

Editorial

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This issue of the journal has been devoted to the analysis of experience with the unprecedented enlargement in the history of European integration. Several considerations seemed to justify this approach. First, after more than seven years of membership of the Central and Northeastern European countries, it could rightly be supposed that sufficient experience could be accumulated for a balanced assessment of positive and negative impacts of accession. Second, and similarly, five years of membership of Bulgaria and Romania offer a satisfactory basis for a first medium-term retrospection. Third, the last years of membership were overshadowed by the global financial and macroeconomic crisis. This situation can be interpreted as a real test of the quality of adjustment and the chance to make use of the potential advantages of full-fledged membership. Finally, such a complex process that has produced manifest and still hidden changes in the previous decades-long economic, political and institutional map of the European integration generated not only "enlargement fatigue" in "old" member states but also an "accession fatigue" in the "new" ones. The latter can be easily understood if we take into account that, within a period half a generation, the new member countries had to face three unique challenges, namely the political and economic transformation, preparation for and adjustment to the EU rules and the impact of the global crisis.

The papers included in this issue can be divided into two major groups. The first five papers concentrate on selected countries and deal with the post-accession development of Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria and, with special reference to the financial contagion, with the Baltic countries. The second part embracing 6 further studies chose a sectoral approach and focus on key and sensitive issues of enlargement/accession, such as agriculture, trade, labour mobility, energy, financial transfers and climate policy.

I feel honoured by having been invited by EJES to act as a guest editor, hopes that this volume of the journal will call attention to the unquestionable results and, at the same time, some deficiencies on all three sides participating in the unfolding geopolitical and economic framework of the enlarged EU ("old" and "new" member country policies, expectations and perceptions, as well as the activities of European institutions). Moreover, several papers offer a good basis for bilateral and regional comparison, a topic the potential of which had been

still far from having been adequately used in accession- and enlargement-related professional literature.

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