It has helped to bring peace and stability to the continent. Nevertheless, contemporary challenges standing in front of the EU causes huge misunderstandings of the future, also further enlargement rise several concerns for the EU members. Hence, the EU seems little bit confused and frightened toward further integration process. Through the cost-benefit analyses, there are number of the issue that should be foreseen. Further enlargement requires inevitability of the institutional or policy reforms. It also will slow the decision making process and might cause security or economic concerns. Accession of the new relatively poor members would have negative implications on the socio-economic situation. Despite existing risk factors, the best way against disintegration process is the pursuing towards greater integration of the European states. Therefore, the EU needs to overcome

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[1] John Palmer, (2011). The The EU crisis: integration or gradual disintegration?
[2] Heikki Patomäki, (2016), Will the EU Disintegrate? What Does the Likely Possibility of Disintegration Tell About the Future of the World?. Available at:
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14747731.2016.1228786 (13.04.2017)

existing weaknesses and become much more attractive. However, the EU deals with a large number of policy areas, but foreign policy belong to the individual Member States, while the NATO guarantees defense. Consequently, the states within the EU and outside of the NATO are not safeguarded.

Despite the existing weaknesses, it is much easier to deal global challenges with Union level, than independently the member states are capable. They have no better alternative to stop integration and pursue disintegration process. The global financial and economic crisis is also now pushing factor to the countries in the Euro area to deepen their economic cooperation and integration. It is well known fact that the disintegration would have higher political, economic or social costs. Besides, the future of the EU, largely depends on the issue of the economic development.

However, EU should enhance European loyalty and allowing for a larger voice of the anti-system Eurosceptic opposition to prevent them from looking for exits. EU self-reinforcing set of complementary safeguards would discourage disintegrative behavior such as non-compliance or secession and would encourage the fulfilment of obligations. When exit options outside the EU are perceived as too costly or risky, dissatisfied actors are stuck with the EU. However, the exit costs are usually higher, because of membership in the Eurozone and the Schengen area or the economic dependence on the EU's internal market. The will by the certain countries regarding exist is inclined to reduce the costs of the EU membership, which should not be true in reality. [3] (Vollaard, 2014). Nevertheless, it will lead more financial devaluation, increase of unemployment and consequently decreasing of the living standards.

Recommendations

EU needs to overcome existing internal- external challenges in order not to be trapped between the enlargement and disintegration. Problems related to the immigration, refugee or economic crisis and the common security threats/concerns on terrorism need common voice and the common action. Moreover, they should strengthen common foreign and security policy together with CFSP.

However, the Brussels is not only the place where success of (decisions are reached) the union are reached. Further changes require the proper, reasonable action, more engagement on national level with help of national parliament/government. Without willingness of the single member states, nothing should be done. In this multipolar and globalized world, they should ensure high degree of cooperation. Consent of ideas are crucially important for the regional unity as well. Moreover, the Union should concentrate on the precise action rather to be only legislative machine, deepen and widen its integration.

However, process of integration helps countries to seek common understanding regarding common goods. It deepens relationships and rises trust that ensures common sense of responsibility, while economic integration and interdependency promotes welfare and generally rises economic efficiency. However, interest based communication on political-economic transaction, strengthens interstate relationships and creates more peaceful environment, where the peace, security and stability is guaranteed.

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