

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ENLARGEMENT TO DATE

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The European Union is now unifying Europe after decades of conflicts. The EU has enlarged to 25 and soon 27 Member States. Over the last fifteen years, the EU has helped to transform Central and Eastern Europe into democracies. It has also inspired reforms in Turkey, Croatia and the other Western Balkans countries. Europeans benefit from having stable democracies and prosperous market economies. The enlargement process extends peace, stability, security, human rights, democracy, the rule of law and prosperity.

Two years after May 2004 the biggest enlargement ever of the European Union is an economic success: the 10 new Member States' economies are growing at a rapid pace enabling them to progressively bridge the gap with their neighbours. But the latter also win as the increase of the EU's single market by 75 million to 450 million inhabitants brings a wealth of trade and investment opportunities.

The fifth enlargement did not involve, as some feared, any major disruption to the economic stability of the continent, nor an uncontrollable flow of population away from the east of Europe towards the west of the continent.

On the contrary it permitted the very rapid integration of the new Member States into the European Union trade flows and has created conditions favourable to sustained growth in Central and Eastern Europe. This should in turn lead, in the near future, to some convergence of these economies with those of Western Europe.

Intensifying commercial links, trade liberalisation through the Europe agreements signed in the early 90s, foreign direct investment, greater efficiency through adapting market mechanisms, macro-economic stability are behind the good results.

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Overall, the fifth enlargement, by leading to a larger, more integrated internal market, has created the conditions for the whole European economy to become stronger and more dynamic, hence to be better equipped to face increased global competition.

It is possible to say that the fifth enlargement has been a success for all its Member States.

We will examine the results of this success in pure economic terms, as well as on industrial matters. There are also positive results in the social domain at costs which are sustainable. We will end this short paper by a rapid survey of the current perspectives of the enlargement policy.

An Economic and Industrial success

Enlargement is a catching—up and economic growth tool

Additional growth because of enlargement is estimated to 1.5%/2% a year in the new Member States. In the old Member States, the former eastern border benefit most from the enhanced trade and investment possibilities (mainly in Germany, Austria, Italy, Denmark).

In comparison with the previous EU15, enlargement increased income diversity but in 2005, per capita income is already at 43 % of the former EU15 in Latvia, 46 % in Poland, 75 % in Slovenia and 77 % in Cyprus.

The central and eastern European countries have already successfully transformed their economies from central planning to functioning free markets, even before enlargement. Their ambition of complying with the Copenhagen criteria for EU accession had served as a catalyst for change.

Per capita incomes are much closer to former EU15 levels now than they were back in 1997 (the year of Agenda 2000). Recently EU-10 growth has been higher than in the former EU15 and EU-10 are now on a long way to convergence with the EU-15.

Macro-economic indicators are generally making improvements in the New Member States. Trade integration which started long before accession and capital movements that were liberalised before accession are amongst the main factors which helped in this process and have played a decisive role in catching up. The

Euro adaptation envisaged can create a new focal point for further structural reforms while providing for macro-economic and fiscal discipline.

Regarding the Maastricht criteria, inflation in the EU-10 has gone down, but wage pressures remain strong and interest rates have come closer to the EU-15 levels over recent years. Eight of the EU-10 have public debt ratios which were in 2004 below the 60% of GDP, half of the new Member States were below the Maastricht threshold of 3 % of GDP for fiscal deficit and 7/10 already joined the exchange rates mechanism. The current account deficits of the EU-10 have been financed by foreign direct investment so far.

The average unemployment rate for the EU-10 slightly decreased over 2004-2005 and employment growth accelerated in the EU-15 over the past two years. Trade integration is already a reality in the global EU 25.

The 10 new EU member states have been highly active participants in the process of trade integration since the early 1990s. This integration process is being driven by trade liberalisation policies, falling transportation and communication costs, rising income levels and development of increasingly global production systems.

Trade flows between the EU-10 and the EU 15 increased dramatically in the period preceding EU accession. Both the prospect of EU accession and trade liberalisation through the Europe agreements triggered a surge in trade in the second half of the 1990s. As a result of the Europe agreements the EU-15 rapidly became the major trading partner for EU-10 countries. In average, the EU-15 has a surplus of more than Eur. 14bn with the 10 Central and Eastern European acceding Countries between 1993 and 2003. The degree of trade integration of the recently acceded Member States with the EU-15 slightly exceeded the degree of the EU-15 countries.

EU accession boosted exports of goods in the two groups of countries. Over the period 1993/2003, the EU-10 increased its market share in the EU-15 by 8 percentage points accounting for 13% of the extra EU-15 imports of goods. The EU-15 countries accounted for around 70 % of the extra EU-10 imports of goods in 2005 with Germany remaining the top EU-15 exporter to these countries. There is a certain complementarity between the trade structures of the EU-10 and EU-15.

There is a strong growth of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in The New Member States

We have recently seen a rapid growth of foreign direct investment flows into the new Member States. In 2004 the global stock of FDI reached 200 billion EUROS in the new Member States (starting at more or less zero at the beginning of the 1990s). The three largest economies: Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic absorbed more or less 80% of this sum. The EU-15 is by far the main investor, with a share of more than three-quarters of the total inward stock in the new Member States in 2004. The Netherlands, Germany and France are the most important investors. Inward FDI in modern and more skill intensive sectors have increased more rapidly. Transport equipment is the largest sector in terms of FDI in manufacturing in the new Member States.

The sensitive question of possible relocation of industries in the new Member States must be well understood. Studies confirm that relocation of companies from the former EU 15 to the new Member States remains a marginal phenomenon. Moreover, Central and Eastern Europe is not the main destination for relocation. It is not enlargement that mainly causes outsourcing and relocation, but global competition.

Companies will always seek lower costs, larger markets, technological innovation and other factors that give them a competitive edge. European companies face global competition. Investing in Central and Eastern Europe can help European industry to maintain jobs and create growth throughout Europe. For instance, the expansion of service enterprises is creating jobs both in new Member States and former EU 15. Enlargement helps the EU to meet the challenge of globalisation by increasing internal and external trade and thus keeping and creating jobs.

The EU accession culminated a process of gradual structural transformation of the new Member States. The new Member States are particularly attractive, but we cannot say that the direct increasing foreign investment flows from the EU-15 to the new Member States are perfect indicators of possible relocation of activities from EU-15 to EU-10 by far. Not all FDI can be associated with the shifting of activities from EU-15 to EU-10.

An important aspect from this problematic is the fact that the trade in intermediate goods has become the most important component for the new Member States (it represents on average around 7% of their GDP). Supplying local markets in service trades is the principal motivation for foreign investors rather than outstanding or establishment or export-oriented activities.

The concerns raised among the old Member States due to fears of loss of employment seem to be exaggerated. While intra-EU relocations may have a significant impact in certain sectors like textiles, transport material and information and communication technology for certain EU-15 regions where they were concentrated, there are no reasons to believe that a massive shift of activities and jobs from the old to the new Member States is underway. The EU-15 remains by far the largest host for FDI within the enlarged EU. In 2003 the share of the new Member States in the outflows of the EU-15 was only 1,5%, while close to two-thirds went to the EU-15. Only a very small share of FDI by the EU-15 firms going to the new Member States involves the substitution of activities previously carried out in the home country. Estimated relocations represented less than 10% of the total French foreign direct investment in central and Eastern European countries.

Positive results in the social domain at sustainable costs

The impact of Enlargement on labour markets of the former EU 15 is limited and social dumping is not a reality

The impact of relocations on employment levels in the EU-15 economies also appears to be clearly limited. The effect of employment substitution between home employment in European multinationals and employment created in their subsidiaries in the new Member States also tends to be small. The employment creation effect in subsidiaries in the new Member States is considerably greater than the employment reduction at home. But the skill composition of labour demand in the EU-15 may change as a result of intra-EU relocations. In Germany it has contributed to the fall in the relative employment of manual workers.

The question of potential migrations from New Member States to the former EU 15 must not be over-estimated.

The doomsday predictions of a flood of workers from Central and Eastern Europe have proved to be unfounded. Labour migration from new Member States to former EU 15 has been modest, rarely reaching even 1 % of the active working population of the host country. This is the case both in those Member States that applied restrictions to access to their labour market and in those which did not. These workers have helped to ease labour shortage in sectors such as agriculture and construction.

The very long run migration potential for the EU of the source populations of the Central and Eastern Europe on countries is estimated at around 3 million people (in cumulated terms over 15 years). These numbers shouldn't affect the EU labour market in general.

Since enlargement there has been an increase in the number of Central and Eastern European countries workers in EU-15 Member States but the number of permits of employment is rather limited. There was an increase in the UK and to a certain extent in Austria and Ireland. A little more than 400 000 Poles migrated in the first year of which 350 000 were seasonal workers. In less than two years 350 000 workers from the new Member States were registered in the UK and close to 150 000 in Ireland.

Ireland, the UK and Sweden have successfully opened their labour markets to the workers from Eastern and Central Europe right from the start, on 1 May 2004. In Ireland, the arrival of workers from the new Member States has played a major role in sustaining the country's high growth rate. In the UK, workers from the new Member States have helped to fill a part of the half a million job vacancies. In light of these positive experiences, Finland, Portugal and Spain have now decided that they too will open their labour markets. Other countries such as Belgium and France have opted for partial opening.

There is no evidence that migration flows from the Central and Eastern European countries caused significant labour market disturbances in the EU15 countries and migration from third countries is a much more important phenomenon than intra EU mobility. A rather high percentage of potential migrations could be classified as highly skilled comprising managers, scientist researchers and students. An important part of this population is students from Central and Eastern Europe receiving tertiary education in countries of the EU-15.

Employment grew 1 % on average in 2005 both in new Member States and former EU 15. Enlargement favours legal migration, which is easier to control,

whereas the real problem in many Member States is illegal migration, mainly from third countries.

Enlargement has not undermined labour conditions and led to social dumping. By opening up opportunities for legal work in the former EU 15 the 2004 enlargement has helped to reduce the grey economy (and the black labour market). Legal workers are less prone to exploitation and poor standards; they also pay taxes and social security contributions.

The increase in the registered working population from new Member States in the former EU 15 had no relevant impact in social security spending.

Meanwhile, the EU requires the new members to adopt its health, safety and other labour standards, improving working conditions for people in those countries and contributing to fair competition between companies. There is no evidence that enlargement has caused social dumping. On the contrary, through enlargement, harmonised social standards are slowly but surely spreading across the EU.

Student exchange programmes are a visible political initiative and a very important benefit for all Europe.

The exchange programmes for young people and students are among the most visible political initiatives and the most promising in terms of the furthering of European integration. Among them, the most significant are Erasmus and Léonardo da Vinci. Within the framework of the enlargement policy, they were incorporated very early into the pre-accession process.

From 1998/99 to 2003/04 the ten new Member States had almost 75000 students receiving Erasmus grants, with a constant progression (from less than 5000 the first year to almost 20000 in 2004). Among them, Poland passed from 1400 students in 1998/99 to 6300 in 2003/04, to a total of almost 24.000 students.

The favourable results of this policy should not, however, be appreciated only by quantification of the number of grants allocated by country, but also by the fact that the students of the European Union increasingly requested to go to carry out at least a six-month study period in one of the new Member States. Thus, while in 1998/99 the Czech Republic and Poland had attracted slightly more than 200 students each, in 2003/04 Poland received about 4.500 and the Czech Republic roughly 4.200. This favourable development is noted, on a lesser scale, given the size of the countries, in all the new Member States.

This involves, therefore, fantastic mixing of young people between the 25 Member States of the European Union which shows the major success of this policy, while, few years before, the exchange was completely pointless. Although formally independent of the enlargement policy of the European Union, this policy can, to a rather large extent, be given credit for this development. The other programmes of the Union (of which Léonardo da Vinci, etc) have experienced comparable developments.

The impact of enlargement on agriculture in the new Member States is significant (mainly through financial transfers).

The enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe was widely expected to have considerable impacts on agriculture in both the old Member States and the new ones.

Agricultural employment is shrinking in both old and new Member States, but at a rate around 2 % a year in the old Member States and around 4 % in the new ones.

Association agreements and further bilateral agreements paved the way for a gradual liberalisation of trade on agricultural products. Farmers in the new Member States have received direct payments from the first year as members of the EU at a rate of 25 % of the EU level (plus a possible topping up of 5 % or 10 %) with a possibility of a simplified way of application. Accession led to a dramatic increase of average real agricultural incomes in EU10 in 2004/2005 by more than 70 % as compared to the average between 1999 and 2003 (farm incomes almost doubled in Poland) even if the absolute average income is still in the new Member States far below the level in EU-15. This increase has been caused mainly by the introduction of the direct payments but it may be a certain handicap for necessary restructuring. Fears that EU-15 farmers could suffer from new competitors in the EU-10 have not been confirmed.

The accession to the EU and the implementation of the Common Agriculture Policy has also affected the food processing sector (especially in fulfilling EU hygiene and quality standards) Food processing in the new Member States benefited particularly from foreign direct investment in the years preceding accession.

Total agricultural trade of the EU-10 has been steadily increasing in recent years. It almost doubled but imports have increased slightly more strongly than exports and thus, the agricultural trade deficit of the new Member States with the

EU15 has also increased (except for Hungary). The share of processed products in EU10 exports increased.

The Financial Assistance at a sustainable cost helped the new Member States to implement the acquis.

New Member States have made rapid progress in implementing the EU acquis in national legislation. They have been obliged to fully implement EU legislation. For nearly 99 % of all that had to be implemented, national measures for their implementation had been notified. It is slightly above the average for all Member States. The new Member States are performing substantially better than the former EU 15 in applying EU laws.

By opening up a market of 75 million consumers to companies from the former EU 15 enlargement has strengthened competition in the internal market, which in turn also makes European companies more competitive on world markets. The same rule on internal market, competition and state aid now apply across the 25 Member States. But the cost of compliance with the acquis is considerable (in environment, infrastructure and transport). For environment it can be between 1 and 3% of GDP over an extended time period. The total could be in environment around 100 billion Euros.

In 2005 the financial assistance to the new Member States was a bit more than 2% of their GDP (only 0.1% of GDP in the former EU 15). A part of the costs comes back because the people in the new Member States buy most of their imported goods from the former EU 15. The disbursements equal not less than 7 % of the EU budget.

The new members' share of the Union's budget represents only 0.15 % of the gross domestic product. This money is mainly spent on better infrastructure, which benefits businesses across the whole EU. Moreover, the new member economies are growing twice as fast as the old ones. The money spent to help developing these economies creates new business opportunities in old and new Member States alike.

Under the proposed financial perspectives 2007/15 net EU transfers to all new Member States together, would vary from some 1,6% to 3,3 % of their aggregated GDP with the smaller net transfers observed at the beginning of the period.

Poorer countries are expected to receive more. Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia and Romania are going to receive a net inflow of EU transfers close to 4% of GDP.

Current Perspectives of the Enlargement Policy

Before ending this short presentation on the economic impact of the fifth enlargement, we should like to draw very quickly what are the economic perspectives of the enlargement policy in the relations with other countries in Europe.

Bulgaria and Romania will enter in 2007 or 2008, once they meet the criteria. Croatia will follow some time later, once it fulfils all the conditions. Other countries of the Western Balkans have the perspective of eventual accession, but they have major work to do and will only be able to join once they are fully prepared. Turkey is negotiating accession with the EU, but it will take a long time to meet all the criteria - perhaps a decade or more. Any decision on the accession of a country has to be taken unanimously by all Member States.

In this framework we have to take into account the concept of absorption capacity, which is about whether the EU can take in new members while continuing to function effectively. It is a functional concept, not a geographical one.

Absorption capacity is an important consideration, as stated by the European Council in Copenhagen in 1993: "the Union's capacity to absorb new members, while maintaining the momentum of European integration, is an important consideration in the general interest of both the Union and the candidate countries". The question of absorption capacity was dealt with for the 2004 enlargement by the Commission's Agenda 2000 document (produced in 1997), which proposed reforms of institutions, policies and the budget of the EU. It paved the way for the decisions in 1999-2003 that prepared the Union for a smooth accession of the 10 new member states in May 2004.

On the other side the EU Treaty says that any European country which respects the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law may apply for EU membership. However, this does not mean that all European countries must apply, or that the EU has to accept all applications. It is not an automatic process, but one where conditionality is the key. The EU's borders are defined by decisions taken unanimously at the highest political level.

The EU is based more on values and political will than on rivers and mountains. The European Union is a political project, and its borders are political. They differ from physical and geographical concepts of Europe. Geographers and historians have never agreed on the physical or natural borders of Europe. The political border of the EU has changed every time a new country has joined.

For the time being our commitments concern Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Croatia and the other Western Balkans countries, if we consider the question of comparison between Ukraine and Turkey, they are at different stages in their relationship with the EU. Turkey's membership prospects and European vocation are long-standing, while Ukraine's EU aspiration is very recent.

The EU supports Ukraine's quest for democratic stability and economic development through the European Neighbourhood Policy. It paves the way for free trade, economic assistance, enhanced political dialogue and better people-to-people contacts. The EU has never offered a membership perspective to Ukraine, and any such decision would have to be taken unanimously by all member states.

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The fifth enlargement has acted as a catalyst of economic dynamism and modernisation for the European Union, helping the economies of former EU 15 and new Member States to better face the challenges of globalisation. At the same time, the economic changes induced by this enlargement have been absorbed quite smoothly, and there is no evidence of disruptive impacts on the product or labour market. Careful preparation of the enlargement over the previous decade has been a key to achieve this successful outcome.

The citizens of the EU 25 benefit from the increased stability and peaceful development to which the enlargement of the EU has contributed. The citizens of the former EU 15 benefit from rising consumer demand in the new members because companies have sold their goods, services and know-how in these markets, which has helped to keep and create jobs back home. Each machine sold by a German company in Poland benefits German citizens, while each French car sold or transaction carried out by a Dutch bank in the new member states benefits the French and Dutch economies. Trade between the former EU 15 and the new members has quadrupled in volume in the last decade. The former EU 15 have

long enjoyed a major trade surplus with the new member states, which has helped to maintain jobs.

Citizens can benefit from enlargement in other ways, such as by easier travel, better chances to study abroad, and better business conditions.

When the EU structural funds finance highways and bridges in Spain and Portugal, or in Poland, Estonia and Slovenia, all Europeans travelling, living or doing business in those countries benefit from enlargement.

In a world marked by global competition economic dynamism is essential. The fifth enlargement has offered new opportunities for all the new Member States to undertake important steps in this direction. Both companies and consumers will benefit from a larger internal market, technological innovation, lower prices, and hence will be in a better position to fully reap the opportunities of the new division of labour that is emerging at global level. The Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs and the path to the euro offer a framework in which to pursue the necessary structural change. Taking with determination this road leading to a dynamic European Union on the world scene will yield further substantial benefits to all parties involved in the EU and beyond.

GEOPOLITICAL PROJECTIONS OF NEW LITHUANIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Laurynas Jonavičius*

Introduction

Lithuania's membership in NATO and the European Union is perceived today as a natural state, although only a few years ago this was the key subject of discussion in the political and academic layers and in the media. From 1995 to 2004 the ambition to integrate into those structures was the driving force of Lithuanian foreign policy. The implementation of this objective employed basically all national capacities starting with actions to ensure good neighbouring relations and ending with domestic policy reforms in the economic, social, and many other fields.

Today the major subject of discussion has been distribution and utilisation of EU funds or the living conditions of NATO soldiers in Īiauliai. In other words, the former priorities of foreign policy became part of the domestic policy agenda. Attempts have been made to fill in the vacuum which emerged in the sphere of foreign policy by bringing out the idea of Lithuania as the regional leader. This idea has been consistently developed in public discourse by the country's top-ranking officials including the Chairman of the Seimas and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

This article examines the process of establishing Lithuania's identity of the regional leader in the country's public discourse. With emphasis on the geopolitical aspect of Lithuania's spatial status, a constructivist approach to the nature of international relations is invoked, and the importance of the identity factor for the formation of Lithuania's new foreign policy is presented. Based on the theory of conventional constructivism, statements of critical geopolitics, and the analysis of Lithuanian geopolitical discourse, the article conveys the principles of shaping the coun-

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try's geopolitical identity, the factors which condition its changes, and the resulting impact on the daily process of foreign policy implementation.

The article examines the space of international relations from the geopolitical angle because geopolitics, as the approach to the core of international relations, in the last few years has become particularly popular in the discourse of Lithuanian academicians and politicians-practitioners.

Theoretical model

Since the very paradigm of geopolitics today is not homogeneous, the article conceptualises the key assumptions of the geopolitical theory, whereas statements of traditional and critical geopolitics are linked into the integral theoretical model of geopolitical analysis. This model is based on the identification and integration of *material and ideational factors* which are characteristic of traditional and critical geopolitics respectively. The assumptions of *conventional constructivism* in the theory of international relations are used as the theoretical framework with integrated elements of traditional and critical geopolitics. Based on the assumptions of conventional constructivism, geopolitical identity in this model is treated as the central element, whose definition and empirical analysis allow for the explanation of geopolitical projections in foreign policy. Here geopolitical identity is perceived as "relatively stable role-specific self-perception and the expectations rising from that perception".¹ This perception is a social definition rising from those theories on which actors of the international system base their approach to *Self* and *Others* and whose assumptions constitute the geopolitical structure of the world. The examination of geopolitical discourse and of relevant material factors comprises the empirical part of the paper.

Lithuanian geopolitical identity and its effects on foreign policy

Proceeding to the analysis of Lithuanian geopolitical identity, there is a need to provide, from this angle, a general overview of the development of Lithuania's

Alexander Wendt "Anarchy is What States Make of It". Kn. A.Linklater (sud.) *International Relations. Critical Concepts in Political Science*, Volume II, Routledge, 2001, 619-620.

identity after the end of the Cold War, which has influenced the country's foreign policy. The tradition of geopolitical thinking in Lithuania after the collapse of the Soviet Union in principle can be divided into two phases - the *"return to the West"* phase and the *"regional leadership"* phase.

Return to the West geopolitics

As mentioned before, from 1995 to 2004 Lithuanian foreign policy was dominated by two key focus areas — membership in NATO and in the European Union. The declaration of "return to the West" in the programmes of political parties, mass media, and academic literature serves as evidence that the ambition to retreat from the "shatter belt zone" between East and West became the driving force of Lithuanian foreign policy. The discourse of formal, practical, and popular geopolitics created the idea of "return to the West" in one accord as the only and inevitable reality. This was accompanied by the construction of Russia's image of the greatest risk and threat to Lithuania.

Lithuania's geopolitical identity as the integral part of the Western world quite easily found its way to geopolitical discourse for several reasons:

- this geopolitical objective was based on a very strong historical imperative:
during Soviet occupation it was developed, supported, and redesigned by
Lithuanian emigrants and resistance actors, whose efforts were
substantially
reinforced by external factors, i.e. the US non-recognition policy of
Lithuanian annexation.
- structural changes in the international system (the breakdown of the
Soviet
Union and the end of the Cold War) provided favourable conditions for
this
identity to transit from its hidden form to the official level and to anchor
in
foreign policy as a priority realm.

Upon breaking old and externally enforced "identity commitments", Lithuania started developing its new identity with great success. Since this development coincided with identity transformation processes of the big powers, it caused fewer objections on their part because the world in principle still operated under the conditions of transforming self-identification of the Cold War period. With those conditions in place, a need emerged for critical evaluation of the internatio-

nal identity structure of all actors within the global system (the visions of a multi-pole and single-pole world emerged) and for new constructivist practice. Deepening integration of European states and unilateral US actions in Iraq can be viewed as examples of this new practice aimed at constructing or enforcing new identities of actors within their own or others' international system and at developing a new structure of international institutions which support those identities. In Lithuania, the transformation of identity ran quite smoothly owing to the existence of geopolitical discourse which was created and supported throughout the Cold War and which clearly defined the guidelines for the new identity: independent Lithuania in the family of West European states linked through transatlantic relations with the USA. Following restoration of independence in 1990, those ideas, leaning upon the new "material foundation" — the transformation of relationships between the big powers - created a forecastle of practical geopolitics, which was easily implemented on the level of popular geopolitics as well. Since Western Europe and the USA in principle approved the creation of this kind of identity for Lithuania (negotiations commenced regarding NATO and EU membership), Lithuania quite easily achieved success in the implementation of the respective constructivist practice, whereas the formal confirmation of Lithuania's membership in the EU and NATO in 2004 basically finalised the process of constructing this new geopolitical identity: Lithuania established in the "shared understanding" of the greater part of the world as part of Western Europe, professing the values of democracy, free market, human rights, and the rule of law.

Geopolitics of regional leadership

Upon eventually becoming a full-fledged member of NATO and the EU, Lithuania faced somewhat of a vacuum in its foreign policy. To fill this gap, it was supposed to define new or reformulate old goals, mobilising the experience accumulated in the 15 years of independence.

In his speech at the conference "Lithuania's new foreign policy" held on the 24th of May at Vilnius University, the then acting president of Lithuania Artūras Paulauskas said:

Today I suggest a new broader doctrine. I view Lithuania as the regional leader through its quality of membership in the EU and NATO and through proactively

developed neighbouring relations. I view Lithuania as the regional centre and Vilnius as the regional capital.

The idea of Lithuania as the regional centre was afterwards contemplated in speeches of many other Lithuanian political leaders, and this role has also been attributed to Lithuania in different draft concepts of its foreign policy, the agreement regarding foreign policy between Lithuanian political parties, and other documents.³

The very first question inevitably arising after hearing this type of declaration relates to the region's definition: which region Lithuania wants and seeks to lead? In practical terms, not a single speech or document which stresses the ambition to become a "regional centre" defines the specific region.

Traditionally, Lithuania can be attributed to even several regions/sub-regions. We are part of the so-called East Baltic sub-region, which also includes Latvia and Estonia. No one would dispute that we fall into the Baltic Sea region together with the same Latvia, Estonia, and the Scandinavian states, Germany, Russia, and Poland. Without going deep into the definition, which would take several other articles to explain, Lithuania is often attributed to Central, East, or Central-East European regions, whose geographic boundaries have changed many times in the course of history depending on the positioning of geopolitical forces. Although one may find a broad assortment of region definitions, both the materialist and the ideational definition deserve consideration. Surely, geography cannot be totally ignored when speaking about any (sub)region. What is also apparent is that mere geography is not enough. Although it is possible to distinguish the geographical-hydrographical region of the Danube basin, in the context of international politics it carries almost no analytical meaning. This allows for the inclusion of additional factors into the region's definition such as political, economic, and cultural belonging and common historical experience, which enables perception of the region as an integral formation in the lifecycle of more than one generation. In other words, the historic element supports the "shared understanding", which helps to distinguish one or another (sub) region irrespective of purely geographic

² A. Paulauskas "Lithuania's new foreign policy" [2004 06 07].

³ E.g. Resolution of the Lithuanian Seimas *regarding the foreign policy trends of the Republic of Lithuania following Lithuania's becoming a full-fledged member of NATO and the European Union*, 1 May 2004, Official Gazette, 2004, No. 75-2572.

factors. Hence the region's definition in today's international politics is becoming significant from the analytical point of view only when incorporating all the above-mentioned factors. This implies that a region can be characterised as certain material-geographic space united by common political, economic and cultural history. This history can be interpreted as a continuously (re) designed common "shared understanding" about the (sub)region, its belonging, and uniqueness compared to other material-ideational formations. At the same time it is important to support the region's definition with the factor of variability. Apart from the fact that a region is a material-geographical space united with political, economic, cultural, and other kinds of history, it is also a variable formation, whose variation depends on the structure of the international system and the policy pursued by individual states (within the region).

To conceptualise this definition of the region, one, again, must have recourse to geopolitical discourse. Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Antanas Valionis once expressed the idea that "For Lithuania to become a regional centre, it needs geographical space. To date, Lithuania without greater reservation has been attributed to only the tiny Baltic Region. Having distinguished North and Central Europe once, we still cannot boast a broader geographic identity. Therefore we must expand the interaction of the Baltic region with our northern, southern, and eastern neighbours to enable their proactive mutual relationships in improving Lithuania's strategic significance."⁴ These words confirm the above-presented conception of the region: the geographical space and the opportunity to construct the region's boundaries. Valionis' words can be decrypted as a direct call to alter Lithuania's geopolitical identity by constructing a new geopolitical (sub)region, whose leader Lithuania could be. In other words, it is not the interests and activities which are adjusted to objective reality, but rather "objective reality" is constructed in consideration of the need to establish a new identity.

One may conclude that political discourse, which became particularly active after the end of the Cold War, regarding Lithuania's belonging to Europe, whose institutional expression was negotiations on NATO and EU membership, enabled the construction of a new geopolitical formation in the country's geopolitical discourse: the sub-region of the "newEU and NATO members", which is intro-

⁴ A. Valionis, speech to heads of Lithuanian diplomatic missions, [2004 08 08].

duced as the eastern fore-post of "real" Europe with the function of spreading Western civilisation further East, to the "not so civilised" Europe, including CIS countries and partly Russia. This "civilisation spreading" function, in turn, is the expression of the pursuit to progress even further west. It is apparent that the declared interests "to expand the boundaries of Europe and surround Lithuania from all sides with free, democratic, and European-type states"⁵ and to implement the NATO and EU "open door" policy⁶ in the context of identity formation is the obvious ambition to move forward on the geopolitical map of Western Europe and to transfer the function of the eastern "fore-post" to other states, for instance the Ukraine.

The problem of regional leadership

After defining the (sub) region, at least to some extent, to which Lithuania attributes itself declaring its "regional leadership" ambition, let us pass on to the feasibility analysis of being the leader of this (sub)region.

The features of materialist-rationalist states which claim regional leadership are quite clearly presented by Cohen⁷, who argues that *the increased importance of second-order, or regional states has come at the moment in world history when major powers have begun to distance themselves from regions which they no longer consider vital to their own national interests. Second-order powerdom is (1) a reflection of the inherent military and economic strength of a state relative to its neighbours. At the same time this power is (2) the function of its centrality or nodality in regional transportation, communication, and trade. As important as any of these factors, however, is (3) the ambition and preservice of the state, not only to impose its influence on others, but to persuade them of their stakes in regional goals and values. One more criteria for measuring the strength of a regional power is (4) its ability to gain*

A. Valionis, speech to heads of Lithuanian diplomatic missions, [2004 08 08]. "We find it important that the European Union and NATO continue development. In the future we will support the states which strive to take the European path. Their success and democratic change will also secure our success" - V. Adamkus, speech at the meeting with heads of diplomatic missions accredited for Lithuania, [2005 03 21]. S. Cohen *Geopolitical realities and United States foreign policy*. — Political Geography, 22 (2003). -p. 1-33.

sustenance from one or more major powers without becoming a satellite <...> and through extra-regional political-military alliances, trade or ideological links.

Without going into much detail, it is obvious that according to these criteria Lithuania, in practically all fields, falls behind Poland, which, owing to its physical features and the attitude on the part of the big powers, is much more suitable for the post of "regional leader".

In other words, rational computations supposedly do not allow Lithuania to claim regional leadership. But maybe an alternative view exists as opposed to traditional rationalist-materialist thinking, which could help to explain today's changes in Lithuanian foreign policy and to support them in theory. One of these alternatives could be the already mentioned constructivist approach to international relations.

Identity transformation in Lithuania

It has already been mentioned that according to the constructivist theory actors of the international system (i.e. states) act according to the roles that they ascribe to themselves and others. That is to say, their behaviour and interests are conditioned by identity. Lithuania's "return to the West" policy was already discussed and it was mentioned that since 1 May 2004 the country has faced the process of the formation of the country's new foreign policy, which can be defined as the "regional leadership" policy. Based on the chosen theoretical model, it is apparent that this kind of transformation of foreign policy must be related to identity transformation.

In this context it is important to emphasise that the establishment of the identity of Lithuania as an integral part of the West was not the final point in the identity transformation process, which started after the collapse of the USSR. Upon gaining a firm position as a EU and NATO member, Lithuania, obtaining tangible support from this membership, has developed new ideas to create another - a substantially narrower - (sub) regional identity. This new identity is actually a declaration of the ambition to take the role of a (sub)regional leader.

Lithuania and Poland's strategic partnership as the ambition to establish the identity of the regional leader

Poland's geographic position and historic relationships with Lithuania could be defined as the crucial regional-scale factor which influences Lithuania's geopolitical projections. Everybody knows that since 1990 Poland has been Lithuania's strategic partner. What meaning, however, does it carry in the context of our country's new foreign policy and how do Poland's geopolitical discourse and practical geopolitics influence Lithuania's behaviour in the international arena?

In commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the agreement between Lithuania and Poland on friendly relations and good neighbourhood, Valionis said: "for those 10 years Lithuania has strived to be Poland's reliable partner (sic!). <...> Supported by Poland, Lithuania led off the Vilnius process, which was the outcome of good neighbourhood and solidarity all across Central and East Europe. <...> the dynamic space "from the Baltic to the Black Sea" may become one of the most promising regions in the European Union. <...> Lithuania and Poland are in the centre of this region. We can become its driving force, the crucial connecting link."⁸ Broadly speaking, the general analysis of Lithuania's geopolitical discourse shows that Poland has a firm position as a strategic and principal foreign policy partner in Lithuania's "shared understanding". To tell the truth, in Lithuania this is old and common knowledge. It is interesting, however, to look at Poland's geopolitical discourse on the subject.

On the one hand, it can be claimed that to date Poland has not shaped its position with respect to Lithuania's initiative. Poland's academic and practical geopolitical discourse is full of similar ideas about the regional centre to those Lithuania has declared. According to the head of the International Security and Strategic Studies Department at the Political Studies Institute of the Polish Science Academy Kaminski, " *The conception of Poland's raison d'état <...> is predicated on strengthening its position in NATO and joining the European Union, maintaining the geopolitical status quo in the area of the former Soviet Union, preventing the*

Speech by Minister of Foreign Affairs Valionis at the Lithuanian Seimas in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the agreement between Lithuania and Poland on friendly relations and good neighbourhood. — Vilnius, 23 April 2004 — http://www.urm.lt/view.php?cat_id=14&msg_id=3246.

emergence of new divisions in Europe (which implies assistance for Ukraine and Belarus and other neighbouring states) and stimulating European co-operation along the North-South axis. It is in Poland's strategic interest to see economic and political advance across the whole Central and Eastern European region and an eastward shift in the centre of gravity in Europe's relationships."⁹ Similar views are maintained by First Secretary of the Strategy and Foreign Policy Planning Department of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Olendzki, who claims that although Poland did not formally declare its ambition to be a regional leader, its policy in principle implies the existence of this kind of leadership.¹⁰ In other words, Poland's ambition of a regional leader is not smaller than Lithuania's. As far as stronger material background and specific relations with the big powers, particularly the US, are concerned, Poland's position in creating its identity of the regional leader is far more favourable. Moreover that Lithuania is given a back seat in Polish geopolitical discourse. At least comparing the significance which is attributed to Poland in Lithuania's foreign policy with that which Poland ascribes to Lithuania, it is apparent that we are much more "in love" with our neighbours. Taking the speech of the Polish minister of foreign affairs introducing the Polish foreign policy as an example, one may observe that Lithuania is mentioned only once and only in reference to the position of the Polish national minority.¹¹

In addition, with regard to regional leadership opportunities, Poles see Germany as their principal competitor in shaping the EU Eastern policy (i.e. of the regional leader). According to Kazanecki, *"Poland's main competitor to such a role is Germany. <...> Germany wants thereby to emphasise that the shaping of an [EU] Eastern policy should belong to it. This is an important challenge for Poland and one that requires an analysis of Poland's role in this area. We hold one more trump card for this competition. It is the support of the United States, which has an interest in Po-*

Kaminski A. *Quality of Structures, Sovereignty and Eastern Policy of Poland.*, http://www.sprawymiedzynarodowe.pl/yearbook/2000/druk/antoni_kaminski_quality...

Olendzki K. *Outlook for Regional Co-operation: Poland's role*, <http://www.sprawymiedzynarodowe.pl/yearbook/2003/olendzki.html>

Government information on the Polish foreign policy presented by the Minister of Foreign

Affairs of the RP, Prof. Adam Daniel Rotfeld, at the session of the Sejm on 21 January 2005.

http://www.msz.gov.pl/start.php?page=1000000000&obj_display_cat=3&obj_display_full=1039&obj_to_display_type=29.

land's position in this region and in the conduct of a policy by Poland towards, first of all, Belarus and Ukraine."¹² Again, there is even no mention of Lithuania. This kind of Polish discourse leads to two assumptions: Lithuania is either totally unappreciated as a strategic partner on the Polish part or a certain role of a partner/ (sub)leader in the region is foreseen for Lithuania. The fact that the second alternative is nonetheless more realistic is supported *inter alia* by the practical behaviour of Poland's political leaders. According to Polish President Alexander Kwas-niewski, "Poland like Lithuania has been at the intersection of different traditions, cultures, and mentalities from the very establishment of its statehood. This experience and knowledge can serve as a good background for creating the EU's rational and responsible Eastern policy."¹³ This can be understood as a certain opportunity for Lithuania to have its niche in the space of regional action and to actually "share" the role of the regional leader. Judging from the discourse, this "sharing" should be based on the division of labour principle: Poland would lead the creation of the Eastern dimension in the context of EU and US interests with particular focus on Ukraine's "westernisation", whereas Lithuania would take a somewhat "specialist" role with particular emphasis on the regions where Lithuania's experience and opportunities are relatively higher than Poland's.¹⁴ These specific regions should most probably include Belarus and Kaliningrad region.

The focus on the problems of Kaliningrad region has been associated exclusively with Lithuania for quite a while. On the one hand, this is due to Lithuania's tremendous attention to this region of the Russian Federation. On the other, when the issue of passenger or military transit from Russia to Kaliningrad is discussed, there are simply no references to the opportunities to perform it through the Polish territory (although physically this would be possible in principle). In other words, the Kaliningrad problem, in mutual relations with Russia and particularly with the EU, is raised mostly on Lithuania's initiative. This, in turn, as if reserves the right of initiative for Lithuania with respect to proposing solutions to this problem.

P. Kazanecki Belarus, Poland and the EU's "Eastern Dimension". — In The EU's "Eastern Dimension" — An opportunity for or Idee Fixe of Poland's Policy? — Centre for International Relations. — Warsaw, 2002. - www.csm.org.pl/en/files/easterndimension.pdf.
Poland, Lithuania could help with the EU's Eastern policy — the Polish president. — REUTERS -Lithuania 2004.09.10.
Or in the areas which Poland views as not very promising — the Belarus case.

With reference to Belarus, it is worth recalling the informal NATO summit held on 20-22 April 2005 in Vilnius and the statements made during the event by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. *"Belarus is really the last dictatorship in the centre of Europe, and it's time for a change in Belarus."*¹⁵ These words of one of the world's most powerful leaders were incidentally uttered in Vilnius. At the same time Rice emphasised the importance of Lithuania's role as a new EU and NATO member state in the development of democracy in the East - the Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova. That is to say, on the discourse level the US, and at the same time NATO, supposedly admit that Lithuania is the centre which should radiate the waves of democracy to Belarus. This is also supported with practice: it is the Lithuanian embassy in Minsk which became NATO's contact embassy in Belarus in 2005. In Vilnius the very same Rice met representatives of the Belarusian opposition. It is worth recalling that earlier Belarusian opposition numerous times found asylum in Vilnius.

In consideration of this situation and of the attitude in Poland, Lithuania's constantly emphasised strategic co-operation in the context of the identity of regional leadership could be quite easily explained. Realising that Poland's opportunities to be the regional leader are far greater, Lithuania constantly attempts to (re) construct its identity of Poland's most important partner, thus securing its opportunities to take the lead over one or another kind of initiative, i.e. Lithuania and Poland's strategic partnership is construed in Lithuanian geopolitical discourse as the tool for establishing geopolitical identity, which helps reconstruct and support this identity.

Influence of structural factors on Lithuanian foreign policy

According to O'Tuathail, the analysis of structural geopolitics is focused on the current geopolitical conditions of the contemporary world, which influence the way actors of the international system view the very same world. Among those principal conditions O'Tuathail names globalisation, informationalisation, and techno-scientific risks. These conditions are associated with the age of modernity, which no longer accepts the worldview of and denies traditional geopolitics, rai-

C. Rice: Lithuania gives new energy and inspiration. — ELTA 2005.04.20.

sing the importance of new factors. Disappearance of boundaries, "digitalisation" of international relations, inter-dependency, which grows at a spectacular pace, and similar changes irreversibly transform geopolitics (including the emergence of chronopolitics, etc.). In other words, representatives of critical geopolitics emphasise that the factors shaping the structure of the international system undergo change, which, in turn, implies alteration of the structure as such. Since this structure (which can also be characterised as a new whole of factors which structure international relations) denies the relevance of the factors underlined by traditional geopolitics, traditional geopolitics itself seems to be pushed down the stage.

If we look at the importance of structural factors for international relations from the constructivist perspective, we will see that here the concept of structure is as if "torn off" the object-materialist surface and lifted to the ideational level. According to Wendt, one has to agree with (neo)materialists, that *"there are strictly material elements in the structure of social systems. The actors who make up social systems are animals with biologically constituted capacities, needs, and dispositions not at all unlike their cousins lower down the food chain. These animals have various tools ("capabilities") at their disposal, material objects with intrinsic powers, which enable them to do certain things. In emphasizing the ideational aspect of international structure, therefore, we should not forget that it supervenes on this material base, the analysis of which is a key contribution of Realism."*¹⁶ In other words, it can be claimed that from the constructivist point of view structure is the common "shared understanding" which creates the rules of the game in the international system. These rules can be defined as "structure".

Let us try to have a look at how structural factors influence Lithuania's geopolitical identity (and automatically its geopolitical preferences). Here, again, one can make a few assumptions. It has been mentioned that following its accession to NATO and the EU Lithuania established its identity of an integral part of the Western world. This identity is also recognised in the geopolitical discourse of some of the big powers (USA, EU). Certain rather important actors of the international geopolitical system (i.e. Russia), however, do not admit it. This is to say, international geopolitical discourse influencing Lithuania's behaviours and preferences is not homogenous. Admittedly, the heterogeneity of the structure itself

Wendt *Social Theory*, 189.

has an automatic effect, which can be identified as geopolitical formations of the "buffer"/"shatter belt"/"gate-way"/"the black hole" as they are named on the academic, practical, and popular levels. The idea of Lithuania as a "bridge" between East and West as well as North and South is very popular in Lithuanian contemporary geopolitical discourse. This, however, is only one side of the impact of structural geopolitics. The other one relates to Lithuania's identity-based belonging to the specific part of the global geopolitical structure of the world. As mentioned before, Lithuania identifies itself with the West, whereas the East (Russia) is considered one of the major "enemies" in geopolitical discourse. The implications of this identity-based belonging condition the relevance of the geopolitical worldview of the Western world (in the broad sense), i.e. identifying itself with the West, Lithuania as if declares its ambition to accept that "shared understanding" which dominates in the West. Taking into account the relation between material and at the same time ideational powers of this Western block, the greatest structural influence should be experienced from the US.

The US factor

The US agenda and interests in the Eastern Baltic region in the period from the reestablishment of Lithuania's independence in 1990 to its accession to NATO and the EU in 2004 were very precisely defined by Asmus. He argues that the key strategic objective in the nineties was the need to settle affairs with the countries which occupied the space between Germany and Russia. This priority emerged in the US European policy because namely the Central and Eastern European countries historically were the major source of conflict in Europe. Formulated the other way round, these words may be claimed to imply the expansion of the Western world to the East, integrating Central and East European countries, and thus eliminating the non-security or non-stability arising from the non-defined geopolitical/civilisational/value-based identity of these countries. According to Asmus, today, when the former Central and Eastern Europe has already been stabilised (i.e. accepted to NATO), the US needs a new agenda. The major challenge which the US will have to face in the coming decade relates to problems in the so-called southern flank of the Euro-Atlantic community. In principle, this is the region which begins in the Balkans, covers the Black Sea region, and stretches across the

Southern Caucasus to Central Asia. It is in this particular space where the US sees its strategic interests for the nearest future. The involvement of the US in helping this region to stabilise and engage into the Western orbit serves as a contribution in pursuit of the major strategic goal of the US: solving the problem of the Great Middle East. According to Asmus, it is the Great Middle East, being as it is today, that poses most risks to US and European societies.¹⁷

If we agree with the assumption that the particular issues of the Near East today are the greatest priorities on the US foreign policy agenda, one may ask what role is taken by the Eastern Baltic region, i.e. also Lithuania, in the US geopolitical schemes following the enlargement of NATO and of the EU. The issue is elaborated on by Larrabee, who admits that *"the old agenda, prior to the integration, was really to promote the internal reform and the democratization of the Baltic States, to obtain NATO and EU integration, to overcome the Russian opposition, to gain western support for NATO and EU integration, and to stabilize the Baltic region."*¹⁸ He argues that a very important issue on the "US new agenda" is stabilisation of the region's direct neighbours, which include Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. One of the other important issues is the dissemination of stability to the Black Sea region. In other words, it is underlined that the major concern of the US in the 21st century is no longer the addressing of security issues in Europe, but rather relocation beyond the boundaries of Europe in pursuit of the same goals. Larrabee points out five key issues of the US "new" geopolitical agenda in the region where Lithuania, among others, acts:

- *Enhancing cooperation with Russia;*
- *Stabilizing Kaliningrad;*
- *Promoting Ukraine's European choice and integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions;*
- *Promoting the democratization of Belarus and;*

¹⁷ Advancing cooperation between Northern Europe and the United States. — An "E-Pine" Think Tank conference, Proceedings: E-Pine Think Tank Meeting, Washington DC, October 14, 2004, http://www.ui.se/texter/DC_report.pdf [Viewed on 2005 04 21].

¹⁸ Ibid.

- *Integrating the Black Sea region into a wider Euro-Atlantic security framework.*¹⁹

According to Asmus, the integration of and enhancing co-operation with Russia has been the most relevant issue on the US agenda for quite a while. " *We have to keep in mind that how we [US, "West"] think about Russia is obviously going to have profound implications in terms of how we deal with Russia, how you all deal with Russia, how the collection of countries at this table deals with Russia.* "²⁰ Translating these words into constructivist language one may conclude that one of the crucial factors influencing US actions towards Russia is Russia's identification as a friend or an enemy, a benevolent or an evil-minded actor (i.e. the identity-based factor). Another important message of this statement is that Americans almost straightforwardly say that the behaviour of Eastern Baltic States in foreign policy is conditioned by the US approach to that behaviour. This means that on the structural level the identities and interests of the Baltic States are not considered independent and are rather conditioned (to a rather great extent) by the US position and "shared understanding". This "shared understanding" is forced on Lithuania, which, in turn, accepts it.

The EU factor

Although US influence on the formation of the vision of Lithuanian geopolitical foreign policy is the strongest, the structural impact of the EU on this vision cannot be ignored. A concise and quite comprehensive analysis of the EU political discourse is provided by Mamadouh.²¹ She claims it is obvious that the mission of the European Union is envisaged as the securing of peace and prosperity in Europe and in the rest of the world. This kind of mission should be implemented through the dissemination of democracy and promotion of the "European method" — multilateralism. In other words, the geopolitical identity of the European

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Virginie Mamadouh "Framing the European Union as a geopolitical actor", Paper, presented at the SGIR Conference "Constructing World Orders", The Hague, 9-11 September, 2004, <http://www.sgir.org/conference2004/papers/Mamadouh%20-%20Framing%20the%20Euro-pean%20Union%20as%20geopolitical%20actor.pdf> [Viewed on 2005 0310]

Union can be defined as the "peaceful disseminator of democratic values" in the international system. What is important in this context is the identity of a "peaceful" actor, which serves as a distinctive feature from US identity. The latter openly declare that for the sake of democracy and human rights (i.e. Western values) they are determined to strike preventive blows and to protect their beliefs using military force. Whereas EU identity is unambiguously associated with peaceful dissemination of Western values: "The EU <...> can offer its unique fifty-year institutional experience how goals should be sought and implemented through continuous compromise and negotiation."²² This declaration of EU "peacefulness" allows for its definition as a "normative power",²³ which, although seeking the same goals as the US, uses different methods.

With reference to EU regional geopolitics, it should be noted that it to a large extent relates to EU ambition to create a "ring of friends"²⁴ along the EU's entire perimeter. Despite the fact that the geographical creation of this "ring of friends" is understood differently by specific EU Member States, one may nevertheless observe the generally declared EU commitment to develop a zone of security and stability not only inside the EU, but also beyond its boundaries. In this common ambition to create the "ring of friends" one may distinguish two narrower regional fields: the neighbourhood of the East and relations with the countries of the Mediterranean region. As a structural factor conditioning Lithuania's geopolitical preferences, EU policy has no significant impact on the Mediterranean states, therefore the most important element which can affect those preferences is namely EU policy with respect to eastern neighbours, or the so-called "Eastern dimension".

The Communication from the European Commission " *Wider Europe—Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neigh-*

Prodi Romano, "A Wider Europe — A Proximity Policy as the key to stability" Speech at the sixth ECSA-World conference "Peace, Security and Stability International Dialogue and the Role of the EU", Brussels, 5-6 December, 2002. http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/news/prodi?sp02_619.htm [Viewed on 2005 03 03].

Ian Manners "Normative Power Europe Reconsidered", CIDEL Workshop. Oslo 22-23 October, 2004, <http://www.arena.uio.no/cidel/WorkshopOsloSecurity/Manners.pdf> [Viewed on 2004 12 20]. Prodi "A Wider Europe", [2005 03 03].

bours"²⁵ states that with ongoing EU enlargement it is necessary to use the opportunity to reinforce co-operation with the new neighbours based on common values. At the same time it emphasises the objective "to avoid drawing new dividing lines in Europe and to promote stability and prosperity within and beyond the new borders of the Union."²⁶ The Communication reiterates that EU enlargement should facilitate reinforcement of relations with Russia and intensification of actions with respect to the Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus. According to the Commission, these relations should be developed in consideration of the objective to create the zone of prosperity and friendly neighbours — the already mentioned "ring of friends" - where the EU could boast close, peaceful, and constructive relations.

Viewing EU-declared goals from the Lithuanian identity-based perspective, one may recall the following statements of the Lithuanian Seimas regarding new foreign policy goals: "The Republic of Lithuania, a full-fledged member of the European Union, will seek <...> to become one of the regional centres with tangible influence on EU's neighbourhood policy and to support the EU "open door" policy based on the Copenhagen criteria for countries which declare the intention to access the European Union".²⁷ This is to say, the goals declared by Lithuania and the EU practically coincide. In this context one can arrive at the conclusion that the changing EU identity at the same time constitutes changes to Lithuanian identity. In consideration of the fact that from the material-economic point of view Lithuania is very strongly dependent on its relations with EU Member States, again, one can view this as the "adjustment" of Lithuania's new identity to the changing structural environment. Although EU impact on the ideational level is not as strong as that of the US, it is impossible to ignore firstly because of the material basis. This means that changing EU geopolitical identity (i.e. the factor of structural geopolitics) also influences the geopolitical projections of Lithuanian foreign policy.

Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament " *Wider Europe—Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours* " - Brussels, 11.3.2003, COM(2003) 104 final, http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/pdf/com03_104_en.pdf. Ibid.

Resolution of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania *on the foreign policies of the Republic of Lithuania following Lithuania's becoming a full-fledged member of NA TO and of the European Union*, Vilnius, Official Gazette, 2004, No. 75-2572.

3 The Russian factor

Finally, Russia's "shared understanding" is the third very important structural factor in Lithuanian foreign policy. Traditionally, Russia was understood as the major obstacle which prevented Lithuania from "returning to Europe" and attempted to retain Lithuania within its sphere of influence. This identification of Russia with an "enemy" is closely related to the geopolitical discourse of Russia and to its interpretation in Lithuania. Russia's constant reiteration of its status as the great power and of its eternal interests in the near abroad, for historical reasons has been associated in Lithuania with the Russian occupation. This is to say, Lithuania's "shared understanding" about Russia treats the identity of this great power exceptionally as a threat to Lithuania's identity as an integral part of the Western world. This trend in geopolitical discourse can be observed throughout the entire period of Lithuania's independence (after 1990).

These trends lead to several conclusions. Firstly, the historical process of the formation of Lithuanian geopolitical identity has always related to the identification of Russia as the greatest threat. This is why today, owing to the "inertia effect", the relations between Lithuania and Russia remain strained even despite their generally recognised "kindness", especially compared to the situation in Latvia and Estonia. The second important issue — and this is where Russia's structural impact on Lithuanian geopolitical identity manifests itself— is that Russia seems to be eager to support its identity of the greatest threat to Lithuania.²⁸ On the one hand, this kind of behaviour by Russia implies Lithuania's negative approach to relations with Russia (proximity with the West, democratisation of Russia, etc.). On the other, recalling Lithuania's objective to establish its identity of the regional leader, this Russian discourse calls for constructivist practice which could "challenge" Russia and transform the "shared understanding" — the fear of Russia. In other words, actions which are contrary to Russian ambitions are taken to mitigate Russia's influence and to show that Lithuania can no longer exist within

The influential Kremlin advisor Pavlovski once said that "The Baltic States are surely within the zone of our interests, particularly issues such as transit or the status of the Russian language or of the Russian community. We will by all means use their acceptance to these organisations [*NATO, EU*] to intensify the observation of issues within our interest and to influence these countries."

Russia's sphere, prepared to disseminate its own influence. Undoubtedly, this all relates to NATO and EU membership.

Conclusions

The analysis of Lithuanian foreign policy trends based on the method of "deconstructing" traditional geopolitical schemes offered by critical geopolitics reveals the relation of the emergence/creation of this policy to the geopolitical identity of actors of the international system and to the interests arising from the latter. Linking the assumptions of critical geopolitics with the theory of conventional constructivism gives rise to a new model of approach to international relations. This approach implies epistemological affinity of critical geopolitics with the constructivist theory of international relations, which manifests itself through recognition of the importance of social interaction and ideational factors in examining international relations. This affinity allows for the use of the critical geopolitics and constructivist approach as an integral model for the analysis of international relations, whose *criticalelement is the country's geopolitical identity*. The benefits of this model are also revealed in explaining the geopolitical projections of Lithuanian foreign policy.

The analysis of Lithuanian *geopoliticaldiscourse* developed in the country following accession to NATO and the EU leads to several significant conclusions about the directions and trends of the country's foreign policy.

- Membership in NATO and the EU can be characterised as somewhat of a turning point in the history of Lithuanian foreign policy. This is because membership in these organisations (a) created a certain vacuum in Lithuanian foreign policy because the strategic goals of the last decade were achieved, and at the same time (b) provided a kind of backing for the implementation of new, relatively more ambitious, projects in the sphere of foreign policy.
- Membership in NATO and the EU has contributed to the transformation of the country's geopolitical identity — Lithuania was institutionalised as an *integral part of the Western world*, this belonging explicitly expressed in practical geopolitical discourse of the West. While the previous geopolitical identity of the *country seeking to return to Europe* constituted the strategic goals such as

accession to NATO and the EU, the new identity is associated with the definition of new goals.

- In this context, the idea of "*heading East*", which emerged in the country's geopolitical discourse and which directly relates to Lithuania's identity-based objective to "move West" on the geopolitical map of Europe and to create a somewhat democratic barrier along the country's eastern borders to protect from Russia's negative influence, can be easily explained. In practical geopolitics this idea took the shape of a "*regional leadership*" goal.
- The emergence of this goal/interest can be most adequately explained by ideational factors, which were linked with the existing material basis, their interaction constituting the new geopolitical identity.
- At the same time it should be emphasised that the emergence of those ideational elements was directly related to *changes on the structural level* in the entire international system, which provided favourable conditions for the transformation of the Lithuanian identity.

In a nutshell, the structural changes which appeared in the international system after the end of the Cold War and following the collapse of the USSR provided favourable conditions for identity-based transformation in Lithuania. This transformation could be viewed as the transposition of the existing identity, which is not feasible due to unfavourable structural factors, to practical geopolitics. Since the benefit of this transformation turned out to be greater than the likely costs and the altered structural environment enabled Lithuania to undertake the constructivist practice of establishing its new identity, Lithuania constructed its transitional identity of the country "returning to the family of Western states". Integration to Western formations, NATO and the EU, became the expression of this identity in the geopolitical projections of foreign policy. Successful progress of establishing this identity is due to common identity-based changes in the international system. Finally, upon achievement of Lithuania's geopolitical identity of an integral part of the Western world (the practical expression of this was membership in NATO and in the EU), new constructivist practice was undertaken by defining the goal of "regional leadership".

This approach does not deny the impact of material factors on geopolitical projections of Lithuania's new foreign policy, but at the same time reveals that the sole focus on material factors is not sufficient to substantiate them. The establishment of geopolitical projections in Lithuanian foreign policy, which are ideationally reasoned, but hardly feasible on sole material grounds, confirms the interfaces of their emergence with changes in the country's geopolitical identity and with the structural alteration of the "shared understanding" about regional geopolitics, substantially affecting those changes. It means that contextualisation of the geopolitical projections of Lithuanian foreign policy discloses the relevance of ideational factors. Although the turn-back of Lithuanian foreign policy to Belarus, Kaliningrad, and partly Ukraine could be explained by traditional material factors, the role of the regional leader becomes objectively definable and explainable through clarification of the ideas attributed to the material basis (i.e. "shared understanding").

In consideration of the fact that geopolitical reality is both a social construct and a material basis, the opportunity to shape geopolitical discourse becomes a crucial factor for its formation. In other words, apart from the analysis of material changes in the international system, there is a need to perform the job of analysing the ideational superstructure. Observation of economic power, military capacity, and scientific inventions (i.e. material factors) all by itself provides no explanation of how this will affect the international geopolitical structure, therefore the no less important element in the analysis and, at the same time, formation, of foreign policy should be the examination of ideas ("shared understanding") about geopolitical reality on the local, regional, and global level. It means that to impact the construction of geopolitical reality one needs to have substantial intellectual and analytical potential. This potential should be used for continuous monitoring and analysis of changes in structural geopolitics and for provision of adequate proposals to implementers of practical policy. To put it simply, creation of analytical centres, "think tanks", and similar institutions must be strongly supported on the national level.

On the one hand, this would enable continuous monitoring of changes in geopolitical discourse and adequate response to them. On the other hand, would also provide the opportunity to develop consistent national strategies for the implementation of foreign policy, which would then be updated and adjusted to changing structural environment.

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SOUTH CAUCASUS IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY

Audrius Poviliūnas*

Introduction

Before the launch of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the area of South Caucasus has been in the shade of European Union interest, as the admittedly weak interest in the region was limited to the Tacis programme. Targeting a number of post-Soviet countries ranging from Ukraine to Uzbekistan, this framework focused on the transition aid and did not set major distinctions among the recipient countries.

The rise of the European Neighbourhood Policy, however, indicated the increase of the EU engagement in the area of its close neighbourhood. The decision also led to the differentiation of Tacis recipient countries, as only Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan were included into the policy zone.

The countries of South Caucasus were included in the European Neighbourhood Policy relatively late, in June 2004. One of the turning points in the EU approach towards the region was the Rose Revolution in Georgia, as the protests against electoral fraud contributed to the regime change and turned the country westwards, while the newly-elected President Mikheil Saakashvili outlined the importance of EU and NATO membership. Armenia has also indicated, even though in a significantly milder way, its will to follow the path of progressive integration into EU models and standards. Azerbaijan seems to be the most reluctant towards any EU conditionality in this context, yet it is also included into the European Neighbourhood Policy.

Bearing in mind different aspirations of three South Caucasian countries vis-à-vis the EU, it is important to investigate whether the EU responds to their diver-

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ging expectations or apply a uniform approach towards the entire region. Currently Action Plans for each one of three South Caucasian countries are being developed according to the recommendations set by the European Commission in March 2005. The question tackled in this paper is, to which extent do the recommendations for the Action Plans for Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan differentiate these countries according to the aspirations each of them links with the European integration? In order to provide an answer, the EU-related expectations of each country will be presented. Then, comparative analysis of European Commission recommendations for the Action Plans will be made. Once the degree of similarity is determined, the reasons leading to this outcome will be analysed from the supranational standpoint.

Georgian EU Perspective: Full Steam Ahead?

Out of the three South Caucasian countries, the Georgian case seems to be a breakthrough step in the development of the relations between the EU and the republics of South Caucasus. The events of November 2003 led to the mutual intensification of cooperation between Georgia and the European Union, as the latter one offered its political support to the new regime through declarations and visits (24). As a result of this closer cooperation and in an aim of strengthening the democratisation and economic liberalisation processes in the region, the countries of the South Caucasus were included into the European Neighbourhood Policy framework. It has to be outlined that during the conceptual stage, EU officials did not envision the three South Caucasus as falling under the initiative, but that thinking changed following the dramatic turn of events in Georgia (19). Thus the Rose Revolution not only portrayed Georgia as the key driver towards change in the region, but also contributed to the inclusion of the other two countries of South Caucasus into the European Neighbourhood Policy initiative.

Georgia has clearly demonstrated most enthusiasm in the European integration of the three countries of the region. The success of the Rose Revolution marked a historic shift in the geopolitical choices of the country, which started openly leaning westwards. The change in the Georgian foreign policy orientation includes its goals to enter the EU and NATO. In April 2004, a few months after the Rose Revolution, the newly-elected President Mikheil Saakashvili projected

that Georgia would need a maximum of three years before it could realistically consider joining the Union, but it was clearly in his sights (12). In order to match this policy shift with an organisational structure, the Government created a Minister of Integration in Europe.

Saakashvili has also outlined the "deeply European" nature of the Georgian culture and values (20) as well as the commitment of the country to follow the guidelines of the European integration. Most Georgians consider themselves Europeans by virtue of their history and lifestyle, and during the post-Soviet period there have been signs of the revival of the notion of Georgia's inherent Western orientation. These trends are firmly entrenched within the Saakashvili administration.

Government members have also been actively and continuously expressing their commitment for Georgia's long-term EU membership process. At the EU-hosted donor conference in June 2004, Zurab Zhvania, Georgian Prime Minister at the time, indicated that the Georgian government's determination to press ahead with economic and political changes was unwavering, adding that Georgia wants to become a full-fledged member of the European Union (19). Salome Zurbishvili, Georgian Foreign Minister, also demonstrated similar determination this year. She stated that despite the fact that the European Neighbourhood Policy was not designed for future EU membership, Georgia was maintaining its integration-driven perspective and using the current instruments to proceed with the reforms as a precondition of joining the EU (15).

Bearing these positions in mind, it can be assumed that the European Neighbourhood Policy keeps Georgian ambitions of joining the Union at a level, which the country perceives as the necessary preparatory stage before the full membership. The Georgian government reaches beyond the current EU provisions and is openly stating its long-term goals. In this context, the European Neighbourhood Policy plays an important role of the path towards the real accession despite the lack of the official approval from the EU.

Armenian EU Perspective: Forward, Cautiously but Surely?

In comparison to its northern neighbour, Armenia has demonstrated a significantly softer approach towards the European Union. The widespread opinion among the Armenian elite is that Georgia rushed into the European home too

fast, thus making many mistakes on the way (7; see Rusetski A., Iskandaryan A.). In contrast, Armenia takes a more incremental approach despite the general recognition of the EU roadmap in its strive towards reforms. Thus the country reiterated that its main target in foreign policy is "progressive integration into EU models and standards" (22). The issue of the European Union membership is being discussed as a possibility or even as a probability in Armenia. However, it has not been upgraded to the status of Armenian foreign policy target yet.

The official announcement that Armenia sees its future membership in the European Union as one of its crucial foreign policy goals might be on its way. In a recent interview, National Assembly speaker Artur Baghdasaryan stated that it should be one of the key priorities of the country's present and future foreign policy as the EU membership would open new avenues for Armenia to move to a new geopolitical milieu as well as a new economic environment and would enable Armenia to have access to a completely new security system (21). In his discourse, the Armenian EU membership strive is presented as a possibility to incorporate core values of the contemporary world and provide the country with more modernisation opportunities.

In spite of approving the EU-oriented Armenian foreign policy and encouraging its development, Artur Baghdasaryan admits it is yet too soon for Armenia to apply for initiating accession negotiations for joining the European Union, because the country is not prepared yet either politically or economically (21). The process should start by reforming legislation and upgrading the processes in Armenia to the European standards. It is rather perceived as a step-by-step process of getting ready to apply for the EU membership when substantial progress is achieved. Initiating accession process at the current stage is considered premature, elaborating on unsuccessful Ukrainian and Georgian intensions. Attention is also paid to the current developments in the EU itself, such as the failure of the Constitutional Treaty in two EU member states, which complicates further enlargement process. While concluding that rapid advance towards the EU membership is unlikely due to internal as well as external factors, the long-term perspective of EU accession is considered the best alternative, or sometimes the only choice, among Armenian foreign policy options due to democratisation, modernisation, conflict resolution and wealthy lifestyle prospects. However, from the Armenian point of view, neither the success of the European integration in South Caucasus nor the irreversibility of the process can be taken for granted (7).

Summing up the Armenian position towards European integration, it can be concluded that the European Neighbourhood Policy prospects match Armenian expectations well. While this policy makes no reference to any possibilities of the future EU accession, the reforms target countries are expected to make are in line with the general Europeanisation process. As the initiative does enhance cooperation between the EU and Armenia, any progress achieved as a result of the intensification of this relationship could be eventually elaborated upon in the context of Armenian long-term foreign policy goals including, when ready, EU accession prospects.

Azerbaijani EU Perspective: Forward, No Rush?

Out of the three South Caucasian countries, Azerbaijan has been the most reluctant towards its European integration. Its foreign policy targets show a considerably mild form of relationship with the EU: one of the foreign policy priorities of Azerbaijan is cooperation with the European Union (16). It is also stated that strategic location of this country at the crossroads of Europe and Asia explained strong interest of the European Union member states in developing political and economic relations with Azerbaijan (16). The focus on "cooperation" rather than "membership" (the Georgian case) or "progressive integration into EU models and standards" (the Armenian case) indicates lower expectations and weaker interest in relation to the European integration. Furthermore, according to these statements, the motivation to cooperate comes primarily from the EU side, not vice-versa. In addition, the emphasis put on the European Union member states rather than European Union as a whole leads to the assumption that the enhanced cooperation will rather flourish in the form of bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and individual EU member states than in the form of the links with the Union as a whole.

The factors behind its more distant approach towards the EU include energy resources, which provide Azerbaijan with more space for manoeuvre, thus placing the country in a more privileged situation than its two South Caucasian neighbours. Hugues Mingarelli, Director at the European Commission for Central Asia and the South Caucasus, outlined that in their relationship with the EU, Azeris were far more relaxed than the representatives of the other two target coun-

tries and less dependent on European largesse than Georgia and Armenia (17). Azerbaijan's geopolitical situation and energy resources locate it at the crossroad of Russian and American interests, while the traditionally strong links with Turkey also play an important role. In this context, one could assume that European integration may seem of secondary importance.

Nevertheless, Azerbaijan firmly expressed its commitment to the European Neighbourhood Policy, which it sees as a platform for improvement through political, social, and economic reforms. In May 2004, after meeting Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission at that time, President Ilham Aliyev welcomed the extension of the EU's neighbourhood program to Azerbaijan and the rest of the Southern Caucasus, adding that Azerbaijan's strategic policy towards integration into European structures continued, and Azerbaijan was moving very actively and quickly into the more active integration with Europe (14).

Since the country's inclusion into the European Neighbourhood Policy framework, developments in EU-Azerbaijan relations show the increased awareness of the progress needed in order to facilitate cooperation. There are, however, signs that Azerbaijan treats the policy less seriously than its South Caucasian neighbours. For instance, the European Union has recently warned Azerbaijan it may fall behind in its New Neighbourhood Policy after it opened direct flights with Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Commenting on the case, Azerbaijani Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov noted that the difference of opinions was a "temporary political difficulty" and that the EU should also be interested in eliminating it (5). He also added that EU may apply differential approach to regional states, this is outside its interests, considering Azerbaijan's role and capabilities (5). This position illustrates certain reluctance in the Azerbaijani attitude towards European integration combined with an inward-looking approach, thus marking a significant difference in comparison to Georgia and Armenia.

To conclude the analysis of aspirations of each South Caucasian country related to the European Union, it could be assumed that while the launch of the European Neighbourhood Policy was welcomed in all these countries, their attitudes towards future EU-related scenarios differ to a large extent. Georgia proves to be the most active and the most straightforward of the three, outlining its EU membership goals. Armenia also has membership-related expectations, but is more cautious in evaluating internal and external factors before

upgrading official foreign policy targets. Azerbaijan is the least interested in European integration out of the three countries and, while it is generally welcoming and approving the enhanced cooperation process, retains signs of an inward-looking attitude. Taking these differences into consideration, it is important to assess the recommendations for the development of the Action Plans for each country and to analyse to which extent they reflect aspirations each country links with the European integration.

Recommendations for the Development of Action Plans: Individual or Collective Perspectives?

On 2 March 2005, the European Commission announced its recommendation to intensify the relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia significantly (6). This recommendation was based on the Commission's Country Report, which provided a comprehensive overview of the political and economic situation in the countries of South Caucasus as well as the state of their relations with the EU. By developing an Action Plan under the European Neighbourhood Policy, the parties aim at shifting their relationship to a higher gear in terms of economic and political cooperation.

The declarations related to the future development of relations between the EU, on one hand, and Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, on the other, fit the general concept of the European Neighbourhood Policy and do not provide any differentiation between the three countries. The recommendations for the development of the Action Plan for each country individually do, however, include several differences as to where most effort in reforms must be put. Despite the fact that general indications are the same for the entire region, it is worth taking differences into account in order to determine the extent of their dependency on the EU integration-related aspirations of the target countries.

Having these conditions in mind, a comparative table illustrating main indications set in the recommendations for the development (8, 9, 10) of the Action Plans is presented. Key indicators show the general guidelines for progress, while recommendation related to each particular indicator are specified for each country individually.

Indicator	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia
Rule of law	Strengthening the rule of law, of democratic structures and pluralism (e.g. the reform of electoral legislation in line with Council of Europe (CoE) and Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) recommendations and the holding of democratic elections; constitutional reform taking into account CoE recommendations; reform of local self-government)	Strengthening respect for the rule of law (reform of judiciary, law enforcement agencies, penitentiary) and enhanced human rights protection; Strengthening of democratic structures and pluralism (reform of parliament, strengthening independence of media, reform of local self government, electoral reform)	Strengthening the rule of law, democratic structures and pluralism (improved institutional division of powers, reform of local self government) and strengthening of electoral legislation and processes so as to enhance democratic election standards; Implementation of effective reform in field of rule of law (judiciary, law enforcement agencies)
Human rights and fundamental freedoms	Strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, especially regarding freedom of expression and freedom of assembly	Enhanced protection of human rights and of freedom and independence of the media	Enhanced human rights protection; Strengthening independence of media
Business climate and modernisation of public sector	Improvements in the business climate as well as public sector modernisation	Improvements in the business climate as well as public sector modernisation	Improvements in the business climate as well as public sector modernisation
Corruption and fraud	Further efforts to tackle corruption and fraud	Effective combating of corruption and fraud	Strengthening the fight against corruption and fraud
Transparency	No direct indication	Increased transparency in the management of oil revenues and in the privatisation process	A transparent privatisation process
Sustainable development	Progress in poverty reduction; progress on sustainable development and environmental protection	Progress in poverty reduction, sustainable development and environmental protection	Progress in poverty reduction, sustainable development and environmental protection
Conflict resolution	Progress towards conflict resolution and enhanced regional cooperation	Progress in the resolution of conflicts and enhanced regional cooperation	No direct indication
Tax and customs	Reform of tax and customs administrations and legislation	Reform of tax and customs administrations and legislation	Reform of tax and customs administrations and legislation
Specific indicators	The decommissioning of the Medzamor Nuclear Power Plant	Increased efforts towards a balanced development of the overall economic system; Progress in WTO accession	The decommissioning of the Medzamor Nuclear Power Plant

Comparing the main recommendations for the South Caucasian countries, it can be noticed that guidelines in many areas are of similar nature or even exactly the same. Recommendations in the areas of business climate and modernisation of public sector, tax and customs, conflict resolution, sustainable development indicate the same lines for reform for all the three countries. Guidelines in the field of human right and fundamental freedoms also focus on the same remarks. Recommendations regarding corruption and fraud differ in their wording: Georgia is asked to "strengthen the fight against corruption and fraud", Armenia should demonstrate "further efforts to tackle corruption and fraud", while "effective combating of corruption and fraud" is expected from Azerbaijan. The latter country also received stricter recommendations in the area of transparency: while indication for Georgia was "a transparent privatisation process", Azerbaijan received more detailed recommendations of showing "increased transparency in the management of oil revenues and in the privatisation process".

As regards the most detailed sector - the rule of law - another difference in wording can be noticed. Armenia and Azerbaijan are expected to "strengthen the rule of law"; Georgia, interestingly, should "strengthen respect for the rule of law". This formulation evokes the assumption of the current differences in this field among the three countries and could distinguish Georgia, as the most advanced one in the context of the rule of law entrenchment. However, recommendations in this sector outline many similarities between Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Common issues include reforming local self-government and improving the electoral system. Both Azerbaijan and Georgia are called to reform judiciary and law enforcement agencies. Certain degree of differentiation can be observed in the area of democratic institution reforms: Georgia is expected to reform the Parliament, Armenian constitutional reforms should follow the recommendations of the Council of Europe, while Azerbaijan should improve institutional division of powers.

The recommendations also draw attention to a set of country-specific problems. The progress programme for Azerbaijan addresses increasing efforts towards a balanced development of the overall economic system as well as progress in World Trade Organisation accession. In the region, Azerbaijan remains the only country, which has not yet joined this organisation, as Georgia entered WTO in 2000, followed by Armenia in 2003. Country-specific recommendations for

Armenia focus on the decommissioning of the Medzamor Nuclear Power Plant, which the EU considers dangerous due to its first-generation Soviet-built status and its risky location in a seismically active zone. The EU and Armenia have not yet reached the agreement on a closure date for Medzamor, as Armenia has pointed out that energy capacities must take account of future expected energy needs of Armenia, the need to strengthen energy security and the need to offset the impact of the closure of the power plant on electricity tariffs (2). The EU indicated that the Armenian position in relation to the closure of Medzamor Nuclear Power Plant would affect the country's access to the benefits offered by its inclusion in the framework of European Neighbourhood Policy.

The comparison of recommendations for the Action Plans of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia shows that in most sectors the policy lines towards reform are very similar. Differences are frequently narrowed down to the choice of wording, which indicates a relative weight of each particular problem in comparison to its importance in neighbouring countries. Important divergences arise in the context of country-specific criteria, which outline the topicality of the Medzamor Nuclear Power Plant closure in Armenia and WTO membership for Azerbaijan. Other than a few country-specific issues, the comparative table of recommendations for Action Plans show the common platform for regional development, as most observations about the need of reform are applied to all the three countries. Thus it can be concluded that different aspirations each South Caucasian country links with European integration have a limited impact on the recommendations for future development of each respective country.

The EU Approach:

"South Caucasus" or "Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia"?

The realisation that EU aspirations of target countries did not have a spill-over effect on guidelines for development leads to the assumption that up to the point of drawing recommendations for the Action Plans Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have been treated as integral parts of the South Caucasus region rather than according to their individual merits. It is important, however, to discuss the validity of this assumption from the EU standpoint.

Talking about the inclusion of the South Caucasian countries into the European Neighbourhood Policy in July 2004, Janez Potoènik, European Commissioner who was then working in close cooperation with Gunther Verheugen, Commissioner for Enlargement, claimed that Brussels did not look at the South Caucasus region as a single unit, and that the prospects of the three countries must be considered separately (13). He added that Brussels would judge Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia according to their individual capabilities, encouraging cooperation in the region simultaneously. Potoènik admitted that it was important to give the countries a chance to move according to their internal readiness in terms of how far and how deep they would like to go in the cooperation and economic integration with the European Union (13). This position presents a different perspective: the one of differentiation according to the merits and to the expected degree of integration.

This position is also supported by the idea of the future action plans: it is claimed that each country will be treated on its own merits, by "rewarding" those that progress the most rapidly (17). The signs of this differentiation perspective can be noticed in Brussels discourse. They are, however, mostly mentioned as a warning in relation to certain EU-negative developments, such as Armenian refuse to agree on the closing date of the Medzamor Nuclear Power Plant or Azerbaijani flight connections with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

The individualised approach towards the countries of South Caucasus could follow, when the actual Action Plans for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are completed later this year. The country-specific focus would most likely foster a certain degree of competition among the countries, which could function as a stimulus for their further progress [1]. At the same time, some issues, such as the question of the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh area, require broader regional consensus.

Even though there is a possibility of applying individualised approach once the Action Plans are launched, recent EU policy-related developments showed little differentiation among the three South Caucasian countries in spite of the diverging visions Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan have about their future relationship with the EU. The Georgian Rose Revolution of 2003 found its echo in Ukraine one year later rather than in its near neighbourhood. Nevertheless, Armenia and Azerbaijan have also been included into the European Neighbourhood Poli-

cy along with Georgia. Armenia and Azerbaijan became directly involved into the process, which would hardly have started in the South Caucasus if the Rose Revolution had not happened in Tbilisi, thus drawing European and global attention to the democratisation prospects in the region.

In spite of its unofficial "clear frontrunner" (13) status, Georgia achieved only slight preferential treatment in the recommendations for developing the Action Plans in comparison to the other two countries. The analysis of main indicators showed that in most fields all the South Caucasian states received the same guidelines. Georgia, like other countries of the region, has to enhance protection of human rights, strengthen democratic structures, facilitate pluralism, intensify the fight against corruption and fraud, increase transparency in privatisation process, modernise public sector, improve the business climate, reduce poverty etc. This shows that an important set of problems has to be addressed region-wide, and the EU-oriented expectations of the country do not necessarily reduce the number of problems which have to be dealt with. A difference worth noting in the case of Georgia is, however, the lack of its country-specific indicators.

These trends show that by including Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in the European Neighbourhood Policy, the EU took a regional rather than individualised approach. By doing so, the EU sent an important message that it was committed to support the Southern Caucasian countries on their route towards building stable societies based on democratic values (1) and therefore to contribute to the peaceful and prosperous development of the region.

The unwillingness of the EU to launch sharp differentiation at the stage of recommendations for the development of Action Plans could be explained by the careful avoidance of membership claim-oriented shifts. The EU is experiencing the period of so-called "enlargement fatigue", and encouragement of aspirations related to entering the EU could cause unnecessary buzz. Last year's EU enlargement raised a number of important issues related to the model of the Union itself. There are warnings that the "institutional overstretch", which is related to the readiness of the Union itself to accept new members, might set the limits of the EU enlargement (11). In addition to the structural and functional changes, there are uncertainties about public support to further enlargement. European citizens need a time perspective to evaluate the effects of the 2004 enlargement properly before making up their minds about the next wave of applicants to come. The failure of the Constitu-

tional Treaty at the French and the Dutch referenda showed that this process takes more time than expected. As Wallace suggests, for the EU to continue to enlarge across the Mediterranean and the steppes of Eurasia would threaten its cohesion, and might not win acceptance from the EU's current citizens (25). In addition, the enlargement proves to be costly. If Western Newly Independent States or the countries of South Caucasus became EU member states, they would find themselves in the position of net-recipients of the EU budget. Finally, the EU has already been bound by many further enlargement indications. Romania and Bulgaria are expected to join in 2007. Croatia is the next candidate country in line. Despite the turmoil related to its candidacy, Turkey overcame objections to start the EU-entry talks this year. Apart from these states, it has been made clear that the Western Balkan countries also were on the political agenda for further EU enlargements. Bearing these factors in mind, taking over a definitive agenda for future enlargement waves seems risky. Therefore the European Neighbourhood Policy is not only an opportunity, but also a necessary limitation: it offers enhanced cooperation but intends to stay away from the enlargement perspective.

If these explanatory factors are taken into consideration, it is clear that in the short (or even medium) run the EU is not ready to accept other membership applications. In this case, the lack of differentiation among the South Caucasian countries at the stage of drawing recommendations for the development of the Action Plans could be treated as a prudent position of the EU. On the contrary, mirroring expectations of each particular country in the recommendations for the Action Plans could have led to a more straightforward drive towards membership application in certain South Caucasian countries.

In the meantime, the European Neighbourhood Policy is a step forward, which brings cooperation between the Union and its neighbours to another level. For Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia participation in this framework means a substantial intensification of the South Caucasian-EU relationship, while a more differentiated approach is likely to start with the launch of individual Action Plans.

Conclusions

The European Neighbourhood Policy contributed to the significant upgrading of the relations between the European Union and the South Caucasian coun-

tries. While this step is perceived as a beneficiary outcome for all the countries of the region, the EU-related aspirations of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan differ to a considerable extent. Georgia has outlined its EU membership goals. Armenia shares these membership-related expectations, but is more careful at evaluating a variety of factors connected to this step. Azerbaijan is generally welcoming the enhanced cooperation process, but attaches lower importance to it than its South Caucasian neighbours.

The aim of this paper was determining to which extent the recommendations for the Action Plans for Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan differentiate these countries according to the aspirations each of them links with the European integration. The comparative analysis of key indicators showed that in most sectors the policy lines towards reform are very similar for each of these countries. Differences are frequently narrowed down to the choice of wording, while important divergences arise in the context of country-specific criteria. Other than a few country-specific issues, the recommendations for Action Plans show the common platform for regional development. Thus it can be concluded that different aspirations each South Caucasian country links with European integration have little impact on the recommendations for future development of each respective country.

Describing its activities in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the EU claims that it assesses each country individually. Even though there is a real possibility of applying individualised approach once the Action Plans are launched, recent EU policy-related developments, such as the inclusion of all South Caucasian countries into the European Neighbourhood Policy and preparation of recommendations for the Action Plans, showed little differentiation among the three countries despite their diverging visions about their future relationship with the EU. The focus was rather placed on solving existing region-wide problems as well as on avoiding EU membership-related references. Thus the country-specific approach is yet to gain importance vis-à-vis the EU general commitment of contributing to peaceful and prosperous development of the South Caucasian region.

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A ROLE FOR LITHUANIA IN PROMOTING DEMOCRACY IN CENTRAL ASIA?

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Lithuania and her sister states Latvia and Estonia are often lauded by Western European and especially North American countries as examples of successful and speedy democratization to be emulated by other ex-Soviet states.¹ Lithuanian (and it might be assumed, Latvian and Estonian) leaders also frequently speak of the need to spread democracy further east, into the territories of the former Soviet Republics.² In fact, they have already taken active part in bringing about democratization to the Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova: numerous visits to the South Caucasus and East Europe by Lithuanian officials attest to Lithuania's serious commitments.

Conspicuously, among Lithuanian politicians this talk of spreading democracy to the East very rarely includes Central Asian states. There have been just a handful of instances when Central Asia was mentioned as a possible destination of spreading democracy. For example, the deposed President Rolandas Paksas and his followers have declared promotion of democracy in Central Asia as one of their foreign policy priorities. In the Program of the so-called Rolandas Paksas' Coalition "For Order

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[://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/05/20050507-8](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/05/20050507-8)

.html.

But few examples are recent speeches by the Lithuanian President. See *Speech of President of the Republic of Lithuania Valdas Adamkus "Discovering Terra Democratica in Eastern Europe and Beyond: Successes, Challenges and the Way Forward"*, Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, Chicago, 19 September 2005, <http://www.president.lt/en/news.full/5982>. See also Adamkus, Valdas. *Black Sea Vision*, *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2004, 1-2. See also *Address by H.E. Mr. Antanas Valionis, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, at the international conference "The Baltic region and the South Caucasus: strategies for cooperation and patterns of reform"*, 8 February 2005, <http://amb.urm.lt/natoshowitem.php?TopMenuID=983&ItemID=2535&SiteID=66&LangID=2>

and Justice", itself based on Paksas presidential elections' program of 2003, it is stated that if voted to power its members would among other things "promote the spread of democracy in other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the neighboring Belarus, in the Caucasus and Central Asian states".³ On the other hand, during his brief presidency Paksas did not take any steps in promoting democratic change in Central Asia, though he went on a joint Azerbaijan-Armenia visit, confirming Lithuania's South Caucasus orientation.

The then acting President Artūras Paulauskas in the mid-2004 indirectly urged Lithuanians to pay more and closer attention to the democratization of states to the east of its borders, implying among others Central Asia.⁴ The current President Valdas Adamkus (elected in the summer of 2004), however, has not so far directly spoken on the issue, though it might be judged from his activities and other speeches that he would subscribe to the idea of promoting democracy as far as Central Asia. The Lithuanian MFA has also kept silent on the issue.⁵ In fact, key documents on Lithuania's foreign policy do not mention Central Asia at all.⁶

³ *Program of Rolandas Paksas' Coalition "For Order and Justice"*, dated 6 July 2004, <http://www.ldp.lt/list.php?strid=1266&id=2047>. Paksas' supporters make an opposition group of 9 (out of the total 141) MPs in the current Lithuanian Parliament.

⁴ *Speech by H. E. Mr. Artūras Paulauskas, Acting President of the Republic of Lithuania, at Vilnius University, on Lithuania's New Foreign Policy*, 24 May 2004, http://www.urm.lt/popup2.php?item_id=8496.

⁵ It is, however, generally argued that Lithuania's involvement in Afghanistan, where it heads a PRT, is an expression of spreading of democracy (and thus sharing its own democratization experiences) into Central Asia.

⁶ *Resolution on Directions in Foreign Policy of the Republic of Lithuania following Lithuania's accession to NATO and the European Union*, adopted by the Seimas of Lithuania on 1 May 2004, http://www.urm.lt/popup2.php?nr=1&item_id=8500&_m_e_id=4&_menu_i_id=162;240&no_cache=1. The other one, *Agreement between Political Parties of the Republic of Lithuania on the Main Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives for 2004-2008*, although explicitly states that Lithuania will seek "to support democratic processes in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, the countries of the South Caucasus and the Russian Federation, in particular the Kaliningrad region" gives no word on Central Asia. 5 October 2004, http://www.urm.lt/popup2.php?item_id=255. Same can be observed in the case of *Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for 2004 - 2008* (Foreign Policy Chapter), where it is stated that the Lithuanian government will continue "to support democratic reforms in Ukraine, Russia and Transcaucasian states, to encourage the determination of these countries to join the area of Euro-Atlantic cooperation. To support the efforts of Belarus to strengthen its independence, democracy and civil society", but does not mention its position on Central Asia. http://www.urm.lt/popup2.php?item_id=256.

Though, as it appears, not urgent at the moment, the question of relevance of the Lithuanian democratization experiences to the situation that has been developing in the countries of the former Soviet Central Asia is nonetheless worth considering. Can one plausibly hope that the Lithuanian (and in general Baltic states') democratization experiences can be (if appropriately amended) successfully applied in the Central Asian states? And more importantly, can the Baltic states facilitate the democratic change in the countries of that remote region? Do they have know-how, do they possess means, do they have support from the partners (the EU and the USA)? And is this the right moment?

The "Shared history" argument

What do the two regions share, and how much difference is there despite the common experience of having been a long-time fellow "inmates" in the "prison" called the USSR? Lithuanian politicians and political analysts routinely dwell on the perceived "shared history" of Baltic and other ex-Soviet Republics.⁷ In their depiction, having been "inmates" in the "prison" Soviet Union for over four decades the captive nations supposedly grew to know each other rather intimately.

Several aspects of this "shared history" are characteristically advanced. First of all, it is argued that all Soviet Republics were administered in principle in a more or less uniform fashion through local Central Committees of the Communist Party. Therefore, purportedly, knowing how the system worked in one practically means knowing how it worked in all of the Soviet Republics. Secondly, however, the USSR was a centralized state, with Moscow being the ultimate decision-making center in matters political, defense and economic. This meant that governments of the Republics had little if at all say not only in matters related to foreign and defense policies but also internal affairs. Since the economy of the entire state was planned in Moscow, the Republics had to simply follow the indicated course.

Thirdly, on the social level, there supposedly was ample mingling among people from the Republics (for example, while serving in the Red Army, in which

⁷ See, for example, *Address of the President of the Republic of Lithuania Valdas Adamkus to the Members of Georgia's Parliament*, 11 November 2005, <http://www.president.lt/en/news.full/6167>.

most of the males did serve, usually far away from one's motherland, or during the study years either by studying together in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev or elsewhere with mates from different regions of the country or on study trips to various corners of the state, or during one's career years — pan-Soviet conferences, symposia, training, festivals, etc). Presumably, these encounters with people from remote Republics laid ground for "cultural awareness" or even "cultural literacy"⁸ of each other, something that now has become an indispensable asset and advantage in comparison with either Western Europeans or Americans, who lack it. Finally, *lingua franca* in the USSR was Russian, the language still widely understood by the elder generation in practically all parts of the former USSR.

Though outwardly (especially to the outside world) the argument of this "shared history" might seem convincing enough, its application in real terms is questionable. First of all, because the "shared history" argument either implies some sort of a unified Soviet culture, which societies in the former Republics supposedly share even now, or it ignores cultural differences as non-significant and thus easy to overstep. However, the USSR was not (or rather failed to produce) a monolithic unified culture it claimed to be - its constituent cultures survived the unification policies of the Soviet machinery even if in adulterated forms. One can actually speak of two-layer history (or parallel histories) only one part of which can be called "shared". The "shared history" refers to the pan-Soviet level of history comprising either inter-Republic relations in which Moscow inevitably was a constituent third party or Republic-Moscow relations. The "shared history" relates to this reality (artificial pan-Soviet relations among Republics) that is hardly relevant to or useful in a post-Soviet reality. Most of accumulated knowledge and skills became obsolete as soon as the conditions that facilitated them melted away.

By 'cultural awareness' it is meant basic acquaintance with history and languages of the societies one is dealing with. It might be maintained that 'cultural awareness' is an essential prerequisite in any transnational relations — whoever is involved in them has to have a minimal baggage of knowledge about the local culture — this would facilitate smoother interaction producing more favorable results. But it might also be argued that 'cultural literacy' would be even more desirable. This includes not only superficial familiarity with basic aspects of indigenous culture(s), but some deeper knowledge of intellectual currents and undercurrents, stratification of society under question, pressure groups, informal authorities, and religion, all this supported by in-depth studying of appropriate local language.

Especially since the Baltic states stayed aloof the newly patched CIS and with introduction of visa regimes travel between the Baltics and more distant former Republics but ceased.

Moreover, under the surface of a more or less unified pan-Soviet life-style and official culture there had always continued alternative (parallel, and usually unobserved) history of respective nations. There has been permanent tension between the artificial official (and wishful) history and culture on the one hand and the persistent indigenous ones on the other hand. However, since unmediated inter-Republic relations, involving any degree of closer cooperation with and interest in each other, were too rare, they did not allow people from one Republic to get to know the indigenous culture of societies of other Republics. Consequently, internal fabric of the Republics, with their cultures and subcultures, remained barely observed by outsiders. And the "cultural awareness" in reality was little more than a collection of stereotypes upheld in jokes.

The geographical proximity has been a major factor allowing for a higher degree of authentic "cultural awareness". This way, in the cases of Belarus and the Ukraine, Lithuanians can claim to possess some intuitive knowledge of these societies (Belarus, after all, used to be part of the same Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Joint Polish-Lithuanian state, before its incorporation into the Russian Empire; so to a certain extent was the Ukraine) which could guide them in their involvements in Belarusian and Ukrainian affairs. Apparently, the perceived affinity has helped Lithuania in its performance as one of the mediators in the Ukrainian case for which there is appreciation both in the Ukraine itself and among Lithuania's partners, especially the USA.

But the further one moves eastward the less of affinity one finds between the Baltics and other parts of the former USSR. The South Caucasus states already prove the point - though Lithuania is more and more involving itself in the democratization of that region (especially Georgia), there is realization that its cultural landscape is extremely complex and unfamiliar enough so that one is to proceed very cautiously. In the case of the Central Asian region, even to an inexperienced eye, it immediately is apparent that the Baltic societies are of a significantly different nature from those found in today's Central Asia. The "shared history" argument then is no more than a formal shell devoid of any real contents.

The different paths

The Baltic states all at the same time took a decisive turn toward rapid two-layer democratization - both citizenry and political elites longed for a democratic make up of their respective countries. The Soviet nomenclature initially was sidelined by progressive nationalist forces, who took first major steps toward a complete revamp of their societies. Ex-Communists, however, soon regrouped to make re-gains, and in some cases, namely Lithuania, they even eventually came back to power. Only now they more or less shared the national vision originally pushed by the nationalists. The set priorities of becoming a competitive liberal economy and open, pluralistic and democratic society while pursuing accession to the EU and NATO (the former served as prerequisites for the latter) have been upheld by all often changing governments, both Left and Right.

The Central Asian Republics, contrary, took equally decisive steps toward rejuvenated authoritarian rule. The initial differences between the Baltics and Central Asia can already be observed at this point - first of all, societies of the Central Asian Republics, unlike those in the Baltics, hardly sought secession from the USSR (though there had been internal unrest since the late 1980s). While the Baltic nations had been actively pushing for their independence for some three years before regaining it, the Central Asian societies gained theirs by virtue of the collapse of the USSR with virtually no effort on their side. In other words, while Baltic people anxiously sought independence, Central Asian inhabitants got it unintentionally. To many of them collapse of the USSR still is a lasting trauma.

Secondly, in contrast to the Baltics, the political leadership in the Central Asian Republics did not pass into the hands of anti-Communist/ nationalist forces (which simply did not exist) and was retained by the very same Communist leaders who had been running them on behalf of the Soviet Communist Party. These swiftly moved to neutralize whatever political opposition was forming and soon succeeded in consolidating their debilitating grip on societies.

The different backgrounds and recent history of statehood might in part help explain the different paths societies of the two regions took. It might be recalled that in-between the wars the Baltic countries were internationally recognized independent nation states (members of the League of Nations) with their defined international borders and their title nationalities. All this was messed up in the then already Soviet Central Asia, pacified and brought into subjugation by Bols-

heviks with no independence, artificial though not international borders, multiethnic societies. This meant that while during the Soviet period the Balts had to cope with the loss of independence and struggle to regain it, the Central Asian societies had yet to arrive at identifying themselves as nations.⁹

One can make a preliminary conclusion that while in the Baltics both the societies and politicians were willing and capable of transformation, in the case of the Central Asian states the societies were neither capable nor willing and politicians were definitely non-willing. This, arguably, has continued to today.

Prerequisites for democracy exporting

Having argued that the Baltic and Central Asian societies are so different, what then can if at all be shared? Depending on the partner chosen, there might be two approaches. In one case, it is the current governments; in the other - political opposition and (civil) society (presumed in the form of NGOs).

In the first (evolutionary) approach, institutional and administrative/ legal reforms perhaps are one of the fields where Lithuania could share its experiences with the former Central Asian "inmates". Such reforms should ideally lead to expansion of good governance practices and rule of law, which in its turn would hopefully facilitate democratization of the concerned Central Asian states. This approach, however, appears least feasible - the decisively authoritarian regimes in some of the countries of the region (namely, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan) would never change themselves and would not allow for any changes in the states they rule. As in the case of Lithuania's neighbor Belarus, it makes almost no sense talking with the rulers of those countries. Moreover, Lithuania lacks diplomatic capacity in its MFA (only two diplomats work in the whole of the Central Asia and South Caucasus Division) and representation in Central Asia (the only three-diplomat embassy in the region covers Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan while Uzbekistan is covered from the embassy in Turkey) to engage local authorities in a more or less continuous dialogue. Moreover, one might add virtual non-existence of professional interest in history, languages or contemporary issues of the Central Asian societies both through-

This is very convincingly analyzed in Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia. The Creation of Nations* (New York, 2000), pp. 161-189.

hout the Soviet period and now- there in effect are no 'area specialists' versed in Central Asian affairs.

In the second (revolutionary) approach, the democratic changes would have to be promoted bottom—up — through nurturing and engaging political opposition and elements of the civil society. The revolutionary phase should ultimately lead into the evolutionary one — once the incumbent regime is changed from the beneath, the new leaders would be approached as a kind of disciples to be taught the new (democratic) methods of governing.

But in the case of the revolutionary approach, in—depth knowledge of the local society is even more indispensable than in the evolutionary one. By knowledge here it is meant not mere superficial individual experiences or memories from the Soviet past but comprehensive baggage of studies and analysis of both history and contemporary socio-cultural realities of the societies concerned. In other words, one has to be "culturally aware" or even "literate".

Of course, one cannot expect every single government official or employee in private sector, charged with specific duties related to or on the territory of remote societies, to be well versed in the intricacies of local cultures. Yet, one is to expect (or even to demand) that those, who make decisions, either themselves possess knowledge of cultures their decisions are to affect or have expert-assistants, who do so to advise them. Only 'culturally literate' decisions have propensity to be welcomed by partners. It is also advisable that even lower—level government and private sector employees are exposed to advance 'culture training' — e.g. are given courses on history, language, religion, and society of countries they are to be posted to or work with.

Thus the cultural background and structural make up of societies one is to engage should be studied anew. Reliance on a perceived "shared history" would not help to tackle with such new factors as family and clan-based social, political and economic system or the resurgence of the role of religion (namely Islam, which is virtually unknown in the Baltics) in the Central Asian societies. As there has been much talk of resurgence of Islam in practically all of them (with a notable exception of Kazakhstan)¹⁰, failing to appreciate this would ultimately

¹⁰ Mir Zohar Husain, *Global Islamic Politics* (New York, 1995), pp. 250-268; Roy, *The New Central Asia*, pp. 143-16; Odil Ruzaliev, 'Islam in Uzbekistan: Implications of 9/11 and Policy Recommendations for the United States', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 25/1 (2005): 13-29.

leave one handicapped in any (democratizing) endeavor. Permanent threat of terrorism in Central Asia is another feature to be kept in mind at all times. One might add drug trade, arms smuggling and illegal migration to the line of features that make two regions apparently dissimilar and thus require an effort to familiarize with the realities of local societies. So far, however, no expert-level knowledge on these issues has been accumulated in Lithuania.

Finally, Lithuania cannot play it alone. It has to be in a 'team of the willing'. And that team next to will has to possess resources, both human and financial. So far, however, it seems that the mightiest partners, the EU and the USA, have not yet set their eyes on democratization of the region. Although the USA is a player in the region, it has shied away from pushing with real democratic change in either evolutionary or revolutionary approach and rather chooses to play by the rules of the local regimes preferring quite but profitable business now to uncertainty of the future. The EU for apparent lack of urgency is even less engaged. All in all, Central Asia has remained a backwater of Russian regional politics, which it now seems to be re-ascertaining through the fledgling CIS and the emerging Shanghai Cooperation Organization. If Russia (and China) succeed in strengthening their positions in Central Asia, it is likely that the USA and the EU will have to abandon the region altogether and the prospects for democratization, dim as they are now, will further diminish.

Conclusion

Lithuania, having achieved the status of democratic society with functioning liberal economy, has a moral obligation to share its achievements with other less fortunate countries to the east of its borders. Yet, it has to be realistic about where and what it can achieve. So far, Lithuania's political establishment (by deliberate choice or by accident) has mostly abstained from including into its "spreading democracy" rhetoric Central Asia and has rather concentrated (both in rhetoric and practice) on geographically closer former Soviet Republics.

Such posture is justified from several points discussed above. First, the "shared history" argument is hardly valid in the case of Baltic and Central Asian societies and is of little help in real terms. Second, in order to engage someone, one has to possess a minimum baggage of awareness of the partner. Lithuania so far neither

on political nor on academic level is "culturally aware/ literate" to assume a position of expert on Central Asian states. Moreover, one has to realize that there in reality is very little common between the Lithuanian society and those in Central Asia. Thus, avoiding the neo-Orientalist trap, Lithuania should avoid assuming it knows those societies. Third, receptiveness of the Central Asian societies to democratic changes is very low - the regimes resist them while civil society is weak. For any real changes to take place, there should stem some interest from the societies concerned - they have to be willing to change for more democratic ones. So far, this unfortunately, is not observed. Contrary, one witnesses their creeping reislamization. Finally, there seems to be very little interest on the part of Lithuania's major partners, the EU and the USA, in pursuing pro-active policies for democratic changes in the region. Without partners' involving and without concerted efforts (in the form of a 'team of the willing', perhaps) neither Lithuania nor her sister states could ever achieve any feasible results in exporting democracy to Central Asia.

These formidable obstacles would surely prevent Lithuania (and Latvia and Estonia also) from any successful export of democracy to Central Asia. Consequently, though it would be highly advisable that Lithuania takes a deeper interest in the vast and important region of Central Asia, it nevertheless should avoid falling into the trap of illusion that it can influence the processes in the region or become a democracy exporter on its own.

EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION ON CIVIL SOCIETY OF THE BALTIC STATES

Saulius Spurga*

Summary

The paper aims at analyzing the impact of European integration on civil societies of the Baltic states in 1988-2004. Identified are 4 mechanisms of the impact of the integration into the EU on the development of civil society of the Baltic states: the Political Accession Criterion of Democracy and the Rule of Law; the EU programmes for democracy promotion and the direct aid; reforms and adaptation of *acquis communautaire*; transnational networks and interest representation at the EU level. Along with these mechanisms, the impact of the integration into the EU on civil societies of the Baltic states is analyzed as the process of socialization and learning. The criterion of democracy has played a modest role in the Eastern enlargement process. Direct financial aid of the EU to civil society in the Baltic countries has been relatively small-scale. On the other hand, the demonstration effect, social learning and the exchange of ideas and experiences have played an important role in the democratic consolidation.

Introduction

Integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures has been the main purpose of the Baltic states from the beginning of the "Singing revolution" in 1988. The guidelines for political and economic reforms in many ways have been drafted, and sometimes imposed, by Western states and institutions. The domestic agenda of the Baltic states in the recent 10 years has been dominated by the integration into the European Union and the fulfilling of the requirements of the EU. The coun-

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tries have implemented radical reforms in crafting democracy and transforming their economies from state socialism to a free market economy, undergone administrative, legal, and social reforms. Fast reforms and privatization have caused a temporary economic decline and a rapid social differentiation. The process of democratic consolidation would have been easily reversed if the international environment had not been favourably disposed towards democratic development in the Baltic states. Democratization in the Baltic states has been in many ways encouraged by the EU and other Western institutions. The aid has often been provided in the form of support for local NGOs and promotion of the activities of civil society.

Owing to the fact that the Baltic states have been strongly committed to the integration into the EU, a transfer and internalization of European norms and collective understandings in the countries have been perceived as a natural way of reforming society. On the other hand, a diverse historical background and differences in political culture between the older members of the EU and the Baltic states have determined that the transfer in some cases has been rather superficial and has caused outcomes other than has been expected. As a consequence, in the process of the integration into the EU, the role and the situation of civil society in the Baltic states have been affected in many ways, which have produced a manifold effect.

The Baltic states have managed to satisfy the formal standards of electoral democracy in the early stage of their independent development. Many indicators of consolidated democracy in the Baltic countries, as well as in the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CCEE), however differ essentially in comparison to the countries of mature democracy. One of the exceptional features of post-communist countries which have chosen the way of democratic development is a weak civil society. The EU in promoting democratization has made efforts to strengthen NGOs and other actors of civil society.

Civil society is a central concept for understanding of the functioning of democracy and the process of democratization (Diamond 1999: 218-261; Whitehead 2002: 65-90, Linz and Stepan 1996a, 1996b: 8; Gellner 1994; Putnam 1994; Keane 1988a; Cohen and Arato 1992). The revival of the term "civil society" in the West begins with the political dissent movement in the late 1970s. Writing not long before the emergence of Polish Solidarity, a Czech émigré J. Rupnik

characterized the situation in Poland as the rebirth of civil society (Pelczynski 1988:361).

The resurgence of associational activity in the Baltic states began in 1988. It lasted however only a few years. The rapid decline of associational activity soon after the beginning of democratization is inherent to all the CCEE. A number of studies in recent years have revealed the fact that levels of organizational membership throughout post-communist Europe are substantially lower than in the established democracies (Howard 2003; Ruutsoo 2002: 372-381). It is worth mentioning that associational activity of citizens of the CCEE is lower in comparison to the post-authoritarian countries of Latin America (Howard 2003). Furthermore, civil society in the Baltic states has been weak compared with that in Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and other post-Communist countries (Berglund et al. 2001: 151-5; Kaldor and Vejvoda 1999). This causes many problems of state-building and democratic development, inasmuch as citizen involvement and participation represent an essential component of the quality of democracy.

In the literature one can find a substantial number of sometimes even contradictory concepts of civil society. For our purpose we need a broad definition which could reveal a comprehensive impact of civil society upon democratic developments. The process of democratization needs actors which cannot be reduced to NGOs alone, as many definitions of civil society do. Active citizens in order to achieve their goals tend to join associations and various movements which afford them the possibility to represent their interests more effectively.

An exhaustive concept of civil society has been given by Linz and Stepan (1996b: 17):

By "civil society," we refer to that arena of the polity where self-organizing and relatively autonomous groups, movements, and individuals attempt to articulate values, to create associations and solidarities, and to advance their interests.

According to the European Economic and Social Committee, "[c]ivil society is a collective term for all types of social action, by individuals or groups, that do not emanate from the state and are not run by it" (EESC, 1999: 32). Civil society organisations include trade unions and employers' organisations ("social partners"), other organisations representing social and economic players, NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs), and religious communities (*Ibid.* 1999: 33-34).

An associational activity in the Baltic states has not significantly changed in time. Some data have revealed that it has been even declining (Ruutsoo 2002: 369, 378; Howard 70-73). Similarities of the 3 Baltic states with regard to the situation of civil society are quite remarkable, especially bearing in mind cultural, religion and linguistic differences. Howard (2000) made a conclusion that low levels of organizational membership in the post-communist countries can be explained by the prior Communist experience (rather than by the impact of economic, political-institutional and civilizational factors). Associational membership in the 3 Baltic countries generally is lower than in the other CCEE. By all appearances the reason for the fact is the former Soviet occupation, destruction of the national state structures and an "original" - harder than in the other states - Soviet regime imposed upon the 3 Baltic states for nearly 50 years.

This does not exclude a possibility that in the future differences of civic activity between the 3 Baltic states may develop. In December 2002, the Estonian Parliament adopted a national strategy, "The Estonian Civil Society Development Concept" (Estonian Parliament 2001), which was developed by the Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations. It aims at establishing a model of cooperation between the state and NGOs and is the only document of this kind in the CCEE. Every two years, the Estonian Parliament, *Riigikogu*, organizes a public hearing on the implementation of its activities (first took place in January 2005). Apparently this is a sign of the changing attitude of the state institutions towards civil society in Estonia. The outcomes of this change have still to be evaluated.

This essay explores the impact of the process of European integration in 1988-2004 on civil society in the Baltic countries.

A fundamental difference between the western and eastern halves of Europe

Institutional arrangement with a different role of civil society for many years has constituted a fundamental difference between the western and eastern halves of Europe. Communist regimes in the CCEE for many years made a great effort to extinguish the tradition of associational activity. Many scholars underline that the Communist one-party system can function only by frustrating or extirpating

the traditions of civil society. Under the one-party systems, civil society is always on the verge of extinction (Keane 1988b: 2, 5-6; Howard 2003; Ruutsoo 2002). Miszlivetz (1999: 57) argues that "[o]ne of the most characteristic features common to all East Central European countries and inherited from the Stalinist model forced upon them is the lack of a well-articulated civil society". In the CCEE dissidents have developed society-based approach to changing Soviet-type regimes. A significant movement independent from the state Communist structures has sprung up however only in Poland, where the trade union 'Solidarnosc' had as many as 1 million members at the beginning of 1980s. In the other countries the dissidents have composed only an insignificant part of the population. Especially this is true in the case of the Baltic states, for the countries were fully occupied and incorporated in the USSR.

The 'Singing revolutions' which broke out in 1988 were a great surprise for the local and Moscow-based communist leaders as well as for Western observers. In these revolutions independent social and political actors played a major part. Usually it is stated that the peaceful revolutions in the Baltic states, as well as in the other CCEE, were carried out by revived civil societies. This is why many observers have expected a post-Communist civil society to be strong and vibrant. Soon afterwards, however, the activity of citizens in the Baltic states weakened, the number of NGOs and the participation rate of citizens in various nongovernmental activities diminished. A revolutionary movement as well as a process of democratic consolidation requires an active engagement of civil society. The characteristics of civil society engagement in each of these two developments, however, are quite different. This explains why the activity of civil society in the Baltic states in overthrowing the old regime and striving for independency has not constituted a reliable basis for a vibrant civil society in the period of democratic reforms.

The World Values Survey (1995-97) has revealed that the average number of organizational membership per person constitutes 2.62 in Sweden, 2.48 in Finland and 2.12 in W. Germany in comparison to only 0.70 in Latvia, 0.64 in Estonia and 0.46 in Lithuania (Howard 2003: 69). According to Howard (2003: 147), the variation that does exist among post-Communist societies in comparison to the older democracies is best characterized as "differences in degree", as opposed to "differences in kind". Ruutsoo (2002: 371) points out that in con-

ceptualizing the state of civil societies in the Western and the Baltic countries, we should deal not with numbers of associations but with the structural gap.

One of the important democratic functions of civil society is to create channels for the articulation, aggregation and representation of interests (Diamond 1999: 239-250). The lack of traditions of civil society and the prevailing political culture in the Baltic states do not help in representing the interests of various societal groups (Spurga 2005). In Lithuania, the term "lobbying" has a negative connotation, often tantamount to corruption and bribery, and the population is not fully aware of the fact that in democratic societies the activity of the interest groups is regarded as a significant and legitimate constituent part of the political process (Paèësaitë 2002). Currently, interest representation is an essential component of the political systems of the older democracy. Intermediary organizations, such as interest groups, play a particularly important role in connecting European-level institutions to the citizens of the EU (Eising 2003). Nearly 700 civil society groups active in the EU have registered themselves on a voluntary basis in the European Commission's database CONECCS (Mahoney 2004). Greenwood (2003) points out that Brussels offices have 170 national interest groups, and that there are also 171 regional offices there. Mainly, it is the non-governmental actors from the older member states that have been active at the EU level, whereas the interests of the various actors of the Baltic states have been represented relatively sparsely.

The mechanisms of the impact

The preparation for the membership in the EU has been the main factor which has determined the direction of reforms and transformation of society in the Baltic states from the mid- 1990s. By the same token, the integration into the EU has been the main factor in affecting a transformation of civil society in the Baltic states. The characteristics of civil society have been influenced in many ways. In 2004, the year of accession of the Baltic states to the EU, the role of civil society in the Baltic states, however, was still of substantially less importance than that in the older member states. This fact testifies that the integration into the EU and the strengthening of the role of civil society in the candidate countries are not parallel processes.

We have identified 4 mechanisms of the impact of the integration into the EU on the development of civil society of the Baltic states. These 4 mechanisms are:

1. The Political Accession Criterion of Democracy and the Rule of Law;
2. The EU programmes for democracy promotion and the direct aid;
3. Reforms and adaptation of *acquis communautaire*;
4. Transnational networks and interest representation at the EU level.

Along with these mechanisms, further in the paper we analyse the impact of the integration into the EU on civil societies as the process of socialization and learning.

The Political Accession Criterion of Democracy and the Rule of Law

The EU's efforts to promote democracy is an important feature in European foreign policy (Kubicek 2005: 270; Youngs 2001). The policy has been implemented regarding the CCEE after the countries became independent in 1989-1991 and started political and economical reforms with the aim to integrate into the Euro-Atlantic structures. The Copenhagen European Council in 1993 recognized the legitimacy of the CCEE desire to become members of the EU and laid down the accession criteria: the political, economic and the criterion of adopting the *acquis communautaire*. Countries with the accession perspective had had to comply with the Copenhagen criteria before they were entitled to enter accession negotiations. The political criterion encompassed a stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities. The task to elaborate on the content of accession requirements was left to the Commission.

An important circumstance in exploring the impact of the Political accession criterion is the fact that the elaboration of the accession requirements and the recommendation to the European Council to recognize that the applicant countries fulfil the Copenhagen political criterion (excluding Slovakia which fulfilled the political criterion two years later, in 1999) were presented by the Commission in the same document, Agenda 2000, in 1997 (European Commission 1997).

In 1997-2002, the Commission issued yearly reports with recommendations for improvement for each applicant and candidate country. The reports provided

evaluations by the EU concerning, *inter alia*, the state of democracy and the rule of law. In the reports, numerous remarks were presented regarding such topics as the rule of law, civil rights, the role of political opposition, fight against corruption, the situation of civil society. The remarks and recommendations however were not systematic, the clear indicators of the evaluation were not elaborated. Kochenov (2004) points out that the assessment of democracy and the rule of law criterion provided by the European institutions was not really full, consistent and impartial and that the threshold to meet this criterion was very low. In the assessment documents of the criterion, the Union has given priority to the assessment of the rule of law. The democratic process in the candidate countries has not been analyzed in detail, the same holds true with regard to the attention to civil society. The requirements for civil society of the applicant and candidate countries have not been elaborated in detail by the European institutions. This is why it is quite complicated to evaluate the impact of the implementation of political accession criterion on civil societies of the Baltic states. Generally it could be stated that the Baltic states have tried to react to every critical remark which has been presented by the European Commission and to transform their societies following the experience of the Western countries. Raik (2003: 49) argues that "[s]ince joining the EU has been a top priority for the CEECs, membership criteria have functioned as a powerful tool for the Union to influence the applicant states".

Some students of democratization relate the ambiguous impact of Brussels on the democratization of the CCEE to the 'democratic deficit' in the EU itself. Raik (2003: 230) points out that the EU's "ability and credibility in terms of acting as a democracy promoter are restricted by its own democratic deficit". Kaldor and Vejvoda (1999: 166-7) have expressed concern that some aspects, criticized by the EU and imposed on the CEECs to be fulfilled before the enlargement - democratic politics and responsiveness to citizens - are missing in the European context. Zielonka (2001: 525) points out that "Western pro-democracy pressure has largely constrained any effective self-rule by Eastern 'democratic' governments".

The EU programmes for democracy promotion and the direct aid

The EU has established the instruments for direct financial aid to promote democracy and to develop civil society in the applicant countries. The EU has

offered financial aid mostly through various programmes within the framework of Phare which was created in 1989 to assist Poland and Hungary but soon was expanded to other applicant countries and countries of the Western Balkans (until 2000). Phare has been designed to help the CCEE "align their political, economic and legal systems with those of the European Union" (The Phare Programme 1997). In the first years of the programme the assistance did not include a specific aid for democratic consolidation. The EU's three multi-country programmes for democracy and civil society were set up in 1992:

- *the Phare Democracy programme*, whose central objective was to promote the application of democratic principles and procedures in various spheres of society, such as the Government, Parliament, local administration, the media, professional groupings and associations;
- *the Phare LIEN programme*, aimed to stimulate citizens' initiative and to strengthen the capacity of non-governmental and non-profit organizations working in the social sector, especially caring for disadvantaged groups of the population;
- and *the Partnership programmes* which focused on local economic development and cooperation between the private sector, local government and NGOs (European Commission 1999; Penny 1995; Raik2003: 206).

In 1999, the Commission replaced the Phare LIEN programme and Partnership programmes with the Phare access programme for the CCEE. The Phare access programme aimed at strengthening civil society and at preparing for accession the candidate CCEE. It was in operation in 1999-2002 with the total budget of about 20 million euros. 2003 was the final programming year of the Phare programme for the new member states, but contracting of projects continued up till 2005 (Phare 2006). In conjunction with the multi-country programmes, also implemented were the Phare national Civil Society programmes but these were implemented only in six countries. Lithuania was the only country in the Baltic states included in the latter programmes and received 0.8 million Euro. It is estimated that from the one program which was implemented in Lithuania approximately 1,000 NGOs benefited (in comparison, the Czech Republic got more

than 12 million Euro, 62,800 NGOs benefited) (Multi-Country Thematic Report 2001).

Raik (2003: 207) gives the figures on the Phare aid to Estonia stressing the fact that the aid to civil society composed only a small part of the financial assistance programmes in the country:

Between 1993-2000, Estonian civil society received over €3 million from Phare funds. The ACCESS programme was launched in 2001 and allocated 0,9 million to Estonia. In comparison, total Phare aid to Estonia was approximately 24 million annually in 1995-2000; Estonian GDP was 5.4 billion in 2000.

These figures are in line with the assessment of Smith (2001: 49) that the EU's 1998 budget for assisting democracy amounted to less than 1 per cent of the total aid for the CCEE. In 1997 the EU declared that the CCEE (except Slovakia) fulfilled the criterion of democracy, and this criterion further played a relatively modest role in the Eastern enlargement process (Raik 2003: 205). Since one of the main Phare's objectives was strengthening public administrations and institutions, the state institutions of the Baltic states have received much more financial assistance than civil society organizations.

What impact has the EU democracy programmes had in the CCEE and the Baltic countries? The Report on the evaluation of the Phare and Tacis democracy programme 1992-1997 states that the programme has been of considerable value for the development of democracy and civil society in the CCEE. According to the report, "it has contributed to the growth of the NGO sector in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe which plays a crucial role in the process of democratization" (Phare 1997a). According to Smith (2001: 49-51), the EU's democracy programmes have improved the transparency of public administration, encouraged local democracy, and strengthened NGOs. In Estonia and Latvia the most important target has been the integration of the Russian-speaking minority into societies of the countries. Minority rights NGOs have had a clear advantage, whereas any significant support for other institutional levels and other types of civil society groups has been lacking. Youngs (2001: 364-365) also points out that the EU's democracy aid focus in the CCEE has been concentrated on the issue of minority rights. Minority rights NGOs have had a clear advantage, any signifi-

cant support for other institutional levels and other types of civil society groups has been lacking.

Wedel (1998: 86), in her turn, questions the possibility to create a democratic pluralism from the outside. In the case of the CCEE, donors were profoundly ill equipped to make choices about just who the appropriate grantees were. Many NGOs and "foundations" were set up with the only purpose to receive Western funds. Geèienē (2002) observes that the new organizations seem to be artificial: they are created from above, do not serve local communities nor represent indigenous interests. Ottaway and Chung (1999: 107), as well as Stubbs (1996) generalizing the experience of external aid to civil society make a similar conclusion that the main benefitors of such aid often are the leaders of NGOs. The EU's democracy programmes have reached mostly the highly educated people and the bigger cities where intellectual capacities are concentrated. This is why in the EU policy to help civil society in the Baltic countries one can see an inherent contradiction. On the one hand, it has been aimed to bring new inputs into the sectors, which attract a great deal of attention in the older EU states but have been neglected in the societies of the Baltic states. On the other hand, for the reason that people in the recipient countries have other value priorities, the new initiatives often seem artificial and are used only by the small circles of the elite.

Phare has provided assistance for the preparation of the CCEE integration into the EU and has focused on capacity-building in the public sector. The evaluation of the impact of the programme on domestic actors of the applicant countries could be seen from the several different perspectives. According to one point of view, the EU's democracy aid programmes have offered additional resources to exert influence for national executives at the expense of the civil society actors. On the other hand, some students underline the fact that a democratic state needs a strong and trustworthy administrative apparatus which establishes conditions for activities of civil society. As Suleiman (1999: 152) notes, a professional bureaucracy is crucial to the consolidation of the democratic process. Börzel and Risse (2004: 10) argue that institution-building can also benefit democratic institutions, while Mendelson and Glenn (2002: 5) in presenting the data on the Western assistance to democracy in the CCEE include also an assistance to administrative reform.

Reforms and adaptation of *aquis communautaire*

Over the past 15 years, the Baltic states have undergone a transformation, which has no analogues in the Western states. The development of civil society in the Western states has been a considerably long process, and the traditions of democracy have been developing under the conditions of the market economy. Transition from dictatorship to democracy, economic reforms in transforming the economy from socialism to capitalism and a state-building in the Baltic states have been implemented concurrently (Offe's 'triple transition' (Offe 1997: 35)). Approximately since 1997, the main direction of the reforms in the Baltic countries has been determined by the requirement to implement *aquis communautaire* and to harmonize the legislation of the Baltic states and the EU. Vilpiðauskas and Nakroðis (2003: 28) have indicated that the main feature of the political development in Lithuania has been the overburdening of the agenda. In the years 1990 to 2000, the Seimas passed about 3000 legal acts, the Government adopted 14 000 resolutions, in 2000, respectively 520 laws were passed and 1516 Governmental resolutions adopted. Such an overload of the agenda was caused by both objective (first and foremost, the preparation for EU membership) and subjective circumstances. Admittedly, such a speedy establishment of institutions has not been immune to perturbation and faults. Furthermore, in order to approve such a large amount of legal acts, it is nearly impossible to carry out discussions on them in detail, evaluate the opinion of the non-governmental actors, and for the interest groups themselves it is not easy to decide what to prioritize when representing their interests. That is why the interests have been defended chaotically, following uncertain rules. These factors have reinforced the frustration of the civil society actors in the Baltic states (Spurga 2005: 141).

K. Maniokas (2000, 2003) while analyzing the impact of the EU membership negotiations on the institutional system of the CCEE, has made a conclusion that in the process of negotiations, the European Commission imposed a new methodology of enlargement. This new methodology concentrated on regulatory functions and caused the delegation of powers to non—majoritarian institutions. The Commission used its power to change the balance of power in the candidate countries on behalf of executive and judicial authorities as an alternative to political control. Such depolitization of public policy has advantaged a small circle of ac-

tors and reinforced a democratic deficit in the then candidate countries. Consequently, the role of interest groups has diminished and the actors of civil society have almost been excluded from the process of decision making. During the negotiations on EU membership, consultations were held with the interest groups, representatives of business and NGOs. These consultations in Lithuania, however, were not systematic, the most important role in them was played by the main group of negotiators (Purlys 2004). On the one hand, such a situation was more convenient to the government, and the political culture prevailing in the Baltic states has not helped to build a consensus; on the other hand, to take account of the propositions and opinions of different interest groups was quite complicated due to the complexity of the problems, the tight terms for the preparation of the position of the Baltic states and the strict requirements of the EU which the Baltic states often had simply to obey without having much opportunity for negotiation. The outcomes of the negotiations on the membership of the Baltic states in the EU have been of great importance and have determined the policy of the states in the many branches of the economy and society for a long time ahead. The important decisions made without adequate consultations with the structures of civil society have suppressed the initiative and instilled the thought that decisions are made far away in Brussels and domestic action cannot change anything.

Transnational networks and interest representation at the EU level

From the beginning of the 'Singing revolution' in the Baltic states, many organizations have sought membership in the European federations. Many NGOs, professional organizations, trade unions, business associations, political parties have joined corresponding federations of the EU. The membership has influenced the main objectives and organizational culture of the organizations. The EU has played an active role in establishing links between non-governmental actors in the Baltic states and the older member states. Some programmes have developed partnerships among NGOs across Europe (Smith 2001: 50; Phare 1997b). Thus the European tradition in many cases has determined the pattern of the organizational structure of the society.

The European Commission and the other European institutions have been paying ever greater attention to a wider involvement of civil society (European

Commission 2001). There has been hardly any activity of civil society of the Baltic states at the level of the EU before 2004. The interest groups of the Baltic states did not have any representation in Brussels before their full membership in the EU. The domestic interest groups basically have not tried to exploit European opportunities and enter into direct relations with European decision makers. In explaining this situation, a few reasons could be provided.

One reason is the character of the negotiations concerning the conditions of the joining of the EU. The prerogative to conduct the negotiations has belonged to the governments. On the other hand, the interest groups of the Baltic states have not seen the possibility of a successful lobbying in Brussels, as even for the governments to defend the position in the negotiations with the EU has been quite a difficult task. Some most influential interest groups have tried to represent their interests through associations operating at the EU level or using the opportunities of representation at the European Economic and Social Committee. The efficiency of these channels, however, has been rather limited. Because of substantially lower level of economic development, the interest groups in the Baltic states do not have sufficient resources to represent their interests at the EU level. The other factors are weak civil activity of the society, political culture which does not encourage the articulation of the interests, lack of lobbying traditions, illegal channels of influence. The Lithuanian peculiarity is obvious assessing that, for example, Lithuania is the only member of the EU, which does not have its national representative in the influential and one of the best resourced lobbyist at the EU level - the European Consumers Organization (BEUC 2006).

Anyhow, the process of integration into the EU, the changed weight centre of decision making influence the relations and configuration of stakeholders of the Baltic states. For example, it has been well understood that due to limited resources Lithuanian business associations have been able to set up in Brussels only one representative office, which could represent the interests of Lithuania, and that is why the competing business associations in Lithuania which have not yet been able to find common understanding have been forced to start deliberation on that point. This kind of activity has had, however, only a rather insignificant effect.

The Domestic Change as the Process of Socialization and Learning

Börzel and Risse (2000) use a sociological institutionalist perspective to explain the process of Europeanization as the emergence of new rules, norms, practices, and structures of meaning to which member states are exposed and which they have to incorporate into their domestic structures. According to Börzel and Risse, in socialization processes actors learn to internalize new norms and rules in order to become full-fledged members of international society.

Socialization and learning constitute the basis for the development of civil society in the Baltic states and plays a major role in all four identified ways of the impact of the integration into the EU on civil society of the Baltic states.

Many students of democratization express quite a sceptical view concerning the idea of imposing democracy from abroad. Grugel (2002: 128) however argues that the success of the international aid depends on whether the transitions to democracy and capitalism count on local support and legitimacy. From this point of view, the Baltic states have been advantageous recipients. The "Singing revolutions" in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania which began in 1988 were carried out under the slogan of "returning to Europe". The striving of the three nations to join the EU has been consistent and has had a broad support in the societies. Marju Lauristin, a prominent Estonian social scientist, maintains that "Estonia's transition" amounts to a "return to Western civilisation" (Alapuro, Liikanen and Lonkila2004: 11). In addition to historical and cultural reasons, it is obvious that the authority of the EU has been based primarily on the economic success and the advanced social system of the Western European states. In the Baltic states there has been a perception that the success of the EU has been related to a democratic regime. Among domestic actors there has been a decisively broad consensus that democracy "is the only game in town" (Linz and Stepan 1996a: 15; 1996b). The transfer of values from the West to the region has been regarded as a natural process. In the words of Mischel (1999: 213), "from an Eastern, Central European or Balkan point of view Europe appears as a magnetic center which represents a higher set of values with which one should identify". The aim to join the EU has been the top priority, and democracy has been seen as the main precondition for the membership. The role of the demonstration effect in these circumstances has been significant. As Raik (2003: 225) points out, "[t]he EU has influ-

enced domestic developments largely indirectly, by shaping visions and ideas about civil society, and by conditioning civic activity and especially its relations to the state".

The survival of the democratic regime in the Baltic states should be related to the prospect of the EU membership. In 2001, 50 percent of Estonians, 51 percent of Latvians, and 59 percent of Lithuanians expressed the opinion that their country would be better governed if the current system were replaced by a return to the Communist regime, military rule, or dictatorship (Rose 2002: 42). Degutis (2004: 98) in evaluating the political culture in Lithuania argues that there are not any conditions in the country for a long time stability of a democratic regime. Opinion polls reveal that a majority of the population would remain passive if the democracy in the country would face a threat. Degutis points out however that the two conditions which make a return to the authoritarian rule hardly credible are the democratic attitudes of the political elites and the international environment. It can be stated that the EU to a great extent predetermines an international environment favourably-disposed towards the consolidation of democracy in the country, and, likewise, the perspective of the membership in the EU which has dominated the agenda of the Baltic states, anchors democratic attitudes among the political elite.

The type of the impact of the EU in this case can be conceptualized as Whitehead's "consent", especially as the aspect of the international demonstration effect of this concept (Whitehead 2001: 15-6). A distribution of public aspirations and expectations may owe much of its configuration to the operation of international demonstration effects. As Whitehead points out (2001: 24), "[o]ne particularly striking illustration of how this may generate consent for democratization is when it is reinforced by the prospect of full membership of the EU".

The EU has encouraged the governmental institutions of the Baltic states to consult social partners and civil society. In the governance schemes proposed by the EU there was a recommendation to incorporate more participatory decision-making forums (Youngs 2001: 363). In an independent evaluation of the Phare programme in Latvia it was stated that Phare support established co-operation among social actors and "sometimes has unintended impact of engaging civil society actors in establishing new institutions" (Phare 2003a: 7). The report on Lithuania points out that the Phare projects resulted in the "transfer of EU best

practices in local development and enhancement of local skills, strengthening institutional capacity and leadership in civil society for sustainable local development partnerships" (Phare 2003b: 47).

A political culture is a mediating factor which leads to the internalization of new norms and the development of new identities (Börzel and Risse 2000: 9). A political culture and other informal institutions entail collective understandings of appropriate behavior. There has been a broad consensus among various groups of society in the Baltic states that the integration into the EU is an auspicious way of the development for economic, political, and security reasons. Due to the European moral and cultural authority and the perspective of European integration, the consequences of many political, social and economic problems in the Baltic countries have been mitigated. Antidemocratic trends have been rejected by politicians and society realizing that they would not be in line with the European tradition and would be a great obstacle when joining the EU. The value transfer, the norm diffusion and the moral pressure "to Europeanize" in these cases have been really remarkable.

The political culture in the Baltic states which is different from that in the countries of established democracy, however, has caused the impediments to internalization of new norms and rules. The role of social actors and civil society in the decision-making process has been often neglected by the governmental institutions because such a tradition has been missing for a long time and the actors of civil society have been lacking the qualification and unity to negotiate and defend their interests. E. g., following the example of the EU member states, a Tripartite Council was established in Lithuania in 1995 whereby the Government should conduct negotiations with the employers and trade unions. The Tripartite Council exists officially, but in practice it is almost non-operational (Vilpišauskas and Nakrošis 2003: 56).

Conclusions

The EU has promoted the patterns of democratic governance and has been an important factor in the support of civil society actors in the Baltic countries. The demonstration effect of the EU has played a crucial role in the process of democratic consolidation in the Baltic states. Social learning and the exchange of ideas

and experiences have been an essential source for the strengthening of the NGOs and civil society actors. On the other hand, the integration into the EU has changed the balance of power on behalf of the executive authorities, caused centralization and isolation of state institutions from interest groups and grass-roots civil society. Direct, financial aid to civil society has composed only a small part of the financial assistance programmes in the region. The democracy promotion programmes have lacked a clear purpose and more specified aims.

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FOREIGN POLICY OF LITHUANIA: LINKING THEORY TO PRACTICE

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Summary

In 2004, Lithuania successfully implemented its two most important foreign policy goals - becoming the member of both the European Union and NATO. However, the country now has to assert its status and position in the Euro-Atlantic community of liberal democracies. Lithuania faces an arguably more complex agenda, which has no clear end-goals or deadlines. The security challenges are difficult to identify and predict. The global and European strategic environment is best characterised by an ever-growing uncertainty: the transatlantic relations continue to be tense, Russia, paradoxically, is balancing between the perspective of disintegration and re-emerging as an expansionist imperial power, and the European Union is undergoing one of the most severe internal crises in decades.

At the same time, the major schools of international relations theory disagree on what to make of current world politics. Neorealist authors tend to give alarmist, apocalyptic accounts of the future, if the nation states would despise the iron logic of geopolitics, whereas reflectivist, constructivist authors argue that the world is "what we make of it", and thus, can be changed. These two visions of international relations inevitably lead to different policy implications.

This paper consists of two parts. In the first part, the authors address the current state of affairs in international relations theory, in particular, the rationalist -

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constructivist debate. In the second part, the authors interchangeably explore and compare the policy options that can be derived from the two different worldviews.

The article concludes that international politics for a small state are more complex than either of the schools would suggest. Although the nature of the world politics is increasingly postmodern, a lot of actors still live in a modern world of geopolitics. Lithuanian decision makers will therefore have to "play" in accordance with postmodern rules when possible, but to remember geopolitics, if necessary.

Grounding their view on theoretical synthesis of constructivist and neorealist approaches to foreign policy, the authors assert that Lithuania's Euroatlantism should not overshadow all other interests and problems of the society. The membership in the EU will have far reaching and long term consequences on Lithuanian society- the same cannot be said about membership in NATO, or relations with the US. Lithuania must internalize the EU as a part of its own corporate identity because Lithuania itself *is* a part of Europe's collective identity. Therefore, Lithuanian political elite should cease to consider Europe as an *object* of Lithuanian foreign policy, rather it should become conscious of itself as a *subject* of European policy, contributing to its formation.

Introduction

Lithuanian political scholars are often blamed for insufficient theoretical underpinnings of the analysis they present. This is especially true in the case of experts and analysts working in the field of international relations and foreign policy analysis. The problem is twofold. First of all, the publications of Lithuanian authors rarely, if ever, appear in the prominent journals of international studies. Participation of Lithuanian scholars in the academic discourse of global and European international relations remains very limited, despite some recent progress.¹ The barrier of language and the lack of resources do not provide the opportunity for being heard in other European countries or the USA.

Articles of Lithuanian international relations scholars have appeared in the Cambridge Review of International Affairs, Journal of the Baltic Studies, Electoral studies, publications of the Robert Schuman Center and the EU Institute for Security Studies, other international journals and publications as well as domestic publications in English (Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review, Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review, Lithuanian Political Science Yearbook).

On the other hand, the field of international relations itself is very fragmented. There are clear schisms between European and American scientific traditions (Whatever, the Sociology of a Not So International Discipline) in the field of international relations as well as the schisms among different theoretical paradigms. Those schisms prevent international relations from becoming a "normal social science" and the critics reasonably make allegations about the belletrist or astrological nature of the field.

The authors of this article themselves pursue a rather venturesome task to overview certain aspects of the current state of affairs in international relations studies and evaluate Lithuanian foreign policy analysis and practice within this context. Accordingly, in the first part, the authors alternately examine the main postulates of currently dominant international relations paradigms - realism and constructivism. In the second part, while being sympathetic to different paradigms, the authors debate with each other on the potential alternatives of Lithuanian foreign policy on the basis of the theoretical assumptions of each school of thought.

Having joined NATO and the European Union, Lithuania had to rethink the goals and guidelines of its foreign policy. A somewhat renewed vision and mission of Lithuania's foreign policy is reflected in the conception of "the New Lithuanian foreign policy", advocated by some part of the Lithuanian political elite.² The main thrust of this "new policy" is the assertion that Lithuania should become the leader of the region. This vision was elaborated in the resolution of the Lithuanian parliament.³ According to the resolution, the new policy would entail the efforts of Lithuania "to become an active country, visible in the world and influential in the region; [...] to benefit from all the opportunities and resources accorded by the European Union and NATO in order to turn Lithuania, within a reasonably short time period, into a secure, flourishing, competitive and modern economy; [...] to take an active part in developing and implementing the

The concept was first proposed in a landmark speech by H. E. Mr. Artūras Paulauskas, Acting President of the Republic of Lithuania, at Vilnius University, "Lithuania's New Foreign Policy", 05 24 2004, <http://paulauskas.president.lt/en/one.phtml?id=4995>

See: Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. Resolution on Directions in Foreign Policy of the Republic of Lithuania following Lithuania's accession to NATO and the European Union. 1 May, 2004, Vilnius.

policy of the European Union, strengthening the economic and social coherence and world influence of the European Union". The Agreement of Political Parties of the Republic of Lithuania, „On States Foreign Policy Main Goals and Tasks for the 2004 - 2008"⁴, repeats the same ideas that Lithuania should become "the active and attractive centre of interregional cooperation, which would spread the Euro-Atlantic values, the spirit of tolerance and cooperation and connect the cultures and civilizations". This document also suggests some means for achieving the goals of the "new policy", e.g. "to embed Lithuania in NATO, the European Union and other international structures, to ensure the complete and active Lithuanian participation in the decision making procedures of those structures; to employ Lithuania's historical, geographical and cultural peculiarities and develop the experience of the good neighbourhood; to strengthen the international role of NATO and the European Union, to ensure the efficiency of Euro-Atlantic structures, to encourage the Euro-Atlantic cooperation and promote the Euro-Atlantic values." The agreement also provides some concrete tasks for 2004 - 2008, like the rapid ratification of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, fast accession to the Economic and Monetary Union and Schengen area, Lithuania's Presidency for the OSCE in 2010 and the membership in UN Security Council in 2014-2015.

However, the actual possibilities of implementation of such a vision were not fully explored either in the academic community or open public discussions. The assumptions of this vision, stemming from rationalist realism, were not critically evaluated and the potential of alternative foreign policy was not examined. The authors of this article maintain that critical review of the theoretical underpinnings of the Lithuanian foreign policy could provide some valuable insights for its practical implementation.

Statkus is a proponent of the contemporary foreign policy of Lithuania grounded in traditional neoclassical realism and geopolitics, whereas Paulauskas argues in favour of an alternative policy based on constructivist assumptions. While arguing among themselves, both authors seek to locate a "common ground" that would facilitate entrenching Lithuania in the regional, European and global structures.

See: The Agreement of Political Parties of the Republic of Lithuania „On States Foreign Policy Main Goals and Tasks for the 2004 - 2008". 5 October, 2004, Vilnius

International Relations: at the crossroads of theory and practice

The rationalist — constructivist debate

Throughout the Cold War, the realists and later neorealists held the ultimate authority over the international relations theory. They decided about the nature of international relations and defined the contents of the main concepts, such as "sovereignty", "security", and "interest". Critical approaches remained on the margins of the subject without any possibility to influence the policy of states or at a minimum to get published in the main journals of international relations studies (Booth, 83-121). The end of the Cold War struck a humiliating blow to the realist citadel. The Cold War "security dilemma" was the central thesis of the realist theory, but the realists failed to foresee the end of the Cold War, they were not able to explain it even post-factum (Gaddis, 5-58) and made further wrong predictions about the future. For example, in 1990, Mearsheimer (Back to the future, 5-56) predicted that Europe will sink to the new vortex of chaos and wars, because of the fall of the bipolar system, which guaranteed stability. The end of the Cold War had discredited realism to an extent that some of its apologists (Legro and Moravcsik in particular), began desperately asking: "Is anybody still a realist?"

The front line of academic struggles among different schools of international relations had changed with the end of the Cold War. While in the 1970s and 1980s the main debate took place among realism, liberalism and marxism, since the 1990s the realists were "fighting" constructivists and reflectivists (see table 1).

Table 1 .Three paradigms (metatheories) in current international relations

	Rationalism	Constructivism	Reflectivism
Ontological basis	Reality is material and objective	Reality is social and inter—subjective	
Epistemological basis	Positivism: reality may be explored scientificall		Post-positivism (discourse analysis)
Fact — idea relation	Material factors are most important ideas are that of secondary importance	Ideas are inseparable from material factors, which exist despite of their definition	Material factors are most important, ideas are that of secondary importance
Structure — agent relation	Structure determines the actions of agents	Relationship between structure and agents is mutually co-deterministic	Structure is an outcome of the agent's actions

Waever argues that rationalism as a meta-theory of international relations emerged after the so called "neo - neo synthesis" - the complete convergence and merger of neorealism and neoliberalism (Neumann and Waever, 18). Such synthesis is recognized by the representatives of both theories themselves (Mearsheimer, *A Realist Reply*, 85). Realism had borrowed some postulates from neoliberalism, but also had absorbed the neo-liberalism as such. The realist international relations theory remains dominant within the paradigm of rationalism. Rationalism is based on materialist ontology and positivist epistemology. The reality is real and material, and does not depend on an observer's point of view. Such a stance enables a clear distinction between facts and ideas (including their normative evaluation) and objective, scientifically based exploration of the former. Rationalism holds an unambiguously holistic approach towards the structure - agent dilemma assuming that the structural factors determine the actions of agents.

Reflectivism as a legitimate approach in international relations studies was recognized by the International Studies Association in 1988 (Keohane, 379-396). Reflectivism is comprised of many schools of thought - postmodernism, feminism, critical theory, normative theories, radical constructivist approaches etc. Strict rejection of rationalist assumptions is common to all of them. Reflectivists assert that the nature of reality is social, subjective and therefore it could not be separated from observer and scientifically explored. Facts are indistinguishable from the normative evaluations. According to Anaës Nin: "We see things not as they are, but as we are" (cited in Booth, 88). Reflectivism is based on methodological individualism, because it maintains that any structure is the outcome of agent's choice and so it may be changed by the will of individuals.

Finally, the supporters of "soft", or "middle ground" constructivism aspire to become the intermediary approach (Adler, 319-63; Wendt), which would connect the reflectivist ontology with the positivist epistemology of rationalism. However, this ambition makes constructivism vulnerable to criticisms from both sides. Contrary to reflectivists' point of view, constructivists acknowledge the existence of reality, which is independent from the observer, however, they stress that the meaning of reality is provided essentially by social environment. Mutually constitutive relationship exists between fact and idea. If there would be no object for observation, the society would be unable to ascribe any meaning to it; and vice versa: the object would be meaningless if the members of society would not ascri-

be some kind of inter-subjective (that is commonly accepted, conventional) meaning to it. The concept of "social fact" was invented by constructivists for the denomination of this reciprocal relationship. Constant social construction and reconstruction of reality does not mean that this social reality can not be explored scientifically and the causal relations among various social facts can not be established. According to the constructivists, mutually co-deterministic relations exist between a structure and an agent as well. On the one hand, individuals "socially construct" structures, however, structures determine the "identity" of agents and thus influence their choices.

To conclude, the first important "theoretical choice" confronting the policy makers of any country is the answer to the question concerning the basis of the foreign policy - is this policy based on pragmatic national interests or values, that exist in national identity and collective identity of a state? If the answer is national interests, then the priorities and ways for their realization should be explored. If the answer is identity, then the desirable values and norms should be identified.

Contradictive recommendations for a state's foreign policy

The status quo of current relation between international relations theory and practice is not promising. There are more problems created by realist theories in practice of international relations than resolved ones. Constructivists' aspiration to alter the nature of international relations fundamentally is praiseworthy, but their recommendations do not shed much light on how to achieve this honourable aim. The effort to challenge the rationalists in their own citadel of positivism attempted by Wendt, Adler, Katzenstein and a number of other prominent scholars did not led to a revolution in the hierarchy of international relations theory yet. They did succeed in bringing back the importance of normative aspects to international relations studies, but the "high" politics are still run according to the rules designed by Kissinger-type realists.

However, realism also does not provide unambiguous recommendations for a state's foreign policy course. There are a few competing approaches, which emphasize different aspects in this paradigm. First of all, it is important to mention the different viewpoints of neorealists and neoclassical realists on the *status quo* and the revisionist states (Elman, 5-7). Neorealists suggest that *status quo* states domi-

nate in the international arena. Therefore, the states should strive for security by supporting the current balance of power among states, because it would guarantee the stability of the international system (Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, 18-19; 22-23). This recommendation may be formulated as follows: the state should balance against a hegemonic power if it threatened the stability of the system; and balance against revisionist states, if these tried to weaken the hegemonic power and the stability of the entire system.

The neoclassical realists suggest that a state should strive to increase its power, because it is the only way to ensure state's self-security. The state should not care about the impact of its behaviour on the balance of powers, whether it threatens this balance or strengthens it (Schweller, 89-92). Various variants of realism highlight different factors, which incite aggressive behaviour of the states. Neorealism suggests that first and foremost a state would tend to balance because the anarchic international system prompts it to do so. The states are forced to pursue an expansionist policy, as they feel the threat from other states and react antagonistically in return. If a real threat does not exist, such a foreign policy is counterproductive, since other states would balance against expansionist states instead of bandwagoning.

Aggressive behaviour of a state may be explained by its internal characteristics presuming that relations among states are conditioned by the power they possess. If a state has more power than other states, it would seek to increase it further. When one state is increasing its power, another will try to do the same. Competition between them would probably grow into a permanent accumulation of power because neither of them knows the capabilities of the rival for certain. Such competition may result in direct confrontation. If one state would not be able to compete it may succumb to the more powerful one and be defeated in the power race (Walt, *The Progressive Power*, 58-65).

Thus, the recommendations for a state on the best foreign policy course depend on its power and status in the international arena. Schweller distinguishes the strong and weak *status quo* states and strong and weak revisionist ones (Schweller, 100). The states may be classified into small states, middle powers, great powers and hegemonic powers according to their influence in the international arena.

Small states are status quo states, which are first and foremost interested in ensuring their self-security. They should have some power for avoiding (limiting)

the control of great powers over them and they acquire this power by bandwagoning with more powerful states. Such a weak status quo state uses the strategy of strategic surrender. It bandwagons the revisionist trying to appease it or bandwagons status quo states in an effort to ensure security against revisionists (Rynning, 14). Small states may use the tactics of bargaining while seeking for more favourable terms of "strategic surrender". Due to the limited resources, they are not able to offer a lot in the negotiations and therefore they have to bandwagon offering their benevolence and expecting to retain autonomy in exchange. As Morgenthau notices, independence of such a state depends which side of states - revisionist or status quo - it would choose (Morgenthau, 188-192).

Middle powers also tend to use the policy of bandwagoning. They tend to act through international institutions. The middle power may decide to bandwagon not only to ensure its security, but also to profit from the policy of revisionist (Rynning, 14).

Great powers are actively involved in the balancing politics, establishing alliances through balancing threats or interests. They are the initiators of various alliances and involve the smaller states into them by creating the regional formations for their own good. They may pursue active expansionist policy striving to achieve power, which would grant control of other states. Although used often, the strategy of balancing is not necessarily the dominant one. Sweeney and Fritz (428-449) argue that the Great Powers tend to bandwagon (establish an alliance with hegemonic power) if they believe they share the same interests (e.g. the United Kingdom after the Second World War).

The hegemonic power of the international system aspires to introduce itself as non-threatening and sharing similar interests and goals with the states it strives to control. It should convince the status quo states that it does not threaten their security and the revisionist states that they are powerless and unable to resist the hegemonic power. The hegemonic power actively increases its power at the same time trying to gain control over other states. The offensive realists emphasize the importance of increasing power and influence on the international arena, because they suggest that a hegemonic status is the most desired one by the state because it ensures the highest possible security. This statement is based on the assumption that small states tend to bandwagon the hegemonic power for profit and the Great Powers tend to avoid challenging the dominant state due to the lack of sufficient

power. The possibility that states would try to establish the counterbalance to hegemonic power, however, should not be rejected, especially if this power potentially threatens significant interests of the other Great Powers.

The "political" agenda of constructivists has a strong normative underpinning. According to the proponents of securitization theory (Wæver, *Securitization and Desecuritization*; Buzan et. al.), states should seek to desecuritize problems and return them back to the normal politics. Some constructivists concede that in some cases it may be necessary to do "positive securitization" - securitize those issues that require an increased public awareness about them and action on behalf of a state (e.g. the Darfur crisis). There is a clear constructivist attempt on expanding their influence on the decision-making process through the articles and studies orientated to the policy analysis and practical recommendations. There is a high probability of constructivists' success to embed the terminology of "identity", "norms", "(de)securitization" in the discourse of international relations and, eventually, in practice, as it was done by the American strategists with such conceptions as "national security", "deterrence", "power politics", "security dilemma".

The conceptions of identity and securitization have a certain analytical and explanatory value, which facilitate the non-traditional view on the traditional issues of international politics. The values, culture, mentality of the society (including the political elite) are no less important factors as military capabilities and economic resources in international relations. The importance of power is not rejected by moderate constructivists. They suggest that the securitizing speech act would be more successful if a securitizing agent would occupy certain authoritative position. States, represented by statesmen, are historically and organizationally best placed to do so (Buzan et. al., 37-40). If the spread of HIV in Africa would be defined as a security problem by Tony Blair or George W. Bush the practical consequences to international relations would be different from those triggered by a member of "Greenpeace".

The main methodological instrument of constructivists is the discourse analysis. The discourse analysis could be defined in a broad sense as the qualitative and interpretative effort of revealing the meaning of speech used by the agents for explanation and perception of social phenomena. The discourse itself means the entirety of interrelated texts, speeches, written documents and social practices, which helps to create the meanings and organize the social knowledge. This met-

hod is very demanding for the researcher himself, unlike the quantitative, statistical, programming or modelling methods. The author must persuade his audience that his interpretation of certain meaning of the phenomenon and its context is useful for an explanation of this phenomenon's empirical outcomes (Abdelal et al., 21). The research in securitization means studying discourse and political constellations. The security conception is decided upon textual criterion, the specific rhetoric structure, which should be distinguished in the discourse according to some features. The analysis of discourse and official texts enables the researcher to identify who, how and when securitizes various issues.

In spite of its logical consistency, the application of the securitization theory for explanation of international relations *practice* has some gaps. The official texts often differ from the actual policy of the state and the main decisions are not made public, but rather in David Easton's "black box", behind closed doors. The representatives of the Copenhagen School recognize that discourse analysis is not very helpful in identifying the real motives of the agents (Buzan et al., 176). The constructivists emphasize the social and subjective nature of reality and thus problematize the ontological assumptions of rationalism, however, they "forget" to problematize their own tools, in particular language. For example, constructivists take the "speech act" securitizing one or another problem as social fact, which may be examined in the ways suggested by positivist epistemology. Such "objectivization" of language is not acceptable for more radical constructivists, since language is only one of the categories which construct social reality and it is as subjective as any other category, in particular *non-verbal* practice of international relations. Constructivists realize the limits of their methodology. Booth (107, 113) recognizes that a lot of studies "are books about books, articles about articles" while people continue to be killed or tortured. The academics must explore reality instead of sniping at each other "from the windows of ivory towers". The sense of insecurity people feel today in the streets of London or Baghdad is not a mere subjective social construct. For the people living in those cities insecurity is an objective, material reality of everyday live. The discourse analysis is neither capable to solve this security problem persuasively, nor change those living conditions.

In summary, it should be emphasized that, according to realists, weaker actors may increase their security in the international arena by implementing the policy, which would eliminate the hostile intentions of other actors of international sys-

tem or increase one's own power in order to prevent the realization of hostile intentions towards them. There are two ways for increasing own power: the internal balancing based on accumulation of internal resources (mobilization of resources, armament, etc.) or the external balancing based on alliances with other states (or subjects of international politics), which are hostile to the perceived enemy. More powerful actors in the international arena tend to rely on a self-sustaining increase of power (the internal balancing), though do not avoid forming alliances by attracting the less powerful states to their own side. The small states and middle powers lean towards external balancing by bandwagoning with the Great Powers (either status quo or revisionist ones) or hegemonic power.

It would be hard to propose unambiguous recommendations to foreign and security policy of a state on the grounds of constructivist assumptions. The supporters of the securitization theory are hostages of their own postulates. They do not deny the normative nature of their theory and put forward the desecuritization as the best long term solution to security problems. However, they also do not reject the possibility that securitization may become unavoidable in case an existential threat to the subject occurs (Buzan et. al., 29). The big question is, who should claim the ultimate authority to decide, which threats are existential? The realists have a ready answer - the states, whereas various schools within the constructivist paradigm still struggle with a clear answer. In addition, the problem of identity- the dichotomy of the *Self* and the *Other*- also remains somewhat unresolved in constructivist thinking. For constructivists, identity and security are mutually constitutive concepts. Identity is what needs to be secured and security becomes meaningful as the protection of identity. The logic of identity requires borders - for identity and security to exist there needs to be a line separating "us" from "them" (Bishai, 158). This dichotomy leads to a security dilemma and conflict, which may only be overcome when the border between the Self and the Other disappears and the Self becomes a part of the Other as well as the Other are integrated into the Self- in other words, a collective identity of "We" is created. But this new "We" identity needs a new "Other".

At this point, the possibility for synthesis of realist and constructivist approaches becomes apparent. A certain issue becomes a security issue only if it is securitized through a speech act of a certain actor, which occupies an authoritative position. In this process, it is not important whether the speech act has a material foundation

(e.g. explosion of a missile or the violation of the airspace by a fighter jet). Both schools agree that after successful securitization of an issue specific means of discourse are activated to justify the use of force (including, military force). It is not important (sic!) whether the threat was "objective", existential or not. Once the problem *is on* the security agenda of international politics, the classical postulates of *realpolitik*, balancing and security dilemma come to work. The final solution of both theories is similar - collective security. Collective security is created either through the creation of alliances (the Self- Other dichotomy remains) as realists maintain; or through the transnational integration and the end of national politics (as well as the beginning of a supranational one) as constructivists suggest.

To date, the constructivists have not put much effort to relate the concept of (de)securitization (which is the main instrument of "security" policy) to the concept of transnational integration (which is the final goal of "security" policy). Linking the two may prove to be a powerful tool for the application of constructivist theories to the foreign policy practice of a state. The main question should thus be formulated as follows: which problems and in what context must a state securitize or desecuritize to weaken the conflictive nature of the Self - Other dichotomy and eventually facilitate the transnational integration.

Implications for the Lithuanian Foreign Policy Strategy

In between geopolitical and identity imperatives

The realist prescriptions to small states that were discussed above: allying with a hegemonic power or the strongest revisionist state, or pursuing neutrality to ensure security does not give much guidance to foreign policy strategists. Realist theory does not give answers to many practical problems. For example, under what circumstances should a small state ally with a hegemonic power and in which cases — with a revisionist state? While applying realism to the foreign policy of a concrete state, one has to take into account its geographical position and historical relations with its neighbours. In other words, foreign policy strategists must take into account geopolitics.

The studies of Lithuania's geopolitical situation indicate that Lithuania is situated at the periphery of the so-called heartland of the continental geostrategic

zone. Because of this, as well as other historical circumstances, Russia as the most powerful state of this zone can exert a multifaceted influence upon the Baltic States. For Russia, the eastern part of the Baltic sea region is a natural barrier protecting it from the power of the maritime states. In addition, this territory is a handy outpost to project its influence further into the Central Europe. Similarly, for the maritime states, this region may also serve as a barrier and an outpost directed against Russia. Under a different narrative, the Baltic States could also become a part of a geopolitical gateway between the West and Russia (Laurinavičius et al., 80-81). However, the function of an effective geopolitical gateway would imply geopolitical neutrality, therefore, Lithuania could only become such a gateway if Russia turned democratic and integrated with the Western political and economic structures. According to some Lithuanian experts on geopolitics, assuming that Lithuania could be a "bridge" that would bring Russia closer to Europe and facilitate the forming of a euro-continental EU-Russia alliance, would be unsubstantiated and dangerous (Laurinavičius et al., 226). Under such a scenario, the domestic and foreign policy of Lithuania and other Baltic States (while formally still a part of the EU) would be controlled by Russia. These Lithuanian experts on geopolitics assert that the main reason behind this argument is that the EU alone could not possibly democratize Russia and therefore would seek for some sort of a trade-off at the expense of Central and Eastern Europe (Laurinavičius et al., 226-227). The states of the European "nucleus" are not capable (and perhaps even not interested) to counterbalance Russian influence in the Eastern part of the Baltic Sea region (ibid.).

However, according to these experts, such dynamics would be possible only if the United States had lost interest in the destiny of the Baltic States (for example, in case the conflicts in the Middle East would escalate) or were forced out of Europe. Above-mentioned geopoliticians (226-227) believe that no state or group of states apart from the US currently is capable or willing to counterbalance Russia's influence in the Eastern part of the Baltic Sea region.

Lithuanian experts of geopolitics assume that the long-term interest of the US in Eurasia is the control of the continental zone (*heartland*). The US and Lithuania's long-term interests towards Russia are essentially the same. Neither France, nor Germany, nor China alone can democratize Russia. The US alone would also be incapable to achieve this goal. Only together can the US and Europe fully democra-

tize and westernize Russia (Motieka et al., 56-57). Therefore, Lithuanian geopoliticians believe that the success of the American geostrategy towards Russia and Europe is in the best interest of Lithuania and the best possible security guarantee.

The geopolitical analysis of Lithuania's international situation makes the realist recommendations more concrete and offers a clear-cut conclusion: *Lithuania and other Baltic States must ally with the US*. Therefore, for realists and apologists of geopolitics it is obvious that this „theorem" of modern Lithuanian geopolitics should form the basis for Lithuania's transatlantic, European and Eastern policies.

Geopolitical logic dictates a clear fatalistic imperative: the country must ally with the US or it will be doomed again to disappear as a sovereign subject of international relations. However, geopolitics is only one of possible discourses to „describe" Lithuanian foreign policy, although it currently dominates over the alternative discourses. Yet, one can also offer a different interpretation of Lithuania's international situation.

The problem of geopolitics stems from theoretical gaps in its ontological basis - realism. The realists do not differentiate the states, the contents of states' identity are unimportant and they all seek the same - to survive. However, the identities *are* different and they do influence the foreign policy of states. When one refers to the European Union, the word „European" is no less important than the word „Union". Analogically, when one refers to „American hegemony", the word „American" is as important as the word „hegemony" (Gricius, Paulauskas, 68). Domestic politics are as important to the state's foreign and security policy, as the structure of international system. The features of international system, domestic factors and „objective" characteristics of the state - geographic location, demographic and geologic data - are all interrelated and affect each other. Under different circumstances, different variables may become decisive. Because of the same reason, in the era of globalisation, the concept of „independence", which has been so central in realist thinking, is losing its centrality. Who (the state? society? individuals? political institutions?) and from what (other states? societies? institutions?) must be made or remain independent in the context of increasingly interdependent global network, in which everything may depend on everything - an earthquake in Pakistan may trigger higher gasoline prices in Hawaii. What should „independence" (political? cultural? economic? social?) mean to Lithuania in the context of the European Union? It is possible to argue that in fact membership in the

EU strengthens actual rather than weakens nominal independence of Lithuania. At the end of the day, political independence cannot be a goal in itself - it is a means to ensure security, economic and social prosperity, and cultural self-expression of the individuals. For example, Lithuania has transferred a part of its national sovereignty to the EU and in this sense it is less "independent" than Serbia, Macedonia or Moldova; however the latter states are incapable to ensure the fundamental interests of their societies even though they are relatively more independent.

However, these theoretical gaps do not frighten the foreign policy makers because applicability of „the constructivist turn in international relations" in practice, is not sufficiently researched. Nonetheless, the constructivist logic could recommend to Lithuanian foreign policy makers some attention-grabbing insights. First of all, it is important to establish the main features of Lithuania's identity in the international system. Wendt's identity theory (224-233) suggests four types of a state's identity. According to Wendt, a *corporate identity* exists if the individuals share a common understanding of the state as a corporate organisation, which is different from other organisations. The Lithuanian state has all necessary attributes of a state: institutional and legal order, monopoly of organized violence, sovereignty, society and territory. The Lithuanian state thus has a corporate identity and aims to maintain and secure this identity; otherwise it would not be able to exist as a state. In terms of Wendt's *typical identities*, Lithuania is a small, democratic, parliamentary, market-economy state. Under different circumstances, different Lithuania's typical identities are activated: when Lithuania negotiated its membership in the WTO, it had activated the identity of market economy state. When Lithuania deals with Russia or the US it acts as a small state, etc. Obviously, typical identities may have significant influence upon the state's foreign policy - Lithuania is especially limited by the identity of a small state. On the other hand, this limitation is at least partially compensated by other important identities - those of democratic and market economy state. *The role identities* of Lithuania are directly related to Lithuania's foreign policy. Three main factors define the roles of Lithuania in international politics: 1) internal perception of the role; 2) expectations of other actors towards Lithuania (first and second factors are closely interrelated as they may influence each other) and 3) actual implementation of the role (which "feedbacks" into the first two). For example, the Lithua-

nian political elite picture Lithuania as an active actor in international politics and as a regional leader. The US ascribes to Lithuania a role of its buffer or agent in Europe. Russia would like to see Lithuania performing a similar role. In addition, financial, human, and intellectual resources also factor into the ability of Lithuania to pursue its foreign policy. All these factors in the end shape the role of the country in international politics. Lithuania's corporate identity (at least nominally) is also a part of the EU's *collective identity*. It is possible to assume that eventually Lithuania will internalize this European collective identity and the borderline between Lithuanian and European identities will disappear (although they will not neglect each other, but rather coexist) and this will definitely be reflected in Lithuanian foreign policy.

A constructivist critique of the Lithuanian foreign policy, which is currently built upon geopolitical postulates, could be threefold. First, Lithuania's foreign policy makers disregard the imperatives of Lithuania's European identity in pursuing its European policy. Second, alignment with the US is not the only alternative for Lithuania's survival - the level of attention Lithuanian foreign policy grants to the US is simply not adequate to the importance this country has to Lithuania's identity but also implementation of security, economic and cultural interests. Third, the omnipresent Russian threat in Lithuanian security policy discourse is a clear case of securitisation, but the way this securitisation is carried out is not necessarily the best policy alternative for Lithuania. Lithuanian foreign policy that would take into account constructivist insights would consist of:

- Creation and implementation of a *serious* European policy strategy;
- Review of the importance of the US in Lithuanian foreign policy;
- Reassessment of policy towards Russia.

Transatlantic policy

A majority of Lithuanian foreign policy makers and apologists of geopolitics, agree that the key element of the state's security is a full-fledged integration into the Western political, economic and military structures. The transatlantic rifts that became apparent after the Second Gulf war (Hoffmann, 1029-1036) are not very promising to Lithuania. From a realist perspective, the main problem of international relations is the place of Europe, as a single actor in the international

system. Will Europe become a full-fledged international actor? If so, will it be strategically autonomous or will it remain dependent upon strategic partnership with the US? (Bretherton and Vogler, 1-45).

From a constructivist perspective, it would be difficult to deny that integration with the West has been the fundamental goal of Lithuania's foreign and security policy. However, constructivists would emphasize a different aspect of this effort: security is a derivative function of identity. Lithuania's choice has been dictated by imperatives of identity.

Throughout the 1990s, the foreign and security policy of Lithuania was driven by the urge to dissociate from the past of the Soviet occupation and become an integral part of the Western community. Miniotaitė eloquently argues (214):

"the Baltic States [...] have been creating narratives of belonging to the West, with the East as their threatening 'other'. The West is being associated with prosperity, security and democracy, whereas the East is linked with poverty, unpredictability and insecurity. Positive identification with Europe is accompanied by dissociation from non-Europe, with the emphasis on Russia's threats."

The EU and NATO for the Lithuanian leaders were two sides of the same coin. Membership in the EU symbolised political, cultural and ideational reunion with Europe as well as economic and social prosperity, whereas membership in NATO was seen as the most efficient "hard" security guarantee against perceived military threats. The buzzword for NATO-EU security cooperation at the time was ESDI - European security and defence identity *within* NATO. Landsbergis, the first leader of independent Lithuania, argues that semiotics was important for Lithuania: it was always about *Euro-Atlantic* not simply *European* integration (cited in Paulauskas, forthcoming).

However, Lithuania could not foresee that it would join a different Euro-Atlantic community from the one it aspired to join. The launch of a more autonomous European security and defence policy in 1999 at least nominally made the EU a defence actor in its own right. In the aftermath of 9/11, Russia became an important ally for the US in the war on terror and the NATO-Russia Council was created. In 2003, NATO went "out of area" defined by the Washington treaty after it took over the ISAF mission from the UN. NATO also transferred missions in FYROM and Bosnia and Herzegovina to the responsibility of the EU. These international dynamics were complex enough for the Lithuanian politi-

cians to fully apprehend, but the diplomatic rift over the Iraq war between the US and France and Germany was even a bigger challenge to the Lithuanian Euro-Atlantic worldview. As a result of these changes, the US and NATO and the EU should no longer be seen as two sides of the same coin, but as separate actors with different interests while Russia is considered a "strategic partner" by both the US and the EU.

The dominant Lithuanian foreign policy narrative is the vital importance of the preservation of the transatlantic link. Any other strategic configuration: either the EU aligning with Russia against the US or the US aligning with Russia against the EU would undoubtedly bring new troubles to Lithuania. What further complicates this puzzle for Lithuania is that both the bigger EU member states and the US seek to have special relations with Russia, albeit for different reasons. These relations could potentially jeopardise the vital security interests of Lithuania if the transatlantic link broke down irreparably. As mentioned before, the realists consider the presence of American military might in Europe to be of vital importance to the „hard security" of Lithuania, while a conflict within the Western collective security structures would pose an existential threat to Lithuania as a subject of international politics (Laurinavičius et al., 192).

Therefore, in accordance with the postulates of the modern Lithuanian geopolitics, Lithuania should support all the initiatives inside the EU and NATO and other international formats that seek to strengthen the transatlantic link and American involvement in Europe. Given certain stagnation of EU political integration after France and the Netherlands rejected the EU constitutional treaty, there is only one feasible way for the United States to reinvigorate the relations with Western Europe - to support actively those countries that seek to create politically unified Europe, which would be a global actor in the international arena equal to the US but also willing to maintain close strategic partnership (Asmus, *Rethinking the EU*). The options how to strengthen transatlantic relations vary from ideas to create new transatlantic institutions (Transatlantic community, Transatlantic council, Transatlantic free trade area - TAFTA, see European Policy Centre, *Towards a Renewed*), which would encompass all the NATO and EU states to proposals of transforming NATO into a central forum of transatlantic strategic dialogue.

On the other hand, realism and geopolitics would not suggest Lithuania to pursue its policies only through international institutions. Lithuania should deve-

lop its bilateral relations with the US. Lithuania should support America's global strategy of promoting the spread of democratic values and attempt to find a specific niche within the American global governance order, which is in the making (Lopata and Statkus). For example, Lithuania could specialize in spreading its experience in democratic institution building to the Western part of CIS. It could help those countries to develop their administrative expertise in certain areas of governance (for example, integration into the EU).

Lithuanian efforts should not be geographically limited to the CIS space. More significantly Lithuania's involvement not only in peace building, but also strengthening of civil administration structures in the „failed states" could be of mutual value for both the US and Lithuania. The Americans have faced major shortcomings in the civil administration of their efforts to build democracy in both Afghanistan and Iraq (Cohen, 49-63). Pursuing ways to strengthening the strategic partnership, some kind of bilateral, formal political-military alliance between Lithuania and the US could also be considered as insurance in case NATO is paralysed.

However, it is also possible to take an alternative look at the place of the US in Lithuanian foreign policy. Lithuania continues to perceive the strategic partnership with the US as vital to its security for a number of reasons. The US formally never recognised the occupation of the Baltic States, therefore the oppressed nations saw more hope in the American *Realpolitik* of destroying the "evil empire" than in the Western European *Ostpolitik* of appeasing the Soviets (Paulauskas, forthcoming). After the Cold War, the US became one of the most ardent supporters of Lithuanian membership in NATO while many Western European countries were hesitant.

At the same time, the EU was lacking a viable defence dimension, which led Lithuanian leadership to believe that the EU would be unwilling or simply not able to repel a major aggression had Russia re-emerged as an expansionist and revisionist regime. Conscious or not, "myopia" towards Russia is undermining the credibility of the EU as a strategic actor in the eyes of Lithuania and other Central and Eastern European countries. It is the factor that pushes them towards a closer alignment with the US on certain strategic matters, especially those concerning European defence - an area in which the EU seeks to become a more prominent actor. Ilves argues (191-202) that if some old member states resented the Central and Eastern European countries' pro-American attitudes, the new members view the old members' approach to Russia in a similar way.

The US has been reinforcing Lithuania's pro-American sentiments by symbolic gestures. During his visit in Vilnius in 2002, George W. Bush famously declared: "anyone who would choose Lithuania as an enemy has also made an enemy of the United States of America". Lithuania has never heard anything remotely similar from any of the Western European leaders. In sharp contrast, Jacques Chirac made his infamous comment on the Vilnius group communiqué⁵ supporting the war on Iraq: "they missed a good opportunity to keep quiet". All in all, if there were a serious contingency in the Baltic neighbourhood, Lithuanian leaders would first dial Washington's number, not Brussels'. Lithuania's decision to send troops to Iraq was based on a simple calculation: Lithuania had to assist its most important strategic ally if it expected the help of this ally in times of trouble (Paulauskas, forthcoming).

However, the alleged Lithuanian pro-Americanism does not go far beyond "hard" security issues and relations with Russia. Even the importance of latter factor is also fading, because any military clash between NATO and Russia seems very unlikely. Therefore, the discourse of „vital importance" of American presence in Europe is becoming irrelevant. Apart from America's moral support on the historical question of the occupation and certain military assistance, there is little the US can offer Lithuania in other areas of crucial importance, such as the economic and social development or dependence on Russian energy supplies. In the Eastern neighbourhood (with the notable exceptions of Russia) the US has far less direct interests than the EU. Lithuania is also of no particular strategic importance for the Americans in terms of their number one priority - the war on terrorism. Lithuania was hardly even mentioned among potential candidates for the global realignment of the US defence posture from Western Europe to Europe's south and east (Paulauskas, forthcoming). Meanwhile, the importance of the EU to political, economic and social spheres of life in Lithuania will continue to grow. Lithuania inevitably has to reassess its approach to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) - the Lithuanian political elite cannot disregard the imperatives dictated by the European identity of Lithuania.

⁵ To see the entire document: 'Statement of the Vilnius group countries', http://www.urm.lt/view.php?cat_id=9&msg_id=1791

European policy

European policy could be defined as a state's foreign policy towards the EU. On the other hand, member states delegate certain functions and competences that are traditionally attributed to the domestic realm to EU institutions, and decisions made at the EU supranational level are directly applied in the member state's national legal and administrative order. For the purposes of this paper, constitutional and foreign policy, including enlargement, will be considered in more detail. For realists, the starting point of Lithuania's European policy is the preservation of the transatlantic link.

In the short and medium term, the US is interested in the deepening of the EU integration, boosting EU military expenditure, improving interoperability between European and American forces, attracting European support for the global war on terrorism, successful integration of new members while upholding their pro American worldview (Hunter, 91-110). According to some American strategists (e.g. Asmus, Great Expectations), the new EU members from Central and Eastern Europe can play a positive role in creating a pro-American EU confederation. A certain degree of centralization in the EU is beneficial to the US (especially in the area of foreign and defense policy) given that it is not directed against America's global and regional policies. The support of a centralized EU diplomatic corps would be of particular value for the global geopolitical projects of the US in the Middle East and Central Asia. The Americans would also welcome an efficient ESDP that would reinforce the capabilities of NATO.

To sum up, Lithuanian realists still consider Europe as an *object* of Lithuanian foreign policy. From a constructivist perspective, it is obvious that Lithuania itself is a *subject* of European policy contributing to its formation.

Membership in the EU has far reaching and more fundamental consequences on the domestic and foreign policies of the state than membership in NATO could possibly have (Gricius and Paulauskas, 83). For constructivists, the starting point of the European policy is a strong and unified Europe — the core purpose of EU's foreign policy. A strong transatlantic link is a secondary, derivative goal. Without a strong Europe, the meaning of transatlantic link as embodied by NATO would continue to lose its relevance. A weak and divided Europe is incapable of producing real military capabilities and supporting the US military adventures in

the Middle East. Europe's weakness diminishes Europe's importance to the US, as it was clearly evident in Afghanistan and second Iraqi military campaigns. And vice versa: when Europe acts as one and supports the US policy, it becomes an important, credible and irreplaceable strategic partner - as it is now evident in Afghanistan's reconstruction and stabilization phase.

The importance of the EU in the life of Lithuanian society and government is growing rapidly. The government has already synchronized its schedule with that of the European institutions. Economic cooperation with the EU was of the utmost importance for Lithuania in its quest to reverse all-around dependence on the Russian economy.⁶

The growing importance of the EU to Lithuania has been strongly reflected in the public attitude. The Lithuanians expressed clear commitment to the European project in overwhelming support for the membership in the EU: 91.04 percent voted "yes" in Lithuania in 2003. By September 2005, 57 percent Lithuanians considered membership in the EU "a good thing" (the EU-25 average was 50 percent, see Eurobarometer 64, 11). In addition, Lithuania became the first EU member state to ratify the EU Constitution.

The EU decision making process is becoming ever more complicated as the number of member states continues to grow. As long as the European Council and the Council of Ministers retain their decision making powers, national governments can defend their interests at the highest level and seek compromises with other states. The Nice Treaty gave the smaller states higher voting quotas relative to their size enabling them to block the proposals of the bigger states. The termination of ratification of the Constitutional treaty of the EU provides Lithuania with an opportunity to consolidate its position within the EU in accordance with Nice regulations, establish informal coalitions and enhance its negotiations skills.

For example, in 1996, Lithuania's imports from and exports to the EU stood at 45 percent and 38.5 percent respectively. Imports from the CIS constituted 32.2 percent and exports 39.3 percent of total Lithuanian foreign trade. By 2004, the trend had been reversed. Lithuania has boosted its trade with the EU: imports from EU stood at 63 percent and exports to EU at 66.4 percent of the respective totals in 2004, while share of trade with the CIS has significantly dropped (imports — 16.1 percent, exports — 26.9 percent in 2004). See: Statistics Lithuania, available online: <http://www.std.lt/web/main.php>

In choosing its allies within the EU, Lithuania should take into account the following criteria, based upon realist postulates:

1. the coalition must be significant in terms of power so that it allows to defend national interests efficiently;
2. preferably, the foreign policy interests of Lithuania and potential allies should be compatible both in the short and the long term;
3. the interests of potential allies should not contradict to Lithuania's geostrategy of alignment with the US;
4. seeking to weaken the dichotomy between *We* and *Other*, Lithuania and potential allies should have identity ties.

In accordance with these criteria, Lithuania should seek a strategic alliance with Poland. Such an alliance would boost Lithuania's structural power, the long term interests of both countries are compatible, both geopolitically lean towards the US and both see the same source of threat in Russia (Laurinavičius et al., 307). The existing obstacles to such an alliance are much less significant than other possible alternative options. Alignment with Germany or the Nordic countries would not enhance Lithuania's structural power or even could diminish its political autonomy under certain circumstances (Laurinavičius et al., 258-259, 289-291).

Working together with Poland, Lithuania could pursue an active and efficient EU and other foreign policy. Alignment with Poland as its strategic partner, would enable Lithuania to ensure its economic but also strategic foreign policy interests — preserving the transatlantic link.

A strong EU is unimaginable without an efficient CFSP. Lithuania's approach towards CFSP should also be consistent with its transatlantic and European policy. The fact that the second pillar of the EU — the CFSP — is carried out through intergovernmental negotiations is beneficial to Lithuania as long as it has not established itself within the supranational institutions of the EU. The other two dilemmas of the CFSP development are related to the issue of sovereignty of the member states and relation with NATO and the US, namely a new definition of NATO's role in the European security system. In other words, the first question

is should a state seek to preserve national sovereignty in the area of security or defence or should it gradually transfer it for the sake of greater political integration. The second question is will the EU seek to become an autonomous geopolitical subject by strengthening its foreign and security policies or will it seek to harmonise these policies with those of the US and NATO (Gnesotto, *European Security and Defence Policy*).

The answers would be clear to a realist - the CFSP is useful if it strengthens Euroatlantism and intergovernmentality. Lithuania has to be active in developing the ESDP and the EU battle groups and make sure they are compatible with NATO forces, do not duplicate them and if necessary, take part in NATO operations. Certain conditions should be observed: 1) the CFSP is a truly common endeavour of all the member states; 2) the CFSP is carried through collective European institutions, while the member states adhere to the decisions made.

The realist answers contradict to the implications stemming from a constructivist view. From the latter perspective, Lithuania's interests would be better served by an autonomous CFSP carried out by supranational institutions.

Public support in Lithuania for the common security and defence policy surpasses the average of the EU-25 (84 and 77 percent respectively, see Eurobarometer 64, 34). In addition, Lithuanians are more inclined to entrust the decision making on European defence to EU institutions (49 percent) rather than to NATO (17 percent) or the national government (16 percent) (Eurobarometer 62, 121). Yet, when it comes to the question of cohesiveness of the CFSP, the Lithuanian government does not seem to share the public sentiments: Lithuanian diplomats tend to prefer intergovernmentality and consensus principles as *modus operandi* of the second pillar over supranationalism and qualified majority voting. Such position relies on a wrong assumption that the development of the CFSP could somehow infringe on the future of the transatlantic link (Paulauskas, *forthcoming*). In fact, a strong CFSP could have less negative effects on transatlantic relations than the damage Lithuania is currently suffering because of a weak CFSP.

Intergovernmentally driven CFSP may guarantee more autonomy for Lithuania to make its own decisions in foreign and security policy, however, these decisions are of little if any interest to other actors and do not guarantee more weight and success in relations with Russia. It is also naïve to assume that the veto right the small countries enjoy under the consensus principle is a measure they could seriously consider let alone use in the European Council.

Lithuania should put all its energies in support of a stronger, more cohesive and more supranational CFSP. The choice for Lithuanian leaders is between pursuing narrow national interests they cannot attain alone and compromising in favour of common interests that have more chance of success. Again, it would be unrealistic to assume that the CFSP could replace the bilateral relations that individual member states pursue vis-à-vis Russia (or any other country, for that matter). Yet, a stronger CFSP based on commonly agreed goals and principles, which would be carried out by the EU foreign minister and European diplomatic corps, empowered by the European Council, would both diminish the necessity to pursue national interests bilaterally and increase the likelihood of attaining them. It is much more difficult for Russia to deal with EU institutions based on the common goals of all member states, than to pursue bilateral relations with individual countries. Such bilateral agreements as the Schröder-Putin pact on the gas pipeline in the Baltic Sea, which was reached at the expense of the interests of other EU member states, would become more difficult to achieve.

All in all, Lithuania has a vital stake in the success of the European project. Lithuania will never become a part of the US identity and therefore will always be an *object of the* US global policy, one among many. In the case of Europe, Lithuania itself is the part of an identity of a collective *subject* and it is up to Lithuania as to how much influence it will be able to exert upon the policy of this subject. The rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in France and the Netherlands was therefore a worrisome development. Although, the worst case scenario - the return to power politics in Europe, which would plunge the whole of Central Europe back to the status of a buffer zone and a playground for the big powers - does not seem likely, the global strategic equation remains highly uncertain. Lithuania should neither admire the idea of the *multi-polar* world especially advocated by France and Russia, nor should it be particularly happy with the *unilateralism* of the US, which would defy international norms. In a multi-polar system, where the balance of power dictates the rules of the game, the smaller countries become what Vladimir Putin once described as "expendable change". By the same token, whenever multilateral norms of international law collapse, the small states are the first to suffer. For example, after the second US invasion of Iraq that came at the expense of multilateralism, Russia was quick to include the possibility of pre-emptive strike into its own strategic planning - a move with which Lithuania was hardly happy. The doctrine of preventive strike is still in the early stages of theo-

retical development and in practice relies upon very subjective calculations of the likelihood of threat and possible damage. In this respect, the narrative the Bush administration created about the Iraqi WMD and ties with Al Qaeda is a classic example. Only some sort of *restricted unipolarity* could best accommodate the security concerns of Lithuania (Paulauskas, forthcoming). Such a scenario would require the US to remain the dominant power, which would not pose a danger to Lithuania and would make sure all the actors adhere to international norms instead of breaking them itself.

Lithuania has yet to develop a clear long-term vision of what shape the CFSP should take in the future. So far, Lithuania has been pursuing an ad hoc, reactive policy rather than a coherent, principled and pro-active European policy. Lithuanian initiatives would be more likely to succeed if at least a few older members supported those initiatives. To do that, Lithuania has to follow the overall agenda of the EU and actively support the other countries when it matters to them. Although Lithuania is active in the Council meetings when relations with Russia or Belarus are discussed, it tends to disappear during any other discussion that may be of utmost importance to other members or even the whole EU (Paulauskas, forthcoming). Lithuania hardly has an elaborated opinion on Iran's nuclear program or the future of the arms embargo on China. As a result, Lithuania and other Baltic States are considered "one issue" countries.

Every EU country wants the CFSP to suit its own interests; therefore an ideal CFSP would require a policy that no member state would be completely happy with. A CFSP based upon the lowest common denominator will never turn the EU into a serious international actor - only constant compromises of all member states for the benefit of common interest can bring the EU's actual policy close to its declared ambitions (Peterson and Sjurson, 3-38). Therefore, aggressive attempts to force national interests onto the EU agenda usually provoke negative reactions - it is important to find more sophisticated means, informal alliances, and work hard behind the scenes in order to promote national interest as a common interest. Lithuania will have to learn to take into account differences of interest and political sensitivities existing among the 25 members of the EU, instead of trying to "break the wall with its head".

Poland is no doubt an important strategic ally of Lithuania both inside NATO and the EU. However, not always do the interests of both countries overlap. First

of all, the identity and roles of both countries in international politics is different. Poland is seeking for a status of a great power within the EU and an opportunity to play in the same league with Germany, United Kingdom and France. This factor alone presupposes qualitatively different Polish and Lithuanian foreign policy and goals inside the EU. During the last 15 years, both countries achieved remarkably little success in most areas of cooperation - social, cultural, economic or energy. They are united in a similar perception of the Russian threat, they both cherish the transatlantic link and they share a stormy common history, however these commonalities are not sufficient to fill up the vision of strategic partnership with significant content. Therefore, Lithuania should remain open to alternative alliances, first of all, with the Nordic countries.

For Lithuania, a closer association with wealthy and peaceful Northern European countries along the lines of similar identities would have clear merits in many areas. Nordic countries were instrumental in helping the Baltic States to achieve NATO and the EU membership. An informal 5N + 3B cooperation has already transpired into a much more cohesive NB8 framework, encompassing different levels and spheres of cooperation. Another format - NB6 - consists of the EU member states. The prime ministers of the NB6 regularly meet to coordinate positions before the European Council meetings. The NB8 is a microcosm of Europe itself: there are members of both the EU and NATO (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Denmark), there are non-aligned countries (Finland and Sweden) and there are non-EU countries (Iceland and Norway). All these countries are relatively small, they all seek closer cooperation between the EU and NATO, and they share geographic proximity to Russia with all the challenges that result from this neighbourhood. At the same time, the Nordic countries have long been an inherent part of Europe's collective identity - Lithuania should also seek to first of all become a *normal* European state and not perform the role of special case, buffer, Trojan horse or another unnatural, externally imposed foreign policy role. The NB8 and/or NB8+2 (including Germany and Poland) format could be more suitable to achieve this goal. Of course, an important precondition for the success of the NB8 group is the willingness of the Nordic countries to accept the Baltic States as equal partners, and not an object of assistance or charity.

A constructivist approach would also imply that Lithuania should not forget relations with the bigger EU member states. Lithuanian foreign policy makers

should in particular take into account the central role Germany plays within the EU. To a large extent, it is up to Germany whether the EU will succeed as a single and influential subject of international relations or not. Due to their specific interests and features of national identities, neither France nor the UK can become the headliners of further deepening of the EU at 25. France seeks closer integration of the nucleus of states and a two-speed Europe, whereas the UK is promoting the idea of a wider Europe, which is politically decentralized and based upon free trade.⁷

If realism is perceived in narrow, utilitarian terms, Lithuania and other new EU member states should not support further EU enlargement, as it would cut the significant assistance they are receiving through the structural funds because the current or future EU candidates - Turkey, Ukraine, Moldova, the South Caucasus, Croatia, Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia & Montenegro - are even less prosperous. However, the EU enlargement would expand the zone of stability and democracy eastwards and would thus neutralize or alleviate „hard" and „soft" security threats (illegal migration, transnational organized crime, international terrorism). In addition, the expansion of the free trade area (new opportunities for the free movement of capital, goods, services and people) would open new markets for Lithuanian business and at least partially compensate for losses of structural funds. Lithuanian business is already taking the risks that Western European or American businessmen seek to avoid by investing in the neighboring countries of the EU, despite the uncertain economic environment. In the long run, these risks should pay off and strengthen the relative and structural power of Lithuanian state and society.

On the other hand, the activity of businessmen alone is not sufficient. For example, the countries of the newly established Community of Democratic Choice lack administrative capabilities to Europeanize their economic, administrative, and social-political systems and reach appropriate EU and NATO standards. Lithuania could well use its own integration experience. Lithuania has a lot of public administration specialists and could offer these experts to carry out a variety projects in the most problematic areas of the Eastern neighbours. The financing of

⁷ Among many articles on the subject, see „Which way for Europe? After French „no" vote, the continent stands at a historic crossroads", *The Independent*, May 31, 2005

such projects would basically come from three sources: 1) Lithuania's foreign policy budget, 2) host nation funds; and 3) the EU "neighbourhood instrument".

Thus Lithuanian foreign policy would help solve certain domestic social problems. To paraphrase Napoleon, „the war must feed itself“ - Lithuania should get to a point where its foreign policy would feed itself. In other words, realism and geopolitics imply that Lithuania must use the economic and political power of the Western countries and establish itself in certain economic and administrative niches in Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the South Caucasus. Lithuania should pick one or two priority countries in which it would concentrate its resources so as to achieve a qualitative and visible breakthrough and make it clear that it happened because of Lithuanian efforts. On the other hand, Lithuania's activity in the EU neighbourhood should strengthen the state's positions within the EU structures. It is somewhat paradoxical that Lithuania consistently sought to disassociate from the Eastern neighbourhood, but now, after the double enlargement, it finds itself in a situation when it has to turn back East to ensure its security and earn respect for its interests in the West. Therefore, a geopolitical perspective would prompt Lithuania to support the EU's enlargement eastwards and negotiations with Turkey, as it would also open the possibility for Ukraine and other CIS to someday enter the EU.

If the EU would follow such a realist Eastern policy, it would be consistent in its long-term political and economic strategy of reuniting Eastern Europe with the West. Such a strategy should result in full-fledged or partial integration of most of the Eastern European countries into the EU. Politically, Lithuania would greatly benefit from such a scenario and would gain wide possibilities for practical cooperation with the Eastern European countries and would strengthen „hard“ and „soft“ security.

From a constructivist perspective, the recommendations for Lithuania's Eastern policy are not so clear-cut - identity imperatives dictate their own logic. It is no doubt that enlargement has been the most successful element of EU's foreign policy. Openness to ready candidates has been a part of EU identity itself- the EU has been asserting its identity via integration of the *Other* and creation of a common *We*, instead of isolation and securitization of the *Other*. On the other hand, in order to define the *We* identity it is still necessary to have a significant *Other*. If Muslim Turkey became the biggest member state of a Christian EU, it

would inevitably *change* the very identity of the EU, to say nothing about its institutional structure, social and cultural policies. It is possible to assume, that membership of Turkey, Ukraine, Moldova, the South Caucasus in the EU would undermine the foundations of the EU, which is already living through a rather severe crisis of legitimacy, increase its internal fragmentation, revive the ideas of multi-speed Europe or even their realization. Such a Europe would be easy to control for the US but also Russia. It is doubtful, that membership in the EU of unstable and corrupt countries, which are heavily influenced by Russia, is a security interest of Lithuania. These states are simply too unstable to expect membership in the near future. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) itself was to a great extent designed as a response to this challenge.

On the other hand, Lithuania has a clear practical interest to seek to desecuritize relations with the Eastern Europe and promote democratic reforms through EU institutions even without an early membership promise. This is the area of the CFSP, in which Lithuania could offer the most substantial contribution. The keen interest of the new members in the stability, economic and social development of the Eastern neighbours prompted the EU as a whole to pay more attention to this region. It still remains to be seen if this increased attention will transpire into substantial financial support for the new neighbours - the EU is still more preoccupied with the countries of the Mediterranean dialogue, which will never become EU members, than those of Eastern Europe. It is doubtful that Lithuania and other new members are ready to fight the older members about the financing of the new neighbours as long as the newcomers themselves find a very hard time to negotiate the size of their own structural funds. Lithuania must appropriately pack and sell its Eastern policy expertise. Lithuania's and other new members' initial stance of "we know better" how to deal with Russia or other neighbours did not fare well with the old members, and the new members were taught "a lesson in humility" (Paulauskas, forthcoming).

Today Lithuania's borders in the West (Kaliningrad region) and the East (Belarus) are external borders of the EU. These borders are vulnerable to the threats of smuggling, human trafficking, trafficking of drugs and guns, organised crime, HIV, illegal migration, not to mention the heavy militarization of Kaliningrad, perhaps, including nuclear weapons. These challenges could hit the EU ever more heavily if the development gap between the wealthy club of the West and the

rest widened further. Stability, peace and economic prosperity in Kaliningrad and Belarus should therefore be the top priority of the foreign and security policy of Lithuania.

Lithuania, together with Poland, claims to have put Belarus and the Kaliningrad region on the EU agenda long before they themselves became members. Even more remarkably, Lithuania together with the other Baltic States already for a few years have been supporting and promoting democratic reforms in the South Caucasus. In 2005, Lithuania has also established itself as an advocate of having the Ukraine inside NATO: it has organized two high level events devoted to Ukraine in Vilnius (meeting of NATO foreign ministers that launched the Intensified Dialogue with Ukraine and NATO-Ukraine consultations). Such activities help to diversify the foreign policy of Lithuania and avoid the status of "one issue" country.

Lithuania has the right instruments to aid the Eastern European countries. First and foremost it is the experience and expertise gained during its own transformation period. Lithuania knows better than Western or former Warsaw pact countries what challenges the former Soviet republics face. Lithuania knows how to shake off the Soviet legacies and transform centrally planned economies into free market economies; second, it knows how to adapt legal and political systems and meet other EU and NATO demands in order to become eligible for membership (Paulauskas, forthcoming). Lithuania must "sell" these advantages to the rest of the EU and NATO, and the EU and NATO has to find a way to exploit these strengths.

The main problem of Lithuania's Eastern policy is the lack of financial and administrative resources. Obviously, it has to find allies. The Nordic-Baltic forum could play an important role in this respect - the Nordic countries have financial resources, and the Baltics have fresh expertise. It is important that Lithuania take into account not only its national interests but also common European interests. Lithuanian endeavours should add value to the efforts of the EU institutions and other EU member states, instead of competing with them.

In addition, Lithuania cannot devote equal attention to all areas - clear priorities must be set in order to consolidate resources and achieve a qualitative difference. As argued in the introduction, a part of the Lithuanian elite is inclined towards grandiose visions, in which Lithuania is seen at least as a regional leader.

According to this vision, Lithuania should be active in all possible directions and lead everywhere: in the CFSP, in EU's relations with Russia, in the European neighbourhood policy, in transatlantic relations, in the OSCE disarmament initiatives, and even become a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. Such ambitions far outstrip the capabilities of the country, creating a potentially dangerous overstretch, which could result in inefficient use of scarce resources and failure to achieve priority objectives. After all, a "regional leadership" cannot be a goal in itself- it can only be one of the means to implement national interests. Taking into account the geopolitical code of Lithuania, or its typical identity, it is not necessarily the most effective means. To be or not to be a regional leader - any answer to this question would have no affect whatsoever on the strengthening of democracy and rule of law in the Eastern neighbourhood. It is also not clear which region one should have in mind. At the end of the day, the main foreign and security interests will always remain local and regional, not global in nature.

Eastern policy: relations with Russia and Belarus

It is obvious that the dynamics of Lithuanian-Russian relations to a large extent depends on EU-Russia and US-Russia relations. However, Russia will continue to be the main source of economic and political threats as long as Russia will continue to be a great power with global geopolitical interests and seek to recapture its influence in the CIS space (Motieka et al, 27-66). Unless Russia will transform into a regional state with regional interests and drops its ambitions to stay a global actor, Lithuania will have to pursue a strategy of selective and principled cooperation with Russia. It is important to remember the main maxim of Lithuania's „realist" foreign policy - to support the American policy towards Russia that seeks to turn Russia into a regional state and a constructive partner of NATO, which in the future could be involved in the transcontinental security system pursued by the US to contain China's rising power (Brzezinski, 68-71).

For realists (e.g. The Atlantic Council of the United States), it is self evident that it is important to support American initiatives aimed at the downsizing of the Russian armed forces and their reform in order to foster their interoperability with NATO's forces; supporting a centralized state structure, which would gua-

rantee the reforms of the Russian economy and armed forces, security of foreign investments and a stable supply of energy resources. It is of acute importance to Lithuania to boost security of energy supplies and diversification of their sources. Lithuania should also explore opportunities to invest in alternative and environment friendly sources of energy.

Lithuania is interested in the strengthening of economic ties between the EU and Russia, in particular the possibilities to Europeanize the Kaliningrad region. If Lithuania could get actively involved in this process, it could well expect significant political and economic gains. Lithuania needs to foster economic, cultural and academic cooperation with the Kaliningrad region and facilitate the entry of the region's inhabitants into the EU. Lithuania should also support the EU initiatives and projects aimed at bringing Kaliningrad closer to the EU even if Lithuania did not take direct part.

Realists believe that the authoritarian regime in Belarus is a threat in itself to Lithuania's territorial integrity and independence. The power of Belarus (first of all military) far surpasses that of Lithuania, therefore, the neighbourhood of potentially unstable and unpredictable state is a direct threat to the security and prosperity of Lithuanian inhabitants.

Geopolitically, it is important to Lithuania the perspective of democratization and *de facto* and *de jure* independence of this country. Lithuania is interested in an independent, democratic, and economically open Belarus. Lithuania should therefore exploit the slightest possibility to pursue an active role in the international efforts to democratize and Europeanize Belarus.

From a constructivist perspective, there is also no doubt that a flourishing European-style democracy in Russia is the most important long-term interest of Lithuania, which, if accomplished, would render most of the other security concerns irrelevant. Meanwhile, Lithuania should seek to desecuritize Russia and build more self-confidence into the cumbersome relations with Russia. Lithuania is now able to use new opportunities provided by the membership in NATO and the EU, but it should also mind new constraints. Membership of the EU and NATO gave Lithuanian decision makers a firm ground and structural power to deal with Russia.

On the other hand, Lithuania lost a part of its autonomous policy line towards Russia. It is important to realise that Lithuanian-Russian relations will now be

subsumed under the EU-Russia and NATO-Russia relations. Lithuanian decision makers will now have to negotiate, adjust and often to concede to common positions of the EU and NATO.

Lithuania may also have to review its ambitions: in bilateral relations it cannot play at the same level as Russia simply because of the different weight categories. Lithuania does not have sufficient resources to become an interlocutor or bridge between Russia and the EU. Such a role of Lithuania would not be acceptable either to Moscow or Brussels. Russia itself does not see the Baltic States or even the whole Central Europe as a "bridge" to Europe. For Vladimir Putin, the Baltic States are no bridge to Europe - he does not need advice from Vilnius, Tallinn or Riga - he flies directly to Brussels, Berlin or Paris. The only way for Lithuania to achieve its long-term goals is multilateral one - through the EU and NATO.

Dealing with the threatening *Other*- Russia - Lithuania should less dramatize the „threat" element, but seek to uncover and understand better the identity of the *Other*, in accordance with the good old principle „knowyour enemy". Russia, the way it is today, will not offer recognition of or compensations for the Soviet occupation. Raising this question to the state with regime of "managed democracy" and "controlled capitalism" simply has no future. Building relations with Moscow on the condition that Russia will redeem historical grievances of Lithuania is a *naïve and* counter-effective approach. Relations with Russia should be built not upon the hopes that Russia will accept the role of a democratic state, but on the understanding, that it is performing a role of an expansionist and authoritarian state. Instrumentalisation of history as a foreign policy tool and securitization of entire Russia in its entirety, as such, does not help Lithuania to solve a number of more earthly and more urgent issues: security challenges stemming from Kaliningrad, dependency on energy supplies and their security, activities of Russia's special services or the future of Belarus. Arguably, constructivism offers a somewhat more pragmatic strategy towards Russia than the one presupposed by realism or geopolitics. A comprehensive securitisation of Russia denies the possibility to identify *existential threats* among regular problems of normal politics. For securitisation to succeed, the audience must accept a certain problem as an existential threat (Buzan et al., 25). Lithuanian society, to say nothing about international community, hardly perceives Russia the same way as the Lithuanian apologists of realism and geopolitics.

Today, there are three groups of countries in Europe: some countries that are further away from Russia, like France, Spain or Italy, have a romantic perception of the Russian image. They do not understand (or pretend to not understand) the processes taking place in Russia, or they are simply not interested. Another group of countries, first of all Germany and in part the UK, have a pragmatic and cynical view of Russia: they know all too well what is happening in Russia and with Russia, but they choose to disregard those processes or even use them to their own advantage. The Central and Eastern European countries *think* they have the best understanding of Russia, and, therefore, are afraid of it. Lithuania should seek to abandon the latter group and move to the second one. The policy of EU institutions towards Russia are *interest-* rather than value-based. Lithuania faces a dilemma: on the one hand, an interest-based, realist Western policy towards Russia is not encouraging its democratisation; on the other hand, Lithuania cannot push the EU and NATO too hard to change their attitude towards "strategic partnership" with Russia. Lithuania has got no significant political dividends from constantly securitising and, thus, self-imposing an anti-Russian image. If Lithuania insisted on a radical policy towards Russia, it risks ending up at the margins of the official EU-Russia and NATO-Russia dialogue, whereas to participate in this dialogue, Lithuania needs a constructive, pragmatic approach.

Conclusions

A synthesis of constructivist and realist approaches to foreign policy is not impossible. A problem becomes a security issue when an actor with appropriate authority and power performs a securitising act. In other words, both discursive and material factors are at play in the formation of foreign policy. In addition, both constructivists and realists agree that after a problem has been successfully securitized, specific discursive tools are activated to justify use of violence. In this process it is not important whether the threat is „objective“, existential, or not. In this realm, classic postulates of *realpolitik*, balance of power and security dilemma come to the fore. The final solution to both schools is similar — collective security. However, for realists, it implies building of alliances; in which a dichotomy between *Myself* and *Other remains* valid, whereas for constructivists it implies transnational integration, the end of national policy and the beginning of supranational one.

Even transnational integration cannot offer the final solution to security problem. Although the dichotomy *Myself- Other* vanishes, but a new dichotomy *We-Other* comes into being. Any identity needs its threatening *Other*, and existence of the threatening *Other* always implies an inherent security dilemma, which can only be overcome through transnational integration and creation of a new collective identity - *We*. And again, for this new identity to exist, new *Other* is necessary. Similarly, in the case of realism, more powerful actors subjugate other actors and assimilate them into a new identity, based on their own. However, in this case collective identity is impossible. If, for example, in the EU many identities may coexist and have certain possibilities for autonomous self-expression (in the UK Scottish, Welsh, English, Irish, British and European political identities peacefully coexist), in the imperial powers, such as the US or the Soviet Union, regional and other sub-national identities are only nominal and have no rights or possibilities of political self-expression - a strict hierarchy of identities is in place. Moreover, two national identities cannot coexist with equal rights within a collective identity.

To conclude, in theory, the security dilemma cannot be resolved either from a realist or constructivist perspective. After all, theory cannot offer final solutions to practical problems. The actual situation of a concrete international actor will dictate specific solutions, which will inevitably have to encompass elements of both realism and constructivism.

It is rather impossible to turn rapidly Lithuania's foreign policy from a realist, geopolitical path towards a constructivist one. Realist thinking is still too deeply enshrined in the consciousness of both the academic and political elite. On the other hand, constructivist assumptions also have not been credibly tested in practice.

The most realistic and constructive way forward would be an evolutionary approach: critical reassessment of some of the old Lithuanian foreign policy axioms and a practical test of some new, constructivist insights. The main elements of synthetic approach, encompassing realist geopolitics and constructivism, could be the following:

1. Lithuania's Euroatlantism should not be the dogma of foreign policy that would overshadow all other interests and problems of the society. The membership in the EU will have far reaching and long term consequences on

Lithuanian society - the same cannot be said about membership in NATO, or relations with the US. Therefore, Lithuania needs to reassess its European policy.

2. Lithuania must internalize the EU as a part of its corporate identity - Lithuania *is* a part of Europe's collective identity. Thus far, for both the political elite and the society, the EU was an extraneous entity rather than a part of national identity. It is no longer about Lithuania *and the* EU, but Lithuania *in* the EU. The rules and principles the Lithuanian foreign policy abided by in bilateral and multilateral relations until membership in the EU, may not necessarily be applicable in the new situation. Even such fundamental concepts as "sovereignty", "territory", "borders", "citizenship", or even "democracy" gain new meanings once a nation state becomes a member state. All of this should be reflected in Lithuania's foreign policy - implementation of clearly defined common European interests should be more important for Lithuania than the implementation of global US interests, even if these interests would be in conflict. In other words, pro-American behaviour of Lithuania should not be *unconditional* - the theorem of Lithuanian geopolitics should not become an axiom. The key words in this case are a *restricted unilateralism of the US* constrained by multilateral norms supervised by effective international institutions.
3. Contrary to the assertion of geopolitics, which presupposes constant and universal mobilisation for war, today the security situation of Lithuania is not special, there will be no existential military threats to Lithuania in the foreseeable future (at least 10 years). The security question in terms of "high politics" and "hard security" has been solved and closed after Lithuania became a member of NATO. There are no reasons for Lithuania to seek re-securitisation of its situation in the region, which is exactly the idea behind the proposals of some radical Euroatlantists. Lithuania should see the bigger picture, despite the fact that immediate sphere of its influence is limited by the neighbouring regions. Lithuania should care about the questions of the EU member states care about. Lithuania should have a position on Myanmar or Kinshasa if it expects others to listen to Lithuania's opinion about Minsk or Chisinau.

4. Lithuania should consider more seriously its participation in the CFSP. A weak CFSP is not in the best interest of Lithuania. Only a strong and efficient CFSP can help implement the main interests of Lithuania, therefore, Vilnius should stand ready to sacrifice part of its sovereignty and rather empty veto power in favour of common interests. Finally, Lithuania should make more solid contribution to EU peacekeeping operations, so that its declarations about an active support to ESDP would gain a tangible form. It is crucial in order to be considered not only active but also a credible EU member state.
5. It is important to desecuritize relations with Russia. Problematic aspects of these relations should be moved from the security agenda to the agenda of normal politics. The perception of Russia as a threatening *Otheris* related not only to real threats stemming from Russia but also internal perceptions in Lithuania that Russia will always be a threat. Such an unconditional position may prevent policy makers from identifying the most serious problems, for example, the weakness of consolidation of Lithuania's own political system, which makes it susceptible to the invasion of Russian capital in the state's domestic life making Lithuania Russia's Trojan horse inside NATO and the EU. At the same time, some issues that do not constitute an existential threat are intentionally or unintentionally securitized (for example, the commemoration of the Victory Day in Moscow in 2005 or the SU-27 accident in Lithuania and the military threat of Russia in general). Inside the EU, Lithuania should be constructive, in bilateral relations with Russia - pragmatic, but also assertive in its long term objective to encourage real, not managed democratic transformation of Russia.
6. In the end, Lithuania should seek to become a *normal*, ordinary EU member state safely locked inside of the united, free and secure Europe. Strengthening cooperation of the NB8+2 group would be the most natural way to achieve this goal. Other popular concepts, such as a "bridge", a "transit link", a "buffer zone" or another ambivalent entity would only imply geopolitical uncertainty and inherent insecurity.

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ON THE SOUTHERN CAUCASUS' PERSPECTIVES OF BECOMING A EURO-CAUCASUS

Soso Tsiskarishvili*

Taking into consideration the popular opinion that the European Union will slow down its enlargement after the year 2007, and that according to various estimates such tacit moratorium may last for 10 to 20 years, it becomes clear that Southern Caucasus countries have about two decades to bring their own state and public life closer to the European requirements prior to submission of valid arguments for EU membership. 20 years! Is it a long time? For the southern temperament, it is an eternity. On the other hand, it is an instant for the Caucasus mentality, which took thousands of years to form.

After long considerations, the European Union suggested that Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia deal with Europe as kind neighbours, at the same time ignoring the fact that the region may hardly be called an oasis of inter-state neighbourliness. How strong are the wish and the real opportunities for neighbourliness between Europe and the Southern Caucasus? Each of the three countries has its own resources and arguments for active engagement in the process of European integration.

For Georgia, this first of all means a cultural and mental self-identification with the European civilisation, as well as a firm desire to belong to the European family. No one in Georgia has ever doubted that the Black Sea, rather than dividing, connects their country with Europe, and that the geopolitical resources of the country have not been fully appreciated by the Old Continent.

For Armenia, this is a historical reality of having constant kinship and business relations with the large Armenian Diaspora in Europe, which are not indifferent to the destiny of their historical homeland and which represent a considerable intellectual and material resource for European integration.

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Regardless of its significant cultural differences with Western Europe, Azerbaijan has nearly one hundred years of experience in serious business partnerships with the West and a traditionally close relationship with England. The country boasts the most dynamically developing economy, is rich in natural resources and, one has to admit it, is the most attractive Southern Caucasus neighbour for Europe in geostrategic terms among other things.

What are the alternatives to European integration for these countries?

It is plausible to believe that Azerbaijan has the widest choice, and it is here that the Asian Bank and the Kuwait Fund are more active than the European Bank and the International Monetary Fund. And if the impact of religious factors on politics continues to increase significantly, at some point in time one might see an abrupt turn of the integration vector to the East or to the South. If Europe remains passive and the Russian factor becomes more attractive or more violent, the Western vector might lose power and the Northern one may become stronger.

For Armenia, a viable alternative to European integration might be a strategic partnership with Russia, perhaps even an involuntary partnership, if Armenia, in the long run, remains a victim of its own victory in Karabakh.

Georgia seems not to have any voluntary alternative to European integration.

Everyone knows that the Karabakh conflict represents the main obstacle to the restoration of civilised trilateral inter-state relationships in the region. For the last two decades, all types of co-operation in the Southern Caucasus have taken place in only two bilateral directions: Georgia - Armenia and Georgia - Azerbaijan.

When long-lasting peace talk processes of various formats are viewed by the parties simply as futile procrastination in problem-solving, the situation in place can hardly be called "frozen conflicts", as some neutral or interested diplomats and conflictologists would like to imagine. At the same time, the population driven away from these zones of conflict as well as their many sympathisers consider themselves to be in the state of an "unended war", whereby failure to act may not be endless. The above-mentioned also refers to zones of long-lasting conflict between Russia and Georgia in Abkhazia and in the so-called Southern Ossetia.

Russia's role in the development of political and economic processes in the Southern Caucasus still remains very important. Potentially, Russia may act as both a warrantor of stability in the region and as an initiator of destabilisation leading to bloodshed. As far as politics in present-day Russia is concerned, unfor-

tunately one can talk about the desire to restore the hegemonic position on the international arena and of Stalinism in the country itself. As a state with imperial interests in the Caucasus, Russia is especially unpredictable today since it has not yet managed to accept the loss of its "senior brother" status and is ready to eagerly assume the status of a "mafia boss" in the Caucasus who dictates what others ought to do and punishes the disobedient in the manner he likes, starting with prohibitions on importing their fruit or wine and ending with impudent annexation of their territories.

Here, the late US president Ronald Reagan comes to mind, who succeeded in demolishing the "Empire of Evil". Alas, he did not consider it opportune to destroy the chips of the empire on the entire former territory of the empire. He probably did not imagine that those fragments would be able to regenerate in some places. If those fragments of the empire are not done away with internally in due time, the international community will have an acute need for a person called Ronald Reagan II! It is well known that according to real renewal logic, if there is demand, then supply will follow.

The problem of relationships with Russia is relevant for the entire civilised world, and the success of many democratic processes in the world, including the success of European integration, depends on the common principle-based policies excluding double standards in inter-state relationships.

Another issue faced regularly is as follows: how consistent are the leaders of the Southern Caucasus countries in their aspirations regarding European integration? Today the leaders of each of the states of the region can demonstrate many facts proving their success on the way to European integration and proving their readiness to sign the European neighbourliness documents agreed upon with Brussels. One may only wish God helps them in their strivings! However, such facts can hardly attract too much attention from the society, especially the European society. Usually what is remembered are the specifics, which stand out from the routine flows of information. It might be dared to say that the result of some official information does not help in the creation of a positive image of integration-related processes of the countries of the region, if seen through the eyes of the so-longed-for European neighbours.

For instance, it was a great surprise to discover the appearance of the name of the Azerbaijani president along the names of Vladimir Putin and Fidel Castro,

who congratulated the third-time president of Belarus on God only knows what. One should not then be surprised if the European Union decided to impose sanctions on all countries of the Southern Caucasus in that relation, if one recalls that in the autumn of 2005 due to assignment of the flight from Baku to Northern Cyprus the European Commission twice postponed the dates of discussions regarding the European neighbourhood program not only with Azerbaijan, but also with Armenia and Georgia.

Not long ago, on the EuroNews the Armenian president expressed his personal opinion regarding European integration. He said the following: "The European Union has not taken a final decision concerning the boundaries of Europe yet; therefore, formulation of Armenia's policies with regards to the European Union is the task of the next generation of Armenian politicians." Upon hearing those words one can only feel sorry for the present-day Georgian politicians who do not know that their present attempts to knock on the European door are in vain, since regardless of the EU's oral assurances about individual consideration for each country, practice shows something totally different. It seems that Brussels continues to view the countries of the Southern Caucasus as "the indissoluble union of free republics" which can try to achieve their objectives only if they are united.

Perhaps nothing bad lies in the fact that brothers from different marriages are forced to consider themselves twins, yet in this case a threat exists that the united "march on Europe" can be hindered by Georgia as well. The president of Georgia, while assuring the population of accession into the EU in the nearest future, at the same time, for example, may calmly accept the abnormal judicial system of the state, which just like a notary who has been threatened, verifies every prosecutor's caprice by the seal of the supreme justice. If one believes that such courts can help one to become member of a union, it will not be the European Union, but rather the Soviet Union once again.

How can one revive and intensify the long-term European neighbourhood process? How can one both show oneself in a better way and see others better? The differences and similarities of the processes taking place in the countries of the Southern Caucasus, the presence of unended conflicts, and the variety of attitudes, methods and time schedules applied on the way to European integration make it logical for one to suggest that the European Commission adopt the notion of a "step-by-step asymmetrical integration" as a mechanism for assessment and encouragement of individual successes, as well as for reacting to possible fai-

lures of each individual country in the process of implementation of the New Neighbourhood programme as the main institutional instrument of the long-term process of European integration.

The contours and conditions of the step-by-step asymmetry may be defined by the European Commission on the basis of clearly pre-set criteria such as the level of democracy in the country concerned, the level of protection of human rights, transparency and validity of elections, positive results in the process of solving of territorial conflicts and conflicts between different nations, independence and professionalism of the judicial system, adequacy and successfulness of reforms, adherence to the principles of market economy, adequate conditions for the development of businesses and investment-related activities, etc. Depending on the achieved results each country could come closer to or further away from the ultimate integration goal, could have an opportunity to become a member of individual European structures or lose its membership. The countries could learn from the success and mistakes of others.

And, finally, about the most important things. It is clear that the European integration, unlike Socialist integration, may not be imposed from above by applying stick and carrot policies. It must become a natural and conscious need of the people, which is able to make the authorities move in the required direction. Such integration would be based on the common European values, whereas any integration imposed from above more often than not may be viewed by people as representing pragmatic interests of the authorities.

A special role in the process of the European integration belongs to the civil societies of the three Caucasus states. People of the three countries must feel that the process of integration is becoming stronger, is moving in a positive direction, and seems feasible for them too and not only for politicians. Thus civil society may become the most efficient accelerator of such processes. A developed civil society (and civil society alone!) can be the initiator and creator in their Caucasian Home of a restructuring which is a common value, is unique in terms of volume, is unprecedented in terms of technology, and is able to turn the Southern Caucasus into a Euro-Caucasus.

Sociological studies carried out by the US company Intermedia in 2004 give one some reasons for being optimistic: 82% of Georgians, 63% of Azerbaijani, and 62% of Armenians have a positive attitude towards the possible accession of their country to the European Union. It should be noted that no such similarity

of opinion-related indicators in Armenia and Azerbaijan is found on any other issues, be it the attitude towards Russia, the USA, the neighbouring countries or NATO membership. This leads to the idea that the role of the EU in mediating conflicts in the Southern Caucasus might become more important and more efficient.

Together with the overall positive attitude towards European integration, people have come up with the following questions addressed to their authorities and the EU leaders:

- What is more important for our country - EU and NATO membership or the solving of our own territorial problems first of all?
- At which stage of European integration will the problems regarding the territorial entirety of Georgia and Azerbaijan be solved?
- What can be demonstrated by the example of Cyprus, which was accepted into the EU disregarding its internationally recognised borders?
- Is the EU planning to apply the status of Kosovo to the unrecognised territories in the Southern Caucasus?
- Will energy-dependent Europe be able to ensure the energy independence of the region? Etc.

Unfortunately, the authorities do not encourage any dialogue with the public on such important issues and only give out their own monologues about successful mutual visits. Furthermore, as Armenian political analyst Stepan Grigorian noted in one of his interviews, Armenian and Azerbaijani people are practically separated from the process of negotiations regarding the Karabakh problem, and "ignorance leads to doubts and suspicions in relation to both the intermediaries and the authorities themselves."

Various-formatted regional civil dialogue, including dialogue with the authorities of one's own country on problems of regional and European development, is indispensable as an instrument of re-creation of mutual trust in the region based on common values and the increased responsibility of the authorities for the results of their actions in the process of European integration.

The participation of representatives of the European community in the Caucasus dialogue will be of great help. People in the Southern Caucasus are looking forward to receiving help from Europeans in spreading the tolerance virus in the Caucasus, where everyone is so different yet so intelligent! It would be a great idea to "contaminate" the hearts of the Caucasus people with some of Françoise Sagan's wisdom by convincing them of the truthfulness of her words: "Accepting others' shortcomings is easy, if you do not aim at correcting them."

The people of Caucasus would benefit from regular communication with representatives of former Socialist European countries, which have only recently become members of the European Union. The people of the two regions spent nearly half of a century fighting against their common illnesses and learned to read between the lines and to understand each other without words. For the countries of the Southern Caucasus the then Socialist countries of Europe were the only "available Europe" where Caucasians could somewhat satisfy their thirst for communication with a more civilised world.

Unfortunately, after the dissolution of the USSR the European Union has not considered it opportune to introduce at least one instrument of co-operation between the countries of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, and thus drove the latter somewhat further away from Europe. With the introduction of the New Neighbourhood policy the situation has begun to improve, yet there are some serious reasons for concern. Among the instruments of implementation of the new EU policy one once again sees the absence of programs of inter-regional co-operation, which could help to share experience and promote European integration of the states of the Baltic and Black Seas.

The solution to the problem could be as follows: following a successful institutionalisation of inter-regional political relations based on the Lithuanian formula 3+3 we should actively form stable inter-regional public and professional relations taking into consideration the above-mentioned formula.

Confidence in the need for implementation of such methods was the stimulus to found a new non-governmental organisation in Georgia, the European Integration Forum, which is supposed to initiate a civil dialogue between various civil society groups in the Baltic and Black Sea regions. The European Integration Forum suggests holding the first inter-regional civil dialogue in such a format in the autumn of 2006 in Tbilisi and hopes that this initiative will be supported by

the initiators of the Vilnius meetings of intellectuals, youth and non-governmental organisations.

In conclusion, one might remind what the English writer and philosopher Oliver Goldsmith told back in the middle of the eighteenth century: "In order to free ourselves from shortcomings we should first of all talk about them loudly." On the contrary, a Russian proverb states that "We should not wash our dirty linen in public." One may consider oneself true European if one believes that by talking about one's shortcomings aloud today one is not washing one's dirty linen in public, since mother Europe itself makes part of this public... The Southern Caucasus is seeking to become part of this public, and one has to be positive that sooner or later a European Caucasian table will also be set in the European home!

LITHUANIA'S NEW FOREIGN POLICY AGENDA

Antanas Valionis*

Summary

Lithuania's accession to NATO and the EU opens up new possibilities for Lithuania together with other democratic nations to cope with challenges of globalisation and reinforce its security in the face of new risks and threats.

Membership of the EU and NATO has transformed Lithuania's engagement in regional and international affairs. Lithuania has joined these two organisations with a vision to become an active member capable of producing political

The article of Mr. Antanas Valionis, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, was published in „*La Revue internationale et stratégique*” (“The International and Strategic Review”), n° 61, supervised by Mr. Pascal Boniface, and dedicated to “The foundations of foreign policies of European states”. This special issue has an ambition to set a panorama and to compare the foreign policy conceptions of different member states of the European Union. To this end, it consists not only of the contributions of French authors (researchers, politicians and senior civil servants) but also of those coming from different countries of the European Union. This issue can be acquired in bookshops or on-line at the following webpage: <http://www.iris-france.org/>

La Revue internationale et stratégique, since its creation in 1991, is set out to take into account the great debates of the international scene. Through the confrontation of ideas and authors but also through the competition of distinguished specialists and decision-makers, it attempts to present a clear vision of the international system, which is more globalised and therefore more complex — that is a characteristic of the beginning of 21th century. Thanks to thematic folders, each trimester is punctuated with profound analysis of one of the subjects of great international discussion. This problematisation of a subject is completed by the sections allowing a reader to comprehend the current affairs in a detailed manner as well as to shed light on a region or a particular country.

La Revue internationale et stratégique is a publication of *Institut de relations internationales et stratégiques* (IRIS, the Institute of International and Strategic Relations), French research centre of strategic questions and international relations.

ideas and practical solutions to regional co-operation, promoting universal principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Our aim is to expand the Baltic region's engagement with the neighbours in the North, the South and the East and to contribute actively to the development of new formats of regional co-operation. In this context, Lithuania's favourable geographical location and its experience of co-operation with neighbours is a great asset.

In his opening speech delivered at the summit of the Baltic Development Forum in Stockholm, President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso stated that the Baltic Sea region could be called 'a beacon of Europe'. Indeed, the Baltic Sea region is one of the fastest growing regions in the EU and has great possibilities to become a world leader in terms of economic growth, competitiveness, and innovation, as well as social welfare of its population.

Seeking to maintain regional dynamism, Lithuania is developing co-operation with Poland, trilateral co-operation with the Baltic States, consulting among the Nordic and Baltic EU members, taking part in the broader cooperation of the Nordic and Baltic States.

Still, the possibilities of the region are underused. Enlargement has drawn a new border on Lithuania's eastern frontiers. Our task is to make this border not only secure, but also less visible, more transparent, and by no means preventing political, economic and people-to-people contacts.

Eastern Europeans have every right to belong to the European family, once they adhere to common values and make practical steps to integrate with Europe.

We must also deliberate on the role of our "new neighbours" in reasserting Europe's global leadership, including such areas as foreign policy and energy safety. The Iranian nuclear case shows how important countries like Russia are in solving modern security problems.

Thus, promoting democracy to the East is a strategic priority. The success of integrating Russia, Ukraine, and the other emerging Eastern European democracies with a broader transatlantic community will secure energy supplies against political manipulations. It would also ensure broader support for European and transatlantic initiatives based on common values.

From a shorter perspective, there is an immediate interest to reinvigorate our indolent policies vis-à-vis the democratic situation in Belarus, as unpredictable

policies of the current Belarusian leadership may have abrupt strategic implications to European stability and cooperation.

In this context, transatlantic co-operation is crucial. Strong transatlantic partnership will also help to advance democratic values further to the Greater Middle East to address such security problems as nuclear safety, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism.

Future of Europe

Europe has changed dramatically over the last few years. It has enlarged to ten new countries in 2004. Bulgaria and Romania will join the EU once they conclude all preparations and necessary procedures. The EU has achieved more consolidation in foreign policy, particularly in the CFSP area. The foreseen expansion of the euro zone and the Schengen area to the new member states will only consolidate this important stage of EU integration.

With enlargement new relationships have emerged on the European continent. They enriched European political culture with new colours and fashions. Geographically, the EU already borders the countries which nearly a decade ago seemed so remote from Europe. The dynamism of change is indeed very striking.

Not surprisingly, enlargement has prompted discussions about the European future, which reflects today in numerous questions regarding *the finalité* of the EU.

The 'no' vote in France and the Netherlands on the Constitution for Europe has raised speculations in some European capitals that the EU needs a break to reflect the direction and the possible impact of ongoing changes.

In our view, the results of the French and the Dutch referenda should not prevent us from continuing European integration policy. The Constitution for Europe should further underpin the process of European integration. The adoption of a common political declaration could be a starting point for changing the context rather than the content of the constitutional debate.

Today the EU needs decisive leadership, strong institutions, and new initiatives. Our vision of Europe builds on four preconditions:

First, Europeans should be open to new solutions. Openness to the world and new ideas has always been the engine of European development. Therefore, national interests should add to rather than prevail over European needs and goals.

Second, solidarity and fairness have to remain at the core of the EU. A search for compromise and fair solutions for all EU members should guide the EU politicians in the future like they did in the past. The fact that the member states have reached a deal on the budget for 2007 - 2013 is a very important political signal showing that the EU is gradually recovering from stagnation and paralysis.

Third, we should feel responsibility to the people of our own countries, and to those of the neighbouring countries, which will be affected respectively. The vision of Europe that we are creating will equally affect all neighbours of the EU - Turkey, the Balkans and the South Caucasus, Ukraine and, of course, Russia.

Fourth, Europe should firmly stick to value-based policies and be ambitious in pursuing common goals. European foreign policy should build on the promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

At the same time we need to understand the concerns and uncertainties of our citizens about the European future. The EU has to be comprehensible and acceptable to the EU's citizens. In this respect the Commission's decision to launch 'the plan D' for democracy, dialogue and debate in Europe was a step in the right direction. National governments should follow that path. Further debate needs a common agenda and an action plan.

Being understandable and acceptable also means being sensitive to different social, economic and fiscal models applied in the member states. These models reflect national peculiarities and stand up to fair competition at the European level. If closing the gap between the better-off and the worse-off member states of the EU is a real priority, the adoption of the Services Directive would be just the right thing to set in motion.

Paradoxically, sometimes we are more pessimistic about Europe's future than some of our neighbours are. For them, Europe is a source of hope and inspiration. Therefore, we should be rather careful when speaking about the so-called "borders" of Europe. We no longer live in the age where borders are drawn disregarding the interests of the nations living in that area. We believe that the people of Eastern Europe should themselves define how far and how wide Europe will be in the future by implementing far-reaching reforms and adopting their lives to European standards.

Transatlantic link

Only acting together can the EU and the US ensure viability of democratic values around the globe. At a global level, the EU and the US are major powers and as such have a global responsibility to act in a joint manner.

The successful democratisation of Central Europe and the Baltic States is a vivid example of the results the EU-US concerted action may produce. The joint efforts also bear fruit in the Balkans, which lay at the ruins of war nearly a decade ago. Serbia-Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina are now going through the process of association and stabilization with the EU. Meanwhile, the future status of Kosovo will be defined soon. Hopefully, the Balkan Gordian knot will be untied forever.

Collective EU-US action is also needed in solving such global issues as the Middle East peace process and the Iranian nuclear crisis.

The spread of accountable and representative governments, rule of law, and respect for human rights should be one of the most important strategic priorities in the EU-US strategic dialogue. The EU and the US can only succeed in advancing these fundamental values if they act together.

NATO is the most important asset in strengthening and developing the transatlantic link. To this end, NATO must strengthen its military capabilities by increasing rapid response standards of all NATO forces, also by developing specialisation and usability of these forces and pre-allocating sufficient funds for NATO-led operations.

On the other hand, the Alliance should not be reduced to a military toolbox. If the organisation is perceived this way, it might lose its political authority and prestige. Enhanced strategic political dialogue in NATO is crucial to understanding regional political developments that might affect NATO operations and security of its member states. Transformed NATO has to remain the prime venue for dialogue between Europeans and Americans on security and security related issues.

In implementing its global agenda, the EU is a natural partner for NATO. NATO and the EU must work together on the basis of burden sharing. The EU-NATO co-operation needs to develop further. However, duplication in terms of both capabilities and structures must be avoided.

Along military cooperation NATO and EU should seek new ways in increasing their civilian capabilities. In this respect it is worth exploring how existing contractual relationship between EU and NATO in military assets and capabilities could be used and extended into the area of civilian capabilities.

The geography of NATO's operations is the best illustration of NATO's ambitions to assume a global role. Lithuania is an active contributor to NATO's peace operations in the Balkans and Afghanistan. Since early June 2005 a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) under Lithuanian command is operating in Ghor province of Afghanistan.

More close coordination of actions in areas where both organisations are present could harmonise EU-NATO dialogue. NATO-EU strategy for the Western Balkans could serve as an example. The testing ground for expanding such co-operation could become the EU and NATO operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

NATO enlargement is another tool of extending the area of security and stability to democratic European countries adhering to common values and making real progress in meeting NATO's standards. NATO should continue pursuing its "open door" policy. The recent round of NATO enlargement should not be the last.

We are certain that the countries which have signed the Adriatic Charter will join the Alliance as soon as they get ready for membership. Yet, the successful consolidation of such countries like Ukraine is also very important for transatlantic security. Ukraine is a country of geopolitical and geo-economic importance for Central Europe, the Black Sea Region and the South Caucasus. This factor should be taken into account as we start our discussions on the next round of NATO enlargement.

Neighbourhood Policy

Development of good neighbourly relations is one of the key goals of Lithuania's foreign policy. An experience gained during the period of independence has shown that good relations with neighbours can be an effective policy instrument in building the atmosphere of mutual trust and co-operation in the region.

Membership of NATO and the EU will allow Lithuania to develop good neighbourly relations first of all through active participation in the formation and implementation of the Union's neighbourhood policy.

Today, one of the biggest challenges for the EU is to stabilise its strategic neighbourhood. Europeans are still arguing over which neighbourhood is more important to them: North Africa, Middle East, the Balkans or the post-Soviet space. In our view, all are important for the long term strategic goals of the EU.

Even more controversial is the question of how stability in the neighbourhood could be achieved. For Lithuania, the answer is clear-cut: stabilisation without democratic reforms is just make-believe. We have walked this path ourselves. Therefore, it is important to keep the European perspective open to those countries, which seek to transform themselves and contribute to European development.

The EU countries have different perceptions and approaches on the EU Eastern Neighbourhood, particularly towards Russia. Geographical proximity makes relations with Russia more intense for some EU members than the others. The painful historical experience of some EU members is also a factor which must be taken into account.

It is obvious that Russia is a strategic energy partner of the EU. The EU is also Russia's biggest foreign trade partner. It can be expected that the economic boom in Russia will continue drawing European capital into Russia. However, whether growing dependency on energy supply from Russia in its current shape would benefit European security in the long run is still unclear.

Recent Ukrainian-Russian gas dispute affected the EU countries as well. The EU has learned that depending on one major energy supplier is rather dangerous. Therefore, the European Energy Security Strategy, as well as a common European energy policy, needs further elaboration. Lithuania welcomes Austria's determination to pay significant attention to this issue during its Presidency.

By creating a common energy policy, the EU would be able to take into account the interests of all EU countries. The projects like the North European Gas Pipe must be discussed in advance with all countries involved. We can only regret that such a discussion was absent this time, despite the vocal opposition of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

At a broader level, the EU needs to agree that such particular interests as trade and energy cannot undermine the EU's long-term objectives in its relations with Russia- namely, the consolidation of democratic values in this country. Lithuania has been and will remain one of the staunchest supporters of a democratic Russia consolidating and integrating with the European community.

In 2006 a series of elections will be held in Eastern Europe, including those in Ukraine and Belarus. Results of the March 26th parliamentary elections in Ukraine will show Europe how firm Ukraine's commitment to pursue EU-oriented policy is. We believe that a discussion under which circumstances the EU would provide Ukraine with a clearer perspective of membership is well matured.

Lithuania and Ukraine seek to further expand and strengthen their bilateral relations. In December 2005 the Foreign Ministers of Lithuania and Ukraine concluded a joint statement on regional co-operation and co-operation in the field of European and Euro-Atlantic integration. This document stipulates plans and actions aimed at promoting co-operation, sharing experience and facilitating gradual integration of Ukraine into the EU.

The EU also needs to pay more attention to the situation in Belarus. The evolving debate on creating a Union State between Russia and Belarus should be taken more seriously. We have to examine carefully what will happen if such a state becomes a reality.

Also, the outcome of the March 19th presidential elections in Belarus may lead to serious deliberations on the EU and the US policies toward Belarus. Lithuania considers that free and fair election is a first step to ensure democratic consolidation of this country. Therefore, the role of the OSCE observation missions will be crucial. In the long run, more flexible financial mechanisms will be necessary to reach out to the Belarusian society.

It is gratifying that Moldova and the South Caucasus attracts more and more attention of the EU. We believe that implementation of the EU Action Plans will help those countries to get closer to the EU.

At this moment, further implementation of political, economic and administrative reforms in Moldova is of utmost importance. Thus, international assistance to the process of reform implementation could be more substantial.

A complete withdrawal of the Russian troops from Moldova's territory as foreseen in international agreements is another issue, which needs quick solution. It is obvious that Russia will co-operate on the Transnistrian issue only in case it feels increased interest and participation of Western countries in the settlement process. The EU's Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine, together with the expanded 5+2 negotiations format, will be instrumental in finding a viable and sustainable solution to the Transnistrian conflict.

Regarding the peacekeeping options, we need to find a multinational solution to the issue. The EU has to make clear that the ESDP instruments and post-settlement arrangements are available, including the possibility to deploy an EU mission to the conflict zone under the agreed mandate with the states concerned.

We welcome the progress achieved so far with regard to the withdrawal of Russian troops from Georgia, which gives us grounds to believe that it will be completed by 2008. Early fulfilment by Russia of all of its 1999 Istanbul commitments would highly contribute to the settlement of the long-lasting conflicts.

Lithuania together with Latvia and Estonia launched the initiative to use joint efforts of the Baltic States in assisting the South Caucasus nations in their transformation.

At a strategic level, we stress the importance of the South Caucasus region in the wider context of addressing global threats, of promoting stability and democracy in the Greater Middle East and Central Asia, and of securing safe energy transit from the Caspian oil and gas sources. The role of the EU Rule of Law Mission, which was launched in Georgia in summer 2004 under the Lithuanian initiative, serves as a successful example of the benefits that EU could provide for the region.

'Frozen' conflicts, or more precisely, 'the frozen resolution of the conflicts', which disrupts territorial integrity of the South Caucasus states, also requires the attention of the Euro-Atlantic community. The time is ripe to ask ourselves: do we believe that the existing negotiation formats and peacekeeping mechanisms on the territory of the former Soviet Union deliver the expected results or do we need new solutions, involving ESDP and NATO mechanisms?