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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Arbeitspapier / working paper

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Delcour, L. (2008). *1989, bringing in a global Europe?* (Working Paper Series of the Research Network 1989, 22). Berlin. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-32359>

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Working Paper Series of the Research Network 1989

Working Paper 22/2008

ISSN 1867-2833

1989, Bringing In a Global Europe?

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Abstract

Whilst 1989 is widely acknowledged as a watershed in international relations, it is also regarded as a major upheaval in the course of European integration since its very beginning in the 1950's. The nature of this regard, however, has overwhelmingly been univocal. The relationship between 1989 and the EU is commonly considered as a one-way process, with communism being finally "dissolved" into EU integration. Moreover, changes in the European integration process since 1989 have often been analyzed *per se*; there have been few attempts, if any, to connect 1989 and the EC/EU in a comprehensive way.

The paper questions the unambiguous, linear and one-way character of the prevailing interpretations relating to the impact of 1989 on the European integration process. Through highlighting and discussing several dialectical trends, it sheds light on complex, multifaceted and open processes which call for re-assessing the impact of 1989 on Europe and the way the European Union has influenced 1989 and "managed" post-1989. It concludes that while the EU has been a major vector of change in CEE countries, 1989 has also induced wide-ranging, profound and long-term transformations on the European integration process, the exact impact of which is still difficult to assess. The EU picture resulting both from 1989 and from the choices made in the 1990's is thus much more blurred and ambivalent.

Keywords

1989; European integration process; enlargement; *Europe à la carte*; "transition"; border; neighbourhood; soft power; civilian power

Introduction: 1989 and the European integration process: parallel or interwoven dynamics?

Whilst 1989 is widely acknowledged as a watershed in international relations, it is also regarded as the major upheaval in the course of European integration since its very beginning in the 1950's. A glimpse at the chronology of the European integration process makes it obvious that 1989 is a watershed which paved the way for the building of a political union as well as for enlargement to new members. Only three years after the collapse of the communist system, the European Community transformed into a European Union with new and extended competences, among which a Common Foreign and Security Policy or Justice and Home Affairs. In the early 1990's, the European Commission also designed a method to enlarge the Union further, opening a wide-ranging process which culminated with the accession of 10 new member states in 2004 and that of two additional members in 2007. The consequences of 1989 for the European integration process were thus immediate and tangible.

At the same time, 1989 did not happen in a vacuum for the then European Community. In the span of thirty years, it had been successful in establishing peaceful relations among its Member States after two World Wars. It was also associated with successful economic cooperation projects which had boosted growth in Western Europe since the 1950's. Even though the European Community had no relations with the Eastern bloc, by the mid-1980s it had thus gained a solid attractiveness sustained by new integration projects which, arguably, also influenced the events which took place in Central and Eastern Europe.

This short glance at the interactions between 1989 and European integration highlights clashing temporalities but interwoven logics: in 1989, the European Community had to cope with political upheavals in the Eastern part of the continent at the time when it was giving a new impetus to its own integration process. Such a temporal dialectic shaped the subsequent architecture of the continent. However, in the wake of 1989, a linear and univocal interpretation of the events' signification for Europe prevailed among Western European policy-makers. This interpretation almost exclusively focuses on the European Community's attractiveness for former communist countries (the "return to Europe" argument) and on the transformations it has induced in the Eastern part of the continent. It implicitly considers European integration as the third component of the "transition" package, together with democratization and market economy. Joining the EU, as wished by Central European countries, is presented as a path to follow, the direction of which was unquestionable and ineluctable as a way out of communism. In other words, the relationship between 1989 and the EU has commonly been considered as a one-way process, with communism being finally "dissolved" into EU integration. Such an interpretation downplays or even overlooks important elements of interaction, in particular the implications of 1989 on the EU.

These features are also widely reflected in academic choices, either in the 1990's or even now, i.e. almost two decades after the overthrow of communist regimes. Indeed, changes in the former Eastern bloc and in the EU after 1989 have mainly been analyzed as parallel dynamics.

On the one hand, the processes through which the EU has changed Central and Eastern European countries in the 1990's have been extensively studied. Literature on the enlargement process has mobilized scholars from a number of countries and disciplines, including economics, sociology, political science and international relations. More recently, the way the EU has been exerting influence over the former Soviet countries through its neighbourhood policy designed in 2003-2004 has immediately triggered the interest of scholars. Even though most of them point out the potentially limited EU influence on the Western New Independent States when compared to Central European candidate countries (Kelley 2006, Cremona and Hillion 2006), the cornerstone of the whole argumentation is similar. It is based upon the central assumption of the EU's transformative power, specifically on former communist countries.

On the other hand, since the early 1990's the literature on the European integration process has been blooming. A number of publications have been dedicated to the changing European Union, either to the evolution of its decision-making system (Wallace, Wallace and Pollack 2005), to its new policies or to its transforming international actorness (Knodt and Princen 2003, K. Smith 2003 and 2005, Hill and Smith 2005). Over the past few years, European studies have become a core curriculum in top universities either in the EU or elsewhere, e.g. in the US or in Russia (Belot and Georgakakis 2004). Thus, scholars have grasped both the multiple evolutions of the EU after 1990 and its increasing importance as a political, economic and international entity. At the same time, no systematic effort has been made to detect possible connections between changes in the European integration process and 1989 events.

It is therefore argued here that the research and analysis performed so far on the former Eastern bloc and on the European integration process leave crucial questions wide open and crossroads unexplored. The following questions need to be further investigated to grasp the signification of 1989 for the European construction:

- a. To what extent and how did the EU contribute to 1989?
- b. What is the global impact of 1989 for the EU integration process? How can it be specifically identified and assessed?
- c. To what extent does this impact shed light on the history of European construction before 1989? What makes the European integration process different after 1989 and because of 1989?
- d. To what extent is the impact of 1989 incorporated in the current integration process? Is it just considered as a legacy, as an episode in the history of EU integration or is it part of a lesson-drawing process having a feedback in current EU policies?

By concentrating on the EU-initiated changes in Central and Eastern Europe, analysts have de facto minimized or missed the implications of 1989 on the European construction. These implications, which were initially expected to be promptly managed and to be overall positive, especially through reunifying the continent, have however turned out to be durable, deep and ambivalent.

This chapter aims at questioning the widely accepted unambiguous character of the prevailing interpretation on the relationship between 1989 and European integration and at exploring the related analytical gaps.

The chapter will first analyze the assumptions underlying the European Community's answer to the collapse of communism and then address the above questions through challenging four mainstream assertions related to the impact of 1989 on the European construction:

1. The collapse of the communist regime has enabled the unification of the continent under the auspices of the European Community/Union.
2. 1989 ushered in a revival of the European integration project, mainly through extending the EC/EU's competences to the political sphere.
3. The "return to Europe" of Central and Eastern European countries, materialised with the EU's enlargement process, has made possible the definition of sustainable borders for the European Union.
4. 1989 has consecrated the EU's "civilian power" and turned the EU into a fully-fledged international actor.

For each of the above-mentioned assertions, the chapter will highlight dialectal trends which will then be discussed in detail. As a result, the chapter sheds light on complex, multifaceted and open processes which call for re-assessing the impact of 1989 on Europe and the way the European Union has influenced 1989 and "managed" post-1989.

1. 1989 and the Return to Europe

The first commonly accepted argument on the relationship between 1989 and Europe relates to the assessment of 1989's consequences on the continent's architecture. It claims that the collapse of communism has enabled the reunification of Europe¹ through the return of former communist countries to their natural geopolitical location and to the sphere of influence they historically belong to.

Immediate Interpretations of 1989: Underlying Assumptions

The "return to Europe" argument is grounded upon two underlying assumptions which have shaped the immediate interpretations of 1989 and the subsequent re-ordering of the continent.

The Parenthesis Assumption

First, the overthrow of communist regimes objectively put an end to the division of Europe which arose after World War II. Nevertheless, while the end of the Yalta system was widely celebrated, there were few attempts to grasp the meaning and the possible consequences of such a lengthy separation on the continent's new architecture. Since the division of Europe was deemed to be artificial – the product of a specific historical context and that of two great powers' antagonism -, its reunification only seemed natural. From this perspective, 1989 triggered feelings of enthusiasm which overshadowed the indispensable debates on interpretations of the communist past and the way in which they could be institutionalised as part of the transformation process. Scenes and pictures like Rostropovich's concert near the Berlin's wall in November 1989 were used to create symbols of the reunified Europe and to forge a brand new common present while the history of divisions was eluded. In Central and Eastern Europe, the initial steps in the nation and state-building processes coincided with a reappraisal of history; however, the desideologization process often induced a global rejection of the communist past and of the corresponding Soviet domination without any comprehensive attempt to grasp their meaning, at least immediately after 1989. In Western Europe, if one excepts the analysis of economic discrepancies and political steps needed for Eastern countries' transformations, 1989 did not trigger any reflection among policy-makers on possible deeply-rooted or structural differences between the two parts of the continent.

Accordingly, the four-decade break-up of Europe into two antagonist blocks was merely analysed as a parenthesis to be naturally closed. The political fall of communism was expected to bring about the complete disappearance of what made the inner nature of the Eastern block. The communist party rule, Soviet domination but also centralised economies and welfare regimes were expected to be easily overcome and soon forgotten without leaving any deep traces behind. The utter vanishing of the communist legacy was considered as obvious for Central Europe in 1989, but also after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Interestingly, the "parenthesis assumption" was made particularly explicit in Eastern policymakers' discourse. For instance, as early as 1992, Russian leaders (in particular President Yeltsin and Minister of Foreign Affairs Kozyrev) called for the return of Russia to the "community of civilized states". It seemed as if seven decades of communist rule were to be considered as an abnormal period in Russian history (just like Tatar invasions in the 13th

¹ The use of the word « reunification » instead of « unification » is in line with the « parenthesis assumption » explained hereafter ; it implies that the two parts of Europe have not significantly changed during four decades.

century) and as if this moment was to be followed by a rapprochement with Europe considered as the normal course of Russian policy.

The Winner-Takes-It-All Assumption

Second, the reunification of the continent was to be made at the expenses of the Eastern block, as far as 1989 represents a defeat of its model and, conversely, a consecration of Western values. This interpretation moulded German reunification which was carried out through absorption (of the German Democratic Republic by the German Federal Republic) rather than through merger of the two countries. The ineluctable dissolution of communism into Western democracy and market economy also forged the accession strategy designed by the European Union for Central and Eastern Europe countries, which consisted in a series of criteria to fulfil in order to adopt the victorious political and economic model and to join the Western club. The “winner-takes-it-all assumption” was expressed simply by Chancellor Kohl:

“Our ideas are spreading across the whole European continent” (quoted in Delors 1992), and, moving to a European scale, by Jacques Delors, then President of the European Commission:

“It is not the East that drifted towards the West, but the West that attracted the East (...). The Community’s structures and framework pave the way for organizing tomorrow’s Europe” (Delors 1992: 134).

Among EC policy-makers, the transformation of Central and Eastern European countries was thus merely seen as a catch-up process aiming at modelling them on their Western counterparts. Against this background, Western European countries’ task was simply to guide former communist states on their road towards democracy and market economy, and to provide them with a suitable institutional framework for their return to Europe.

Which “Common European Home”?

While the objective of reuniting the continent based upon Western values was not subject to controversy, the main question focused on the best institutional option to do so. As highlighted by Jacques Delors’ words quoted above, the European Economic Community quickly emerged as the natural institutional receptacle for this return to Europe². Yet, such a role was far from being obvious for an organisation which had so far almost exclusively focussed on economic issues, thus deserving its widespread reputation of being “an economic giant and a political dwarf”.

Two factors help understanding the EEC’s role in shaping post-Cold War Europe.

First, other institutions or alternatives modes of organization were discarded for various reasons. At a time when the Soviet threat seemed to be eliminated, political and economic issues, rather than military or security challenges, were considered as central to unite the continent after the overthrow of communist regimes. Therefore, either before or after the Warsaw Pact was dissolved and even notwithstanding perceptions in the former Eastern bloc, NATO did not appear as a viable option to take the responsibility for bringing the two parts of Europe together. Being a pan-European organization covering a wide range of issues, the OSCE could have played such a role, but it lacked effective decision-making mechanisms and

² Conclusions of the European Council, Strasbourg, December 1989.

a real power going beyond mere consultative competences. Potential alternatives suggesting new modes of socialisation between East and West, such as Mikhail Gorbachev's "Common European Home" formulated in 1987 based upon "the acknowledgment of a certain integral whole"³, remained empty shells after 1989. By that time, the dominant feeling was one of historical unity to be translated politically into an attractive project which the Soviet Union could not longer inspire.

The European Economic Community thus emerged as a default option, but it was also considered as the best possible vector of the continent's "reunification" process for reasons inherent to its own history. By contrast to the USSR, the EC was pictured as a flourishing example of integration. It thus appeared as an "antidote" to Soviet integration (la Serre, Lequesne, Rupnik 1994: 111). Both its successful record and, paradoxically, its failures were considered as assets in the perspective of the continent's reunification. Created in 1957, the EEC had built upon the record of the European Community of Coal and Steel that launched in the early 1950's the first cooperation projects between Western European countries. Economic integration projects succeeded in reconciling former enemies such as France and Germany and in promoting sustainable peace on the western part of the continent. The Customs Union and the initial common policies had been so flourishing that the Community had quickly attracted new members, including the initially reluctant United Kingdom which applied as early as the 1960's. At the same time, the integration process remained strictly limited to the economic sphere, with a few attempts of intergovernmental cooperation in political areas (e.g. the European Political Cooperation for foreign policy in the early 1970's). Paradoxically, these limits turned out to be positive in the context of 1989. The EC lack of a military dimension – due to the initial failure of the European Defence Community in 1954 – made it a "neutral" institution when compared to military alliances such as NATO. The idea of a "special historical responsibility" of the Community vis-à-vis the other part of the continent emerged on this basis.

2. 1989 as the Gateway to a United Europe or 1989 as the Road to a Divided Europe?

Following the "return to Europe" argument, in the wake of 1989 the continent was to be united under the auspices of the European Community. From this point of view, the fifth and sixth EU enlargements (1st May 2004 and 1st January 2007) are considered to be major milestones symbolizing the end of Europe's reunification process. Nevertheless, this interpretation of 1989 as a gateway to a united Europe has been challenged by facts and perceptions both during the enlargement process and after the accession of Central and Eastern European countries. Many of the ongoing debates within the European Union indeed reflect divergences between "old" and "new" member states and thus seem to reproduce an Eastern/Western rift.

An Asymmetrical Europe

It is argued that such a rift finds its roots in the EU enlargement process itself, which in line with the "parenthesis" and "winner-takes-it-all" assumptions turned out to be highly asymmetrical.

³ Address by Mikhail Gorbachev in Prague, April 1987.

As an institution praised for its record in developing stable economic and political environments, the EC was first entrusted with the responsibility of managing Western aid to Poland and Hungary even before the communist regimes collapsed, in July 1989. The overthrow of the communist rule in Eastern Europe further required the prompt design of a far-reaching EC political strategy.

Three interconnected elements are salient in the vision of enlargement developed by the EC for Eastern Europe. First, even though the idea of enlargement was discussed as soon as the early 1990's, the EC developed a very gradual strategy, divided into several stages and milestones. It began with association agreements (also significantly called "Europe agreements") signed with Central European countries and the three Baltic States in the early 1990's. The next step was the recognition of a "European vocation" for these countries at the Essen Council in 1993 and the definition of the Copenhagen accession criteria the same year. Accession negotiations started in 1998 with a first wave of applicants joining in 2004 and a second wave in 2007. The second salient aspect is the use of conditionality as the core element in the enlargement process' methodology. Accession to the EU was made conditional upon the fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria which were specifically designed for Central and Eastern Europe applicants⁴. Progress from one step to the next one was subject to applicants' fulfilling a number of conditions. The third remarkable element was the control kept by the European Union, more specifically the European Commission, over the whole process. Through designing benchmarks and monitoring applicants' progress⁵, the Commission played the role of a gate keeper in charge of granting each country access to the next stage. The multiplication of steps was thus also meant to enhance control over the access to each stage. The accession strategy triggered a widespread disenchantment feeling among Central and Eastern European countries as early as the mid-1990's. It was criticised by applicants for being too hard and requiring huge efforts. When compared to previous enlargements, the developments of the European integration process in the end of the 1980's/early 1990's had indeed considerably increased the volume of *acquis* to be approximated. Moreover, conditions set by the EU under previous enlargements were made harder for Central and Eastern European applicants which had to approximate the full *acquis* before acceding. Finally, through compiling a number of documents the EU added new conditions throughout the accession process, e.g. in the Accession Partnership.

While the EC had thus far mainly relied upon imitation mechanisms with adaptations to the local context to reach its external policy objectives⁶, the social logic behind the enlargement process was largely one of assimilation which implied internalizing the European model. Such a logic was tightly connected to the oversimplified interpretation of 1989 as a consecration of the Western European model.

⁴ Before the 1990's, the European Community had not formalized any accession criteria. Being a democracy was an implicit criterion, as shown by the late accession of three Mediterranean countries, Greece, Spain and Portugal, that joined the Community after the overthrow of dictatorships. However, the huge discrepancies with former communist regimes prompted the EC to officialise and to detail three accession criteria: political (stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities); economic (existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union); acceptance of the Community *acquis* (ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union).

⁵ Especially through the screening method which entails checking applicants' progress in approximating their legislation to the EU's *acquis communautaire*.

⁶ For instance, such an imitation logic can be found in the promotion of regional integration in EC assistance programmes and policies for ACP (Africa-Caribbean- Pacific) countries.

A clash of interpretations?

While EC management of 1989 was effective in bringing Central and Eastern European countries into the Union, it may have failed to unite the continent. Over the past few years, a number of events have reflected divergences between “old” and “new” Member States. Such tensions are unprecedented and they did not occur after other accession rounds to the EC/EU. For instance, the adjectives “old” and “new” were never used before 2004 to distinguish among Member States. They suggest deeply rooted differences going beyond the technicalities of the accession process and relating to the interpretation of 1989.

A few examples of these divergences between “old” and “new” Member States can be quoted, both in the foreign policy and in the institutional areas. While the so-called axis of European integration, Germany and France, refused to take part in the US-launched 2003 intervention in Iraq, several new Member States – among which Poland – sent troops to support the US-led initiative, thus openly disagreeing with some of the main “older” Member States. Such a situation recently reiterated with Poland and Lithuania blocking the opening of negotiations for a new agreement between the EU and Russia at the end of 2007-beginning of 2008, and with Poland and the Baltic States adopting a firmer stance during the conflict in South Ossetia in August 2008. At the same time, Poland took a hard stance during negotiations for a Constitutional treaty and for the Lisbon Treaty, requiring for instance the inclusion of a formula on the Christian roots of Europe in the Constitution.

How can such differences be explained? A first analysis grid suggests that Central and Eastern European countries are now enjoying the privilege of being fully-fledged members of the Union. After years of efforts to comply with EC conditions, they make use of their institutional rights as EU Member States and they try to maximise their power. However, this interpretation does not account for the content of divergences between “new” and “old” Member States. A second set of explanations focuses on the coexistence of divergent memories within the EU, as highlighted by the systematic harsher stance of Eastern EU Members vis-à-vis Russia which can be understood through the vivid memory of Soviet occupation. A third, more comprehensive grid of analysis questions the very concept of a single or united Europe and highlights a clash of interpretations on European integration. It argues that the six founding Member States and subsequent applicants shared a similar vision of their integration, or at least compatible visions. Functionalist theories even argue that these visions were made compatible by the very process of integration. While it is too early to verify this hypothesis for new Member States, their positions also suggest a different conception of the European Union. This conception is intermingled with Central European historical experience. It is shaped by two main factors. First, the lack of a tradition of multi-level governance, involving in particular shared competences and the combination of intergovernmental and supranational approaches, as this is the case within the European Union. Second, the suspicion against any form of supranational integration stemming from the experience of Soviet domination. Central and Eastern European countries’ conception of the European Union is therefore shaped primarily by their experience and by their attachment to the national sovereignty they recovered after 1989.

The main lesson to be drawn from these differences between “old” and “new” EU Member States invalidates the interpretation of 1989 which has prevailed over the past two decades. It indicates that the communist past cannot be simply erased by the EU accession process or dissolved into it. Current tensions within the EU also reflect shortcomings in the enlargement methodology as far as no attention was paid and no time dedicated to grasping the meaning of four decades of division.

3. 1989 and European Integration. 1989 as a Revival or as a Breakdown in the European Integration Project?

1989 is usually also considered as a turning point in the course of the European integration process, inasmuch as it is naturally associated with the impetus given to that process in the 1990's. In other words, in the European construction the "what for" question received a new answer after the overthrow of communist regimes, in particular through the development of a political union. However, a thorough examination of the dynamics at stake shows that the picture is much more blurred. Other factors have played a role in boosting the European project in the 1990's. Moreover, the impact of 1989 on the European construction can be assessed as ambivalent, as far as the wide-ranging enlargement to former communist countries slackened the rhythm of integration.

1989, a New *Grand Design* for Europe?

The widespread interpretation claiming that 1989 was instrumental in insufflating a new breath to the European construction is partially misleading and overlooks major previous developments. Before 1989, EC institutions (in particular the European Commission) had already initiated wide-ranging projects to invigorate the integration process after a period of Euro-sclerosis. These focused on the economic area, e.g. the completion of the Internal Market (decided by the Single European Act in 1986) and the ambitious launching of an Economic and Monetary Union (planned by the "Delors packages" in 1988). These projects were undoubtedly bold and far-reaching. First, whereas the Treaty of Rome only provided for the creation of a "common market", which involved eliminating all obstacles to trade within the Community, the Internal Market went further and entailed harmonizing national norms and legislation to enhance competitiveness. Second, the Treaty of Rome did not contain neither any demands regarding macroeconomic policy nor any plans of monetary cooperation. At the same time, whereas unforeseen by the initial Treaty, both the Internal Market and the EMU were clearly in line with previous integration efforts. First of all, the choice was made to revitalise the European Community through deepening integration in areas where it had started thirty years before, i.e. trade and economy. Moreover, the Community still relied upon the integration method used since the creation of the Coal and Steel Community, the Monnet method which entailed gradual and concrete cooperation to be then extended to other sectors.

The collapse of the communist system gave further impetus to the EC revival while at the same time shifting integration to the political area and calling for a change in methods of integration. In the wake of 1989, it was commonly agreed that a qualitative jump was needed to answer upheavals in the Eastern part of the continent:

"History accelerates. We must accelerate too (...) I have always been a proponent of a small steps policy, as shown by the current framework to give a new impetus to the European integration process. But I am moving away from it now because time is counted (...). We need a qualitative jump both for our conception of the Community and for our external action modalities" (Delors, 1992)

Both the content and the methods of integration which had previously prevailed were thus considered as inadequate to tackle challenges stemming from the overthrow of communist

regimes. Whereas the EC had concentrated on economic issues, these challenges were deemed to be highly political. Moreover, the small-steps Monnet method was assessed to be insufficient as far as the spill-over effects it had triggered on EU integration had remained limited to the economic area. Therefore, the European construction had to be changed to cope with 1989. The feeling of a responsibility vis-à-vis the former communist bloc led major EC leaders, Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand, to propose at the beginning of 1990's a second intergovernmental conference on the political union, in parallel to the one planned on economic issues. As a result, new EC competences and new pillars of EC action (in particular the Common Foreign and Security Policy and Justice and Home Affairs) were enshrined in the Treaty of Maastricht. This was indeed a major breakthrough in the history of European integration as far all previous efforts in this respect had failed. In paving the way for political integration, 1989 is also indirectly the source of subsequent developments in this area, e.g. the creation of a Security and Defence Policy at the end of the 1990's, as well as progress in common policies for asylum and migration-related issues.

To put it simply, the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe made unavoidable an inflexion in the course of integration towards areas which, due to Member States' reluctances, were previously unexplored and highly sensitive.

1989, the End of European Integration?

At the same time, the developments of the European integration project in the aftermath of 1989 display obvious limits. These stem only indirectly from the overthrow of communist regimes and rather reflect shortcomings in the EU's management of the post-1990 era.

Alternative methods used throughout the 1990's and since the beginning of the century have focused on intergovernmentalism. However, they have yielded little so far. First, *intergovernmental negotiations* used to modify the Treaties have not allowed to bring in the indispensable institutional changes which would have allowed an efficient functioning of the EU-27. All intergovernmental conferences organised since the early 1990's have reflected tough negotiations and deep differences between EU actors. Major institutional modifications were postponed by the Amsterdam intergovernmental conference in the mid-1990's and due to divergent interests among Member States, the solutions proposed by the subsequent Nice conference in the early 2000's were both partial and rickety. Second, the *open method of coordination* – an innovative method adapted from the enlargement process – displays important limits for similar reasons. To allow further progress of cooperation in areas which do not fall within EC competences, the open method of coordination relies upon soft law mechanisms (benchmarking, monitoring) and peer pressure (naming and shaming) with a view to stimulating Member States for harmonising their positions. However, its record has been assessed as mixed in the main area where it has been applied so far, namely the employment strategy.

Difficulties experienced to achieve convergence between national positions and policies are also correlated to the increased number of EU members induced by enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe countries. Because national preferences are much more miscellaneous and because the content of integration is now wider than before 1989, agreements on the agenda of European construction are much more complex to reach. As a consequence, parallel schemes of integration have been initiated since the 1990's and different speeds and rhythms of cooperation coexist within the EU-27. For the first time in the history of European integration, opt-out provisions were included in the Maastricht Treaty. In contrast to these provisions, mechanisms to develop further integration for those Member States willing to do so in specific areas were formally introduced in the Amsterdam Treaty, i.e. enhanced

cooperations. The picture of the EU-27 therefore looks like a mosaic of rules, procedures and clubs. Even though they do not strictly correspond to the procedure of enhanced cooperations, the European Monetary Union as well as the Schengen area illustrate the possibility for an “avant-garde” to move forward and to work closely together. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that forerunners will eventually be caught up by laggards. Rather than a multi-speed Europe, one may witness the development of a “Europe à la carte” in which each Member State picks up the activities it wants to implement and the rules it is ready to obey. This would undoubtedly constitute a profound alteration of the initial integration project as designed by Schuman and Monnet in the early 1950’s. It is in this context that the recent major crises in the European construction should be analyzed. Repeated negative votes on European affairs in various Member States highlight uncertainty on the EU’s current identity. For instance, the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in France and the Netherlands in 2005 reflected much more than a mere refusal of the political document issued by the Convention. Negative votes in two of the EC founding members expressed either disappointment with the lack of EC action in specific areas (social sphere), or in contrast criticism vis-à-vis a Union perceived as getting ever growing competences in areas traditionally devoted to Member States, or finally dissatisfaction with an enlargement process which had been barely explained to EU citizens. In other words, through making the EU more diverse and more fragmented, through shifting the integration project from its initial philosophy, 1989 has indirectly contributed to the current blockages in European construction.

4. 1989 and Europe’s Borders. 1989, Clarifying the EU’s Borders or Blurring Boundaries?

Whereas 1989 has impressed a new pace and new directions on the European integration process, it has also been instrumental in changing its contour. In the European construction, the “where” question has thus drastically been altered by the overthrow of the communist regimes.

1989, a Revolution in the Geographical Framework of the European Integration Process

From the “where” point of view, 1989 is a breakthrough *per se* as far as it made the geographical framework in which the European Community was created fall into pieces. The first attempts of European integration were carried out in the late 1940’s, in the aftermath of World War II. However, even though the European integration process finds its roots in WWII and in the rejection of any future war on the continent, it is also deeply embedded in the Cold War context. The growing tensions between the Eastern and Western blocs indirectly triggered initial economic cooperation projects among Western European countries, which served as a basis for the future EEC; for instance, major EEC founding fathers actively participated in the Organization for European Economic Co-operation which was meant to dispatch US assistance provided in the framework of the Marshall Plan. The European Community was thus formally created at a time when the Cold War naturally provided for its geographical limits. The “Iron Curtain” constituted an obvious, yet implicit boundary of the newly born organisation.

Within that fixed framework, the EC borders did not remain rigid. They evolved over time with the Community welcoming new members, e.g. the UK, Ireland and Denmark in 1973,

Greece in 1981, Spain and Portugal in 1986. However, the “enlargement policy” – an expression to be used cautiously into since it was not formalized nor translated into official accession criteria - was tightly connected to the international Cold War context. In other words, in the early period of the European integration process, adherence to the Western bloc (together with NATO membership) was implicitly seen as a criterion for EC membership. This is perfectly illustrated by the case of Turkey, which was seen as an important ally in the Cold War context and thus explicitly expected to join the Community once it would be ready to do so. The Association Agreement (known as the Ankara Agreement) signed in 1963, aiming at bringing Turkey into a Customs Union with the EEC and to eventual membership, thus provided that:

« EEC’s support to the efforts undertaken by the people of Turkey to improve the standards of living will then facilitate Turkey’s accession to the Community »

Against that background, 1989 events raised, for the first time in the Community’s history, the issue of the final borders of EU integration. Through paving the way for the unification of Europe, the overthrow of communist regimes not only changed the EC’s boundaries; it also seemed to open unprecedented avenues for defining the EU’s new identity and thus its final borders.

Post-1989: A Missed Opportunity to Define New Geographical Landmarks for European Integration

1989 is arguably a missed opportunity in this respect. The events in Central and Eastern Europe called for answering the “where” question, i.e. for rethinking the geographical framework which had shaped the European construction in its first thirty years. However, while the EU carefully designed an accession strategy in the early 1990’s including political and economic criteria, it left wide open crucial questions regarding its future. What should be the EU’s frontiers and who should be allowed to apply for EU membership? On the basis of which criteria should such a decision be made?

The example of application criteria for EU membership illustrates the absence of EU efforts to define the boundary between itself and the outer world. While accession criteria reflect the political and economic model of the Union, application criteria are meant to mirror the EU’s self-perceptions on its possible final boundaries. Motivated by its geographical location, the rejection of Morocco’s application in 1987 was a first step towards clarification. However, application criteria were not specified further in the 1990’s. The corresponding article of the EC Treaty has not been modified since 1957. It provides that:

“Any European country that respects the principles of the European Union may apply to join”.

Before 1989, the reference to the EU’s principles was *per se* sufficient to exclude Central and Eastern Europe as well as the former Soviet Union. After 1989, the implicit coincidence of application criteria with the geopolitical context disappeared. Combined with the absence of additional application criteria, the EU’s choice –enlarging rather than deepening - was interpreted as an open door policy.

Inside/Out: Ambivalent Borders, Undefined Boundaries

Whereas an in-depth debate on the definitive boundaries of European integration was eluded after 1989, this had little implications until the beginning of the 2000’s. The progress and the

finalisation of accession negotiations moved attention onto the external consequences of the enlargement, in other words on the way to manage the EU's future borders. The fifth and sixth waves of enlargement would bring the EU much closer to open or frozen conflicts, e.g. the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the conflicts in Transnistria and in the Caucasus. Furthermore, it would put the EU in contact with poorer and fragile States, characterised by a strong degree of corruption, institutional weakness and limited ability to undertake reforms. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was designed as a comprehensive answer to these challenges. The ENP was clearly inspired by the desire to create a buffer zone around the enlarged Union, composed of stable countries protecting the EU against possible threats. However, it calls upon ambivalent logics and policy tools.

On the one hand, the ENP relies on the EU's attraction power to bring partner countries closer to the Union in key areas such as issues linked to the Internal Market, transports, infrastructures, education or research. Its objective is to bring neighbours closer to the EU through legal approximation, in order to avoid new dividing lines in Europe.

On the other hand, the ENP includes a coercive dimension in line with concerns expressed in the European Security Strategy, which as early as 2003 emphasized the need to ensure security beyond EU borders:

Our traditional concept of self- defence – up to and including the Cold War – was based on the threat of invasion. With the new threats, the first line of defence will often be abroad.

Tools such as visa facilitation and readmission agreements illustrate the externalisation of EC security policy towards neighbouring countries. The readmission agreements set out clear obligations and procedures for the authorities of partner countries as to when and how to take back people who are illegally residing on the EU territory. As a result, partner countries – for instance Russia or Ukraine – bear the financial and administrative burden for taking back illegal immigrants from the EU border to their homeland. At the same time, due to the entry of new Member States into the Schengen area in 2007, the border between the EU and its neighbours is made harder and is considered to create a “Paper Wall” across Europe.

As a consequence, neighbouring countries are both excluded from and included in the European integration process. While ambivalent dynamics of inclusion/exclusion blur the boundaries of EU integration (Lavenex 2004), no answer has been provided to the issue of the EU's final borders. Strong expectations of countries like Ukraine shed light on the inadequacy of application criteria, as Kyiv's European character cannot be questioned. Moreover, through relying upon approximation of neighbours' legislation with parts of the *acquis*, the ENP also creates applicants for the EU while it is not ready to engage itself into new enlargement processes (Cremona and Hillion 2006). The EU's “absorption capacity” – a condition formalized by the European Council in 2006 to limit further enlargements – cannot substitute to a definition of the integration process' final borders. This entails however defining also the Union's identity and its finalité, which seem difficult due to different conceptions among EU Member States. Therefore, the debate opened in 1989 regarding the “where” question is far from being closed for the Union.

5. 1989 and the Nature of European Power. 1989 as the Consecration of the EU's Soft Power or as the End of the “Civilian Power”?

The impact of 1989 is also dual when it comes to the “how” question, i.e. the way in which the EU exerts influence worldwide and interacts with other stakeholders. On the one hand, the collapse of communism has consecrated the EC’s modes of influence and has boosted the EC’s attractiveness. On the other hand, upheavals in Central and Eastern Europe in the aftermath of 1989 have shown the limits of EC’s soft power and introduced new modes of influence.

The collapse of the communist system did not only significantly strengthen the European Community’s role in Europe. With 1989, the EC turned into a global actor. In the past, it had often been mocked for its lack of international influence, as illustrated by Henry Kissinger’s famous words “When I want to call Europe, I cannot find a phone number”. 1989 paved the way for the institutional arrangements which bridged that gap. The Common Foreign and Security Policy introduced by the Maastricht Treaty enabled the EU to go beyond foreign policy declarations and to implement joint actions. The CFSP was later developed with common strategies launched by the Amsterdam Treaty. Moreover, the position of High Representative for CFSP was created to embody the EU’s foreign policy and to increase consistency; units dedicated to external relations developed both within the Commission and the Council. Beyond the institutional framework, evidence of the EU’s new international assertiveness can also be found in the extension of its network of programmes/agreements worldwide after 1989. In the 1960’s, the EC had started to develop relations either with former colonies (e.g. Africa Caribbean Pacific countries) or with countries belonging to the Western bloc (e.g. USA, Turkey, Canada). These relations were gradually extended to Mediterranean, Asian and South American countries. But since its creation the EC had not established any official links with the USSR and its satellite countries; therefore, the sphere of EU external action only became universal with 1989.

The overthrow of communist system thus consecrated the specific modes of influence developed by the European Community and framed by its own history, particularly by the lack of military capabilities after the rejection of the European Defence Community in 1954. As early as the 1970’s, the EC had been called a “civilian power”⁷, i.e. an entity exerting influence through attraction rather than coercion. This also referred to the predominant role played by trade and assistance in EC external action when compared to the lack of political instruments. 1989 both consecrated the EU’s attractiveness and was instrumental in developing the EC’s soft power. More specifically, the use of conditionality which had been initiated in the 1980’s in EC external action became a cornerstone of the enlargement process and was extended to other external policies. Political conditionality enabled the EU to export its norms, standards and values (Sjursen 2006). The European Neighbourhood Policy provides an illustration of the EU’s “normative power” (Manners 2002): closer cooperation with Eastern and Southern neighbours (including their participation to specific EU programmes and policies) is made conditional upon partner countries’ progress in the respect of “shared values” and approximation to EC *acquis* in a wide range of legal areas. Even though (unlike candidate countries) full alignment is not required from neighbours, the neighbourhood policy highlights an asymmetrical process: taking into account the policy framework, partner

⁷ The expression was first used by François Duchêne in 1973, “The European Community and the uncertainties of Interdependence”, in: Kohnstamm M., Hager W. (eds), *A Nation Writ Large? Foreign Policy Problems before the European Community*, Macmillan.

countries have little possibilities to resist the EU's attempt to model its environment after itself.

At the same time, in the aftermath of 1989 the EU was confronted with the limits of its "civilian power", e.g. its incapacity to contain conflicts on the European continent or at its periphery. Wars in the Balkans in the early 1990's shed light on different reactions by EU Member States and on the EU's lack of influence on the conflicts' management. The institution which had been praised for its success in promoting peace between former enemies proved totally unable to prevent genocides and wars at its borders, or even to contribute effectively to their settlement. The Kosovo conflict in 1999 confirmed these shortcomings while reflecting also NATO's primacy. These events led to the development of a military dimension in the European construction, first with the Petersberg tasks adopted in the early 1990's in the framework of the Western European Union and incorporated later into the EU, then with the design a European Common Security and Defence Policy at the end of the 1990's (Helsinki Headline Goal followed by the adoption of the European Capabilities Action Plan in the early 2000's). The deployments of European troops under the ESDP in the Balkans and elsewhere thus clearly reflect a watershed in the EU's modes of influence; 1989 has been one of the basic factors in this process. The rise of security issues on the EU's agenda and the use of military capabilities are considered to undermine the EU's specificity as an international actor (Smith 2005). However, either the EU's Security Strategy or field operations highlight a specific understanding of security issues, with a preference for conflict prevention/crisis management, as shown by the EUBAM mission in Ukraine/Moldova.

As far as the EU's international actorness is concerned, 1989 has thus also resulted in ambivalent processes, with the increasing assertion of the EU's normative power and at the same time a re-examination of its modes of influence. The emerging picture is blurred, with mixed logics and increased need for consistency in EU foreign policy. Recent events such as the conflict in Ossetia (also a long-term consequence of 1989) reflect a mixed record. On the one hand, the EU is sufficiently attractive to appear as the only possible mediator between Russia and Georgia, and to act effectively in this position since a ceasefire was quickly reached. At the same time, the EU's reactivity is linked to the Presidency's being held by a large country. Moreover, subsequent events in Georgia showed that the EU has little possibilities to influence an actor (Russia) which is a perfect reversed picture of its soft power, which still relies upon coercion to defend its own interests and which has only agreed to adopt the European model on a selective basis.

Conclusion

I. A closer look at the consequences of the overthrow of communist regimes on the European Union highlights both compressed and stretched temporalities, as the result of clashing rhythms between Eastern and Western Europe at the end of the 1980's:

1. 1989 events coincided with a wide-ranging reform process launched in the European Community with the Single European Act in 1986. These reforms were meant to improve the decision-making process in order to deepen economic integration between Member States. They thus gave a new impetus to the European project which undoubtedly contributed to increasing the EC's attractiveness and allowed the Community to appear as a pole for guiding Central and Eastern European countries in the way out communism. However, at the end of the 1980's the EC concentrated on its own integration process and was therefore not prepared to take over new external responsibilities. In spite of its unpreparedness, the EC proved able to provide immediate answers to the upheavals in the Eastern part of the continent, first – as early as July 1989 - through a new assistance programme, then – in the early 1990's through the design of an enlargement methodology.

2. At the same time, while the EC succeeded in managing compressed temporalities in 1989, it failed to take into account possible consequences of the upheavals on itself and its projects and to answer crucial questions for its own construction. Before 1989, these questions had either been void (e.g. the issue of final boundaries, because of the Cold War context; the issue of the decision-making process, because of the restricted number of potential applicants) or they had been eluded to avoid divergences between Member States (e.g. regarding the final goal of the European integration process). In other words, the pre-1989 European project, whatever its successes may have been, was limited as far as it was framed by the international context. These questions which were raised as a consequence of 1989 were overshadowed in the 1990's by the huge task of enlargement. As a result, the direct and indirect implications of 1989 for the European Union have mostly become visible since the early 2000's, thus highlighting stretched temporalities. Over the past few years, especially since 2004, the EU has indeed been faced with challenges stemming from its management of 1989. While bringing the enlargement process to an end, the accession of 10 Central and Eastern European countries in 2004 and 2007, together with high expectations from former Soviet Republics also confronted the Union with crucial questions, e.g. the *finalité* and the final boundaries of its integration process.

II. The analysis of the impact of 1989 on European integration also sheds light on interwoven logics, yet clashing interpretations stemming from the EC's management of 1989.

1. In a situation characterised by urgency, but also by limited rationality of the actors involved, the option taken by the European Community in 1989 and in the early 1990's is twofold. It entails both including Central and Eastern European countries in the European project (mainly through the enlargement process) and pursuing the process launched in the 1980's to deepen integration between Member States. The social logic and the method used for the enlargement process (assimilation, adoption of EU *acquis* prior to accession) are meant to enable candidate countries to fully participate, once they have acceded, in a European integration project which continues being developed in parallel to the enlargement process.

2. At the same time, the European Community has overlooked the changes which Central and Eastern European countries' accession would bring in the European integration project. Such a shortcoming is linked to the two assumptions which guided its management of 1989, the parenthesis and the winner-takes-it-all assumptions. The strong belief in a linear approach led the EC to reduce candidate countries to their "transitional" status, on their way to democracy, to a market economy and to the EU. These unquestioned assumptions overshadowed the traces left behind by pre-communist and communist past, the resulting divergences of interpretations between "East" and "West" on EU integration, and the backlash that 2004 would bring on the EU as a consequence of its neglecting 1989's impact on its own construction. As a consequence of this omission, the European project now seems to be in a standstill with divergences running deep on the way forward for EU integration.

Through challenging the four assumptions which lie at the core of prevailing interpretations on 1989 and Europe, this chapter has shed light ambivalent processes:

1. The continent is now formally united under the EU's banner, yet tensions and divisions remain vivid as a consequence of EC management of 1989 and poor reflection (in both parts of Europe) on the meaning of these four decades of division.
2. 1989 ushered in a revival of the European integration project through paving the way for a political Union. At the same time, through making the EU more diverse and more fragmented, through shifting the integration project from its initial philosophy, 1989 has made the European construction more fragile.
3. The overthrow of communist regimes has enabled the EC to define its own borders, which had previously been limited by the international context. Yet, a prerequisite for doing so would be the clarification of the EU's *finalité*, a task that has been carefully avoided since 1958.
4. 1989 has consecrated the EU's "civilian power" and turned the EU into a global actor; yet, as far as foreign policy is concerned, the decision-making is cumbersome and the EU still lacks instruments and capacities which would enable it to become a fully-fledged international actor.

The picture of the impact of 1989 on Europe is therefore much more blurred than indicated by the prevailing interpretations and the official EU discourse. As far as the European integration process is concerned, 1989 has resulted in raising questions much more than in giving answers. Since these questions are still unanswered, the consequences of 1989 on EU construction are still ongoing, they became more flagrant than ever after 2004 and they need urgently to be addressed.

Twenty years after the collapse of communism, the European Union therefore needs to appraise at last its implications on its own construction and to engage into a comprehensive lesson-drawing process. It also needs to initiate a reflection which it failed to develop after 1989 and which is now made more difficult by the increased number of members and the strong expectations expressed by the former Soviet Republics. Such a reflection on its *finalité* is yet indispensable to build the way forward for EU integration. Further research on the positions taken by "new" Member States on major issues after their accession, factors shaping these positions and resulting influence on the decision-making will be helpful to fulfil this task.

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