

## ***THINK-TANK TASK FORCE 6***

### **EXTERNAL BORDERS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

- Constantinos Karamanlis Institute for Democracy (*lead organisation*)
- Fondation pour l'Innovation politique
- Austrian Institute for European Security Policy
- Századvég Foundation
- Free Europe Centre
- Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
- Robert Schuman Foundation
- Azad Centre for Political Studies

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### ***ANALYSIS***

- ◆ The issue of the external borders of the European Union is of vital importance not only in regard to specific EU policies, but because of the challenges the Union will face as a result of future enlargements. This issue should be discussed within a framework that encompasses both the history and the spirit of the European project as a whole.
- ◆ There is a need for a strong EU, able to decide and act efficiently and to develop the integration process further, towards the objective as laid down in the Treaties. The EU has always been more than a mere economic project. The European peoples unite and work on the basis of shared core values. This has been clearly and unequivocally stated in Article 6.1. TEU: the basis on which the EU is founded.
- ◆ The main goal of the European integration process is to overcome traditional power politics based on the national interests of the European nation states, by building a new European order established on a common framework of European law, institutions and procedures; and an independent European judiciary which guarantees that the rule of law governs relations among member states. The purpose of is not only to create a European zone of economic welfare and strength, but to establish a stable order of peace. Its political finality is to develop an ever closer union of the peoples of Europe.
- ◆ The realisation of the European integration project demands a gradual, dynamic process of pooling partial national sovereignties and competences which are then exercised in the Union's institutions to shape common policies to solve common problems and safeguard Europe's interests on the global scene. The EU is more than a multilateral organisation and has created a political Community which establishes interrelationships between member states, common institutions and the European citizens. Its finality was already laid down in the Rome Treaties. The Treaty of Maastricht established a new quality in the integration process; the EU was established, and the building of a political union became an agreed objective of EU member states.
- ◆ A perceived European identity, awareness of common interests and a common fate are indispensable for the acceptance of the integration process by the European citizens. It is a precondition for their readiness to agree to the pooling of national sovereignty and national competences which in turn is indispensable for preserving and strengthening the Union's capacity to decide and act: its problem-solving capacity.

- ◆ Each enlargement inescapably leads to additional internal disparities, widening the spectrum of divergent interests and increasing internal heterogeneity. The latest enlargement has practically doubled the Union's membership and further increased the degree of internal disparities. This underlines the urgent need to build a strong European identity, politically effective in terms of forming a firm and enduring basis for common action.

## *PROPOSALS*

- ◆ With the present phase of the European integration, especially after the latest enlargement, attention should be paid to the Union's internal cohesion and the full 'absorption' of all its present members. Convergence of those who are lagging behind should be given priority. Further enlargement should not be pursued at the expense of cohesion.
- ◆ The issue of the Union's external borders and future enlargements is linked to its absorption capacity. The question of how much social and cultural diversity within the EU can be absorbed at any given time must be cautiously evaluated. The following criteria need to be taken into account:
  - impact on the nature of the European project so that the momentum of integration is maintained;
  - effect on identity-building;
  - acceptance by the people;
  - impact on the functioning of the Union;
  - financial implications;
  - impact on individual EU policies and strategies;
  - candidate member's political and social compatibility with the values and structures of existing Member States and the Union as such.
- ◆ Turkey should continue to reform towards meeting the criteria to entry to the EU, while keeping in mind that membership requires that the candidate country has achieved several conditions and that membership presupposes the candidate's ability to take on the obligations of membership. Only full and unequivocal compliance by Turkey of all terms and conditions for full membership (there should be no discounts or rebates on political criteria) can lead to Turkey's entry to the Union.
- ◆ Concerning the Balkans, the EU must introduce clear-cut commitments and a specific framework for action that will guide the remaining Balkan States toward their inclusion in the European Union. Road-maps should be drawn indicating the necessary steps for the proper preparation for future membership. These road-maps should be meaningful and their implementation should be a must for each candidate.
- ◆ The EU's 'good neighbourhood policy should focus on inter-dependence with the countries that have recently found themselves (or will in the future) at the Union's frontiers. Promotion of free trade, as well as cooperation on such issues as illegal immigration, human trafficking and human rights, should help to ensure greater prosperity and stability at the new EU external borders.
- ◆ Clarifying the question of the absorption capacity of the Union does not as such aim at preventing new members. It is rather a strategy to preserve the cohesion of the EU, to maintain its capability to decide and act, and as a result to assure the full support of its citizens. A strong, effective, efficiently functioning Union enhances its general absorption capacity for future enlargement.