[4] Według klasyfikacji BEC są to dobra inwestycyjne, dobra konsumpcyjne trwałego użytku, samochody osobowe oraz części i akcesoria.

[5] Nastąpiło to mimo silnego załamania w 2009 r., kiedy wartość rosyjskiego importu obniżyła się o ponad 30%, a więc najmocniej wśród największych światowych importerów.

[6] Wpływ na wielkość inwestycji w krajach EŚW mogły mieć także utrzymujące się bariery inwestycji zagranicznych w Rosji.

[7] Zainteresowanie delokalizacją produkcji z krajów Europy Zachodniej do EŚW rosło wraz z postępującym procesem integracji regionu z Unią Europejską. Rola korporacji międzynarodowych w handlu regionu systematycznie zwiększała się od połowy lat 90. ubiegłego wieku. Jednak skala tego zjawiska znacząco się zwiększyła w wyniku przystąpienia krajów EŚW do Unii.

[8] W 2011 r. na kraje Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej przypadało 21,5% eksportu całej Unii Europejskiej do Rosji (w 2003 r., a więc bezpośrednio przed akcesją ośmiu krajów EŚW do Unii, przypadało na nie 10,8%).

[9] Udział przedsiębiorstw zagranicznych w eksporcie EŚW znacznie wykracza poza handel realizowany w ramach międzynarodowych sieci produkcji (koncentrują się one na wyrobach klasyfikowanych jako maszyny i sprzęt transportowy). Efektem inwestycji zagranicznych w regionie jest w dużej mierze eksport leków, a także galanterii papierowej.

[10] W krajach UE-15 po rozszerzeniu Unii Europejskiej nastąpiło pewne spowolnienie dynamiki eksportu do Rosji, zwłaszcza w kategoriach związanych z działalnością korporacji międzynarodowych. O ile bowiem bezpośrednio przed akcesją (tj. w latach 2000-2003) eksport UE-15 do Rosji rósł w tempie 22,5% rocznie, to w latach 2004-2008 jego dynamika obniżyła się do 18,6%. Spowolnienie to było przede wszystkim efektem obniżenia się dynamiki eksportu w kategoriach związanych z GVC (z 29,3% do 21,2%), podczas gdy w przypadku pozostałych kategorii zmiana tempa wzrostu eksportu była stosunkowo niewielka (z 16,9% do 15,7%).

[11] Producentów branży motoryzacyjnej uważano za głównych, obok producentów rolnych, poszkodowanych („ofiary”) przystąpienia Rosji do WTO. Por. *Russia's Accession to the WTO: Major Commitments, Possible Implications* (2012), Sergey F. Sutyrin (red.), International Trade Centre, Saint-Petersburg and Geneva, s. 4.

[12] Szerzej na ten temat patrz Marzenna Błaszczuk-Zawiła (2012), *Skutki przystąpienia Rosji do WTO dla stosunków UE-Rosja*, „Unia Europejska.pl”, Warszawa, IBRKK, nr 4(215).

[13] W zakresie uzyskania pozwoleń na budowę (wskaźnik *Dealing with Construction Permits*) Rosja została sklasyfikowana na 178 miejscu, a pod względem czasu i kosztu uzyskania przyłącza elektrycznego dla nowo wybudowanego przedsiębiorstwa (wskaźnik *Getting Electricity*) na 184 miejscu (tj. przedostatnim przed Bangladeszem). Wiele do życzenia pozostawiały także warunki prowadzenia handlu zagranicznego, tj. liczba dokumentów, podpisów i czasu niezbędnego, aby przedsiębiorca mógł importować lub eksportować (wskaźnik *Trading Across Borders*). W tej dziedzinie Rosja znalazła się dopiero na 162 pozycji.

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ABC UNII EUROPEJSKIEJ

STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR THE EU10 COUNTRIES IN 2012[1]

*Krisztina Vida**

Besides giving a snapshot of their political and economic situation, the present article is displaying the attitudes of the ten Central and Eastern European member states (EU10) in the formulation of some of the most topical issues under discussion in the European Union in 2012. The countries in focus are Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. The study attempts to identify the key EU-related priorities of these countries and their abilities to influence European Union policies alone or jointly. The issues discussed are the management of the eurozone crisis, the multiannual financial framework for 2014-2020, the reform of common agricultural policy and of cohesion policy after 2013, energy policy, external relations, enlargement and neighbourhood policy. The article concludes that – due to diverse interests, positions and challenges – the EU10 does not behave as a single lobby group, nevertheless, many policy areas can be detected where these countries have a similar approach allowing them to make an impact on European integration.

Internal politics, EU strategy of the governments

Overview of internal politics

The crisis seems to have consolidated public politics in the EU10 region. The sole exception was Romania, where the massive protests triggered by the painful crisis management measures undermined the stability of the government. The situation became highly complicated in 2012, with the formation of a new coalition government (without elections) and with clashes between the President and the new Prime Minister. While the position of the President – after an invalid referendum on impeachment – was reinforced until the end of his initial term (end of 2014), parliamentary elections of early December 2012 seem to have resulted in the setting up of a stable government. The only country where the crisis provoked pre-scheduled elections was Slovakia, in which the coalition parties were split over the country's contribution to the European Financial Stability Facility. This however did not destabilise internal politics there, and the March 2012 pre-scheduled elections brought about a new single-party government. Regular elections have recently been held in Lithuania where the conservative government was replaced by a leftist one. Next elections will be held in Bulgaria in the summer of 2013, and then in 2014 in the Czech Republic and Hungary. Currently, the predominant political orientation in the region is centre-right: there are centre-right governments in all reviewed countries with the exception of Slovakia, Romania and Lithuania. Furthermore, there is only one minority government, namely in Bulgaria, which has so far proved to be stable.

Table 1

Internal political scene of the EU10

Country	State President	Term of office	Prime Minister	Political orientation	Term of office
Poland	Bronisław Komorowski	2010.07–2015.07	Donald Tusk	centre-right	2011.10 – 2015.10
Czech Republic	Miloš Zeman	2013.03–2018.03	Petr Nečas	centre-right	2010.05 – 2014.05
Slovakia	Ivan Gašparovič	2009.04–2014.04	Robert Fico	centre-left	2012.04 – 2016.04
Hungary	János Áder	2012.05–2017.05	Viktor Orbán	centre-right	2010.05 – 2014.05
Slovenia	Borut Pahor	2012.12–2017.12	Janez Janša	centre-right	2012.02 – 2016.02
Estonia	Toomas Hendrik Ilves	2011.09–2016.09	Andrus Ansip	centre-right	2011.04 – 2015.04
Latvia	Andris Bērziņš	2011.06–2015.06	Valdis Dombrovskis	centre-right	2011.10 – 2015.10
Lithuania	Dalia Grybauskaitė	2009.07–2014.07	Algirdas Butkevičius	centre-left	2012.11 – 2016.11
Romania	Traian Băsescu	2009.12–2014.12	Victor Ponta	centre-left	2012.12 – 2016.12
Bulgaria	Rosen Plevneliev	2012.01–2017.01	Boyko Borisov	centre-right	2009.07 – 2013.07

Source: Own compilation.

It is also important to highlight that despite the difficult economic and social situation aggravated by recession and austerity measures, the crisis did not spark general social discontent. The region cannot be characterised by strikes, demonstrations and social unrest. Nevertheless, there have been signs of dissatisfaction and resistance to reforms by the society. A striking example has been the strong lobbying of Czech, Slovak and Hungarian doctors for the significant upward correction of their wages (otherwise many of them were determined to leave, or indeed left the country). Further examples of social resistance were the negative referendum in Slovenia on the restructuring of the pension system, or the demonstrations by Hungarian students against austerity in the higher education system.

EU strategy of the EU10 countries

When looking at the EU strategy of the ten member states it must be underlined that not all of them have an official written strategy as a member state of the European Union. However, their behaviour and articulated position in the most topical issues tell a lot about their approach to integration matters and their image about the future of the EU. Most of them have a pragmatic approach: they show interest in the well functioning internal market, in the development of infrastructure, in interconnections of energy networks, or in a stronger role for the EU as a global player.

Another common point is that most of these countries are interested in taking part in deepening of integration processes rather than remaining outside. These countries would not like to see the EU become more fragmented and would like to avoid a Europe of several circles and tiers. This is the reason why Romania and Bulgaria are so keen on joining the Schengen area as soon as possible, and this explains why most of the non-eurozone countries preferred to accede to the Euro Plus Pact and to the Fiscal Compact too. However, the EU10 countries (as mostly small and medium sized countries) prefer the EU framework coupled with the Community method of decision-making instead of the intergovernmental approach marked by the leadership of some big member states. The only exception here was Poland which actually welcomed these developments and, in November 2011, the Polish Foreign Minister even asked Germany to take the lead in solving the euro area crisis.

At the same time, the Czech Republic seems to be the most eurosceptic country in the group often taking sides with the United Kingdom in shaping the future of the EU. As regards the mentioned two documents initiated by Germany and France and signed by most member states, the Czech government decided not to join them. Hungary was also rather reluctant in joining both initiatives but then opted for signing the Fiscal Compact (which will be fully binding only upon eurozone membership) and for voluntarily cooperating in all areas of the Euro Plus Pact with the exception of harmonising the corporate tax base. The other eight countries did accede formally to both pacts even if most of them are concerned about the increasing loss of sovereignty in budgetary policies and even if they are against any kind of tax harmonisation. But this stance is inferior to the strong wish of being part of policy formulation.

In close connection to tackling the euro area debt crisis, the 17 countries using the single currency decided to set up the European Stability Mechanism. Its legal basis is the ESM Treaty which was ratified by all 17 member states concerned, including Slovenia, Slovakia and Estonia. However, the new rescue fund can only be operational if the ratification of the amended Article 136 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) is completed by all 27 member states. By early 2013, this process has still not come to an end, as the Czech Republic – due to missing presidential assent – did not deposit the ratification document yet.

Table 2

Participation in EU-level crisis management: joining to and ratification of relevant legal documents

Country	Euro Plus Pact	Fiscal Compact	ESM Treaty	Art. 136 of TFEU
Poland	✓	✓	not applicable	✓
Czech Republic	-	-	not applicable	not yet
Slovakia	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hungary	-	✓	not applicable	✓
Slovenia	✓	✓	✓	✓
Estonia	✓	✓	✓	✓
Latvia	✓	✓	not applicable	✓
Lithuania	✓	✓	not applicable	✓
Romania	✓	✓	not applicable	✓
Bulgaria	✓	✓	not applicable	✓

Source: Own compilation.

General economic analysis

Overview of main macroeconomic developments

The crisis broke extremely dynamic growth and catching up trends in most of the EU10, while in 2009 recession was deeper in nine out of the ten countries than the EU average. In the Baltic states – after the overheated growth – GDP plummeted by two-digit figures, but the other countries also suffered from substantial contraction (see Table 3). Solely Poland did not experience recession, thanks to its big internal market and lower dependence on external demand. Moreover, in 2010 and 2011 there was a dynamic expansion there thanks also to investment projects financed from EU funds. In 2010, only two countries' GDP change remained in the negative (that of Romania and Latvia) while the mentioned Polish, but also the Czech, Slovak and Estonian development outpaced the EU average. In 2011, only one country, Slovenia saw GDP contraction, the other nine countries were above the modest, 1.5% EU average growth rate.

The year 2012 seems to have checked the promising recovery trends. According to Eurostat forecasts (of August 2012) the EU as a whole will see stagnation, just like the Czech and practically also the Bulgarian economy. Recession returns to Hungary and Slovenia while the other six countries would grow between 1.4 and 2.7% (above EU average). 2013 may however bring about better results; there should be no GDP contraction any more and most growth rates would again be above the 1.3% EU average. Thus, 2013 could be the first year after accession when the pace of economic development would be relatively even without any big discrepancies within the EU10.

It is worth taking a closer look at the factors influencing growth after 20092. In the case of Poland, Slovakia, Romania as well as the Baltic states, growth since 2010 or 2011 has been driven – in parallel to exports – by recovering domestic demand, within that especially gross fixed capital formation. Due to budgetary austerity, public consumption is practically stagnating or decreasing while private consumption is picking up very slowly across the region (especially in Hungary, Slovenia and Bulgaria). At the same time, shrinking demand on external markets had a negative impact on these countries' exports throughout the past years. In 2011, only the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria had

Table 3

Real GDP growth in percent of the previous year

Country	2009	2010	2011	2012[a]	2013[a]
EU27	-4.3	2.0	1.5	0.0	1.3
Poland	1.6	3.9	4.3	2.7	2.6
Czech Republic	-4.7	2.7	1.7	0.0	1.5
Slovakia	-4.9	4.2	3.3	1.8	2.9
Hungary	-6.8	1.3	1.6	-0.3	1.0
Slovenia	-8.0	1.4	-0.2	-1.4	0.7
Estonia	-14.3	2.3	7.6	1.6	3.8
Latvia	-17.7	-0.3	5.5	2.2	3.6
Lithuania	-14.8	1.4	5.9	2.4	3.5
Romania	-6.6	-1.6	2.5	1.4	2.9
Bulgaria	-5.5	0.4	1.7	0.5	1.9

[a] *Forecast.*

Source: Eurostat.

export-led growth, while in 2012 net exports are expected to play an exclusive role in the otherwise weak economic performance of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia and Bulgaria (while it will contribute to the revived internal demand in Poland and Slovakia). At the same time, the Romanian and the Baltic economies will primarily be driven by domestic demand, emphatically by investments. The shift from external to internal factors of growth might be even more pronounced in 2013, when net exports will play an exclusive role in recovery only in Slovenia, Hungary and practically also in the Czech Republic. So, the structure of growth in the EU10 is varied; there is no single regional pattern for catching up.

Development levels continue to be heterogeneous too. Most of these countries had a very dynamic closing up performance after accession and prior to the crisis, while the Hungarian rate of GDP per capita showed hardly any convergence to the EU average. The crisis slowed these trends down and brought about some deterioration in the highest developed Slovenia. However, its first place is not challenged (84% in 2011) and neither is the second place of the Czech Republic (80% in 2011). The two least developed countries, namely Romania and Bulgaria (with 49% and 45% respectively), came somewhat closer to the middle range led by Slovakia and followed by Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Lithuania and Latvia (between 73% and 58% in 2011).

Fiscal stability, economic and social competitiveness

The situation of public finances in nine out of the EU10 countries has been good prior to the crisis. In 2007, only Hungary had a greater than 3% per GDP budget deficit and only the Romanian trend was a deteriorating one. In 2008 however, already five countries of the group exceeded the 3% limit and in the year of deepest recession, in 2009, only the Estonian figure remained below the threshold. At the same time, despite having avoided recession, Poland has accumulated a huge deficit due to the smaller growth rate (by 3.5 percentage points) impacting on the revenue side of the national budget. Thus, eight out of the ten countries came under excessive deficit procedure, while Hungary has been subject to it ever since 2004. The traditionally disciplined Estonia was the only country to avoid it. The other successful country was Bulgaria which was under this procedure for two years only (between mid-2010 and mid-2012).

The correction deadlines3 are close: for Poland, Romania, Latvia, Lithuania and Hungary it is 2012 while for the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia it is 2013. As it can be seen from Table 4, in 2010-2011 budgetary positions have clearly improved in most of the EU10 and this trend is largely continuing in 2012. As a result, for 2013 the European Commission (in its 2012 spring forecast) projects a greater-than-allowed public deficit only in two countries: Slovakia and Slovenia.

It is worth mentioning what types of measures are being used by the EU10 to implement budgetary consolidation4. Even though there is no single model, governments seem to pursue very similar strategies in many aspects. On the revenue side, VAT hikes occurred in the Visegrad countries and Romania, excise duties were raised in Hungary, Slovenia and Romania while the base for personal income tax and corporate tax was widened in Slovakia. As a new type of tax the banking tax was introduced in Hungary and Slovakia and the tax on lottery in the Czech Republic.

Table 4

Public budget balance as percent of GDP

Country	2009	2010	2011	2012[a]	2013[a]
EU27	-6.9	-6.5	-4.5	n.a.	n.a.
Poland	-7.4	-7.8	-5.1	-3.0	-2.5
Czech Republic	-5.8	-4.8	-3.1	-2.9	-2.6
Slovakia	-8.0	-7.7	-4.8	-4.7	-4.9
Hungary	-4.6	-4.2	4.3	-2.5	-2.9
Slovenia	-6.1	-6.0	-6.4	-4.3	-3.8
Estonia	-2.0	0.2	1.0	-2.4	-1.3
Latvia	-9.8	-8.2	-3.5	-2.1	-2.1
Lithuania	-9.4	-7.2	-5.5	-3.2	-3.0
Romania	-9.0	-6.8	-5.2	-2.8	-2.2
Bulgaria	-4.3	-3.1	-2.1	-1.9	-1.7

[a] *Forecast.*

Source: Eurostat, European Commission, 2012 spring forecast 2012.

All in all however, the EU10 countries do not put emphasis on increasing revenues but rather on cutting back expenditure. Bulgaria took the lead in this respect: the role of the state in redistribution has been reduced significantly compared to the pre-crisis period. The Bulgarian government did not raise taxes while it froze pensions and public sector wages and cut back state aid. The "self-restriction" of the public sector, the freezing of wages and the shrinking of public consumption is also typical for Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania. In Estonia, there are opposite tendencies however: the quickly restored confidence and good growth outlook make the upward modification of pensions and public wages possible while the budget deficit will continue decreasing. In contrast to this, in Slovakia the austerity measures do not seem to bring about the expected results in 2013.

The Hungarian strategy is "unorthodox" in the sense that the government decided to decrease both personal income tax and corporate tax for SMEs, thereby encouraging consumption/savings and economic activity. The holes caused by these measures on the revenue side should be filled by the banking tax, some (temporary) sectoral taxes, taxation on telephone conversations, a levy on financial transactions or the electronic road toll. On the expenditure side (while there are steps to streamline the public administration), the government is rather focusing on reforming and restructuring the social redistribution system including the health sector, education, transport and pensions.

Table 5

Public debt as percent of GDP

Country	2009	2010	2011	2012[a]	2013[a]
EU27	74.8	80.0	82.5	n.a.	n.a.
Poland	50.9	54.8	56.3	55.0	53.7
Czech Republic	34.4	38.1	41.2	43.9	44.9
Slovakia	35.6	41.1	43.3	49.7	53.5
Hungary	79.8	81.4	80.6	78.5	78.0
Slovenia	35.3	38.8	47.6	54.7	58.1
Estonia	7.2	6.7	6.0	10.4	11.7
Latvia	36.7	44.7	42.6	43.5	44.7
Lithuania	29.4	38.0	38.5	40.4	40.9
Romania	23.6	30.5	33.3	34.6	34.6
Bulgaria	14.6	16.3	16.3	17.6	18.5

[a] *Forecast.*

Source: Eurostat, European Commission, 2012 spring forecast 2012.

The serious destabilisation of the public budgets caused by the crisis brought about an immediate increase of public debts in most of the EU10. It is important to highlight that this region has been characterised by low debt levels in the pre-crisis period, except for Hungary. The other nine countries have always been well below the 60% Maastricht threshold and they still are, despite the mounting problems. The best performer in the EU10 (as well as in the EU27) is Estonia which, thanks to its disciplined fiscal policy, accumulated hardly any public debt. The second best performer is Bulgaria, where public debts were above 70% in 2000 which then have been pushed back to enviable levels thanks to stringent fiscal policy and dynamic growth. In both countries the recent slight increase of debts should take a reversed trend soon, in parallel with their lowering deficits.

At the other edge can be found Hungary where – in contrast to the other nine countries – EU accession did not induce growth and catching up, while public finances have continuously been worsening. Hungary joined the EU with by far the biggest debt ratio which peaked in 2010 (81.4%) and has been reversed since then. The other country where the trend has recently been positive is Poland where the nearing to 60% triggered immediate measures to cut back the debt level (in accordance with the constitution). In the other six countries, the rise of debts is very substantial compared to the pre-crisis years. While this quickly deteriorating trend seems to slow down in most of them, the case of Slovakia and Slovenia might be alarming. These are the two countries where public deficits are predicted to be the highest too. The reasons for that are different in the two countries. In Slovakia, government expenditure rose suddenly in 2009-2010 to mitigate the effects of the crisis and this level seems to persist coupled with the same level of revenues. In Slovenia, the main reason is the weak economic performance and the resistance of the population to structural reform (see the negative referendum on the pension reform).

In terms of selected social and competitiveness indicators the region is heterogeneous. As can be seen from Table 6, only four countries out of ten had one-digit unemployment rates in 2011, of them Poland was at the EU average level while the Czech Republic, Romania and Slovenia had by far the lowest rates. The crisis had a negative impact on the other key labour market indicator, too. Employment rates (which were not bad before the crisis, except for the Hungarian figure) have deteriorated everywhere as a consequence of the crisis. According to 2011 data, the farthest from the EU average is Hungary, but the Romanian and Bulgarian figures are also low. In the latter two countries (beyond structural challenges) labour outmigration plays an important role as well. Despite all difficulties, the EU10 countries pledged to reach rates of 70% or above by 2020: targets vary between 70% for Romania and 76% for Estonia and Bulgaria – according to their National Reform Programmes.

Table 6

Selected social and competitiveness indicators of the EU10 (2011)

Country	Unemployment %	Employment %	Early school leavers %	GERD[a] as % of GDP (2010)	Innovation index
EU27	9.7	68.6	n.a.	2.0	0.539
Poland	9.7	64.8	5.4	0.7	0.296
Czech Rep.	6.7	70.9	4.9	1.6	0.436
Slovakia	13.6	65.1	4.7	0.6	0.305
Hungary	10.9	60.7	10.5	1.2	0.352
Slovenia	8.2	68.4	5.0	2.1	0.521
Estonia	12.5	70.4	11.6	1.6	0.496
Latvia	16.2	67.2	15.2	0.6	0.230
Lithuania	15.4	67.2	8.1	0.8	0.255
Romania	7.4	62.8	18.4	0.5	0.263
Bulgaria	11.3	63.9	13.9	0.6	0.239

[a] *Gross expenditure on research and development.*

Source: Eurostat, European Commission: Europe 2020 webpage: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm; European Commission: Innovation Union Scoreboard: *http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/files/ius-2011_en.pdf*

Early school leaving is extremely high in Romania, Latvia and Bulgaria, and these are the three countries in the group of EU10 which did not even pledge to push this rate below 10% by the end of the decade as proposed by the Europe 2020 strategy. At the same time, a really good performance is shown by Poland, the

Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia. In terms of innovation performance Slovenia leads the group (having a record at around the EU average) followed by Estonia. The rest of the group is among the so-called moderate or modest innovators. Therefore the 3% of GDP expenditure on research, development and innovation is unrealistic for most of these countries: only Slovenia and Estonia set these Europe 2020 targets in their national strategies.

Position and potential impact of the EU10 on current key issues

EU budget: the size of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2014-2020

According to the European Commission's June 2011 proposal, the total amount of the commitment appropriations for the period of 2014-2020 would be 1,025 billion euros (without the items outside MFF), or 1,083 billion including those items). Table 7 compares the size of the current and the proposed upcoming multiannual financial frameworks at 2011 prices.

Table 7

EU budget in billion euros at 2011 prices

	2007-2013	2014-2020
Smart and inclusive growth	439	491
of which cohesion policy	*355*	*336*
Natural resources	413	383
of which direct payments	*330*	*281*
Security and citizenship	12	18
Global Europe	56	70
Administration	56	63
Total commitments	**976**	**1,025**
As percent of EU GNI	**1.12**	**1.05**
Total payments	926	972
As percent of EU GNI	1.06	1.00

Source: European Commission.

For 2007-2013: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/figures/fin_fwk0713/fwk0713_en.cfm#cf07_13;

For 2014-2020: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/biblio/documents/fin_fwk1420/MFF_COM-2011-500_Part_I_en.pdf

According to the Commission draft, in the upcoming seven years financial framework there would be a modest 5% nominal increase of the total amount in terms of both commitments and payments, as compared to the 2007-2013 cycle. Even though this caused some disappointment, in the midst of the eurozone's debt crisis, the EU10 countries – as net beneficiaries – have a realistic approach to the issue of the size of the upcoming MFF. At the same time, most of them insisted that this should be the "negotiating minimum" and many of them, especially Poland, openly rejected any further reduction of the sums proposed. However, Estonia showed readiness to accept a small cut while the Czech Republic joined six net payer member states (Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden and Finland) which signed a non-paper stating that "the Commission proposal is significantly in excess of what is needed for a stabilisation of the European budget"5. This group emphasised that a "higher quality of spending" was needed and that EU money in general should focus on investments improving the Union's competitiveness. In fact, Poland and Hungary also underlined that the EU budget should not be seen as a simple redistribution mechanism with winners and losers but rather as a major investment tool that leads to greater cohesion and contributes to the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy.

EU budget: the revenue side of the multiannual financial framework for 2014-2020

The EU10 countries agree with the European Commission that the revenue side of the EU budget should be made more transparent. They actually support the GNI source as a fair one reflecting every country's economic weight. The traditional own resources (TOR) should also be maintained while positions are either divided, or not yet available regarding the shrinking of the 25% national share (to cover the costs of customs duties and sugar levies collection) to 10% as proposed by the Commission. For example, Slovakia and Hungary can accept this change while Latvia would be against it. Furthermore, the EU10 countries support the idea to abolish the current VAT contribution system and they would also prefer the complete elimination of correction mechanisms. The

Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria have been explicit in this regard at the General Affairs Council meeting in the end of May 2012.

The European Commission – encouraged and supported by the European Parliament – proposed two new own resources of the EU budget as well. On the one hand, a new European VAT should be introduced, namely 1 percentage point of the standard rate VAT income of member states would be transferred to the EU. This new resource has been received with scepticism by most of the member states including most of the EU10. By mid-2012 only Poland expressed its support openly while many other countries voiced their opposition. On the other hand, a new type of revenue, the financial transaction tax (FTT) was also put forward by the Commission. According to the concept, exchange of bonds and stocks would be taxed at the rate of 0.1% and derivatives trades at 0.01%. One third of this revenue would remain with the member states while two thirds would go to the EU budget. This is intended to become an important leverage on the national (GNI-based) contributions to the EU budget while also creating a brand new source for national governments. This has been perceived as an idea worth considering. However, the first reaction of most of the EU10 was to have impact assessments before taking a clear position on it. By mid-2012 only Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia signalled their approval while most of the others remained undecided. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Bulgaria seem to be most hostile to this new own resource. Their underlying argument is (similarly to the case with the European value added tax) that the EU has no taxation competence – this is a prerogative of the member states.

Thus, the EU10 are on the same platform as regards maintaining the GNI-based resource and the traditional own resources as the main revenue items of the EU budget and also as regards abolishing the old VAT source and preferably eliminating all correction mechanisms. At the same time, they are obviously divided over the two new own resources as proposed by the European Commission.

Common agricultural policy after 2013

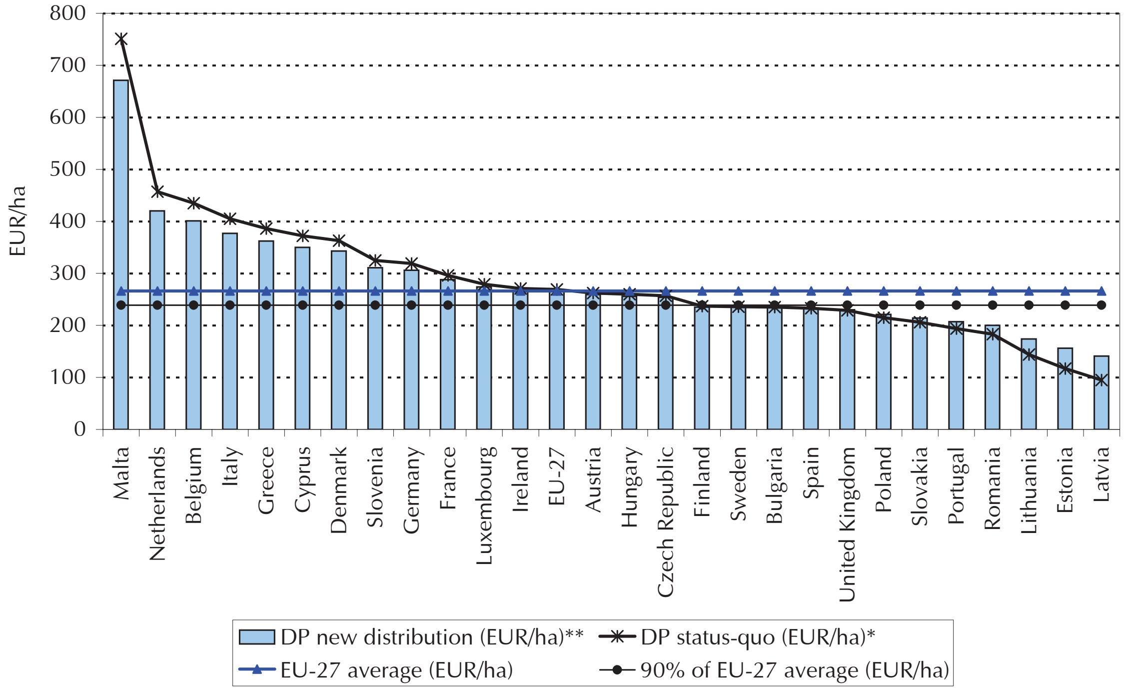
As can be seen from Table 7, in the upcoming MFF there would be less money earmarked for "natural resources" and within that for first pillar expenditure (direct payments and market measures) than in the period between 2007 and 2013. According to the Commission proposal, the share of agriculture and rural development in the EU budget would shrink from 42% to 37%. Given the fact that both key policy areas, common agricultural policy (CAP) and cohesion policy, would be hit by cuts in the new financial perspective, the EU10 can rather accept a smaller budget in the former than in the latter case.

The most important reform initiatives of the European Commission in terms of financing the CAP are the following. First, the level of direct payments should be more equitable across the EU, therefore the payments received per hectare should be evened out gradually. The Commission proposes to complement the direct payments to those member states where these payments are below 90% of EU average. The gap should be decreased by one third of the difference between the given level and the 90% level by the end of the decade (via shrinking assistance to those above the average). The second innovation would be the so-called greening whereby 30% of the direct payments envelope would be conditional on a range of environmental criteria (i.e. crop diversification, permanent pastures and ecological farming on 7% of the given farm). Non-compliance with greening would entail sanctions. The third element of the proposal is the so-called capping, namely limiting assistance to the big farms (with a ceiling of 300,000 euros). This would mean an increasing share of direct payments to be deducted from the total amount given to large farms. Payments of above 150,000 euros per annum would be capped progressively, up to 300,000 euros above which 100% would be taken away. The money "spared" on capping would remain in the recipient member state but would be channelled to the second pillar, to be used for innovation purposes. Further important elements of the CAP after 2013 include stronger links between direct payments and farming activities, as well as support for small farms and young farmers.

As regards the issue of more equitable direct payments across the EU, all EU10 agree with the principle, however they are in very different positions (see chart 1). At the moment, only Slovenia is above the EU average in terms of direct payments per hectare but compared to the status quo, the country would receive just a little bit less by 2020 (while still remaining above the average). Hungary and the Czech Republic are close to the average level which means they would practically preserve their status by the end of the decade. Bulgaria is around 90% consequently their payments per hectare will not change significantly either. The other six countries are and will remain below 90% of EU average even in 2020 according to the proposed scheme. Poland and Slovakia would come somewhat closer to the 90% level while Romania and especially the Baltic states would remain in the worst position despite some improvement. Latvia would be the most disadvantaged with reaching just around half of the EU average in 2020. This is the reason why Latvia actually proposed to thoroughly revise this plan by simply setting the rule, according to which by the end of the MFF period no member state would be entitled to get more direct payments per hectare than 120% or less than 80% of EU average. Poland in its turn also proposed to simplify the system by introducing an area-based flat rate that would be an objective and fair basis for payments calculations.

Chart 1

Level of direct payments: current situation and 2020 levels



** Calculated on the basis of all direct aids on the basis of Council Regulation (EC) No 73/2009, after modulation and phasing-in, except POSEI/SAI and cotton and potentially eligible area 2009*

*** Calculated on the basis of Annex II to DP proposal for claim year 2019 (budget year 2020) and potentially eligible area (PEA) 2009*

Source: European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development. The CAP towards 2020 Legal proposals, 2012, p. 16.

Second, as regards the concept of tying 30% of direct payments to new and strict greening conditions, it is not really welcome by the EU10. Although some of them welcome the idea, most of the countries of the group emphasise that on the one hand, there are already enough green components in the CAP on the other hand, they find the sanctioning mechanisms too severe. Losing the relevant 30% in case of non-compliance, plus losing out in the direct payments in general are seen as too strong sanctions. Another concern often voiced by some of these countries (especially Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary) is increased bureaucracy involved for both the farmers and the national administrations. Furthermore, for countries with typically small farms, like Slovenia, the greening requirements could pose special challenges.

Third, the idea of capping assistance to big farms is seen rather differently in the EU10. Here in principle the least interested countries, with predominantly big farms would be the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria. However, the latter country does welcome the capping of payments to large farms as they have a dominant position in Bulgaria and tend to "monopolise" EU financial support. At the same time, the Czech Republic and Slovakia are against the idea while Hungary can accept such a reform. In reality however, the sums lost for the big farms would not be too significant and the money would remain within the country. Another issue is however to lobby for a more flexible approach to spending these amounts for rural development (preferably not exclusively for innovation purposes, as stressed by Hungary). On the other hand, capping does not seem to be a challenging issue e.g. for Poland, Romania or Slovenia where small and medium sized farms prevail.

All in all, regarding the Commission proposal on the new CAP, the EU10 are most united in criticising the greening concept, while they represent different interests stemming from their different positions as regards direct payments or capping. Finally, with a view to the other elements of the proposed CAP reform, i.e. stronger links between direct payments and farming activities, or support for small farms and young farmers are welcome and endorsed by the EU10.

Cohesion policy after 2013

The total amount of money earmarked for cohesion policy would be reduced in the upcoming MFF compared to the current financial framework. As can be seen in Table 7, instead of the 355 billion euros committed for 2007-2013 only 336 billion would be available between

Table 8

Position of the EU10 on main points of the MFF for 2014-2020

Country	Size of MFF	Abolish old VAT	Correction mechanisms	EU VAT	EU FTT	CAP DP[a]	CAP greening	Ceiling for big farms	Cohesion total amount	Transition regions	CEF	2.5% capping
PL	OK, no further cuts	Yes	Abolish	Yes	Yes	Not enough	Reservations	OK	No further cuts	OK	Scepticism	No
CZ	Should be smaller	Yes	Abolish	No	No	OK	Reservations	No	No further cuts	N.a.	Scepticism	No
SK	OK, no further cuts	Yes	Abolish	No	Yes	OK	Reservations	No	No further cuts	Not against	Scepticism	Can accept
HU	OK, no further cuts	Yes	Abolish	No	No	OK	Reservations	Can accept	No further cuts	No	Scepticism	No
SI	OK, no further cuts	Yes	Abolish	No	Yes	OK	Reservations	OK	No further cuts	OK	OK	Not affected
EE	Could be smaller	Yes	Abolish	Undecided	Yes	N.a.	Reservations	OK	No further cuts	No	Scepticism	No
LV	OK, no further cuts	Yes	Abolish	No	Undecided	Not enough	Reservations	OK	No further cuts	N.a.	Scepticism	No
LT	OK, no further cuts	Yes	Abolish	Undecided	Undecided	Not enough	Reservations	OK	No further cuts	N.a.	Scepticism	No
RO	OK, no further cuts	Yes	Abolish	Undecided	Undecided	OK	Reservations	OK	No further cuts	No	OK	No
BG	OK, no further cuts	Yes	Abolish	No	No	Not enough	Reservations	OK	No further cuts	Not against	Scepticism	No

[a] *DP: gradual closing of the direct payments gap across the EU.*

Source: Own compilation.

2014 and 2020. Even though Croatia will join in 2013 (and other Western Balkan countries might gain membership before the end of the decade), the share of the Convergence objective within this smaller amount would be cut back too. This is unacceptable to the EU10 which are net beneficiaries of cohesion policy. The EU10 together with Spain, Portugal, Greece, Malta and Croatia have actually formed the lobby group of "Friends of Cohesion" and have already issued a statement6 and a declaration7 with a view to highlighting the key importance of this policy area and its financial background. In fact, the group underlines that cohesion assistance should be primarily targeted to underdeveloped regions and that no further cuts can be accepted in this policy field.

One of the reasons why assistance to convergence would be smaller than between 2007 and 2013 is a new fund, the so-called Connecting Europe Facility which would have a framework of 50 billion euros of which 10 billion would be channelled away from the Cohesion Fund to the facility. The idea is that it would finance trans-European infrastructure projects and any member states would be entitled to apply for funding such projects (the part of 40 billion would be open to any EU members while the part of 10 billion would be open for the "cohesion countries"). Such trans-European projects can be beneficial, however many of the EU10 see this with scepticism, and fear they might be less successful in their applications.

However, the main reason for the shrinking of assistance to the least developed regions is another innovation of the Commission proposal, namely the introduction of a new category of regions, the transition regions. To this category would belong all regions where GDP per capita is between 75 and 90% of the EU average. This would obviously shift some assistance away from the least developed to some better developed areas which is not welcome by many of the EU10. Actually, only two of the EU10 would benefit from this: Poland and Romania where the regions surrounding the capital cities would become eligible. In the other eight countries, the regions are overwhelmingly below 75% and in a few cases above 90%. Thus, there is no single position on this issue by the EU10 but most of them are critical vis-à-vis the idea.

Another point of concern for many of the EU10 is the planned introduction of a lower cap of cohesion assistance, namely a ceiling of 2.5% of GDP would be applied for the beneficiary states between 2014 and 2020. Actually, only Slovakia and the highest developed Slovenia are ready to accept it. The other eight countries are all against the proposal as they think such a reduction in the resources is unfair and is against the principle of economic, social and territorial cohesion. According to preliminary calculations, the worst off would be the Baltic states and Hungary. In all four cases the basis for GDP projections are very low to which the approximately 1 percentage point cut back relative to GDP (i.e. from the ca. 3.5% level down to 2.5%) must be added. These two effects result in substantial losses in the next MFF compared to the current one. Moreover, these countries also emphasise the aspect of absorption capacity and say that good performance should be also taken into account when calculating national tranches. However, in that respect only Lithuania and Estonia have an excellent record, while that of Latvia and Hungary is so far lower.

When looking at the new regulatory framework for implementing cohesion policy, the European Commission actually proposes a system of better targeted assistance that would also be in line with the Europe 2020 strategy and with the EU's efforts to reach fiscal stability and macroeconomic balances across the Union. This is of course acceptable for the EU10, nevertheless many of them are anxious because of the increased bureaucracy and the severe sanctions potentially involved with those new rules. In fact, the general fear is that between 2014 and 2020 there would be less money available for the least developed regions to catch up while the smaller amounts of assistance would be tied to stricter rules than ever before.

Energy policy

A common European energy policy is among the areas where the EU10 countries have strong shared interests. Even after 23 years of systemic changes, this region is still characterised by a predominantly unilateral dependence on oil and gas imports coming from Russia. In fact, the most dependent are Slovakia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Bulgaria, while the least dependent are Romania, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Poland. However, all of them are interested in the security of supplies, especially after some bitter lessons learned in 2009, due to disruption in the delivery. One of the most important responses to this is the project of North-South Interconnections in Central and Eastern Europe with the participation of the Visegrad countries, Slovenia, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria as well as Germany. The project covers interconnections of electricity networks, gas and oil pipelines stretching from the Baltic to the Adriatic and Black Seas. Another strategic goal, intimately linked to the previous one, is greater import diversification. This is the reason why most of EU10 countries are signatories to different alternative routes of energy supply such as the Pan-European Oil Pipeline, the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline System or the Nabucco project (even though the latter two are still in their initial phase and implementation seems to face considerable challenges).

A further shared strategic interest of the analysed countries is the establishment of a real single market of energy in the EU framework which would bring about greater competition among suppliers. Some bigger energy companies, especially the Hungarian MOL and the Czech CEZ can also profit from further liberalisation in line with the EU's third liberalisation package. A crucial step in the direction of interconnections and having a single gas and electricity market by 2014 was actually taken under the Hungarian presidency which put this issue very high on its agenda.

The EU10 countries are committed to reducing green house gas emissions and improving energy efficiency. Here they are facing very different challenges. In the region only Slovenia is above the Kyoto target in terms of CO2 emission, while the other nine countries are well below8 (and have thus a good position in the quota trading system). In fact, these countries have a relatively good performance due to the fact that after the systemic changes the outdated and highly polluting factories were mostly abolished, and via several important green field (or even brown field) investments in the manufacturing industry cleaner technologies have been installed. Another factor has recently been the crisis itself which slowed down economic activities compared to the pre-crisis years, thereby diminishing industrial pollution. Moreover, many of these countries launched programmes to modernise and insulate real estates and eight of them had also set clear targets in the field of lowering total energy consumption by 2020. Poland has a special problem in this regard: it has to reduce its overreliance on coal which is abundantly available in the country and which is used as the predominant source of electric power. But Poland needs more time for that, therefore it currently resists faster carbon-dioxide cuts at the EU level.

Besides cutting back CO2 emissions by 20% and improving energy efficiency by 20%, the Europe 2020 strategy also set the target of covering 20% of total energy consumption from renewable energy sources by the end of the decade. In this respect the EU10 countries have a very heterogeneous performance. As can be seen from Table 9, Latvia, Romania and Estonia excel with their already high rates (above or nearly 20%) while the Visegrad countries have only a one-digit level of this figure. When looking at the national targets, the Visegrad countries and Bulgaria will make important efforts in this regard but will still remain below 20% in 2020. On the other hand, the Baltic states, Slovenia and Romania could reach impressive levels.

Table 9

Share of renewable energy sources in total energy use

Country	Situation in 2010 (%)	Europe 2020 target (%)
Poland	7.9	15.48
Czech Republic	8.5	13
Slovakia	8.3	14
Hungary	7.3	14.65
Slovenia	15.0	25
Estonia	18.9	25
Latvia	30.0	40
Lithuania	15.0	23
Romania	20.5	24
Bulgaria	12.6	16

Source: European Commission: Europe 2020 webpage: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

Finally, as regards nuclear energy, seven countries of the EU10 do use it and stick to it in the future too. Atomic energy plays an important role in all of them and is seen as a major tool for improving self-sufficiency in energy. Only Estonia, Latvia and Poland do not have any nuclear power plant but Poland is already on the way of planning one. Two plants of outdated technology had to be gradually decommissioned at the request of the EU, namely the Ignalina power plant in Lithuania and the Kozloduy power plant in Bulgaria.

External relations, enlargement, neighbourhood policy

For the EU10 – besides NATO – it is the European Union that guarantees security and a greater room of manoeuvre in international relations. These countries also participate in several common security and defence policy (CSDP) missions and operations of the EU. Their ratio of participation obviously shows a correlation with their size. Table 10 represents a snapshot of EU10 involvement in selected missions as of April 2012 (but does not indicate these countries' earlier personnel or financial commitments which came to an end by that date).

Beyond the general commitment of the EU10 to CSDP missions they broadly share interest and position in two topics that are important for them in the framework of the EU's external relations. One is Eastern Partnership and the other one is enlargement.

Table 10

Actual participation of the EU10 in selected CSDP missions (as of April 2012)

	PL	CZ	SK	HU	SI	EE	LV	LT	RO	BG
EUFOR ALTHEA, BiH	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓
EUSEC DR, Congo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-
EUJUST LEX, Iraq	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	-
EUBAM, Ukraine-Moldova	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓
EUPOL COPPS, Palestine Terr.	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
EUPOL, Afghanistan	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
EULEX, Kosovo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓
EUMM, Georgia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
EUNAVFOR ATALANTA, Somalia	-	✓	-	-	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓

Source: Online portal of the Common Security and Defence Policy Mission Analysis Partnership: http://www.csdpmap.eu/mission-personnel

Due to their geographic position it is understandable that the EU10 insist on a more balanced approach of the EU in the framework of its neighbourhood policy. According to the EU10, the European Union should dedicate equal attention and financial support to this policy's southern and eastern dimension. Actually, the Eastern Partnership (EaP) idea originated in Slovakia, which put the issue forward during its presidency of the Visegrad group. Then it was officially proposed to the EU27 by Poland and Sweden, two countries which became successful agenda-setters at the EU level in this regard. Later on, the first Eastern Partnership summit was held in Prague in 2009 and the next one in Warsaw in 2011. For different historical, geographic, economic and political reasons there is a "varied geometry" as regards the country preferences of the EU10 within Eastern Partnership. Consequently, a special relationship between Romania and Moldova, or between Poland, Slovakia, Hungary on the one hand, and Ukraine on the other can be seen as natural. However, the EU10 seem to be on the same platform as regards the Eastern Partnership's meaning and content. These countries would like to see a more pragmatic approach on the EU side with more added value and stronger cooperation. Thus, the EU10 would primarily promote democracy, rule of law, human rights accompanied with closer economic integration via free trade, or deep and comprehensive free trade agreements with the countries prepared for it (currently mainly Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia). Another concrete area where relations should strengthen is gradual and mutual visa liberalisation. Most of the EU10 would be in favour of prospective EU membership of those EaP countries that would be interested and prepared. As a sign of commitment, the Visegrad countries also decided recently to open a new section in the Visegrad Fund that would sponsor cooperation projects that are in line with the Eastern Partnership goals.

As regards further enlargement of the EU, the countries in analysis are all in favour of it. To underpin this argument it is enough to mention that the Hungarian presidency worked extremely hard to speed up and conclude accession negotiations with Croatia – a country which can finally become a member state on 1 July 2013. Actually, the membership of all Western Balkan countries is supported by the EU10 mainly for reasons of security in the region. Icelandic membership would be welcome and the EU10 is probably the most positive group of countries in the EU27 as regards Turkish accession to the Union. This is not only an official stance of the political elite but is largely echoed by the population of the region as indicated by opinion polls. The basic approach of the EU10 is that any European country that meets membership criteria should be able to join the European Union. But emphasis is on meeting those preconditions, as the EU10 themselves had to make serious efforts to comply with all necessary criteria before entering the EU. Romania and Bulgaria recently have to meet extra conditions for their Schengen accession; this is the so-called cooperation and verification mechanism which involves justice and home affairs, as well as border control and anti-corruption standards that have to be implemented. This is the reason why these two countries emphasise that any new applicant country (outside the Schengen zone) should also be subject to this mechanism. At the same time, none of the EU10 countries would veto any European country's accession.

Conclusions

Despite the protracted financial and economic crisis in the European Union, the EU10 countries can be generally characterised by political and social stability. Since 2009, the year of drastic recession in nine of the EU10, there has been a rather quick recovery in most of the countries concerned. The promising trends seem to halt in 2012 but the year 2013 could bring about a new impetus for growth. At the same time, all governments are making considerable efforts to bring public finances under control, to cut general government deficits, to restructure the public households and to reverse the unfavourable trends in public debts. As a result, it is possible that by 2014 only two of the EU10 will still be under excessive deficit procedure.

Being in general a less problematic region in political, social, economic and fiscal terms, the EU10 could become a lobby group within the European Union or at least could have the chance to make a stronger impact on policies and decisions. Due to diverse interests, positions and challenges however, the EU10 does not behave as a single lobby group which can also be seen as avoiding unwanted cleavages within the Union. Nevertheless, these countries have undoubtedly made a considerable contribution to having a genuine internal market of energy supply in the EU, or to intensifying relations with the Union's eastern neighbours in the framework of Eastern Partnership. The group – together with other member states – has also been lobbying strongly for preserving the budgetary commitments to cohesion policy in the next financial framework and to consider them as investment tools beneficial for the whole of the EU. Finally, the EU10 can be seen as perhaps the most pro-enlargement group of EU member states (at both the political and the public opinion level). As regards the different measures aimed at managing the debt crisis in the euro area, the three eurozone members adhered to all of them, as did many of the other seven however, the Czech Republic has been the least supportive. While the EU10 cannot be seen as an interest group within the EU (although the catalyst role of the Visegrad countries in this regard should not be underestimated), many policy areas can be detected where they – or most of them – have a common approach allowing them to make an impact on European integration.

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[1] This article is a revised and partly updated version of the following publication: Krisztina Vida (2012): Summary. In: Krisztina Vida (ed.): Strategic issues for the EU10 countries – Main positions and implications for EU policy-making. Foundation for European Progressive Studies – Institute of World Economics, Budapest, pp. 279-310. The publication was the result of a one-year research project coordinated by the Institute of World Economics and supported by FEPS. The updates cover only some recent events, however the statistics date back to the summer of 2012, and the national positions on the MFF for 2014-2020 relate to the initial proposal of the European Commission as tabled in June 2011. The full study is accessible here: http://www.vki.hu/news/news_565.html

[2] Based on the European Commission's Spring 2012 forecast, May 2012: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2012/pdf/ee-2012-1_en.pdf

[3] http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/sgp/deficit/index_en.htm

[4] Information based on the country studies and on documents accessible here: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/sgp/convergence/programmes/2012_en.htm

[5] Non-paper from AT, CZ, DE, FI, NL, SE, UK – May 29, 2012. http://www.euractiv.de/fileadmin/images/MFR_non-paper_May_29.pdf

[6] http://www.gov.ro/sessions-of-the-friends-of-cohesion-group-conference-on-eu-multiannual-financial-framework-2014-2020__l2a117305.html

[7] http://www.vlada.gov.sk/friends-of-cohesion-joint-declaration-on-the-multiannual-financial-framework-2014-2020/

[8] http://www.energy.eu

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KRYZYS W STREFIE EURO A PROBLEM LEGITYMACJI WŁADZY W UNII EUROPEJSKIEJ

*Rafał Riedel**

Problematyka legitymacji władzy w Unii Europejskiej (UE) od lat zajmuje uwagę badaczy i stanowi jedną z kluczowych kwestii w debacie nad optymalizacją unijnego systemu sprawowania władzy, jak również w debacie nad standardami demokracji w przestrzeni ponadnarodowej. Kryzys w strefie euro stawia w nowym świetle wiele dotychczasowych pytań tej debaty, jak również weryfikuje część udzielonych dotychczas odpowiedzi. Wielu obserwatorów uważa, że kryzys jednego z fundamentalnych projektów jednoczącej się Europy naruszył dotychczas funkcjonującą konstrukcję legitymizacyjną. Konstrukcję kruchą, złożoną i kwestionowaną z wielu pozycji. Jak każdy kryzys, również ten obecny, pozwala nam ujrzeć pewne defekty systemu w pełnej ostrości. Niniejszy tekst rekonstruuje główne elementy systemu legitymizacji władzy, ich interaktywny charakter, kanały legitymizacyjne i ich punkty węzłowe, aby wskazać sposób, w jaki wpływa na nie kryzys w strefie euro. Artykuł stanowi wkład w debatę nad deficytem demokratycznym w Unii Europejskiej w świetle czynników, które ujawnił bądź uwypuklił kryzys.

Innymi słowy, celem niniejszej analizy jest spojrzenie na problematykę legitymacji władzy w Unii Europejskiej przez pryzmat kryzysu w strefie euro. W konsekwencji autor poszukuje odpowiedzi na pytania: czy i jak kryzys wpływa na poszczególne elementy składowe problemu tzw. deficytu demokratycznego w UE, w tym przede wszystkim legitymizacji władzy w tym wielopoziomowym systemie, czy i jak kryzys wzmacnia bądź osłabia legitymację w różnorodnych jej wymiarach, jak kształtują się odpowiedzi na pytania o uprawomocnienie władzy i decyzji polityczno-gospodarczych w zależności od poszczególnych poziomów tego wielopoziomowego systemu rządzenia (MLG – *multi-level governance*) wspólnoty. W tym celu autor, po pierwsze dokonuje zarysu sposobów rozumienia legitymizacji władzy w ogóle, a następnie legitymizacji władzy w UE, przytacza głów-