



WHERE DOES EUROPE BEGIN?

Thoughts and Ideas

A Paper

Working Group on International Affairs

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I. Where Does Europe Begin, Where Does it End?

If we approach Europe from the East, we shall arrive – in terms of geography – once we have crossed the Urals. “To belong to Europe”, “To live in Europe” however, has a different meaning to different people: wealth, peace, freedom, social harmony, stability, individuality. “Europe” is equated with the affiliation to the European Union. The hope to belong to the EU motivates many countries to head for far reaching reforms. On the side of the European Union, there are also reforms to be undertaken in order to facilitate the process of enlargement. The process of enlargement raises hopes as well as fears: who can belong to, and who cannot; what would an extended, larger Europe look like; where does this Europe begin, and where does it end; who decides about its frontiers?

We, the Working Group on International Affairs of the Cologne Greens (*Arbeitskreis Internationales der Kölner Grünen*) have been dealing with these questions since 2006. We have discussed the various positive voices which are documented within numerous texts and presentations related to the Bertelsmann Foundation and many more scientific sources. We have also dealt with the ruminative and the cautionary voices. These are less organised and less systematically written down so can be difficult to find and address. Finally, we have carried out field work: we have researched the spectrum of opinions and perspectives in the official and the potential candidate countries. We have also held discussions with representatives from these countries.

The present paper is our current result. We would like to introduce you to our internal arguments, perceptions and opinions concerning the future of the European Union. We have distributed our paper to committees and working groups of the Green Party and we would also like to introduce our contributions for public debate. In our opinion, broad discussions concerning Europe’s future and its position in the world are as necessary as important, and therefore, amongst other things, we have organised a civil forum here in Cologne.

Following a brief review of the situation, we shall unveil our detailed proposals for essential European values and a vision for Europe in the first part, “Values and Visions”.

In the second part, “The View of the Candidate Countries”, we shall explain why it is important to examine the view of our neighbouring countries. We also examine the results of our research and discussions.

The third part, “Where Does this Lead the Green Policy?” shall discuss the conclusions to be drawn by the Green Party. Two of our members shall introduce their, partly contrary, arguments and conclusions.

In the final part, we shall offer our collective, temporary conclusions for discussion.

Our process of discussion is “unfinished”, similar to Europe never being “finished” at any one time. We would be glad to receive further discussions, comments and feedback, and we hope that you will find the following text of some interest!

Monika Dittrich

II. Values and Visions

1. The Status Quo

Most people in the world associate Europe with today's European Union. Since the Eastern enlargement in 2004, the EU consists of 25 Member States with around 460 million inhabitants in total. 12 of these states have established a common currency, the Euro. There are currently four candidate countries for further enlargement of the EU: Bulgaria and Romania, who in all likelihood shall enter the EU after 2007; and Croatia and Turkey.

Following the principle of the separation of powers, the most important institutions of the EU today are:

- the European Parliament with 732 seats representing the citizens' voice
- the Council of the EU as the representation of the individual Member States
- the European Commission representing the executive body of the EU
- the European Court of Justice representing the guardian of rights.

Other institutions include the European Central Bank, the Committee of the Regions and the European Court of Auditors.

Since 1951, the respective member states have concluded a variety of contracts. In order to manage and renew the large number of contracts, the heads of states and government of the EU have agreed on a common constitution. This constitution shall only become effective when all 25 national parliaments ratify the text (some states are intending to hold additional referenda). The citizens in France and the Netherlands rejected the constitution in 2005, which raised new questions concerning the constitution.

We consider the constitution too liberal as far as the economy is concerned, too bureaucratic and too far removed from the citizens. Above all, we are missing basic, concisely formulated values within the constitution which all citizens can identify with as European.

With the enlargement of the EU, all countries belonging to the continent of Europe could find admittance, when their citizens share the following values.

Andrea Malorny / Kai Rösen

2. European Basic Values – Green Values

Which identity-forming characteristics keep together the present Europe?

We consider Europe a value-sharing community. In contrast to the political conservatism, we do not base our comments on religion, but on secular-philosophical ways of thinking. Common values should be embodied in the European people's minds, such as freedom, equality, solidarity and civil rights. Above all stands the inviolability of the human dignity and the respect of nature.

These values can be found in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, proclaimed in Nice on 7th December, 2000, and they have deep roots in the epoch of the Enlightenment during the 17th and 18th century.

The following values and rights are given as examples:

Rights of liberty: freedom of expression, free media, freedom to travel, freedom of association, religious freedom, right of one's own culture and education.

Equality demands and solidarity: justice concerning the genders and generations, cultural variety, social standards.

Civil and judicial rights: mobility, constitutional state principles, as well as the presumption of innocence and the right of defence.

We would especially like to stress original Green values, such as the protection of the flora and fauna, a resource-saving treatment of nature (conservation) and tolerance as a basis of mutual co-existence.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union is in our view progressive and trendsetting in many respects. However, the Charter's claims and the reality in Europe fall apart in a striking way. Some of the Charter's articles do not correspond to the reality as found in Europe.

Are the values mentioned too impossible to achieve? We do not think so - rather should the efforts be intensified in order to put the every-day living conditions in Europe in balance with the fixed basic principles.

Therefore, we do not wish to question the existing political institutions, but the democracy, the transparency, the efficiency and keeping in touch with the people which could all be optimised. Here, modifications are required in order to realise the ambitious aims of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU. For example, we would like to mention the improvement of the rights of the European Parliament and the public conference of the Council of Ministers. Not least, it has been neglected to communicate the values laid down within the Charter to the citizens. This has led from a general scepticism to the rejection of the European process of integration. In general, the inhabitants' attitude shows tendencies of disinterest, indifference, unawareness and disenchantment with politics regarding Europe. An active, mental

participation concerning the issues and values of Europe has not taken place amongst the citizens in a sufficient manner.

The missing component is a positive image of Europe.

This is where Green policy must become active.

It is necessary to communicate the achievements of the Charter with society and a general comprehensibility.

The advantages to be created by a European Union must be made clear to each individual for his/her personal life.

A vision for a Europe of the future must be developed by the people in joint venture.

Andrea Malorny / Kai Rösen

3. Vision

What sort of Europe would we like to live in, in the future?

We do not define Europe via political institutions, but we name essential values which can be shared by all Europeans. Our question is: what in principle, can the Europeans identify with?

We consider it sensible to distinguish the basic values concerning the fields of culture, politics/society, economy and Europe's role in the world.

From our point of view the following should be applied to culture:

- an openness to cultural diversity, but also an awareness of the common past regarding arts and culture
- education as everyone's obligation
- a critical awareness of regional, single-state-related and all-European traditions and historical developments
- preservation of the national and regional languages whilst sharing a common lingua franca, which shall be English.

In the field of politics and society we consider the following points to be pertinent:

- more direct democracy incorporating increasing plebiscitary elements as a further development of the representative democracy
- laicism: to us, the strict separation of state and church forms an important value
- freedom to choose one's personal lifestyle and partnership
- further development of the constitutional state principle
- realisation of equal living conditions for women and men.

In our opinion, the following should be applied in the field of economics:

- strong awareness of environmental protection and a sustainable economic infrastructure
- macroeconomic stability and stable currency
- social minimum standards and social responsibility on a personal and national level.

We consider that the following should be included in Europe's role within the world:

- Europe as a peacemaking body involved in global issues
- Establishment of a common European right of asylum which respects the human dignity, and a framed immigration without boundaries
- Intensive assistance to support the developing countries

- A strong framing force for an ordered fair global trade and regulated transnational services.

We consider these values as meaningful for a peaceful, ecological and solidarity co-operation between all Europeans. Furthermore, we regard these values as worthwhile in order to obtain security, satisfaction and happiness for the people.

Let us give a soul to Europe!

Andrea Malorny / Kai Rüsen

III. The View of the Candidate Countries

1. What do we care?

The European Union is considered the “Club of the Rich and Powerful”. Those who are the members determine the rules, the affiliations and thus the frontiers of “Europe”. This is a straightforward fact which is acknowledged in the same way by the countries wishing to join the EU. Why should this club have any interest in the ideas and conceptions of the acceding countries, before they have joined?

- Europe is a project with an open goal and constant changes. Apart from changes coming from the interior, the new countries also bring changes to the EU. This is in general desirable and welcome. From the EU's point of view, it is with foresight to ask the potential acceding countries for their conceptions insofar, as these conceptions have to be compared with those within the existing EU. This should be arranged via public discussion and thus provide for a better clarity for the EU, as well as for the potential acceding countries.
- The public discussions form part of the democratic opinion formation. They can be a further step towards the democratisation of the acceding countries. The discussion with the EU may be a trigger to no longer consider the EU a “Business Club with membership obstruction”, but an equal “partner where identities are acknowledged and individual needs are met”.
- Feedback related to the EU from other countries wishing to accede the EU may assist the EU in its current situation of stagnation: the motives to accede can reveal which parts have already been achieved or which parts of it are not just a matter of course but are a valuable status quo which must constantly be defended. Ideas concerning the future shall generate new ideas: this is also needed by the EU.
- A deeper and more open dispute about the conceptions and interests of the acceding countries may also show alternatives to full membership. This would decrease the current sceptical view concerning the enlargement within the EU, and the interests of the acceding countries concerning foreign policy would be taken up at the same time.

Monika Dittrich

2. What do they actually want?

The goals and expectations related to an accession to the EU are just as manifold as the candidates themselves, their history and current situation.¹ Two aspects however, are stressed again and again: the peace-political and politico-economic aspect of the EU, which are both noted as a history of success.

The **aspect of peace-related policy** plays – not surprisingly – a prominent role, especially for the *Balkan States*. With regard to their recent history, characterised by ethnic conflicts and war-like struggles, the EU appears as a place of peace and stability compared to these countries. The peaceful cooperation within the EU is much more appreciated in these countries as it is in the current member states of the EU (especially the 15 “old” member states), where peace and stability are taken for granted, 60 years after the end of WW II.

This aspect however plays a minor part for *Turkey*, which belongs within the range of official candidate countries, and the *Ukraine* which is often mentioned as a potential candidate country. Here, though, geo-strategic considerations play a role: Turkey considers its role as a “bridge” between Europe and Asia Minor – the Caucasus, the Black Sea region and the Eastern Mediterranean area – and it presents this role not least as a chance for the EU. The Ukraine expects especially an increasing independence from its large neighbour, Russia by a stronger western orientation: “More freedom in the West in order to feel better in the East”, is how a Ukrainian diplomat expressed it. At the same time it presents itself as a mediator between the “West” and the “East”.

The **politico-economic aspect** is also being mentioned by all candidate countries, though is less emphasized. With regard to the economic success in the history of the 15 “old” EU member states (and recently more and more of the 10 “new” member states), the EU appears as an island of wealth. The candidates expect a stronger economic growth and a higher prosperity from the economic advantages arising from an EU accession – from commercial prosperousness regarding increased, direct, foreign investment to the availability of EU conveyances.

One further aspect plays a prominent role, particularly in the more well-off, educated urban milieus of the acceding countries: for these milieus the EU stands equally for modernisation, (economic) freedom, democracy, a constitutional state. Democratic progress is expected on the basis of an EU accession – often already on the basis of an existing perspective of accession. An EU accession here, serves as a catalyst for necessary/considered as necessary political, social and economic reforms, especially for those milieus in the *Balkan States* who associate an EU accession as

¹ The following estimation is based on evaluations from a various number of sources: official statements belonging to the candidate countries’ governments, speeches by politicians and diplomats, scientific publications, national and European polls and discussions with diplomats from Croatia, Macedonia and the Ukraine which took place in Cologne in June 2006.

a turning point from the current state and social models based on ethnicity towards democratic and constitutional alternatives.

In relation to the above it is no surprise that an EU enlargement to the Balkans is generally considered as the only workable policy for South-East Europe. The perspective of an EU accession is considered the only perspective shared by the countries in South-East Europe and therefore able to prevent a relapse into the ethnic conflicts and war-like struggles of the past years and to secure political, social and economic reforms.

Alternatives to an EU membership for the *Balkan States* would in particular have to consider the security requirements of these countries. In the face of the questionable role played by the EU during the conflicts in the 90's, we seriously have to ask the question whether such alternatives – e.g. the granting of extensive security guarantees and the support of the civil society and constitutional institutions in these countries – would enjoy an adequate credibility in order to fulfil their wish for stability and security.

A “privileged partnership”, as it is repeatedly suggested for Turkey by the German Christian Democratic Party (CDU), is rejected by the Balkans: on the one hand, it is considered as being only concerned with economic aspects; on the other hand, it may be almost impossible to communicate to the Balkan States in the face of the accession of Slovenia and the ongoing negotiations with Croatia, that the same criteria concerning an EU accession should not be applied to them, or – even worse – that they should not be granted accession at all.

Regardless of all concrete advantages expected by the Balkan States following an EU accession, there is still an “idealistic” aspect playing a role: The EU is not only regarded as the “Club of the Rich and Powerful”, but also as the “Club of the Democracies” – a union of countries so, which is widely appreciated in most parts of the world because of its economic and political situation. An affiliation with this union – the “Club Membership” – therefore forms a value which should not be underestimated.

The same applies for *Turkey*, where a “privileged partnership” or another pure neighbour policy with another disparate “label” is also severely rejected: a partnership such as this would only aim at inhibiting an EU affiliation to Turkey. By right, Turkey has stated that there is already a privileged partnership between the EU and Turkey because of the long-term close relationships and the Customs Union. The dispute concerning alternatives to an EU accession strengthened EU-sceptical and Anti-EU positions in Turkey and reduced the support of an EU accession and the reforms required to achieve this.

Only the *Ukraine* appears less decisive to insist on a clear-cut accession perspective, which – apart from its particular historical and geographic situation – seems to be based upon the fact that neither within the Ukrainian population, nor within the political class is there a consensus concerning a consequent orientation

towards the West. The Ukraine seems to be the most willing to consider alternatives to an EU membership – e.g. the establishment of a free trade zone, economic support actions and easing visa restrictions.

Monika Dittrich / Patrick Kopischke

IV. Where Does this Lead the Green Policy?

1. Position 1

Plea for Consistency

Even if there have been numerous attempts to modify and extend the EU constitution during its process of development; and if many things seem to be dysfunctional following the rejection of the constitution outline by the populations of France and the Netherlands; and if there have been a few attempts to finally gain success by repairing it, e.g. by re-interpreting the plebiscite - on the plus side there are still a number of aspects to be noted: the European Constitution outline finally forms a stage direction for the *European Enterprise*, which shall leave behind the chaos resulting from the half-baked reforms and half-hearted decision structures from Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice. Without a doubt, the outline may provide a better, more efficient and more transparent route for the enterprise. Suggestions for modifications may in part be arranged under the pragmatic and in part under the essential extensions of the script.

However, have we not all been warned by the formation of The European Convention, which we would have liked to have been fresher, more powerful and imaginative? Did the idea of Europe not dramatically pale in comparison to the former expressiveness of the single states and their citizens, as The Convention outline was passed? Hence, it is not very surprising that a great deal has accrued on the debit side. Moreover, we seem to be right on track to burden our European ground in a less than straightforward manner with mortgages and interest rates. We have to ask ourselves, if our Europe initiative has not become a “*multinational enterprise*” with likewise *charms, productive efficiency, straightforwardness and appreciation of democracy*. According to this aspect, the question has to be asked again as to whether this “*multi-*” was wished and also necessary. To the Greens, this definitely has to be negated. The Green’s political issue has always headed in the opposite direction from the very beginning: the issue should always be ecological, thus based on natural procedures and organisation structures. In general, this must be derived from nature.

Dealing with the vision of Europe has led to the formation of three groups, from the interior (I) point of view, as well as from the exterior (E).

I1 On the one hand we have the classical states, such as Germany, France and Italy. These are ridden by a surprisingly heavy crisis in the middle of the constitution process. Germany has begun to re-discover itself, over night as it were, after having had its identity capped for decades by modern history and has subsequently faced

some difficulty finding its way out of this *vicious circle*. France has had to rediscover, day after day that demand and reality, being and appearance diverge strongly and that one cannot ‘*live in the lap of luxury*’¹ all of the time. The experience of a ‘cultural nation’ such as Italy which has been influenced crucially and even changed its institutions, bodies and complete media scene by a billions’-owning mogul has not only traumatised a good deal of its population, but also turned the EU-related philosophy upside-down.²

I2 The second group consists of those countries which have not yet (re) discovered their identity or balance or which are currently defining it from scratch. Here, particularly the members of the Warsaw Pact must be mentioned who have been over-directed against their wishes for decades. Former Czechoslovakia decided on separation instead of heading for a people-spanning union under the EU. Poland currently shows how counterproductive a seamless change of political systems may be.

I3 In the third group we find countries who have never considered Europe as their complete home. An example of this is Great Britain, or in part, England which feels at home in America or Australia, at least to the same extent. These countries do not wish to dedicate themselves to the EU, but rather use it for certain purposes.

E1 On the exterior, first of all we have classical countries like Switzerland and Norway. These are rich and for that reason they currently do not see any necessity to accede. They do not have any club-related interests, but somehow consider themselves as belonging to the “*family*”, so, they pursue a policy of a *lax liaison* and observation.

E2 The second range of countries falls between those which have not yet found either their equilibrium or their identity, such as the former states of the Warsaw Pact, or those who wish to alter their identity. What they have in common is the desire to belong to the “*Club*” of Europe: this desire is driven by various motives. Romania, which is a part of *another* Europe deals with its national unity by following the French example and simply needs a little time; Bulgaria has never come to rest and continues to struggle along a path of self-discovery; Macedonia is still in turmoil.³

E3 In the third group we find countries which make use of the EU, but do not wish to dedicate themselves to it. The Ukraine and Russia belong to this range.⁴

¹ Translator’s note: the corresponding German phrase to “live in the lap of luxury” alludes to France (“*Leben wie Gott in Frankreich*”; literally: “lead the life of God in France”).

² If there had not been a cross-border communication channel via the media, East Germany, which has been robbed of its identity in a completely superfluous manner, would have to be arranged under I2.

³ Turkey has to be arranged between E2 and E3 as an identified multi-ethnic state (which is often denied officially in Ankara).

⁴ Turkey has to be arranged between E2 and E3 as an identified multi-ethnic state (which is often denied officially in Ankara).

The description of the situation which has only been touched on here shows that the timing of an EU process cannot be less appropriate. However, it makes little sense to discuss >values, targets and tasks< with countries which are involved in their self-discovery, which cannot orientate themselves, which fail to acknowledge the advantages that exist, or interpret concepts in a different way. What is a value-based society and is perceived to be a familiar unity for some, forms a structural society (club) providing advantages for others: efficient, democratic and transparent decision structures however, require such partners.

Not only do the examples of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia allow us to conclude that the European people would prefer to be organised in clear basic entities, but also that the national and regional level is regarded as the most important level for the citizens. For this reason, we have to doubt that the Brussels apparatus will ever find long-term support. We have to ask whether or not there are related issues which do not require a *governmental structure* on an organised supranational level. The example of foreign policy shows that the constitution outline falls short here, since the people prefer to be represented by themselves. A co-ordinating external management would have been sufficient. However, the *climate* issue should be at the top of the agenda everywhere.

The EU, whether perceived as a piece of or as a continuous process, is in respect developing haphazardly and contradicts natural processes. 'Natural' would mean to gradually increase communication based on interactions, verbal exchange and cross-border neighbourhood initiatives in the forefront of a constitutional process. The Constitution's aim of the organisational form has an air of immensity and segregation with its stringency, and is very likely to be considered as threatening outside of Europe against the backdrop of the economic data. Natural courses of motion such as going against something or temporarily ceasing from something seem to have gone out of sight. The same applies to values such as respect, regard, independence and reserve: the latter can be observed with the subject of Turkey. Here, it is remarkable how carelessly the destruction of mature structures has been admitted without suggesting what should follow on, or is considered to be the target.

The examination of the perspectives and their analysis leads us to the result that the conflict may be solved if two issues were to be answered:

- 1. If the Europeans do not wish some sort of United States of Europe, there is no need for a *multi-national enterprise* with the intended monstrous and excessive apparatus. The supranational level could then be organised much leaner, the primary structures more flexible and more in touch with the common man.**

- 2. The EU cannot be realised with the countries in the 3rd group whilst maintaining the type of the values, targets and tasks that have been mentioned. If these remain under discussion, these considerations must be abandoned and new ways must be found.**

The Greens act wisely by unravelling the current situations and by finding new ways. One of these ways is to discover how countries of the 2nd group may refrain and gain some more autonomy without feeling alone or isolated. The Greens have to be reminded of a more politically innovative way of thinking: thus, the national state could be overcome in areas of conflict without taking away the home and identity from ethnic groups. A part of a free Europe could emerge which would ease conflicts.

The >Idea of Europe< is obvious

... but one may add that the wood cannot be seen for the trees! The problem lies with a mistaken approach and view of the project. One reason for this may be because of modern and older histories which on the one hand lead many individuals to doubt the national state and on the other hand puts the topic of peace first. The "House of Europe" has been considered and planned as a new building project to extend to the Convention. This is proved by the constitution outline, as well as by the numerous statements of proud politicians claiming to have contributed to the design of the "House of Europe". The sceptical but interested glance at the "*United States*" of America (Tocqueville) may also have been responsible for this: though, Europe stands diametrically opposed to The US. Indeed, the Europe project is not a new building development in green, fertile meadows, but consists of a great deal of existing property which may be extended by buildings of a contemporary, modern nature. The only question that remains open relates to the size of the shares and how much of the property belongs within the range of monuments (to be saved), and what may be demolished and re-built afterwards. This mixture of old and new is particularly regarded as exciting and interesting. If one intended to market the House of Europe in a virtual sense and asked oneself the question as to what the USP (unique selling product) would be, the idea and vision would lie ahead and the soul would be clearly visible:

it is the distinctiveness of the countries and the citizens, the uniqueness of the regions and the cities, the diversity of human beings and nature, the variety of cultures and languages, the great history and the many little histories, the colourfulness and variegation, also the diversity of political scenes and economic cultures. The task of Europe is not only to maintain and protect this abundance within a globalised world, but also to accentuate and extend these differences. Europe's finality does not lie within the union of its citizens, but by retaining and promoting their uniqueness within a comprehensive co-operation.

Thus, with a wink of the eye, we could draw the conclusion: we do not need a constitution, but a Convention on Biodiversity. This is indeed, not far from the truth - and we can ask ourselves: why does something have to be developed new, with long-winded perfection, belonging to the great tradition, or even to the identity of many countries? Great Britain even goes shamelessly without any constitution. There are charters ad infinitum, and they have rarely contributed anything to the happiness in the world. In the summer of 2006, Germany experienced that a different staff with a new, fundamental attitude and a few adjustment screws are sufficient to change the circumstances. Fun and attraction had come to the fore.

The Greens will not act in favour of their history and formation party platform, if they opt for the *Multinational Enterprise*. Europe is in much better hands if organised in small, clear and manageable entities. Everyone would be well advised to approach the subject >values< from different angles. Particularly, the value of old is often ignored, since old is associated with old-fashioned, unattractive or difficult times. Instead, attributes such as flexibility, sophistication, elegance and reserve are in demand for the handling, particularly regarding some of the neighbouring countries.

If the two above-mentioned issues are taken into account, the mechanics of the “House of Europe” can be set up from scratch. It is just not necessary to have a sublime union of Europe’s citizens: Europe’s history, its citizens and the current requirements would be served better with the other approach. If we compare Europe with a forest, in a structural sense the EU should be a light, well-networked tree-top, which spans to the outside, protects widely and covers partly, but remains unburdened. The trunk and branches are formed by other bodies; a top with flexible spaces and perimeters, gleaming with luscious colours. This forest should develop in a natural way, its growth should not be accelerated by injections of any kind (“*agent orange*”). It would not become a >Europe Light<, but a subsidiary-structured Europe in which the common tasks would be pondered over with sense and empathy and in which the uniqueness and distinctiveness together with the human beings, cultures and their products would always remain in the foreground. It shall become a complex whose valuable, archaic volumes have been renovated, accentuated again and extended in an ingenious way by new parts in the style of a modern minimalism.

Hans-Joachim Stromenger

2. Position 2

The expectations on the Balkans and in Turkey are clear. With regard to the accession of Slovenia and the accession perspective given by the EU, any alternative to an EU affiliation would be regarded as an affront and offence. Such an affront would mean a heavy setback to the democratic, reform-aiming, pro-European forces in these countries, including any related consequences. The international trustworthiness of the EU would also be heavily damaged should it refuse an EU affiliation to these countries.

Thus, are there genuine reasons to grant the Balkan States and Turkey an accession perspective, if they fulfil the Copenhagen Criteria, as suggested by the Green fraction in the European Parliament within its 2006 position paper concerning the enlargement?

Yes and no, as in our view such a perspective must be tied to certain pre-conditions which go beyond the Copenhagen Criteria¹ and which do not only check the capability of accession of the candidates, but also the EU's capability to integrate these countries.

However important the peace-political and the politico-economical aspects of the European unifying process may be, Europe to us means more than a peace project and a Common Market. In our point of view, the EU is also a political, social and lastly but not least, an ecological project.

The Greens have stated earlier on that manifold challenges of modern policy – climatic change, globalisation, international terrorism - just to mention a few – can no longer be solved by national politics, but require a co-ordinated, multilateral policy. According to this, the EU can be regarded as a pioneer: there is no other place in the world where the political integration of sovereign nation states is that advanced, where so many tasks and powers have been allocated to a supranational institution.

¹ The criteria to be fulfilled by potential candidate countries for an EU accession are identified as the Copenhagen Criteria. They were confirmed during the European Council on 22nd June, 1993 in Copenhagen. They form three groups of criteria:

Political criteria

- institutional stability
- democratic and constitutional order
- preservation of human rights including respect and protection of minorities

Economic criteria

- a functioning market economy
- the capacity to withstand the competition pressure within the Single European Market

Acquis criterion

- takeover of the "joint vested rights" (*Acquis communautaire*)

The criteria must be fulfilled at the latest by the termination of the negotiations.

This political integration and allocation of nation state-related tasks is, however, bound to three prerequisites:

- efficient, democratic and transparent decision structures
- a fundamental consensus concerning common values, targets and tasks between the affiliate states of the EU or their governments
- the support by the broad public in the member states of the EU.

These three prerequisites which are at the core of a thriving EU, we would like to name the “Brussels Criteria”, are held in question following the negative referenda concerning the European Constitution in France and the Netherlands.

The constitution has not least been based on the deeper insight that more efficient and democratic decision structures are required within an enlarged EU. Though far away from a democratic ideal, it has envisioned clear-cut improvements of the democracy and transparency on the European side – including the extension of powers of the European Parliament, the enlargement of majority decisions to additional areas of politics and public meetings of the Council. These improvements have, however, been put on hold since the rejection of the constitution by France and the Netherlands.

Also, a fundamental consensus concerning common values, targets and tasks does not seem to exist between the governments of the member states of the EU. Especially between France and Great Britain: different views of a united Europe became evident following the failure of the referenda. The stage of reflection which was announced by the European Council following the negative referenda in France and the Netherlands has not led to any significant results, and a common vision of Europe is currently out of sight. The “Berlin Declaration” certainly does not provide this vision.

Finally, the support by a broad public in the member states of the EU is also in question. The rejection of the constitution in France and the Netherlands has made clear that periods of a “silent acceptance” of further development of the EU in broad parts of the population have disappeared. Instead, massive criticism concerning a lack of communication, the distance between citizens and the EU, and finally the EU as an elitist project has been voiced in the negative referenda.

At the same time, polls hint at a constant increase of expectations towards the EU which in particular, concern employment creation and the granting of social standards. So, French and Dutch people stated their concern for an “unsocial” Europe as a main reason which (apart from inner-political reasons) has led to the rejection of the constitution. From our point of view, this development only apparently contradicts the stated Europe-scepticism. An essential reason for this scepticism and the decreasing support of the EU, in particular within the “old” member states of the EU, most likely lies with the growing gulf between the expectations addressed to the EU and EU’s inability to fulfil these expectations.

Each political measure on the European side – especially the enlargement policy – must therefore be evaluated as to which impact it has with regard to the political integration of the EU as a political, social and ecological project, i.e. the contribution it makes in order to fulfil the “Brussels Criteria”.

Unfortunately, this evaluation appears to be rather negative at present. Further EU accessions would not only lead to a higher number of parties involved but would also further complicate the establishment of more efficient, democratic and transparent decision structures, and the agreement on a fundamental consensus concerning common values, targets and tasks. At this moment in time we believe and fear that further growth of the EU would in fact increase the Europe-related scepticism found in large parts of the population at present, particularly in the “old” EU member states.

So, the French and the Dutch people have associated an EU enlargement in the East with a decrease of employment and social standards – rightly or wrongly - which was also stated as a core reason for the rejection of the constitution. This association is, according to the “Euro-barometer” shared in broad parts of the population in other EU member states.

Any further enlargement therefore, requires in our opinion the complete fulfilment of not only the Copenhagen Criteria, but also of the “Brussels Criteria” as fundamental prerequisites for the EU’s ability to integrate new members. As long as these criteria continue to remain unfulfilled, any further EU accessions will endanger the support and the legitimation for the necessary political integration and for the assignment of national tasks and powers in the EU.

This may not be misunderstood as “Das Boot ist voll”¹ rhetoric which aims to refuse an accession perspective to the Balkans States, Turkey, Ukraine and other potential candidate countries. On the contrary, we support further enlargements in general, in the face of the negative impact to be expected, if an accession perspective were refused to these countries.

Before a candidate country is granted an accession to the EU, they (together with existing member states) must fulfil the required prerequisites to ensure that the EU as a political, social and ecological project is not endangered. The reference to the EU’s integration capacity should, however, not be understood as carte blanche to sceptical enlargement positions. It is up to us to do our homework and everything in our power in order to meet these prerequisites.

¹ Translator’s note: this common German expression would literally mean “The boat is full” in English. It refers to the idea that a country is already too crowded with citizens/immigrants so that further immigration would cause internal trouble.

Efficient, democratic and transparent decision structures; a fundamental consensus concerning common values, targets and tasks; as well as the support by a broad public will not fall into our lap. In fact, these call for insistent attempts and constant persuasion, in the field of politics as well as in the field of society. We consider this not only the European Green Party's task on a national and European level, but also on a regional, personal level.

Patrick Kopischke

V. Europe ad Infinitum?!

Although there are still many pros and cons and different approaches to a solution, we agree on the issue that a Green policy has to take the existing opportunities more firmly in order to build a EU out of the “EEC”, based on values, and that an EU enlargement may not be carried out under the current premises. From now on, the “Brussels Criteria” (named by us) has to be applied to any accession and beyond: individual attention towards the candidate countries may not be taboo. The Greens must commit themselves vehemently so that each EU-citizen is granted a fair chance to take part in decisions in a new measure, to be defined plebiscitarily and to follow the EU policy in a more understanding and comfortable manner. In this way, the citizen shall finally grant himself/herself the possibility to develop a nationality-exceeding EU-awareness which goes beyond a national-patriotic awareness and allows him/her to live in an identity-forming manner. However, this way can only be paved by a value-based consensus, as it has been outlined in chapter II.2 of this paper. Each member state would then have to be committed to such a value-based consensus without any special regulations, otherwise it would have to separate from the EU. Regarding the current requirements and those of the future, the Greens must in parts, return to their founding ethos.

Marco Petrikat

VI. Our Voices

I like travelling far away. So Europe – that's coming back home.

Andrea G. Malorny

If we compare Europe with a forest, in a structural sense the EU should be a light, well-networked tree-top, which spans to the outside, protects widely and covers partly, but remains unburdened; the trunk and branches are formed by other bodies; a top with flexible spaces and perimeters, but common roots. It is a top with changing colours and seasons: the fresh green in spring and the luscious green in the glittering blue of the summer. It is the changing shades in autumn and the crown-moistened sky in winter. A Europe that is alive.

Hans-Joachim Stromenger

Unity to the Hellenes! – Platon claimed this in vain in a perpetual, conflict-ridden Ancient Greece. May today's Europeans have more success with the Union.

Kai Rösen

Future city culture is planetary village culture. (Peter Sloterdijk)

To me, the EU only comes into its own, when culture and social policy is no longer shaped by 27 central governments, but by 2700 NGOs.

Marco Petrikat

I would like to live in Sevilla for a while and later when I have come of age in Bath for another while. Europe means that this is (as) a matter of course (and) possible.

Monika Dittrich

Europe is past, present – and our future.

Patrick Kopsischke

VII. Your Voices

We will be glad to receive feedback – with comments, proposals, plaudit and criticism!

The International Working Group and the individual authors can be contacted via the following e-mail addresses:

International Working Group
ak-internationales@web.de

Hans-Joachim Stromenger
hj.stromenger@t-online.de

Kai Rösen
kai.ruesen@t-online.de

Marco Petrikat
gruene@linux-koeln.de

Monika Dittrich
monika.dittrich@gmx.net

Patrick Kopischke
patrick_kopischke@web.de