Our analysis regarding the importance of the Lisbon Treaty is centred on various dimensions, including the historical, cultural, institutional and, last but not least, politico-juridical areas. Nevertheless, it has to be stated from the very beginning that there are many more viable possibilities to approach this analysis of the Lisbon Treaty, such as the ones focusing on the perspective of EU citizens, the EU within the globalised world, the values it promotes, the concept of multilevel governance and so on.

As far as the historical dimension is concerned, it is without a doubt the area that has been the least widely exploited in the specialised literature, although there are certain prominent names having undergone research on this topic.\footnote{For example, in the French speciality literature, we have encountered important contributions by Armel Pécheul, Étienne de Poncins, Stefan Griller, Jacques Ziller, Jean-Claude Piris and Jean-Luc Sauron.} However, it is our view that the Treaty should be credited with the important accomplishment of bringing an end to transition in Central and Eastern Europe, a process that has been particularly long-lasting and extremely abundant in terms of expression formulas. The fact that a large number of countries from the abovementioned area joined the European Union in two waves, namely 2004 and 2007, has enabled them to stand out as righteous actors on the stage of European affairs for the first time in their history, as decision makers directly involved in the creation of a much needed European Treaty.

Along with this achievement comes the completion of a historic process of European reunification, one that has brought us one step closer to witnessing the rebirth of *Europa Magna*, a dream which has been constantly cited and assumed during the history of the European continent. In fact, it is interesting to pinpoint a remarkable turn of events brought forth by the approval of the Treaty: while it undoubtedly aims to endow the EU with new momentum, so as to strengthen it by means of a reinforced integration endeavour, it also configures a number of intuitively shaped zones that uncover similar affinities and begin to act in a uniform manner, in order to gain more prominent decision making positions within the EU’s institutional concert.
This so-called zoning may well question the fact that there has been a single major historical achievement in European construction to date, namely the Franco-German partnership, given that the southern flank of the EU has indeed become quite strong, as has the northern one, to which one may boldly add this New Europe. Its evolution sprang from a mere politico-journalistic formula utilised during the War in Iraq, only to become a regional identity which does not aim to raise additional obstacles within the European Union, although it has managed to find a plethora of elements that define it and have enabled it to take certain concrete positions in the thorny debate regarding the Treaty of Lisbon.

The entire historical debate on the Treaty is truly fascinating and I am certain that historians will exploit this spectacular accomplishment of the European Union, namely the peaceful reunification of the continent. Equally impressive is the new perspective offered by EU 27, one that fosters much more than a debate on the need to take reform one step further, as it also comprises values, institutional performance and the conferral of new competences. Let it not be forgotten that this Treaty is the first fundamental one dating from decade number one of the new millennium, whereas the last ten years of the 20th century were characterised, from an institutional perspective, by no fewer than three Treaties: Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice, the latter being mostly oriented towards enlargement.2

The task of the historian is quite difficult. Should he or she interpret the Treaty solely from a historical perspective? Present it from the point of view of the institutional and administrative reform? Or from that of restarting the engines of the EU (see the new competences assigned to institutions etc.)? What about the perspective of the EU in a globalised world? Should one follow the exact debate on the Treaty and its achievements or novelties, perhaps by outlining the role of Central and East-European countries? Should one shed light on what has happened after Lisbon in a Union that has been ever more obliged to react to the global agenda - an increasingly challenging one - and emphasize the contributions of Central and Eastern Europe to the management of this agenda? Or ought one to opt for a mix of ideas, meant to demonstrate that the Treaty represents a new beginning for the EU and that Central and Eastern Europe has been granted for the first time not simply the rights of some states that are being assisted on their way to integration, but the position of pieces of a juridical statement linked to the creation of new European policies?

Prior to actually exhibiting, in a less extended manner, the modelling of the debate and the course of action taken by the ratification process of the Treaty in Central and Eastern Europe, we would like to point out the fact that the abovementioned regional leadership has in fact succeeded in finding a powerful core, which is not something that has necessarily taken us by surprise. This nucleus encompasses firstly Poland and then the Czech Republic, Slovakia and, to a lesser extent, Hungary. This proves beyond a doubt that it is the Višegrad group that has emerged as the champion of the painstaking transition process, while striving to come ever closer to embracing a European identity.

These countries have almost invariably opted for further emphasis on identity and wider sovereignty and have subsequently attempted to find a viable solution, by means of the Treaty, to their problems germane to national minorities. Hence, without explicitly altering the territorial status quo, they have turned to methods pertaining to institutional restructuring endeavours, by examining the reformist approach of the EU through the lens which are specific of that particular area. This is chiefly noticeable in issues concerning the debate on the number of Commissioners, the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the Agencies or even the Charter of Fundamental Rights. In so doing, these nations have managed to bring to Brussels’ attention (and to that of the European leadership in general) a true Central-European agenda, which overlaps with the general one of the EU in a significant number of areas, such as the matter of the Agencies, energy, free movement, neighbourhood policy etc.

Furthermore, the abovementioned countries have equally succeeded in determining earlier EU decision makers to abandon a potentially inconvenient debate on a multi-speed Europe. In return, they have suggested formulas that preserve the key role of smaller member states, as well as an integration pattern rejecting concentric circles.

Once set in motion, the current European agenda has been credited with conducting substantial lobbying activities in order to foster the enlargement towards the West Balkans. Therefore, it has been capable of introducing a Neighbourhood Policy into the Lisbon Treaty.

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Moreover, East-Europeans have once more proven to be quite industrious with regard to the development of governance, by actively participating in many policy areas, concerning the environment, resources, energy, the regional dimension, cross-border cooperation and even enhanced management of human resources, so as to effectively take part in decision-making at the highest possible level.

The most significant aspect, in our view, is the furtherance of the process of modernisation and Europeanization in the area that interests us, one that every now and again shows signs of worrying fatigue (as in the case of Romania, where one may notice problems concerning the pace, consistence and even politico-institutional will). It is certain that citizens wish to be made part of this process, along with various other actors, so as to endow it with more Europe (an allusion to the former slogan of a Spanish European Council, under Prime-Minister Aznar) and to lead to a fundamental change of paradigm from the perspective of networking, workgroups, cross-border cooperation and partnerships, firstly on an area level and then, why not, in the implementation of the very generous concept of European Studies across Borders.

As a constant element, we may notice the concrete involvement of each and every one of the states from Central and Eastern Europe in the responsible debate on the Treaty, one that has engendered a bounty of ideas, whether they dealt with reform, multi-level governance, intergovernmentalism or the relation between national and supranational. This involvement has effectively contributed to the modelling of New Europe, one that has spread its branches within the European Union, in its quest for a new beginning from a global perspective.

On the other hand, the ties among the member states from Central and Eastern Europe remain somewhat weak, as each of them has so far attempted - and in some cases succeeded - to position itself as conspicuously as possible in the relationship with the institutions from Brussels, or within certain networking projects with Western Europe. It is therefore necessary to initiate a learning process by these states, aiming to foster teamwork, partnerships and even common positions, because, first and foremost, they are intertwined by a rich - and often intricate - cultural and historical inheritance. And this can only be managed by the common assumption of the problems that arise, an act that ultimately builds mutual confidence (take for example the joint Government meetings between Bucharest and Budapest or high level contacts between

8 Aznar pushes for “more Europe” as Spain prepares to take the EU helm, EuropeanVoice.com, 13.12.2001.
leaders from the two countries). Henceforth, Central and East-European states should exhibit more initiative in their attempt to reposition the EU with regard to the West Balkans, the Republic of Moldova, the Caucasus or, better yet, the ex-Soviet space, by flexibly managing this concept of neighbourhood policy, whose first fundamental inclusion within a Treaty came along with Lisbon.

The question that arises now is ‘why the Lisbon Treaty?’

Despite severe criticism and rather pessimistic views, it is a fact that the new Treaty has managed to keep the most important provisions of the Constitutional one. Thus, it not only reaffirms the values on which the Union is built, but also endows it with more effective response mechanisms, enabling it to address the current global challenges. For instance, we could refer to climate change, energy security, international terrorism, cross-border organised crime, immigration and enlargement. With this in mind, it is safe to say that the Reform Treaty, also referred to as the Lisbon Treaty, has overcome the standstill caused by the failure to ratify the so-called Constitution for Europe.

Nevertheless, there are still a significant number of dossiers that remain unsolved and fester amid the omnipresent Euroscepticism, which refer, for example, to the future of the Union in light of the lack of a powerful voice representing it on an international scale - an area that imposes juridical changes within the European Union’s internal framework. Other issues include the need to further democratise this institutional system of the Union, one that has constantly been marred by accusations claiming the existence of a democratic deficit. This means that the institutional mechanisms are too intricate and seem too remote in the eyes of the citizens, often too detached from their daily concerns, too favourable of the executive side to the detriment of the legislative one and too ignorant towards local and regional communities, trade unions and associations. At least, these ideas are so often encountered in the testimonies of European citizens and scholars, who claim that the EU suffers from more than just a democratic deficit, as its problems spread to the area of communication as well. This is partly due to the fact that the EU relies on two types of legitimacy: one that is awarded by the member states and another that emanates directly from its citizens.

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Therefore, the need for a new Treaty was further emphasised by the existence of an artificial wall separating the EU’s political stage from the national one, whose results can be traced back to communication failures between decisions taken at the Union’s level and those pertaining to the national political spectrum. Another reason advocating for the need to elaborate a new Treaty resided in the shortage of coherence and clarity in the EU’s governance process. Confusions were consequently noticeable in the case of the separation of competences, as well as the difficulty in regrouping member states around solid common objectives and, respectively, citizens around European institutions. Further challenges referred to the potential reshaping of EU policies by integrating new members into it, the development of a Union sharing a global vision, the need to overcome institutional setbacks, the redefinition of European values, rights and identities - in other words, a set of concrete measures were required so as to ready the Union for a new beginning and provide it with more impetus, in order for it to tackle problems on a global scale.

It is the merit of Central and East-European countries to have spotted, felt and seized this historic moment. By not missing it, they have now integrated into the global architecture of a process aiming to reinterpret European realities in a more pragmatic, effective and powerful manner. It is thus of interest to present, by means of brief case studies, the way that every state from this area has tailored its participation in this new process, one that provides the Union with the chance to start over, while restating European values on a global scale.

As far as Hungary is concerned, we can notice that after 1989, it definitely turned its eyes towards the West and thus affirmed its willingness to join the European Union. In fact, Hungary was the second state to ratify the Constitutional Treaty, on the 20th of December 2004, when the Hungarian deputies voted its text with 322 votes pro, 12 against and 8 abstentions. Since the Treaty was later rejected, the Hungarian government clearly affirmed its determination to continue the process meant to adopt a new Treaty, which later enabled it to have only one objection during the negotiations on its text, namely the one opposing the Czech Republic’s request with regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

This being said, Hungary was the first member state to ratify the Lisbon Treaty on the 17th of December 2007, after revising its own Constitution so as to render it compatible with the new European legislation. The text was approved with 325 votes pro, 5 against and 14 abstentions. Before the vote, Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany declared: “European history shows us that the answer to historical problems is a historic agreement (...) The parties often engage in heated debates within the Hungarian Parliament (...) but there is fundamental consensus on the fact that Hungary must cooperate in the area of European integration.”

Commission President José Manuel Barroso congratulated Hungary on the ratification of the Treaty and also deemed symbolic the fact that its first approval came from a country that joined the Union only in 2004. “This proves that enlargement is an inspiration for a future debate on European integration and that enlargement and consolidation go hand in hand”.

The message expressed by Hungary in the drafting of the Lisbon Treaty is reflected by declarations no. 52, 54 and 58 that were added to the document. The former states that Hungary, along with other 15 countries, recognises the symbols, namely the flag, anthem, motto and currency of the EU as official. Moreover, declaration no. 54, signed by Germany, Austria, Ireland, Sweden and Hungary, calls for an intergovernmental conference meant to amend the Treaty creating Euratom, as it is considered that changes are necessary in this respect. Finally, declaration no. 58, signed by Latvia, Malta and Hungary, refers to the spelling of the single European currency in the body of treaties, affirming the maintenance of particular linguistic norms in this regard.

To conclude, the course of events initiated by Hungary in its attitude towards the Lisbon Treaty demonstrates that change was possible and, if one measures it in what may be called historical time, it occurred quite fast, obeying a set of strategic axes followed by all Hungarian governments after 1989. These principles include the idea of integration and, after 2004,

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enhanced competitiveness within the European Union - the final proof of the latter being the overall attitude of Hungary with regard to the Lisbon Treaty.

In the Czech Republic, the debates on the Treaty were dominated by no fewer than four political parties: on the one hand there are the Civic Democrats (ODS) and the Communists (KSCM), who represent the Eurosceptical pole; on the other hand, we have the Social-Democrats (CSSD) and Christian-Democrats (KDU-CSL), who expressed a pro-European view. The debates were predominantly focused on institutional reform and, to a lesser extent, policies. Major subjects included: the Council of Ministers, the competences of national parliaments, as well as the Charter of Fundamental Rights.  

Within the Czech Parliament, the reform of the Council triggered a heated debate, as ODS and KSCM argued that the Treaty rendered this institution less effective than it had been before. In their view, the position of small and medium-sized member states would therefore be weakened and the new system would enable large western states to dominate the Union. Meanwhile, the double majority principle was welcomed only by members of CSSD, who argued that the new voting system should contribute to much more efficient decision making within the EU, while Eurosceptical parties opposed, for instance, the new Presidency system, by calling it unequal and discriminatory, since there was allegedly a great chance that only Western politicians would gain easy access to this particular position. Consequently, according to this group, small and medium-sized member states would have less influence on EU policies and the legislative process. This view was not shared by the Social-Democrats, who argued that the new definition of Presidency would strengthen the EU’s position at an international level, while rendering it more effective and better represented, even from the perspective of smaller member states, which would still benefit from the rotational Presidency for the Council of Ministers. On the other hand, the ODS equally opposed the potential reduction in the number of

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16 Outlook for 2010-11 in The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited 2010.
17 Anna Szolucha- University of St Andrews, The EU and Enlargement Fatigue: Why has the European Union not been able to counter enlargement fatigue? in Journal of Contemporary European Research, Vol 6, Issue 1.
19 Business Europe, EU: Klaus compromise on Lisbon in Economist Intelligence Unit, 2009.
20 Aleksandra Maatsch, Between an Intergovernmental and a Polycentric European Union, National Parliamentary Discourses on Democracy in EU Ratification Process in RECON Online Working Paper, University of Oslo, Centre for European Studies.
Commissioners. In fact, from their perspective, the Treaty did not increase the level of legitimacy of the European Parliament, as it remained a weak and insufficiently transparent institution, whilst the Social-Democrats and Communists perceived the reform of the EP as a positive factor.\(^{21}\)

It was however the Charter of Fundamental Rights that caused perhaps the greatest division among Czech parliamentarians. The OSD held its ground against the document, claiming it was illegitimate - as it had been drafted by EU politicians - and that it weakened the prerogatives of member states. Other critical ideas included the unclear interpretations of the Charter and the allegation that it reflected a right-wing ideology that was not shared by all EU states. In this political group’s opinion, the adoption of the Charter would make it possible for German citizens to reclaim their former Czech properties that had been seized after the war by the Beneš decrees. Meanwhile, KSCM did not pay that much attention to the Charter, as it had initially rejected it as unsuitable to be integrated into the Treaty, whereas the Social-Democrats unanimously upheld it, considering it an important step towards European integration and the guarantee of individual rights.\(^{22}\)

Another important point that is well worth discussing when it comes to the Czech Republic is the debate on the constitutionality of the Lisbon Treaty, which shed light on the problem of national sovereignty - a key point for ODS members, who sustained that only states could be sovereign. Claiming that the EU was no such entity, in the absence of a European nation, OSD remained sceptical towards all reforms introduced by the Treaty that were likely to foster the creation of a federal Europe, for which, they said, the continent was not prepared.\(^{23}\) Nevertheless, the Constitutional Court, which was addressed twice by members of the Senate with regard to the compatibility between certain provisions of the Treaty and the Czech Constitution, ruled that a new definition of sovereignty was needed, in light of this document. It acknowledged that the EU was a *sui generis* entity, one that could not be catalogued by classic political science criteria. Thus, the changes brought forth could either be perceived as a partial loss of sovereignty, or the conferral of some sovereign attributes to a more powerful


organisation. The Court admitted that traditional state prerogatives had to keep up with evolution and experience it in order to gradually apply the process of globalisation - so it was in the interest of member states to give up certain rights in favour of the European Union, in order for it to act, under the same institutional rules, as a representative democracy.\textsuperscript{24}

The “passerelle” clause enables the European Council to unanimously decide in favour of replacing unanimous voting in the Council of Ministers with qualified majority, in specific areas and with the consent of the European Parliament, as well as to shift from the special legislative procedure to the ordinary one.\textsuperscript{25}

The requests of President Klaus clearly express his reticence towards both the European Union and the Lisbon Treaty. The first refers to the re-examining of the constitutionality of the Treaty, as the President claimed an international Treaty could not be granted the same level of authority as the Constitution.\textsuperscript{26} The second request refers to the compatibility between the Treaty and the Czech Constitution, stating that qualified majority voting endangered national sovereignty and indicating that only the original and not the derived Union law should be granted direct effect. He is equally sceptical with regard to the European Charter and expresses his concern towards the relation between the former and the Czech Charter, as far as compatibility and superiority are concerned. Klaus equally criticises the fact that the Union positions itself on a superior scale compared to its member states, which is contradictory to article 10 of the Czech Constitution, since the Union becomes more than an international organisation - it actually turns into a super-state. For him, the Charter is not necessary, all the more because it aims to build a European nation, supported by the idea of a common citizenship. According to Klaus, it is therefore envisaged to establish a federal competence system in which the President of the Union may get to have a veto within the European Council, since after Lisbon, the Union is undergoing changes in its very nature, by shifting from a \textit{union of states} to an \textit{organisation above the states}.\textsuperscript{27}

The third request refers to the ratification process of the Treaty in the Czech Republic, one that allegedly can only be completed by means of a referendum. The last request by Vaclav Klaus acknowledges the hypothetical situation where Germans who had been expelled from the

\textsuperscript{24} Nevra Esenturk, \textit{art. cit.}
\textsuperscript{25} Aleksandra Maatsch, \textit{op cit.}
\textsuperscript{26} Business Europe, \textit{EU: Klaus compromise on Lisbon} in Economist Intelligence Unit, 2009.
Sudetenland after World War Two, or their descendants, might ask for compensations from the part of the Czech Republic, in light of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, since article 17 recognises the right to material benefits in the event of expropriation, while article 19 forbids collective expulsion.\textsuperscript{28} Hence, Klaus demanded that a clause be included in the Treaty so as to exclude the Czech Republic from the group of states that have to apply the document. In order to complete the ratification process, the European Council agreed to partly relinquish to this request, by admitting that within the next adhesion treaty and according to the constitutional provisions of each member state, a new protocol will be added in this respect as an addendum to the Lisbon Treaty, through which the Charter will have the same effects on the Czech Republic as it does on Britain or Poland\textsuperscript{29}.

In the Czech Republic’s declaration, added to the Final Act of the Intergovernmental Conference that adopted the Lisbon Treaty, it reaffirms that the provisions of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights refer to EU institutions and bodies and respect the principle of subsidiarity and of sharing competences between the Union and its member states. Thus, the provisions of the Charter only refer to these states in so far as the latter apply Union law and not in the event that they adopt and apply their national law, separately from the Community one.

Among the Eastern European states that acceded to the European Union in 2004, \textbf{Poland}, together with the Czech Republic, was one of the most reticent states in what concerns the ratification and signing of the Lisbon Treaty, a vital turning point for the EU.

In 2005, Poland would be lead by a coalition of three conservative, national-clerical, eurosceptic and populist parties, the most prominent of which being the Law and Justice Party lead by the Kaczyński twins. Jarosław Kaczyński became the prime minister of Poland, while his brother, Lech Kaczyński, had already been chosen president. This was a period when Poland turned from the diligent student of Eastern Europe into \textit{l’enfant terrible}, a period when populism, xenophobia, clerical integralism and euroscepticism had reached all-time highs. Moreover, the euroscepticism risked turning into anti-Europeanism, counterproductive and harmful both for Poland and for the EU. Poland’s chance was the coming to power of a Europhile and pro-

\textsuperscript{28} Business Europe, \textit{art. cit.}  
Western party, the Civic Platform, lead by Donald Tusk as prime minister in 2007. However, Poland’s ratification and signing of the Treaty was extremely difficult.

In April 2008, the bicameral Parliament of Poland was to ratify the Lisbon Treaty. The Sejm, the lower house of the Parliament, had 384 votes in favour, 56 against and 12 abstentions, while the Senate had 74 votes in favour, 17 against and 6 abstentions. All that was left was for the Treaty to be signed by President Lech Kaczyński, who had previously announced his intention of postponing the moment for as long as possible. In fact, the Polish president was waiting for the result of the Irish referendum in 2008, who ended with a clear victory for those who refused to ratify the Treaty in Ireland (53.4% of the Irish voters were against). Immediately after the result, the President officially announced that any further discussion concerning the Treaty was “useless.” This attitude was only going to infuriate French President Nicolas Sarkozy, whose country held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first part of 2008 and who hoped to assume the success of the Treaty. Kaczyński’s obstinacy to sign the Treaty after the second referendum was only going to add to the tension between the EU member states.

In fact, until April 2008, when the Treaty was adopted by the Polish parliament, there had been many conflicts. Fearing Germany’s growing influence, Poland asked for a review of the double majority from the Treaty of Nice, which gave Germany a decisive role in the voting process. As an alternative, Poland proposed the use of the so-called square root of the population, that considerably diminished Germany’s role, but also that of other Western powers such as France and Great Britain. The chief negotiator of Poland, historian Marek Cichocki, stated that the voting system would be a “Polish historical rebate” for the fact that “for 50 years Poland for no fault of its own was outside EU integration.” Of course, like many had noticed, Poland was bluffing, aiming to preserve the status quo of the double majority, but to at least limit the importance of demographic weight, and thus that of the great European states. In the end, Poland

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31 Ian Traynor, „EU: Poland threatens Sarkozy’s scheme to rescue Lisbon’s treaty” [http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/jul/02/eu.poland] last access 04.05.2011.
32 Andrew Rettman, „Poland to fight for 'square root' law in EU treaty” [http://euobserver.com/9/23808] last access 04.05.2011.
did not continue with this plan, and accepted to reduce its number of representatives in the European Parliament.\(^{33}\)

During the difficult negotiations, different problems emerged, from the fear of abandoning Eastern Europe to the sphere of Russia’s economic influence to the smallest of technical or symbolic issues, such as the role of the EU president, which the Polish wanted to be as symbolic as possible.

As previously mentioned, the bicameral Parliament was to ratify the Lisbon Treaty in April 2008 with an opt-out clause, so as not to oblige Poland to accept the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. This was done for fear that Poland would be forced to accept same-sex marriages and facilitating abortion in a predominantly catholic country.\(^{34}\) After the second Irish referendum, this time a positive one, the Polish president had no excuse to further delay the signing of the Treaty, which was signed on October 10, 2009. During the ceremony, the president declared that “the European Union remains a union of sovereign nation states (...) a successful experiment without precedent in human history, cannot be closed to those who wish to join... not only in the Balkans but also countries like Georgia.”\(^{35}\)

Finally, apart from the opt-out clause, Poland also obtained a double majority for Council decisions (55% of the member states and 65% of the EU population), which comes into force only in 2014, with a period of transition until 2017. To this we add the Ioannina compromise, another Polish intervention, which allows a minority of member states to delay the decisions taken through qualified majority in the Council of Ministers until another majority is found. This clause is not part of the Treaty itself, which means it can be modified without repeating the difficult process of modifying and ratifying the Treaty all over again.\(^{36}\)

The Republic of Slovenia is part of the former Yugoslavia and is the most economically developed state in this region. An EU member from 2004, Slovenia is among the first Central-Eastern European countries to be accepted in the EU and NATO. After the dissolution of

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\(^{33}\) *Idem.*

\(^{34}\) "Q&A : The Lisbon Treaty" [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6901353.stm] last access 04.05.2011.


Yugoslavia, the evolution of Slovenia was closely related to its relation to the EU, the integration in the Union being one of the country’s objectives ever since 1991. In this way, relations with the EU became a part of the national political system. The same situation was repeated when Slovenia held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, when the most important political parties (with the exception of LDS and SNP) signed an agreement regarding the implementation and preparation of the Council Presidency. Therefore, the Europeanisation process is felt especially at a central level, the local actors having a marginal role in what regards the European policy administration.

The political scene reflects the dynamics of the parties and the aspiration to belong to the great European political groups. By analysing the political spectrum, we notice that in Slovenia, the EU impact on the internal organisation of parties and the redistribution of power between them is limited. Likewise, the modest influence of European policies and objectives in election campaigns supports the fact that in Slovenia a weak European “multi-level” governance system has been established. However, the EU influence on Slovenia cannot be analysed without taking into consideration the ratification process of the Lisbon Treaty and its importance. The first official document in which the position of the Central-Eastern region states had the same value as that of the Western states, the Lisbon Treaty shows a more united Europe, despite the difficulties it was faced with during the ratification period. Thus, for the first time, the Central-Eastern region states had the same value as that of the Western states, the Lisbon Treaty shows a more united Europe, despite the difficulties it was faced with during the ratification period. Thus, for the first time, the Central-Eastern region states had the same value as that of the Western states, the Lisbon Treaty shows a more united Europe, despite the difficulties it was faced with during the ratification period.

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37 Alenka Krašovec si Damjan Lajh, *The European Union: A Joker or Just an Ordinary Playing Card for Slovenian Political Parties?*, 2009, p 491, [http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a917141500](http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a917141500).

38 In the accession period, with the exception of a single parliamentary party – the Slovenian National Party-- no other parliamentary party publicly opposed this goal, ibid., p 501.

39 What was especially new for the independent Slovenia relative to the EU was that for the first time foreign affairs became part of the national political system. This happened at almost the same time as Slovenia started to take part in the European integration processes, Danika Fink Hafner, *Europeanization in managing EU Affairs*, 2007, p 813, [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9299.2007.00668.x/abstract?systemMessage=Wiley+Online+Library+will+be+disrupted+14+May+from+10-12+BST+for+monthly+maintenance](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9299.2007.00668.x/abstract?systemMessage=Wiley+Online+Library+will+be+disrupted+14+May+from+10-12+BST+for+monthly+maintenance).

40 Agreement on the co-operation of political parties, the group of unconnected [¼ independent] deputies and representatives of national minorities in the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia for the successful implementation of the preparation and presidency of the EU.


42 See George Andreou, Ian Bache, *Europeanzation and multilevel governance in Slovenia*, 2010, p 20-40 [http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a922093361](http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a922093361).

43 See ibidem, pp 491-505.

44 George Andreou, Ian Bache, *art cit*, p 41.
Eastern European states can express their opinions towards the EU and contribute to administrating the European resource.

Through its pro-Europe attitude, Slovenia had an important role in elaborating and promoting this Treaty. Therefore, from the moment of the EU integration, Slovenia found essential the existence of a Foreign Affairs Minister for the European Union who would hold positions both in the Common Foreign and Security Policy and as a member of the Commission on international relations.\(^4\) In what concerns the Lisbon Treaty, Slovenia was the third country to ratify it. The Slovenian Parliament signed the Treaty on January 29, 2008, thus encouraging the rest of the countries to proceed in the same way.\(^5\) The ratification by the Parliament with an overwhelming majority (74 votes in favour, 6 against) showed a country willing to end the institutional crisis at the EU level and to contribute to its reform.

The impact and the principles of the EU in the post-Lisbon period are closely tied to Slovenia’s contribution in the ratification process of this Treaty and as a member of the EU. The Presidency of Slovenia within the Council of the EU had a decisive role in what concerns the relation of the EU with its citizens. Slovenia held the Presidency of the Council from January 1, 2008 to June 30, 2008, with the following prerogatives: coordinating the Council of the EU and the Council of Europe, representing the European Union Council in relation with other European institutions and the international community.\(^6\)

Slovenia’s Presidency of the Council involved three great challenges. First of all, Slovenia was the first country in the 2004-2007 wave of integration and the first post-communist country. Also, Slovenia was the smallest country (with the exception of Luxembourg) to hold the Presidency of the Council.\(^7\) In what concerns the Presidency of the Council, Slovenia had established five priorities: ratifying the Lisbon Treaty, strengthening the European perspective in the Western Balkans, advancing the climate and energy package through the liberalisation of the

\(^{4}\) Contribution by Dr Dimitrij Rupel, Slovenian Foreign Minister and Prime Minister’s Representative to the European Convention, european-convention.eu.int/docs/speeches/9513.pdf.


internal market for electricity and gas, addressing a new cycle of the Lisbon Strategy and promoting intercultural dialogue.

This paper analyses Slovenia’s realisations with regard to the Lisbon Treaty. We have to mention the impact that Slovenia’s Presidency had in what concerns the Treaty. Although not strictly connected to Slovenia’s Presidency, the rejection of the Lisbon Treaty through the Irish referendum had deteriorated Slovenia’s image. At the same time, this referendum raised question marks on the relation of the EU with its citizens and on their degree of information on the Treaty. The declaration of the Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša is significant in this case: “I believe that we need to focus on communication. Communication has the task of showing the citizens of Europe quite clearly why the European Union needs a new treaty.” (June 24, 2008, Extraordinary Session of the European Parliament)

In this way, Slovenia’s Presidency and the way in which this country approached the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty reopened the perspective of a transparent cooperation between the EU and its citizens. The criticism brought at an internal level regarding both the lack of a citizen information campaign on the content of the Treaty of Lisbon, and the futility of expressing an agreement through a referendum by the citizens of the EU has proven the importance of an open dialogue between the EU and its citizens.

The period following the ratification of the Treaty by all member states (including its signing through a second referendum in Ireland) brings a new position for the Eastern European states. With a more united Europe in mind, it is necessary for the Eastern European states to overcome historic tensions, in order fully unify the European space. Taking into consideration the strategic location of the Balkan states in what concerns the Integration Strategy of the EU 2010-2020,


52 See Ibid., pp 8-16.

53 According to the opinion of the Head of the Government Office for European Affairs, promoting a 300-page document was useless, since it would have been difficult to read by a European citizen who would start believing in it only after seeing the personal benefits from the Treaty. See “Neprebravljivo besedilo”, Mladina, 01/2008, http://www.mladina.si/tednik/200801/clanek/slo-evropski_dom-marjan_horvat/.

Slovenia will play a key role through promoting Croatia as a new member of the EU.\textsuperscript{55} Moving past the tensions concerning the borders of the two countries and the misunderstandings regarding the Piran Bay,\textsuperscript{56} Slovenia has to promote a climate of cooperation in the Balkans, action started with its Presidency of the EU Council.

Significant in defining Slovenia’s position in the post-Lisbon society is the creation of the first European agency in Slovenia. Named ACER (European Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators), the agency was opened on March 3, 2011\textsuperscript{57} and was established starting from the third package of liberalisation in the energy sector.\textsuperscript{58} The opening of this agency plays a key role in the coordination of the EU energy policy, ensuring that the future network of development will determine the fusion of national energy markets.\textsuperscript{59}

Also, the amendments of the Slovenian Parliament after the Lisbon Treaty came into force show the way in which Slovenia adapted to the Treaty and to the EU in the post-Lisbon period. The main modifications are: monitoring the legislation regarding the principle of subsidiarity, taking legal action in the EU Court of Justice when the principle of subsidiarity has been violated, discussions regarding the European Council initiatives in what concerns amending treaties and proposals of the EU Council in what concerns judicial cooperation in civil law matters.

Regarding Slovenia’s position towards the EU, the country enjoys great visibility in relation to its surface. Slovenia is represented by a member of the European Commission, seven members in the European Parliament,\textsuperscript{60} the Prime Minister of the European Council and other members in various committees and European institutions. The position of the Slovenian leaders towards the EU and towards the Lisbon Treaty in general has been a favourable one. Both the Slovenian

\textsuperscript{55} Otočec ob Krki, \textit{Meetings of Presidents of Slovenia and Croatia}, 23.03.2011, \url{http://www.up-rs.si/up-rs/uprs-eng.nsf/dokumentiweb/0935502ACF9C5CF3C12578630048D61A?OpenDocument}.

\textsuperscript{56} Neil MacDonald, Slovenia and Croatia reach deal on border, September 2009, \url{http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1858484831&sid=2&Fmt=3&clientId=65090&RQT=309&VName=PQD}.

\textsuperscript{57} Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of the Economy, News, \textit{First European Agency opens in Slovenia}, 03.03.2011, \url{http://www.mg.gov.si/en/splosno/cns/news/article/2159/7720906894b36f/}.


\textsuperscript{59} The Director of ACER, Alberto Pototschnig, said that the Agency would ensure that the planning of network development will promote the merger of national energy markets, including markets that are currently isolated or weakly connected, \textit{ibidem}.

\textsuperscript{60} See \textit{Slovenian representatives in EU Institutions}, \url{http://www.evropa.gov.si/en/member-of-the-eu/slovenian-representatives-in-eu-institutions/}. 
President Dr Danilo Türk and Prime Minister Janez Janša have stated their support for the Treaty. Moreover, in the president’s Address in the Diplomatic Reception in January 2011, he talks about the problems of the EU and proposes different ways of solving them.\textsuperscript{61}

Taking into consideration Slovenia’s position towards Europe after the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty and the importance the country had in the Treaty’s ratification, we can conclude that Slovenia brought multiple benefits to the long-term European strategy. Among these we can mention the openness towards the Balkan area, but also the promotion of the transparency principle within the EU in what concerns its citizens.

The Baltic States had been attracted by the European Union even before its creation, from the time it was only a project. This attraction was mainly the result of the foreign relations with Russia, who had dominated the three countries for decades. In 1991 the Baltic States became independent and the process known as “the return to Europe” began\textsuperscript{62}. This image of “returning to Europe” was actually rejected by the Baltic nations\textsuperscript{63} because it shows them as imitators of the West, not equals. The current European situation is the following: the New Europe is challenging the old one. The Baltic States are not after a Western identity, nor do they want to be perceived as inferior to the West. What they want is equality, and in this sense they are becoming a voice in the current European policy. For the Baltic countries, “the return to Europe” implies a division of Europe between West and East, that is to say an uneven perception of the states, whereas the New Europe has to be a model of unity and prosperity.

By acceding to the EU, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were hoping to receive the “white cheque of compensation” for everything they had suffered because of Russia/USSR and to be protected from it.

Putin’s speech in 2005, in which he declared that the greatest strategic catastrophe of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century was the collapse of the Soviet Union, lead to a continuation of the acute tension between

\textsuperscript{61} by the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Dr Danilo Türk, at the diplomatic reception ceremony Brdo pri Kranju, 24 January 2011, \url{http://www.up-rs.si/up-rs/uprs-eng.nsf/dokumentiweb/E88C85694E08AABEC1257822004CF9DF?OpenDocument}.

\textsuperscript{62} Matthes Buhbe and Iris Kempe, \textit{Russia, the EU and the Baltic States}, 2005.

\textsuperscript{63} David James Smith, \textit{The Baltic States and their region: new Europe or old?}, Rodopi, New York, 2005, p.87.
the two parts and confirmed to the Baltic states Russia’s view of the former Soviet states. This determined them to be even more eager to get closer to the EU.

By acceding to the Lisbon Treaty, the Baltic nations strengthened their policies, the Treaty having an essential role since it focuses on the security policy. Moreover, what is important is the introduction of the common defence policy, the member states being obliged to support by any means a state that is the victim of an aggression. Another valuable matter is the stipulation of cooperation intensification between certain states that have the same interest of common defence. This means that the states have the possibility of taking initiative and protecting the values of the EU.

Another reason for enthusiasm for the Baltic countries regarding the Treaty was the protocol concerning the energy problem. This issue is vital for the three states, since they depend on Russia for energy. One of the projects the Baltic States most opposed was the Nord Stream project to extract petrol from Russia and to transport it to the West through the Baltic Sea. The then president of Lithuania, Valdas Adamkus, declared:

“…our shared responsibility must also include environmental protection and climate change. The Baltic Sea region is among the most vulnerable in the context of climate change, while the inland Baltic Sea is seriously threatened by large-scale infrastructure projects such as the Nord Stream and rapidly increasing oil tanker traffic. We cannot allow the Baltic Sea to become a “new Bosphorus”: with large amounts of dumped chemical munitions any incident at sea may result in an ecological disaster, causing irreparable damage to the entire region. It is important to ensure the highest possible standards of environmental protection against any off-shore and on-shore economic activity.” (29.04.2008, University of Tallinn)

Finally, the Treaty also introduces the provision of the prosperity of EU citizens and of combating poverty through Art. II, Paragraph 5. The Baltic States, finding themselves in a

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profound financial crisis after the extraordinary development in 2000-2007\textsuperscript{66} have found support in this Treaty.

The Lisbon Treaty was ratified on May 8, 2008 by Lithuania and Latvia. In Lithuania, there were 83 votes in favour, 5 against and 23 abstentions. Latvia had 70 votes in favour out of 74. Estonia ratified the Treaty one month later, on June 11, 2008.

The Baltic States have oriented themselves towards the EU policies since 1991, but with certain well-defined expectations. They were hoping to completely change their history with the help of the EU and to be compensated for their past, something they have publicly asked for many times, the accusations being headed towards Russia. At the same time, a phenomenon of perceiving the countries as victims of the past took place, the Baltic States currently taking action in order for communism to be recognised as equal to Nazism\textsuperscript{67}.

As a landmark for their political, economic and social objectives, the Baltic States have clung to the Lisbon Treaty, Treaty which they perceived as a means of solving their past and present problems. On the other hand, the European Union paid attention to its policies in what concerns the Baltic nations, because they represent an open door to the relations with the former communist states and, at the same time, a geo-strategic point.

In the case of \textbf{Romania}, all the governments after 1989 have undoubtedly acted in order to facilitate the country’s integration into the EU and NATO. This entente among political parties was in no way due to a belief that a unified Europe was a way to utter happiness, or to the confidence in any supreme law that might one day rule over the entire continent, but it did lead to a strong desire to align to European standards so as to become a stable partner in a tense geopolitical context.\textsuperscript{68} Hence, with the exception of some hesitancy after 1989, such as the so-called \textit{Mineriads} and various other ethnic and political conflicts around 1990/1991, leading to the fall of the Petre Roman government, Romania has shown its willingness to irreversibly go down the western path.

\textsuperscript{66} Carolyn Bain, \textit{Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania}, Lonely Planet, Oakland, 2009, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{67} Carlos Closa Montero, \textit{Study on how the memory of crimes committed by totalitarian regimes in Europe is dealt with in the Member States}, 2010.
This is largely due to the fact that the Romanian people welcomed with euphoria the escape from sheer isolation and a physical and mental deterioration of the human being which had been in place for half a century. Therefore, the little energy this nation still possessed was used to attain the ultimate goal of being univocally accepted into both NATO and the European Union. This proves, amongst other things, the haste which guided Romania’s parliamentary ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, becoming the fourth member state to have done so, and with resounding figures: 387 votes pro, one against and one abstention (differing thus from the “Golden Age” when all proposals initiated by the beloved leader would meet full consensus). It is deputy Lavinia Ṣandru that voted against the Reform Treaty, on behalf of the tiny National Initiative Party, while Dragoș Dumitru from the equally minuscule Conservative Party abstained from casting a vote.

The reasons behind the actions of the two MPs are quite indicative of what it means to totally ignore and lack interest towards this important legal document. It is Lavinia Ṣandru who declared in fact that “I have voted against the Lisbon Treaty because Romania has had no contribution to this document... we cannot state that the Treaty favours Romania. At this time, we are demonstrating that we do not matter at the EU level and we have accepted everything that the Europeans have passed on to us... it is important that everyone should know... the Lisbon Treaty is over 90 percent equivalent to the old constitution.” Meanwhile, conservative Dragoș Dumitru declared that he was “Eurosceptical with regard to the economic and social aspects of this united Europe”. The other parliamentarians had nothing but words of praise to welcome Romania’s approval of the Lisbon Treaty. For instance, former Prime Minister Adrian Năstase declared that “The Lisbon Treaty is a chance and in no way a problem for Romania.” He continued by stating that “the problem lies not only in the way we adjust to what standards from Brussels are all about, but in the way we shall manage to transfer part of our interest to Brussels”. Moreover, liberal Mircea Cepraga said: “the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty is the zenith of the European political aspirations that Romania has been reaching for so far, but also the gesture that will chase away the frustrations of Romanians”. Discussions continued in fact in this particular direction.

71 Idem.
Only after the occurrence of major achievements - Romania’s accession to the Euro-Atlantic structures and the more recent ratification of the Lisbon Treaty - did national contributions start to appear with regard to the contents of the latter. A series of debates were initiated months after the ratification in order to analyse the impact of the Treaty and provide some prospective evaluations. We shall mention the two academic initiatives held in Cluj-Napoca: Romania in the EU: 3 years since accession and Romania and the European Union post-Lisbon Treaty, where Professor Tom Gallagher evaluated with great accuracy the climate around these debates, by mentioning that “it is good to see critical and constructive messages for a high quality progress of integration”. 72

Furthermore, Romanian politicians got more substantially involved in such debates so as to facilitate an increase in confidence in the EU’s processes and institutions. Foreign Affairs Minister Vasile Puşcaş, who led the first reunion of the Reflection Group regarding the Future of the Lisbon Strategy, made up of representatives of central and local public administration, the civil society and academia, showed that the Group was compliant with the EU’s initiative meant to foster the organization of debates on future action and an integrated approach to the 2020 Agenda.

Senator Alexandru Peleş, a vice-president of the Romanian Senate, while in The Hague along with the presidents of the superior chambers of EU parliaments, underlined the constant preoccupation for consolidating the relationship between the Senate and the civil society, in order to initiate a package of reforms on these grounds. 73

Leonard Orban, European Commissioner, expressed, during the Conference Strategies and Politics Studies Launch, within the section dedicated to the Lisbon Treaty, on the 30th of March 2011, the need to implement the document over a long period of time, since the success of the Union depended on it. 74

In conclusion, this institutional reform stands out due to the numerous acquisitions in terms of competences. As far as we are concerned, it is the topic of Central and Eastern Europe that remains of great interest, also from the viewpoint of this very area: what does the debate on the Treaty bring for it and what has been the individual reaction of each state, since one way or

another, every single one of them has had its own contribution to this achievement? What remains open to discussion is, however, the involvement of decision makers and, more generally speaking, stakeholders from Central and Eastern Europe, in the management of European affairs.

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