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The European Union and expansion – potential borders of the European Union

Master Thesis

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Academic Year: 2014/2015

Declaration of authorship

The author hereby declares that she completed this master thesis independently using only the resources and literature listed.

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In Prague _____

Denisa Dočkalová

Abstract

The current research reviews the topic of the potential future borders of the European Union in great details. It uses the combined methodological approach involving the qualitative and quantitative assessment of the economic, political, geographical, and civilization factors of the EU member countries and its potential members. The analysis particularly focuses on the following potential members: Georgia, Ukraine, Switzerland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Turkey, analyzing them based on the mentioned factors to identify the possibility of their accession in the future. The thorough historical background of the current research, as well as the fact that its theoretical foundation lies on the official governmental documents of the EU, its official statistics, and official reports, which express the opinions of the EU legislative bodies, contribute to the credibility and precision of the research, allowing it to reach its main aim: to identify the future potential borders and members of the European Union.

Keywords:

European Union, borders, future, current members, potential members, economic factors, political factors, civilization factors, geography, European treaties, Turkey, Switzerland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, Georgia

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Master Thesis Proposal

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Topic Characteristics:

The purpose of the master thesis is to identify the potential borders of the European Union, in other words how far could the EU expand its borders and territory, answering this question by selecting several countries from below mentioned groups of countries and by conducting their analysis. The expansion of the European Union (EU) has always been a debated topic. Some countries have desired to be part of the European Union for all its advantages and status of the EU member state. There have been also countries which the EU has desired to incorporate into its revolutionary community. Year 2015 brings new opinions and facts about the EU and its current and potential future members. There are many situations and dilemmas which influence the current and future state of the EU including the general economic crisis, Greek crisis, conflicts in Ukraine, threat of terrorism, etc. Also, Iceland is considering preparation for meeting all the acceptance criteria, Serbia in 2014 started closer cooperation with EU, and Turkey stays a long-term applicant. Even Caucasian countries, mainly Armenia, consider application in the future. The questions remain; What is the possible territory the European Union can swallow, incorporate, and embrace? Is it supposed to actually expand? What might be the potential impacts of the future prospective members?

Working hypotheses:

1. Hypothesis #1: The European Union is able to incorporate additional new members.
2. Hypothesis #2: The research will show the most suitable future members are economically stable and homogeneous.
3. Hypothesis #3: Some countries can be grouped into categories, based on the level of their development and the time of their accession to the union.

Methodology:

1. The European Union will be identified – what does European Union actually means and what are borders of the European continent.
2. A list of criteria will be chosen and introduced, based on which the current European standard will be based. These criteria are geography, civilization factors (major cultural aspects including immigration, religion, majority/minorities, heterogeneity/homogeneity within the society), politics (regime, potential internal conflicts, freedom level, any separatist tendencies), and economy (inflation, level of interest rates, budget deficit, budget debt, potentially exchange rate).

3. The research will use the empiric approach to test hypotheses, will use both qualitative and quantitative types of research, will focus on specific issues and specific countries to draw the conclusions and answer question which countries should/could belong to EU.
4. A table for each of the sphere analyzed will be created where will be list of the current countries and list of the potential countries. Numerical data will be put in the table and this data will be compared and analyzed.
5. The research will use specific examples of the potential members of the union, namely Switzerland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey, Ukraine, and Georgia. This means that one country from each group of countries will be chosen. By using the comparative analysis, it becomes possible to identify the exact reasons why certain countries can or cannot be accepted into the European Union. Moreover, by using the tables with all countries including data for all of them (e.g. inflation rate for, type of religion, mentioning of actual or potential frozen conflicts, etc.), it becomes possible to identify the correlations between the cultural, political, religious, and economic aspects of potential member states and the existing members of the union and even identify the probability with which each potential member can be accepted into the union given its current level of development. This approach can be called comprehensive and effective. The only drawback of this type of methodology is that its scope is very limited because of the highly detailed analysis. It is well beyond the scope of the current research to deeply analyze data about all member countries and all potential member countries.
6. The geographical scope of Europe will be analyzed. The detached areas such as French Guyana, etc. will be included as well. Both economical and geographical centers of the European Union will be analyzed and found.
7. The conditions for the acceptance of a country, based on the EU treaties and acceptance policies and criteria will be analyzed, e.g. Copenhagen Criteria, Treaty on the European Union, etc.
8. The current members will be grouped and analyzed as follows:
 - i. GB, Italy, Belgium, Netherland, Luxemburg, France, Germany
 - ii. Slovenia, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Malta, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Czech republic, Denmark, Finland, Austria, Sweden, Croatia
 - iii. Bulgaria, Romania, Spain, Greece, Ireland Portugal, Cyprus
9. A list of potential future members or countries interested in the EU membership will be specified. The list of the countries include the Balkan countries, Iceland, Turkey, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Caucasian countries, Switzerland, Norway. The countries will be analyzed in the following groups
 - a. Iceland, Norway, **Switzerland**
 - b. **Turkey**
 - c. **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, Moldavia, Albania, Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia
 - d. Belarus, **Ukraine**
 - e. **Georgia**, Azerbaijan, Armenia
 - f. Russia – will not be analyzed
10. The thesis will end with a conclusion summarizing which of the chosen countries based on the chosen criteria and the criteria of the EU could join the European Union. Explanation will be given about why a country could or could not expand the EU. Finally, the potential effect of each new potential member state, which would qualify for the membership based on the research, on the European Union will be analyzed. Would the individual potential member states be prosperous for the Union? Would

they bring more advantages/disadvantages? Would they create conflicts and what kind of conflicts? The paper will be finished with the answer what are the potential borders of the EU, based on the selected criteria and what is the probability of the new members' entrance into the EU and current members' exit.

Finally, the purpose of this paper is not to judge whether a country should be accepted into the EU. The purpose of the thesis is to analyze the geographical, cultural, political, economic, and religious scope of the EU and to show on the mentioned countries, whether they could be potentially part of the EU community based on comparison of the criteria of the EU and each individual member state.

Outline:

1. Abstract – max 150 words
2. Introduction – app. 5 pages
3. Literary review – what sources were used, why were these chosen, what was their effect benefit, description – app. 7 pages
4. Hypothesis and the explanation the methodology used – app. 10 pages
5. Discussion – app. 35 pages Comparison of differing opinions from the resources on this topic/theme, comparison of the outline of this master thesis to existing studies, divided into individual chapters/parts based on the individual chosen countries, followed by their comparison and outcomes. Some of the points analyzed in this section will be.
 - i. Chapter 1 – geography of Europe
 - ii. Chapter 2 – geopolitics of Europe
 - iii. Chapter 3 – European citizenship and European identity
 - iv. Chapter 4 – European treaties and accession criteria
 - v. Chapter 5 – economic analysis
 - vi. Chapter 6 – political analysis
 - vii. Chapter 7 – civilization factor analysis
 - viii. Chapter 8 – current official status of all potential states
6. Conclusion – app. 5
 - a. Total app. 55-65 pages
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1. Introduction

The topic of the future borders of the European Union is of immediate relevance because the Union continuously enhances its relationships with non-members, establishes the zones of preferential treatment, and represents the significant political, economic, and cultural power in the world. Thus, the identification of the future potential borders of the European Union can help to understand the future trends in international economics, globalization, integration, central position of the EU in Europe, and the role of international institutions in the global economy and politics. At the current stage of its development, the European Union is already a strong political and economic force, which provides many benefits to the member countries, but also, of course, has its own drawbacks, such as the significant dependence of the certain groups of countries on the wealthier groups of countries, religious conflicts, cultural misunderstandings, and so forth. However, these drawbacks do not seem to outweigh the positive sides of the European Union, which provides such benefits as a free movement of the factors of production, including capital and labor force, higher stability of the common currency, better division of labor, more stable overall political situation, and the ability to make more informed decisions based on the better knowledge of the macroeconomic situation inside the Union. The European Union, with its policy of helping all member states to improve their economic stability with the assistance of the Union's financial institutions to meet the Union's standards of living and infrastructure, looks like an especially tempting opportunity for less developed countries. While the actual future benefits of entering the Union might seem to be a controversial topic, most of the less developed countries still see a large number of benefits in entering the European Union.

However, to become a member of the Union, a country must meet, since the decision of the European Council in Copenhagen in 1993, so called Copenhagen criteria and Copenhagen Plus criteria for Western Balkan countries as well as the initial criteria of the

Treaty of Maastricht, and additional conditions, which may include compliance with additional political, demographic, religious, and economic standards. While the list of the main criteria is relatively stable, the nature of the Union dictates occasional changes in them, especially based on the individual characteristics of each potential member. For this reason, the question of the expansion of the European Union remains open. Still, it is clear that the Union can benefit from new members that can at least meet the Copenhagen criteria, as each new member that is able to meet such criteria can improve the economic stability of the Union, which is why it is possible to speculate about the future expansion of European Union's borders.

Considering all these factors the purpose of the current thesis boils down to the identification of the potential future borders of the European Union based on the political, civilization, geographical, and economic criteria. This aim can be reached by the analysis of the potential members and by drawing the conclusions of whether they could or could not be integrated in the EU in the future. The overall basis of comparison are the relations of such potential members as Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldavia, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Turkey, and Ukraine to all current EU members. However, the analysis particularly focuses on the following five countries: Ukraine, Turkey, Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Switzerland. These countries were chosen as exemplar representatives of their respective groups which are stated in the hypothesis section. Switzerland was selected because it is situated close to the heart of continental Europe and is part of the Schengen area. Turkey has an own category and therefore it requires an individual analysis. Ukraine was chosen over Belarus because even though it experiences an inner division and conflicts it has pro-European tendencies. Bosnia and Herzegovina was selected because it is a country which experienced enormous turmoil in the 1990's and therefore it could be essential to examine

future integration possibilities of such a disturbed country. Finally, Georgia was chosen because a closer look at a country which would like to be more integrated in the EU and Europe in general but still under a non-negligible sphere of influence of Russia might bring interesting results.

Even though there is an official list of Copenhagen criteria, which should be met by any potential member of the Union, it is decided to use a separate empiric evaluation of the existing and potential members for the purposes of the current research based on political, economic, geographical, and civilization criteria, using tables and graphs.

Sapir (2005) and Aiginger and Guger (2005) give the theoretical foundation to such stratification. Aiginger and Guger (2005) subdivide the EU based on the economic performance of the countries in it and point out that the countries with the highest level of economic development are also the countries with the lowest rate of economic growth. For example, “Germany has the lowest levels of growth in output, potential output, and employment” (Aiginger and Guger, 2005, p. 5). On the other hand, Ireland has the highest rates of output and productivity growth. Finland, Denmark, and Sweden are also identified by Aiginger and Guger (2005) as the separate group of high performers, which are characterized by the efficient models of cost management, usage of innovative technologies, and the latest information technologies to boost research and development. Sapir (2005) also categorizes the EU countries based on the so-called European models, identifying Nordic countries, which include Denmark, Finland, Sweden, and the Netherlands, Anglo-Saxon countries, which include Ireland and the UK, continental countries, which include Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, and Austria, and Mediterranean countries, which include Portugal, Greece, Spain, and Italy. With regards to categorization, Sapir (2005) assesses the EU countries in terms of efficiency and equity with the Nordic countries being both highly-efficient and having high equity, Mediterranean countries having low equity and low efficiency, continental

countries having high equity and low efficiency, and Anglo-Saxons having high efficiency but low equity. This categorization manifests itself in the efficiency of employment and the ability of social models to be sustainable in the long run. Thus, the idea of categorization of the countries based on the economic criteria is not new and has been successfully implemented by Sapir (2005) and Aiginger and Guger (2005).

The current thesis uses the combined methodological approach to test its hypotheses based on both the theoretical and empiric evidence. Such an approach ensures that the thesis does not become biased based on either the method of induction or deduction. The method of induction uses particular samples to make generalized conclusions about larger phenomena and the method of deduction is used to create logical links between the concepts based on universal laws. By examining the particular concepts using the method of induction, it becomes possible to avoid the perils of the deduction method and by applying the deduction techniques to the conclusions derived from using the induction method it becomes possible to form certain conclusions about the nature of phenomena, such as the expansion of the European Union borders.

The methodology of the research also uses the combination of the qualitative and quantitative approaches with the former being based on peer-reviewed academic articles and the latter being based on the empiric evaluation of political, civilization, and economic dimensions of the members and potential members.

There is an ample amount of information concerning the future borders of the European Union. For example Walters (2009) reviews the border management of the European Union from purely theoretical and political perspectives, by applying the principles of territoriality, sovereign power, and political imagination to the external policy of the Union. In the end, Walters (2009) reaches the conclusion that the borders of the European Union are somewhat blurry and that the process of regionalization significantly impacts the formation of

so-called internal borders. However, Walters (2009) research lacks statistical evidence and is mostly based on the speculations about the political infrastructure of the Union.

The structure of the paper allows smooth transition from the evaluation of theoretical concepts, concerning the expansion and the development of the European Union, to the evaluation of empiric data and the discussion of the results derived from the analysis of both types of the data. The paper consists of the abstract, introduction, evaluation and description of the literature, description of methodology, discussion, which consists of eight chapters, analysis of the outcomes and hypotheses, and conclusion. The first chapter analyzes the geographical scope of the EU, the second chapter focuses on the geopolitics of the EU, examines the spheres of influence of the EU and the Russian Federation, the political and economic centers of the region. The third chapter examines the issue of the European citizenship and European identity, the fourth chapter focuses on the accession criteria imposed by the European treaties. The fifth chapter provides the economic analysis of the existing and potential members as well as compares the economic indicators of the potential members to the indicators of the existing EU members. The sixth and seventh chapters examine the civilization and political factors of the member countries and compare them to the same factors related to the potential members. Chapter eight summarizes the status of the five representative potential members. Finally, the paper ends with a conclusion and provides the suggestions about whether Turkey, Ukraine, Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Switzerland could become the members of the Union in the future. It also analyses whether the hypotheses were proved or disproved and it gives suggestions for future research.

Finally it is vital to mention that the topic of future potential borders of the EU can be viewed from two points of view: the expansion one and the reduction one. There have been various voices saying that some countries might voluntarily leave the EU or that some countries might be expelled. However for the purpose of this paper, only the expansion point

of view is used. Last but not least the purpose of this paper is not to claim which country should or will expand the borders of the EU, the paper only tries to analyze which countries, if the EU decides to accept new members, could potentially enlarge it and under what circumstances

2. Literary Review

2.1. Geography

The most obvious way to review the geographical scope of the European Union in its current state is to refer to the map. One such map is readily provided by Keeping Cool (2010) website. While the analysis of the accession to and enlargement of the EU requires some historical perspective, it is considered that the analysis of the geographical scope should only be based on up to date information. This information is gathered from the book “A geography of the European Union” by Cole and Cole (2013), from the book “The Geography of the World Economy” by Knox, Agnew, and McCarthy (2014), and the report by European Spatial Planning Observation Network (2013).

2.2. Treaties

The next step of the discussion analyzes the criteria of accession to the European Union and the stages of its enlargement. To adequately address these issues, the current research refers to such legal documents as the Treaty on European Union, Treaty of Rome, Treaty of Nice, Treaty of Amsterdam, Treaty of Accession 2003, Treaty of Accession 2005, Lisbon Treaty, and the document called “Legal Questions of Enlargement” issued by the European Parliament in 1998. Starting from the Rome Treaty, when the predecessor of the

European Union has become a full-featured economic body, since the Paris Treaty was signed in 1951, when the cooperation was only possible in the industry of coal and steel among few countries, and ending with the Lisbon Treaty, which is an example of how the continuous legislative process of the European Union evolved, the treaties of the European Union outline the main criteria of accession to the Union, including the legislative, economic, and political requirements. Moreover, modern authors, such as Klaus-Dieter Borchardt (2010) and Kratke (2002) help to interpret the treaties and to better understand them, while such authors as Wiener (1997) give a historical perspective on the concept of European citizenship.

Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2002) present yet another perspective on the issue, and they mainly focus on the expansion of the EU as a political entity ignoring the internal inconsistencies of certain member states with the requirements of the Union. The research of Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2002) is quite comprehensive and builds a strong logical argument using dependent variables such as member state politics, applicants' politics, Union's macro politics, and the substantive politics of the Union as well as independent variables, such as the existing borders of member states, their sovereignty, and certain aspects of internal politics. Even though the research provides a comprehensive overview of the EU enlargement in the future, it is still quite theoretical, and the current research attempts to avoid excessive theorizing by using an empiric approach to the existing member states of the EU as well as to the applicants. Medvec (2009) and Golemi (2013) also focus on the expansion of borders of the EU. They also do not use empiric and quantitative analysis for their studies and only focus on the expansion of the EU to the Eastern countries. The current research takes into account all these and other types of analysis and attempts to draw a conclusion concerning the overall expansion while using the empiric approach to reach its conclusion.

Some of the resources used to develop the theoretical framework of the current thesis include Cole and Cole (2012), Knox, Agnew, and McCarthy (2014) providing information on

the geography of the EU, Klaus-Dieter Borchardt (2010), Wiener (1997), Tsaliki (2007), and Kratker (2002) who provide the historical background about the development of the EU, EU's citizenship, and national identity.

2.3. European identity and citizenship

Some other sources concerning this step of discussion include the publication called "The ABC of European Law" by Klaus-Dieter Borchardt (2010), the article "The Regional Impact of EU Eastern Enlargement: A View from Germany" by Stefan Kratke (2002), and the article "Making Sense of the New Geography of Citizenship: Fragmented Citizenship in the European Union" by Wiener (1997). Wiener (1997) defines the overall concept of citizenship as "the entitlement to belong to a political community, the later having he right and the duty to represent community interests as a sovereign vis-à-vis other communities and vis-à-vis the citizens" (p. 533).

This definition can be applied to the EU, which makes it possible to define an EU citizen as the one who is entitled to belong to the EU, the later having he right and the duty to represent community interests as a sovereign vis-à-vis other communities and vis-à-vis other EU citizens. While discussing the EU citizenship, it is also advantageous to speculate about the EU identity. Tsaliki (2007) argues that even though the formation of European identity is a continuous process, which is far from being finished, it is mainly formed by using cultural levers inside the Union. For example, she points out that "in Article 128 of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty (now 151 in the amended Treaty of Amsterdam): 'the Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore'" (Tsaliki, 2007, p. 159).

Thus, according to Tsaliki (2007) the question of European identity is not political, as it is in the case of European citizenship but rather cultural, which is focused on creating the European consciousness using such initiatives as European Cinema and Television Year, EUREKA and Erasmus program, and so forth. Thus, being a citizen of the EU does not always mean to have European identity and might not mean this in the nearest future, but the continuous participation in the cultural life of the EU should form the generations of EU citizens that can in addition to the identification with their national cultures also associate themselves with Europe as a whole rather than only with their national cultures.

The European identity is also reflected in the treaties of the European Union, mentioned above, which is why by examining them it becomes possible to identify the true list of criteria for the accession into the Union including the civilization, political, economic, geographical, and religious aspects of such accession. By using the combination of all these literary sources and the concepts of EU citizenship and EU identity, it is possible to create a unified approach based on the historical method of research and the analysis of the modern look at the accession criteria that can lead to the successful enlargement of the Union.

2.4. Economic, political, and civilization factors

The next step of the discussion is intended to analyze the civilization, political, and economic aspects of the European Union as well as the similar aspects inherent to some of its member states. For the purposes of this analysis, the article by Gournelos (2007) is used to identify the overall demographic climate in the Union based on such factors as homogeneity and the presence of minorities, the publication by Staab, Lodge, and Thielemann (2011) is used to identify the overall political climate in the Union.

The overall economic climate in the Union is identified by Balcerowicz et al. (2014), and the overall religious situation is summarized by the report provided by the Council of the European Union (2013) and Carrera and Parkin (2010).

Moreover, all the aspects are analyzed for one country from each group of the potential members. The countries chosen from each group for the purposes of this research are believed to accurately represent their groups. The countries chosen from potential members are Switzerland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, Turkey, and Georgia.

The economic climate in the union is reviewed by Balcerowicz et al. (2014), the Council of the European Union (2013) and Carrera and Parkin (2010). The information about the political rights and civil liberties in the union as a whole and in these countries is analyzed using the data from Freedom House (Freedomhouse. Org, 2015). The demographic state of the potential members and their economic and political structure is also reviewed using the works of De Mortanges (2012), Stuebner (2009) and Sujoldzis et al. (2006), Karci Korfali, Ustubici, and De Clerck (2010), and many others.

Swiss culture has been associated with neutrality since 1851 and prosperity for a long time, and to better understand the rights of minorities, the homogeneity, and other aspects of this country, the works of Pasquier and Villeneuve (2005) as well as the work of Feld and Kirchgassner (2000) are used. These works give a good understanding of how the demographic structure of the country interacts with its politics. The economy of Switzerland is summarized using the report provided by OECD (2013) and the religious climate in the country is summarized by De Mortanges (2012).

The economic and political aspects of Bosnia and Herzegovina are sufficiently reviewed in the report by European Commission (2014). The report also summarizes the progress the country has made in its possible future membership in the EU. However, since the civilization aspects of Bosnia and Herzegovina are not sufficiently summarized in the

report, the current thesis also utilizes the researches of Stuebner (2009) and Sujoldzis et al. (2006) to fill in these gaps.

The information about the civilization, political, and economic aspects of Ukraine is sufficiently summarized by U.S. Department of State (2012), Laufer, Riabchuk and Savenets (2012), Kuzio and Hamilton (2011), and Sutela (2012).

The information about geographical, civilization, political, and economic aspects of Turkey is summarized by Karci Korfali, Ustubici, and De Clerck (2010), Aschner et al. (2009), Migdalovitz (2010), OECD (2014), Gormez (2012), and Karakas (2007).

Georgian civilization factors are analyzed using the report by Helly (2014). This report not only analyzes the minorities and homogeneity/heterogeneity of the country but also reviews the relationships between Georgia and the European Union in the recent years. The political peculiarities of the country are analyzed using the publication by Nodia and Pinto Scholtbach (2006), as they trace the democratic transitions, the political regimes, and the formation of political parties in the country. The degree of the religious freedom in Georgia is assessed using the report provided by Regional Conference on the Freedom of Religion or Belief (2013). This report, published by cooperating with the European Centre for Minority Issues, and created as a result of the conference in Tbilisi in July 2013, summarizes the religions in Georgia and Armenia as well as the attitude of local citizens to different religions.

Finally, the economy of the country is assessed by using the report of the World Bank Group (2015). This report provides a concise and comprehensive analysis of the many aspects of Georgian economy including the conditions of conducting business in the country, the challenges in energy policy, fiscal peculiarities of the country's economy, and so forth.

2.5. Theories

According to the opinion of Becker Jager (2011), Gren (2003), and Perez-Caldentey and Vernengo (2012), the European Union can be subdivided into the core and peripheral regions based on the economic development of the states. For example, Becker and Jager (2011) and Perez-Caldentey and Vernengo (2012) speculate about the resilience of the European countries to the crisis and their position in the economy of the EU. The peripheral countries are believed to be victims of the “beggar-thy-neighbor policies” and become a victim of higher labor costs imposed by the legislative system of the EU, thus making them less resilient to crises. Thus, it becomes clear that peripheral countries are the countries that are less economically developed than the core countries. Still, such events as the world economic crisis rapidly change the economic efficiency of numerous European countries, which is why, although there exists a wide variety of the recipes outlining how to revive the economy of peripheral countries provided by such researchers as Becker and Jagers (2011) and Perez-Caldentey and Vernengo (2012), the peripherality of the particular countries should be identified by other than economic criteria. For example Gren (2003) speculates about the peripherality of the countries based on their geographical position in addition to economic gravity.

Another point to consider in the stratification of Europe is the phenomenon of multi-speed Europe, which is also sometimes called differentiated integration and is amply described by Holzinger and Schimmelfennig (2012), who speculate about the concepts of “Avantgarde Europe” and “The Europe of Concentric Circles,” Von Ondarza (2013) who assesses the impact of the multi-speed Europe on the fiscal policy of the Union, Jerneck (2004) who ties the concept of the multi-speed Europe to the principle of flexibility, and Tekin and Wessels (2008) who assess the positive and negative sides of flexible integration.

Gren's (2003) point of view is shared by Friedman (2009) as he subdivides the European Union into the countries of Atlantic Europe, facing the Atlantic Ocean and North Sea, such as the United Kingdom, Central Europe represented by such countries as Germany and Italy, Eastern Europe that were "occupied by Soviet troops in World War II and developed their recent national identities from this experience," (p. 75) and the Scandinavian countries, which are called "less significant Europe" (p. 75), which is strange, especially considering the fact that Finland was especially resilient to the crisis according to Foxman (2012). Friedman (2009) refers to the concept of peripherality of Europe in a peculiar way. He thinks that any countries located on the periphery of larger and more powerful neighbors can be assimilated by the latter in the nearest future (p. 152). Thus, the question of periphery boils down to the ability of more powerful countries to influence their neighbors.

Another interesting look at the theory of geographical or rather geopolitical peripherality is provided by Cohen (2003), as he speculates about the 'dynamic geopolitical equilibrium' (p. 435). Cohen's (2003) theory suggests that countries constantly rearrange themselves by moving from the equilibrium to short-term disturbances and vice versa. Thus, according to Cohen (2003) the peripherality of the EU in terms of geopolitics is a highly dynamic process, which is why the borders of the EU are bound to expand or shrink in the future.

3. Methodology

While the purpose of the current research is to identify the potential future borders of the European Union, it is built on three main hypotheses, which have to be either proved or disproved to reach a definite conclusion concerning the future of the Union.

3.1. Hypothesis #1

The first hypothesis can be formulated as follows: The European Union is able to incorporate additional new members and the expansion or the reduction of the European Union is a dynamic process.

It is necessary to take a historical approach to get a deeper understanding of this statement, as well as to analyze the modern literary sources, including governmental publications, to understand the most up-to-date criteria of accession. The experience of the countries that have previously joined the Union can be used as a valuable source of information, and modern political, economic, and civilization trends can be used as a guide for the current situation in the Union. Based on the analysis of all these factors it becomes possible to understand the nature of the Union and suggest that it is either a dynamic or static political and economic body. Moreover, the European Union itself expresses its opinion concerning the questions of enlargement in official documents and reports. It is possible to use these documents to either prove or disprove the first hypothesis.

The process of proving the first hypothesis is the most important part of the current research, because it allows getting an understanding of the European Union's attitude towards the potential expansion of its borders.

3.2. Hypothesis #2

The second hypothesis can be formulated as follows: it is possible to use the complex analysis of theoretical and empiric data provided in the research to identify the most suitable future members. The research will come up with the most suitable potential future members being economically stable and homogenous or being close to this definition.

The second hypothesis suggests that it is possible to use theoretical data to understand which countries can be best incorporated in the European Union in the future. The procedure of assessment is based on the qualitative method and uses the comparative analysis.

The following key aspects are considered to be the most important during the assessment: geography, economy, politics, and civilization aspects of the European Union and potential member countries. To reach this goal, the current research utilizes the empiric approach to assess the geographical position of the Union and potential members using simple cartographic projections, the historical approach to analyze the process of the formation of the European Union and the process of the formation of the statehood of potential members, and the comparative analysis to understand the extent to which each potential member meets the criteria of the European Union.

During the process of the formation of the EU, it has become possible to speculate about the so-called European identity, which complements the European citizenship, which, in turn, complements the citizenship of each country member. However, now that the European Union is such a large community, it becomes harder and harder to reach a compromise, which is why new members must keep in mind that they have to adjust to the rules of the European Union more than the rules of the European Union adjust to them.

The procedure of adjustment is especially important for economically weak countries, because, even though the Union's legislative base is built on the principles of democracy, the economic power of some members, such as Germany, gives them a privilege to dictate certain

economic rules, which also influence the political and social aspects of all member states. The criteria of comparison include the GDP, Gini index, inflation rate, level of interest rates, budget deficit, budget debt and the exchange rate. This way, the criteria of comparison give the current qualitative research a quantitative basis, which contributes to its efficiency and precision. The analysis of economic stability of the potential members is not sufficient. To integrate successfully in the European Union potential member countries must comply with the overall cultural, religious, and political climate of the Union.

It is also necessary to assess the way in which religion interacts with the politics of each member country, the extent to which the former influences the latter, because the democratic principles rarely coexist peacefully with the postulates of radical religious movements that want to control the government. To conduct the comparative analysis of the religious aspect, it is decided to pick the following criteria: the prevailing religion in the country, the minor religions in it, and the problems associated with both major and minor religions. In addition, the demographic assessment should provide information about the frozen conflicts, the presence of minorities, and the heterogeneity of society.

The political climate in the countries aiming to become the members of the Union is also of utmost importance. Authoritarian and totalitarian regimes do not comply with the political orientation of the Union based on the Copenhagen accession criteria defined by art. 6(1) of the Treaty on the EU. They also often impair the economic performance of the country and make it unable to collaborate with key international financial organizations. This way, it is possible to assume that the countries with radical regimes are not likely to be accepted into the EU, just as the countries with radical religious movements. Despite the fact that such countries would not meet the accession criteria and thus would their membership be rejected, it is essential to test, analyze, and compare the potential countries' political atmosphere to the political atmosphere in the EU.

The suggested criteria of comparison include the political rights and civil liberties in the EU and in the potential member countries. This analysis should allow identifying the extent to which political movements define the market mechanisms inside the potential member countries, the stability of political parties, the stability of a legally elected government, and the nature of relations among the potential member countries, the countries of the EU, and other countries.

It is expected that the last criterion can significantly improve the potential members' chances to join the Union, as the EU frequently establishes the zones of preferential trading, economic associations or even trade unions with the future potential members. Some other political criteria to consider include potential internal conflicts, separatist tendencies, and freedom level as well as any violent revolutions or coups in modern recent history.

Moreover, by analyzing the median trends in the economy, politics, and civilization factors of the European Union, it becomes possible to notice that some countries are lagging behind the median standards of religious freedom, democratic freedom, political standards, and economic standards of the union.

3.3. Hypothesis #3

Finally, it is possible to identify the following hypothesis: both current and potential member countries can be grouped into categories, based on the level of their development, stability, and current or potential level of integration. For the purposes of the current research and hypothesis, the countries are grouped as follows:

1. Great Britain (1973), Belgium (1958), Italy (1958), France (1958), Luxemburg (1958), Germany (1958), Austria (1995), and Netherlands (1958).

2. Slovenia (2004), Poland (2004), Slovakia (2004), Hungary (2004), Latvia (2004), Estonia (2004), Lithuania (2004), Denmark (1973), Czech Republic (2004), Spain (1986), Cyprus (2004), Finland (1995), Malta (2004), Sweden (1995).
3. Romania (2007), Bulgaria (2007), Greece (1981), Ireland (1973), Portugal (1986), Croatia (2013).

The hypothesis concerning the categorization of the EU members can also be applied to the potential members with the criterion of such categorization being based on the probability of the accession of particular potential members to the Union. This allows identifying the following groups of countries:

- 1) Norway, Switzerland, Iceland
- 2) Turkey
- 3) Moldavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, and Montenegro
- 4) Ukraine, Belarus
- 5) Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia

The procedure of the categorization of the EU members is not new and has been also conducted by Sapir (2005) and Aiginger and Guger (2005), as they speculate about the division of countries using the European social models and the economic performance based on such indicators as productivity growth and output growth. However, the analysis of all these countries would unjustifiably increase the scope of the current research. The analysis of potential members focuses therefore on Switzerland, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, and Georgia. Russia is not taken into account for the purposes of this analysis because it of the extensive data needed.

It might be fundamental to mention that potentially some countries of the European Union may not fit in the European Union based on the criteria identified in the current

research. It is natural that there might be some countries that confirm such a claim. The current research does not insist on such radical actions as expulsion but is rather aimed at the identification of weaker members and their comparison with potential members.

The methodology of the current thesis is, in a way, unique because it smoothly combines the qualitative and quantitative methods to speculate about the chosen hypotheses and to form a concise conclusion. If to compare the methodology of the current research to the researches by Walters (2009), Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2002), Medvec (2009) and Golemi (2013), it is possible to identify the following differences: the current research uses the empiric approach to test hypotheses, uses both qualitative and quantitative types of research, focuses on specific issues and specific countries to draw its conclusions while the researches of the abovementioned authors firmly base themselves on the theoretical foundation but do not use any empiric data to support their evidence and are limited by theorizing about the politics and socio-economic challenges of the EU, its potential and existing members. Empiric data is the data that is acquired by directly observing certain phenomena rather than using the conclusions about the secondary data that has been previously acquired by other researchers. For this reason the current research uses the economic, political, civilization and geographical factors in their rawest form, which is represented by simple statistical observations.

By using the comparative analysis, it becomes possible to identify the exact reasons why certain countries could or could not be accepted into the European Union. Moreover, the research makes it possible to identify the correlations between the civilization, political, and economic aspects of potential and the existing members and even identify the probability with which each potential member can be accepted into the Union given its current level of development.

This approach can be called comprehensive and effective. The only drawback of this type of methodology is that its scope is very limited because of the highly detailed analysis. It is well beyond the scope of the current research to gather data about all member and all potential member countries. Moreover, this research could have benefitted from more primary resources data, for example from interview with professors or respective authorities mainly from political and international relations rank. Still, the theoretical foundation created by the current research should significantly contribute to the existing field of knowledge concerning the expansion of the EU borders. This foundation can be used by other researchers to expand the field of knowledge concerning such an extension and to gather a larger amount of data concerning the member countries and the potential member countries.

4. Discussion

4.1. Chapter 1: Geography of Europe

The boundaries of the European continent have remained the subject of the increased controversy during the last few decades. One of the probable reasons is that some countries increasingly identify themselves with the European Union based on geographical criteria while the others do not. Since the variety of opinions is huge, it is decided to only include the geographical interpretation of the European borders provided by National Geographic (2011) and Berglee (2012).

Berglee (2012) provides a detailed analysis, which is complemented by the map of the European continent provided by Worldatlas.com (2015) (Appendix 2). Berglee (2012) writes that the “traditional boundaries of the European Continent include the North Atlantic Ocean to the west and Russia up to the Ural mountains to the east. The southern border of Europe is in

Mediterranean Sea and includes the islands of Malta and Cyprus. ” (p. 84). Berglee (2012) also mentions that Turkey is a part of Europe too, but it is usually reviewed in the context of the Middle East region because the Bosphorus creates the natural border between Asia and Europe in this country. As for the geographical borders of the European Union, this information is taken from Keeping Cool (2010), the map of which is presented in the Appendix 3. This map clearly shows the existing and the potential members of the union as well as the years of their accession.

While speculating about the borders of the European Union, it is also necessary to take into account the territories that are not located on the European continent but still enjoy the benefits of the Union. Vestergaard (2013) describes these territories in her report about the European Union as overseas territories. According to Vestergaard (2013), “there are 26 countries and territories—mainly small islands—outside of mainland Europe that have constitutional ties with the European Union” (p. 1). These territories mostly include Europe’s overseas islands and Greenland. All of the EU’s overseas territories are represented by non-autonomous islands, which are tied by constitutional ties with Denmark, France, the United Kingdom, or the Netherlands. Vestergaard (2013) points out that the overseas countries and territories are not independent; they are also not considered a part of the EU, and the law of the community is not applicable to them except of the association regime. Thus, overseas territories can be seen as the territories with differentiated integration.

The list of the territories is as follows: Greenland, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Mayotte, French Antarctic and Southern Territories, Saint Pierre and Miquelon, Wallis and Futuna Islands, Netherlands Antilles including Saba, Bonaire, Curacao, Sint Maarten, and Sint Eustatius, Aruba, Falkland Islands, Cayman Islands, Anguilla, Pitcairn, Montserrat, South Sandwich Islands, South Georgia, British Indian Ocean Territory, Saint Helena, British Antarctic Territory, Caicos Islands, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands.

Vestergaard (2013) argues that even though these territories are not considered to be the part of the EU, their citizens can nonetheless be called the EU citizens. She also points out that the overseas territories significantly vary based on the degree of their autonomy, and their defense and foreign affairs are usually managed by member states, to which they belong.

There is, however, another group of territories, in other words outermost territories, which are considered to be members of the EU and are not located on the European continent. These territories include the Archipelagos of Madeira and the Archipelagos of Azores, which are a part of Portugal, the Canaries archipelago, which is a part of Spain, and such French overseas departments as Guadeloupe, Martinique, Reunion, and French Guyana. These territories “constitute an integral part of the Union, as stated by Article 299(2) of the EC Treaty, and, as a consequence, Community law is fully applicable to them, even though derogations are granted on a case-by-case basis in step with their structural handicaps” (European Commission, 2013, p. 1).

They are also considered to be outermost regions and are a result of the colonial past of the member states, to which they are attached. Thus, it is possible to assume that the EU can expand beyond the boundaries of the European continent, but only in special cases, such as the case with these outermost regions that have been colonized before by France, Portugal, and Spain. Therefore, the further expansion of the EU to other overseas territories in the nearest future seems to be unlikely, even though some countries lying outside of the European continent might try to apply for the membership, as for example Morocco unsuccessfully tried in the past.

Finally, it is necessary to underline that the five potential members of the EU that are discussed in the course of the current research belong to the European continent, which is why they meet the geographical criteria of accession and can be successfully integrated in the Union based on this criterion.

4.2.Chapter 2. Geopolitics of Europe

4.2.1. The theory of core and peripheral countries

The theoretical foundation of the current thesis is fortified by the theory, according to which the European Union can be subdivided into core and peripheral countries. This theory is discussed in the articles of Becker and Jager (2011), Gren (2003), and Perez-Caldentey and Vernengo (2012), and it also provides the framework of geopolitical shaping in the modern European Union. All three scholars speculate about the fact that the division between the core and peripheral countries of the European Union originates from the differences in their economic development.

For example, Perez-Caldentey and Vernengo (2012) focus on the imbalances in the Union's monetary policy and underline the imbalances between the values of Euro in the different countries of the Union. Perez-Caldentey and Vernengo (2012) take a post-Keynesian approach to the fiscal deregulations among the countries that constitute the core of the Union and its periphery. According to Perez-Caldentey and Vernengo (2012), the fiscal crisis in the European Union was the result of the external crisis, which is natural if to refer to the original causes of the world crisis. However, according to Perez-Caldentey and Vernengo (2012) the situation was even further worsened by the disproportion of financial activity between the core countries and peripheral countries. The researchers identify these two groups of countries purely based on their economic development and point out that core countries implemented "export led growth policies or more specifically 'beggar-thy-neighbor policies'" (Perez-Caldentey and Vernengo, 2012, p. 1) during the crisis, thus sharpening the fiscal crisis in peripheral countries. Due to the fact that the peripheral countries purchased too many goods from the core countries during the crisis period, the doubts concerning their purchasing power began to rise.

However, since all debt inside the European Union is treated as foreign debt, because the only institution that has monetary power is the European Central Bank, the peripheral countries could not stand such “equal” treatment and began to further slide into recession. Among other factors that contributed to such slide Perez-Caldentey and Vernengo (2012) underline “higher unit labor costs in the peripheral countries of Europe,” (p. 7) as compared to core countries. Thus, the disproportionalities in the structure of capital and labor resources have created the division into the core and peripheral countries of the European Union.

However, the deficiency of the research of Perez-Caldentey And Vernengo (2012) is that they never mention the exact countries that belong to the core group and the countries that belong to the peripheral group. One might assume that the core countries are the countries that formed the EU from its very beginning. However, the quick deterioration of the economic indicators of some of these countries, as it was in the case of Italy, does not allow them to be called such.

To eliminate confusion, it is possible to refer to the research of Gren (2003) who defines peripheral countries as those that “lack accessibility and/or economic and political importance when compared to the core” (p. 4). Gren (2003) also underlines that peripheral countries are grouped based on their distance from the core countries and their economic gravity. However, this definition is still somehow blurry, which is why it is decided to refer to the report of Becker and Jager (2011), who review the issue of the European Integration during the recent crisis. These researchers identify core countries as Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands, but they still avoid further commentary concerning the other core member states.

Becker and Jagers (2011) focus on the elimination of laissez-faire principle and the implementation of stricter trade policies inside the Union, which should eliminate the disproportionalities in the economic development of different regions. Still, the authors do not clearly define the core group of countries, which is why it is necessary to refer to the report of

European Commission (2013). This report divides the European Union into the core regions and peripheries based on the measures undertaken in 2011-2013 in the response to the crisis. The report summarizes core EU countries as Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Ireland, Portugal, and Greece (p. 7). However, it also identifies large disproportionalities between the economic developments of these regions in the recent years.

Another point to consider is that, for example, “Moody’s changed the outlook on three of Europe’s strongest AAA countries—Germany, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg—to negative” in 2012 (Foxman, 2012). Curiously, Finland, which joined the Union much later, did not receive a negative forecast from the rating agency in 2012 allowing it to be categorized as a core country. There is also an opinion that the belonging to either core or peripheral category depends on the belonging of a particular country to the Eurozone. However, if to focus on the case of Greece, it becomes apparent that this can hardly be considered a true criterion for the measurement of economic magnitude of a country.

If to look at the European Union from the point of view of its economic, political, and geographical centers, the last can be identified with the greatest of ease by referring to the map. It becomes obvious that, given its current state, the geographical center of the EU is located in such countries as the Czech Republic, Austria, and Germany.

As for the economic centers, they are represented by the core countries, which according to Hale and Obstfeld (2014) are all EU members except Greece, Italy, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain, which were especially hit by the crisis. Still, Germany should probably be mentioned separately as a major economic center of the EU, especially if to take into account its role in the stabilization of such countries as Greece in the post-crisis period.

The current thesis considers the countries that had initially formed the European Coal and Steel Community and later the European Economic Union and European Atomic Energy

Community which became the forerunners of the EU to be the political centers of the Union. These countries include France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Italy.

If to speculate about the potential members analyzed in the current thesis, it is possible to draw the following conclusions concerning their belonging to the category of either core or peripheral countries.

Switzerland

If Switzerland entered the European Union it would most likely be the core country because of its position of neutrality and the ability to conserve resources, especially financial resources. Even now Switzerland benefits from the Free Trade Agreement with the EU but is not in a hurry to adopt the Euro that could compromise its economic stability.

Georgia

If Georgia entered the EU, it would probably become a peripheral country because of the weakness of its economy, distance from the geopolitical and economic gravity of the EU, and ever-changing relations with its neighbor, the Russian Federation.

Ukraine

The situation in Ukraine is similar to that of Georgia, especially given the latest events in the east of the country and Crimea. The difference is that although Ukraine does not have sufficient economic power to become a core member of the EU if it ever enters it, it has the pro-European national spirit, at least in the East part of the country, and the natural resources, which could decrease the distance between this country and the core countries of the EU.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

If Bosnia and Herzegovina entered the EU, it would also become a peripheral country because of the lack of economic power in this country and the renegade policy during the Yugoslav epoch, which prevents the citizens of the country from having the EU mindset, as it is in the case of Ukraine.

Turkey

Turkey would also become the peripheral country if entered the EU because, even though the country has an influential economy which is in addition rapidly developing, it has significant fluctuations, on political and economic levels, which do not allow calling it stable.

4.2.2. Differentiated integration theory

The concept of differentiated integration is formulated by Holzinger and Schimmelfennig (2012) as “the introduction of a federal political union in several steps, whereby some states cooperate closer at an earlier point in time while others follow suit later” (p. 4). The researchers point out that the differentiation between the member states in multi-speed Europe is purely temporal and depends on the readiness of certain member states to ratify the new treaties and other legislative documents issued by the European Union. The concept of the multi-speed Europe is almost as old as the European Union itself, and Klaus-Dieter Borchardt (2010) speculates about the fact that even during the ratification of the Treaty on European Union, such countries as Germany and Denmark needed extra time to reconcile the requirements of the treaty with internal politics.

Holzinger and Schimmelfennig (2012) point out that with regard to the acceptance of new political and legislative changes, it is possible to outline the “Avantgarde Europe” (p. 4) countries and all the other countries. Regarding the phenomenon of differentiated integration, Europe is also often divided into the “Core Europe” and all the other countries, or is described as “The Europe of Concentric Circles” with the certain category of countries belonging to the second and third circles, which ratify the new treaties gradually, later than the core group of countries. Von Ondarza (2013) gives a comprehensive review of the positive and negative sides of the multi-speed Europe in his research paper.

He points out that even though “differentiated forms of cooperation were originally intended only as a strategy of “last resort” for European integration,” (p. 5) the current number of members in the Union and such external factors as the recent financial crisis, require the EU to increasingly implement the policy of differentiated integration creating the multi-speed Europe. Von Oндarza (2013), however, underlines the fact that the concept of multi-speed Europe is only a special case of differentiated integration, which reflects temporal inability of certain members to ratify new legislative acts (p. 8). However, both phenomena of multi-speed Europe and differentiated integration are closely related to each other, which is why they can be reviewed together to show the new political and legislative peculiarities inside the Union. The Euro Plus Pact and the Fiscal Compact are two bright examples of how the policy of differentiated integration works. The pacts subdivided the EU into 17 countries that have signed the pact and 11 countries that have not. Schengen policy and asylum policy are yet another examples of differentiated integration that creates a multi-speed Europe.

While the phenomenon of differentiated integration seems to contradict the primary principles of the EU, Von Oндarza (2013) points out that it serves as “a catalyst of European integration” (p. 16) instead. The reason is that differentiated integration actually creates a multi-speed Europe in the long run causing the outsiders to gradually adopt the policy of the “Avantgarde Europe” while also avoiding the political impasses.

The main factor that allowed the development of multi-speed Europe is the principle of flexibility of the EU. Jerneck (2004), in particular, speculates about the principle of flexibility and argues that it found its first reflection in the Maastricht Treaty. The principle was manifested in numerous opting-out clauses, which “were accepted in various policy sectors” (Jerneck, 2004, p. 2). Jerneck (2004) points out that the Amsterdam Treaty has further developed the principle of flexibility inside the Union, improving the mechanism of horizontal flexibility, in addition to vertical flexibility provided by the Maastricht Treaty. The

main consequence of the flexible integration, according to Jerneck (2004) is the emergence of the multi-speed Europe, but he also mentions such terms as multi-tier Europe and Europe a la carte. Jerneck (2004) gives the multi-tier Europe the following definition: “a situation, in which certain Members States are allowed to opt out on a quasi-permanent basis, usually by the means of treaty based clauses, whereas others are going further in integration” (p. 3). Finally, according to Jerneck (2004) the Europe a la carte model is based on the assumption that each member state has a right to pick the provisions it wants to comply with.

On the other hand Jerneck (2004) argues that flexible integration “put the actors – states and institutions – on the horns of a series of difficult – and unwanted - political dilemmas, especially in terms of European governance,” (p. 10) thus fearing the dual nature of the union’s treaties.

A more modern approach to the flexible integration in terms of the Lisbon Treaty is provided by Tekin and Wessels (2008). The authors also speculate about the division of the EU into the group of core or Avant-garde countries and peripheral countries based on their willingness to comply with the provisions of the latest legislative acts of the EU, including the Lisbon Treaty. Tekin and Wessels (2008) then proceed to name the positive and negative sides of flexible integration, such as “upwardly-oriented flexibility” (p. 26) in the former case and spillbacks in the latter case. The level of integration flexibility is also conveniently pictured on Appendix 1. (See Appendix 1)

With regards to the theories of multi-speed Europe and the theory that divides the EU into core and peripheral countries, it is possible to draw the following conclusions concerning the potential member countries:

Georgia

It is almost obvious that Georgia if joining the EU would take advantage of the multi-speed Europe as it would not be possible to integrate on all the levels at once. For example a lot of work would have to be done before the country could enter the Schengen Area as some of the border regions are not under proper control of the authorities in Tbilisi. It would not be a part of Avantgarde Europe any time soon if at all.

Ukraine

Ukraine will also become a peripheral because it is sponsored by European institution even now.. Ukraine is also likely to become a country with the lower level of integration than “Avantgarde Europe” for the same reasons as Georgia, the reasons including economic situation. It would probably use the a la carte principle in order to choose the policies it will be able and willing to accept.

Switzerland

Switzerland is likely to become a core country if it ever joins the Union because of the high level of its economic development and the highly stable currency. It could be assumed that it would integrate into the EU slightly faster than the previously mentioned countries because of the stability and current cooperation with the EU (Switzerland is part of the Schengen Area for example). However the country would also probably use the multi speed Europe principle as it would consider which policies to introduce. It would be interesting to speculate whether it would for example become a member of the Eurozone or not.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

It is also likely to become a country with the lower level of integration, which is the case for most new members for the same reasons. First the country has to solve its internal problems including the religious conflicts before it can enhance its integration on a more active level.

Turkey

Despite the fact that Turkey can be characterized by the booming economy at the moment, it can hardly become a core country in the EU when it enters it. It is also unlikely that Turkey will become a member of “Avantgarde Europe” for the same reason as Bosnia and Herzegovina. It again would not probably join the Schengen or Eurozone anytime soon after the potential entrance into the EU.

4.2.3. Spheres of influence

The concept of the spheres of influence originates already around the World War II, an example being Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed in 1939. It has later continued during the Cold War, but given the recent events in Ukraine and the development of the concept of the New Cold War, spheres of influence become important again. Since the only large political power in the nearest proximity to the east of the European Union is Russia, it is possible to speculate about the division of the spheres of influence between this country and the Union. Another significant political force that also imposes its influence over numerous countries is the U.S.. Based on the information from the Guardian (2013), it is possible to trace the distribution of the spheres of influence between the EU (EEC at that time) and Russia since 1991. The historical approach provided by the Guardian (2013) shows that from the very beginning such countries as Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus remained in the Russian sphere of influence, and Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania remained under the European Union’s (NATO’s) sphere of influence. Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan remained between the spheres of influence from 1991 to 2003.

In 2003, Saakashvili claimed his intention to take a political vector towards the EU, and NATO and Ukrainian Orange Revolution also made it pro-European in this year. 2004 was also the year of the accession wave of such countries as Poland, the Czech Republic,

Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, giving the countries near the borders even more intentions to join the EU. 2007 brought two more countries to the EU – Romania and Bulgaria and 2013 Croatia. The Eastern Partnership program launched by the EU in 2009 deepened the sphere of influence of the Union even further bringing for example Moldova, previously faithful to Russia, potentially closer to its side.

In 2010, the situation for Ukraine changed, as Yanukovich came to power and changed the political vector of the country towards Russia. In 2012, a pro-European politician Bidzina Ivanishvili won the parliamentary elections in Georgia also changing the vector of the national policy towards Russia; the similar situation happened in Moldova in 2014. However, given the recent developments in Ukraine it is possible to attribute the country to neither of the spheres of influence. Thus, the current spheres of influence to the east of the EU constitute of four countries that can be called “between the spheres” including Ukraine, (even though it signed with the EU the Association Agreement in 2014), Armenia (even though it joined the Eurasian Economic Union in 2014), Azerbaijan, and Moldova. However, Russian’s recent politics has shown that it might impose its policy on some countries, such as Ukraine, even if they are between the spheres of influence. The EU tries to do the same but uses different methods to bring potential members or partners to its direction. Moreover, if to look at the map of the European Union as a political body together with the years of accession of its members, it is possible to notice that such countries as Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Poland represent the so-called gateway region allowing the nearby non-member countries to establish associations and other types of preferential treatment based on their geographical location.

Still, if to assess the political situation on the European continent before 1991, it becomes apparent that the Soviet Union also had significant spheres of influence, especially

in the countries labeled by Friedman (2009) as Eastern Europe, namely Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova.

These countries share their post-Soviet past even now and, therefore, have a tendency to gravitate towards Russian politics or be dependent on it to some extent. Another significant group of countries that have a more European-oriented mindset are post-Yugoslav countries, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia, and Macedonia.

Even though Slovenia and Croatia have already joined the EU in 2004 and 2013 respectively, it will be interesting to see the direction of the other post-Yugoslav countries as some of them are currently pro-European based on cooperation with EU and some might be under Russian influence.

Turkey may be identified in a group that is separate from both post-Yugoslav and post-Soviet countries. Friedman (2009) identifies Turkey as “a stable platform in the midst of chaos” (p. 7) with the Balkans, Caucasus, and the Arab countries being increasingly unstable. Friedman (2009) also points out that Turkey is one of the most efficient economies in the Middle East and that it is located strategically between Russia, the Middle East and Europe, but is not under the influence of any of these countries including the U.S., giving Turkey a unique political flexibility. However, it could be assumed that Turkey is the EU oriented country, because of its continuous policy of building bonds with the European Union, even though it experiences phases during which it is dragged away from the European direction mainly due to more pro-Islamic and traditions oriented political representatives as during Erdogan period.

Another point to consider is the spheres of the maritime influence of Europe and the U.S. To identify these spheres, it is possible to refer to the work of Cohen (2003) once again. According to Cohen (2003), “the boundaries that set off Maritime Europe and the Maghreb from the rest of the world system are marked by water barriers in three directions – the

Atlantic to the west, the Norwegian Sea-Arctic Ocean to the north, and the Mediterranean to the southeast” (p. 151). Cohen (2003) divides the world into the geostrategic regions, which are called the Maritime Realm and the Eurasian Continental Realm. Each of the realms represents the sphere of influence, which consists of the countries in the particular order: the first order countries of the Maritime Realm are the countries of the European Community, the United States, and Japan. The first order countries of the Continental Realm are the countries of the Soviet Union and China. However, since Cohen’s research (2003) is a bit outdated at the moment, the post-soviet countries may be compared to the Soviet Union countries and attributed to the Eurasian sphere of influence.

The second order states have significantly less power than the first order states, but are still able to extend their influence to the neighboring countries. The examples of highly powerful second-order states are Brazil, Canada, Turkey, Australia, Iran, Nigeria, and South Africa. There are also the countries of the third, fourth, and fifth order, the influence of which is limited to their own territory. The conflict zones between the superpowers are called shatterbelts by Cohen (2003), and the shatterbelts that are affected by the tribal and ethnic rivalries, and yet are not influenced by the extra-regional power of first order countries are called the zones of compression. The zones of compression and the spheres of influence according to Cohen (2003) are found on Appendix 4.

Another point to consider is the Spykman’s (1942) point of view, as he speculates about the so-called Rimland, which roughly includes the European coast land, the Asian monsoon land, and the Arabian Middle Eastern desert land. According to Spykman (1942), “Who controls the Rimland rules Eurasia; who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world” (p. 27). The U.S. is also actively involved in this battle, and it will continue until the spheres of influence will be shared among Russia, the EU, and the U.S., or potentially even some new actors influencing the world politics and economy.

If to briefly summarize the belonging of the potential members discussed in the current thesis to the realms described by Cohen (2003), it is possible to note that Switzerland belongs to the Maritime Realm, to which the countries of the EU belong, Georgia and Turkey are in the shatter belt zone, Bosnia and Herzegovina belongs to the zone of compression, and Ukraine belongs to the Eurasian Continental Realm. This means that the only potential member that is currently under the European Union's sphere of influence is Switzerland, which means that it has the best chances of entering the Union. Bosnia and Herzegovina, which belongs to the zone of compression, has chances to enter the Union if it overcomes its internal conflicts, which are currently in the frozen state. Georgia and Turkey, on the other hand, belong to the shatterbelt affected by both internal conflicts and the first-order countries' influence, which is why it might be especially hard to enter the Union for these countries, although the situation is not so bad with Turkey with its recent significant progress in economy and politics. Ukraine belongs to the Eurasian Continental Realm and must overcome the influence of Russia and China, which Russia starts to partner with, to enter the Union.

4.3. Chapter 3. European citizenship and European identity

While discussing the concept of the European citizenship outlined by Wiener (1997) and the consecutive formation of the European identity described by Tsaliki (2007), it is advantageous to look at how the current and potential members of the EU perceive the latter concept.

While the European citizenship goes as an unconditional benefit of entering the European Union, the European identity of a particular nation is developed gradually. Tsaliki (2007) aptly notes that the formation of such identity is a continuous process, and it forms using the cultural levers inside the Union. If to look at the specific cases of the current member countries this fact becomes especially apparent. The report of the European

Commission concerning the attachment of the citizens of member countries to their national identities and the European identity has indicated that “more than 80% of respondents in all Member States are attached to their country” (p. 7).

However, when asked about the attachment to the European Union, the numbers were significantly more modest. In 2012, only the minority of Europeans was attached to the Union with 46% of the respondents attached to it, as compared to 53% of the respondents attached to the Union in 2010. The countries in which the attachment to the Union was the most significant included Luxembourg with 72% of the respondents attached to the EU, Poland with 60%, “Belgium (58%), France (55%), Latvia (54%), Bulgaria (53%), Germany (52%) and Romania (51%)” (p. 8).

The potential member states are, however, significantly more positive concerning the question of European accession and thus building of their own type of European identity. Turcilo (2013) speculates about the phenomenon of Europhilia in Bosnia and Herzegovina that has recently ended and the fact that the citizens of the country have become skeptical towards the political and economic solutions the EU can offer. Still, the majority of citizens would like to enter the Union because the accession of Croatia has basically brought the EU to the Bosnian doorstep.

Ukraine as another future potential member of the EU reviews the process of Europeanization as positive. Hryaban (2006) speculates about the process of building European identity as the process that is synonymous to the “emancipation from pro-soviet political and cultural orientation and from ideological stereotypes” (p. 5). Hryaban (2006) speculates about the fact that there is even a Presidential Decree No. 1433, which outlines the program of European integration for the country. There were also such cultural events as the celebration of the Europe Day in 2003 in Kyiv and Lviv and even the Europe Week in 2005.

Hryaban (2006) points out that the adjective “European” is widely associated with high quality and effectiveness in the country. The European way of living is considered to be progressive, democratic, and ensuring the citizens’ happiness.

Arikan (2012) examines the attitude of Turks towards the integration in the EU as well as their attitude towards the process of acquiring the European identity. He concludes that 48% of Turkish respondents consider European integration to be a positive process, 17% have a neutral attitude towards integration, and 26% are opposed towards the integration.

According to Arikan (2012), some of the perceived benefits seen by the Turks in integration are economic prosperity with 32,24% considering this to be the main driver of integration, the ability to travel, study, and work in the EU with 24,58% of Turks considering this factor to be decisive in the successful integration, and the increase in social protection with 19,9% of Turks favoring this factor as the main positive side of integration. However, the main drawbacks of integration seen by the Turkish citizens and its overall bad perception were mostly caused by the clash of the perception in the Turkish national and cultural identity as opposed to the European identity. Arikan (2012) particularly outlines that the EU “has increasingly been demonstrated as being a “Christian club” ” (p. 86), thus decreasing the popularity of integration among the Turks. Arikan (2012) then concludes that the symbolic threats of the EU are quite significant to the majority of Turks making the process of building the European identity in the country quite challenging (p. 96).

Thus, the overall chances of the accession of Georgia, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey, and Switzerland can be summarized as follows.

Ukraine

Ukraine has a positive view of the EU accession, thus it can be called a country with a European identity. On the other hand however, this claim might not apply to the country as a whole as the society is torn into two parts, into East with a positive European identity attitude and West with pro-Russian attitude. This said, Ukraine is a country with two directions as its population is not united and even though its politicians signed the Association Agreement with the EU in October 2014 thus showing the world its official stand, it was a very costly decision which made the division of the country even more visible and radical. To conclude, even though large population of Ukraine as well as its current officials want to enhance the integration into the EU, thus showing a positive attitude towards European identity, it is not written in the stone that the country will not change the direction under different political leaders or various outer or inner pressures, most critical being the West of the country.

Switzerland

Switzerland has the European identity in terms of its geographical location, but not in terms of the political and economic union. Swiss population is proud on being a part of a stable and neutral entity and through referendum it showed several times that so far it does not want to become part of the EU. This does not mean that Swiss do not have the European identity; it actually shows that even though they are aware of the European identity, they do not so far want to become the EU citizens.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina has evolved from European enthusiasm to the sober view at the question of European identity. However, most of the citizens still perceive the EU to be a positive change in the political and economic future of the country, which is why Bosnia and Herzegovina can be called partially compatible with the EU's identity.

Georgia

Georgia was influenced by the Soviet era, is geographically dispersed, and is located near the Asian continent, which is why it is considered to be worse compatible with European identity. On the other hand, promotion of the European identity might mean a change for the Georgian society.

Turkey

Turkey has evolved in the same way as Bosnia and Herzegovina in its views towards integration, and the outcome is similar, which is why it can also be called partially compatible with European identity but it must also be taken into account that Turkey lies on the Asian continent as well and that there might be a difference between the attitude towards the European identity between the eastern and western part of the country.

4.4. Chapter 4. European Treaties and accession criteria

To understand the criteria of accession to the European Union and to get the historical perspective, it is essential to analyze the stages of its development. Both tasks can be accomplished by analyzing the Treaties of the European Union as well as their impact on the legislative stance of the European Union concerning the accession of new members and external politics.

One way to get a quick overview of how the European Union has formed and evolved is to refer to the book by Klaus-Dieter Borchardt (2010). The author states that the first prerequisites for the emergence of the European Union were created in 1948, when the Organization for European Economic Cooperation appeared. Later, in 1951, the European Coal and Steel Community was established, an organization which could be considered to be a forerunner of the European Union.

These organizations, as well as NATO created in 1949, and the Western European Union created in 1954 were the first ancestors of the European Union and evolved as a part of the Marshall Plan created by the U.S. to help the countries of Western Europe to revive their economies after the World War II.

Also, on May 5 of 1949 the Council of Europe was formed. This political institution functions until now, and it has the power to design and implement conventions if all the countries that belong to the Council approve of the postulates of such conventions. This body is legally separated from the European Union and its institutions.

The final factor that is considered to be the most important in the formation of the European Union by many researchers and mentioned already above is the economic cooperation between Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Italy, and France, which was established in 1951 and was called the European Coal and Steel Community. The treaty that was ratified to create the community is called the Paris Treaty, and it entered into force in 1952.

However, even though the Paris Treaty began the cooperation among the countries that are the founding members of the European Union, the first real prototype of the Union that put a heavy emphasis on all aspects of the Union's economic activities, not only the activities in production and processing of coal and steel, emerged in 1957, after the ratification of the Treaty of Rome.

According to Klaus-Dieter Borchardt (2010) this treaty created two main organizations, which were the European Atomic Energy Community, and the European Economic Community. The countries that have signed the treaty included Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.

Due to the fact that the Treaty of Rome was the first treaty to establish the European Union as an economic union, it had no defined accession policy, which is why it is difficult to speculate about the accession criteria with regards to this treaty.

The Treaty of Maastricht or the Treaty on European Union was aimed at amending and improving the Treaty of Rome and was signed in 1992. The most important parts of the treaty were the so-called convergence criteria, which represented the economic criteria for the accession of new members.

The convergence criteria entered into force on November 1, 1993 and can be summarized as follows:

- 1) The inflation of the harmonized index of consumer prices should not be higher by more than 1,5% than the arithmetic mean of this indicator in 3 EU member states.
- 2) The ratio of the annual government budget deficit to the GDP should be not higher than 3% at the end of the previous year and to remain under 3% in the next two years according to the forecast of the European Commission. The budget deficits between 3-3,5% are considered to be slightly higher than average and could only be accepted if the increase in the indicator was caused by exceptional circumstances or if the deficit ratio significantly and continuously declined before reaching the level between 3 and 3,5%.
- 3) The ratio of the government debt to GDP should be at most 60%.
- 4) The exchange rate of the national currency should be stable, and the applicant countries should not devalue their currency for at least two years.
- 5) The long-term interest rates in the applicant countries should be at most 2% higher than the mean interest rate of 3 EU members with the lowest harmonized index of consumer prices inflation.

These criteria were introduced as a part of common monetary policy introduced by the Maastricht Treaty. To successfully implement the new common currency, all countries, including the potential members had to comply with convergence criteria.

The political criteria of the Maastricht Treaty can be summarized as follows:

- 1) “Community policy in this area shall contribute to the general objective of developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law, and to that of respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.” (Consolidated Version Of The Treaty On European Union 2012, p. 38).
- 2) The new members should have been ready to be examined by the newly established Court of Auditors.

The cultural criteria of the Maastricht Treaty are summarized in the article 128 called “Culture.” The following criteria can be named:

- 1) The Union emphasized the respect to the diversity of its members while “bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.” (Consolidated Version Of The Treaty On European Union 2012, p. 30).
- 2) The treaty also encouraged non-commercial cultural exchanges, artistic and literary creations inside the Union, improvement of the knowledge about the culture of Europe as a whole.
- 3) The necessary harmonization of laws and the cooperation with the third countries were also implemented as a part of new cultural policy imposed by the Maastricht Treaty.

The treaty did not outline any particular provisions concerning the religious criteria of the accession to the Union.

The next important treaty on the path of the formation of the EU was the Treaty of Amsterdam. Signed in 1997, the treaty of Amsterdam significantly widened the possibilities of accession to the new members. The political criteria of accession were significantly

amended to suit the possible new wave of accession. In particular, the Treaty of Amsterdam created the partnership for accession strategy extending the participation of potential members in the programs of the community, especially in the educational programs. All the other political criteria remained the same, including the rule of law, consolidating democracy and respect to human rights. The pre-accession countries also received additional funding in the spheres of infrastructure, environment, and transport. The Treaty of Amsterdam only briefly mentions the civilization criteria of accession emphasizing the necessity to promote the cultural diversity in the Union; the religious criteria are non-existent in the treaty of Amsterdam.

The next step in the lawmaking of the EU was the Treaty of Nice. The main aim of the Treaty of Nice was to facilitate the 2004 wave of accession, which included 10 new members. The Treaty of Nice has facilitated the accession in the economic sphere in the following way:

1) The countries still had to comply with the convergence economic criteria imposed by the Maastricht Treaty, which was especially tricky for the countries of the post-Soviet block.

The political framework of the members of the Union was adjusted accordingly to facilitate the future accession. Also, the PHARE program was implemented to facilitate the implementation of the legislative framework for the potential member states. The Treaty of Nice also focused on the issues in common defense strategy, social policy, and sustainability. However, the civilization criteria are not mentioned in the treaty.

The most recent version of the Treaty on European Union is presented by the Lisbon Treaty, which was signed in 2007, in Lisbon, Portugal. The Lisbon Treaty represented the new economic strategy of the Union with the particular focus on the sustainable development and innovations. The following additional economic criteria emerged in the Lisbon Treaty:

1) The European Commission could issue a warning to the country that could not comply with the convergence criteria and make the recommendations concerning the changes in economic policy; the concerned country did not have a vote in this process.

2) The convergence criteria were amended with the regards on the trends in the economy of potential members. For example, if such trends showed the positive results, and one of the ratios was slightly higher than the target value, Lisbon Treaty allowed reviewing the economic conditions of such countries in a favorable light.

3) The Lisbon Treaty also introduced fines and sanctions for the existing members. The Lisbon Treaty put an additional emphasis on the religious factor of integration including it in the preamble to the treaty and also establishing the following criteria necessary for the accession of new members:

1) All members and potential members had to show the respect to the religious rites of the other members of the Union.

2) The article concerning non-discrimination also focused on non-discrimination in the sphere of religion.

As for the civilization criteria, the Lisbon Treaty put an emphasis at the sustainable attitude towards the cultural heritage of all member states, as well as showing the respect to cultural traditions along with the religious rites.

To sum up it is possible to underline that the most significant challenge for all potential member countries analyzed with the exception of Switzerland are the convergence criteria outlined in the Maastricht Treaty. All the other criteria could be more easily achieved, and are anticipated and expected by the democratic standards established in all potential members.

4.5. Chapter 5. Economic analysis

After the analysis of the accession criteria, it becomes obvious that one of the most challenging set of these criteria imposed by the treaties of the EU over time is the set of convergence/economic criteria imposed by the Maastricht Treaty. The convergence criteria require significant changes and present a serious challenge to many potential members. The analysis of the main economic indicators including **Gini index, inflation level, level of interest rates, budget deficit, budget debt, and the exchange rate** of the countries of the EU and the potential members are analyzed using Appendix 5 and Appendix 6 (See Appendix 5, Appendix 6). To understand the impact of all mentioned indicators, it is proposed to give a short description of them¹ as well as their meaning in the chances of accession of each particular potential member.

By looking at the economic indicators in the potential member countries and the current EU members, it becomes possible to see significant differences. The mean Gini index in the EU member countries is 29,86 points which is 2,03 points lower than in the potential member countries where the mean is 31,89. The maximum Gini index among the current EU members is in Bulgaria and is equal to 35,40. The lowest Gini index among the current members is in Slovakia and equal to 24,20. The highest Gini index among the potential members is in Macedonia, which is equal to 43,56 and the lowest is in Ukraine, which is equal to 24,82. The inflation level in the EU member and potential member countries also varies significantly, mainly because of the high inflation rates in the economies of such

¹ Gini index shows the inequality in the distribution of national wealth, in other words, the abyss between the poor and the wealthy citizens. The inflation level that is presented in the appendices is calculated based on the consumer price index, and it is basically the extent to which the purchasing power of the citizen of each analyzed country changed over the last year. The level of interest rates shows the borrowing power of local citizens and enterprises which means that lower indicators are better for the economy of a particular country. The budget deficit shows the extent to which the government expenditures exceed its revenues and is used as an important factor in convergence criteria. According to these criteria the ratio of this indicator to GDP should not be higher than 3% for at least three years. The ratio of government external debt to GDP should not be higher than 60%. The inflation rate should not be higher than 1,5%.

countries as Belarus, Moldavia, and Ukraine, which are equal to 18,1%, 5,1%, and 12,2% respectively.

The lowest inflation rate among the potential members is in Bosnia, and equals to -0,9%, which shows that its currency has actually appreciated. The inflation rate however also does not meet the convergence criteria in most of the current EU countries, and the mean inflation is equal to 2,88%, which is higher than 1,5% established by the criteria. The minimal inflation rate among the countries of the EU is in Sweden. It is equal to 0,9% and, ironically, this country is not a member of the Eurozone.

The interest rates in the economies of potential members are significantly higher than in the economies of the existing members. The mean interest rate of the current members are 3,78% lower than the mean interest rate of the potential members. Moreover, the convergence criteria make the spread even higher, as Greek consumer price index makes it eligible for the comparison of long-term interest rates, which is, however, the maximum interest rate in the Union. The significant difference in this indicator still make the EU goal non achievable for many countries, such as Azerbaijan, Kosovo, and Armenia.

The mean ratio of the budget deficit to GDP in the economies of the existing members is 3%, which shows an acceptable level below 3% for most of the countries. The mean ratio of budget deficit to GDP in the economies of potential members is also within the limits of convergence criteria, and is equal to 0%.

The ratio of budget debt to GDP should not exceed 60% for the potential member countries, and the mean value of this ratio for the EU members is 77%, which clearly shows the effect of the recent crisis. Still, Greece has the highest ratio among the countries of EU equal to 1,74 or 174%. Curiously, the overall situation with potential members is even better than the situation with the current members, as the mean ratio of debt to GDP in these

countries is 41%. The highest indicator can be identified in the economy of Georgia and the lowest in the economy of Norway.

If to focus on the five potential members that are chosen for the purposes of the research it is possible to make the following conclusions.

Georgia

Georgian Gini index is the second highest among the potential members. It is equal to 41,35 points and although it is not an official convergence criteria the fact that Georgia has such a high indicator shows the low welfare of its citizens, which is not a good factor for a potential member country. Georgian long-term interest rates are equal to 6,5% which is significantly higher than the mean level of interest rates of the current members with the lowest inflation rates. The ratio of Georgian national debt to GDP is also high and equal to 81%, which is significantly higher than 60% established by criteria. The ratio of budget deficit GDP is acceptable though, and equal to approximately 2,9%. This said, even though the EU is able to make various exceptions in the convergence criteria Georgia would have a long negotiations period in front of itself as it has to put many of its economic indicators in better shape.

Turkey

The Gini index of Turkey represents the third highest value in the sample of potential countries, which also shows the high level of stratification of its citizens. The inflation level represents the third highest value showing the lack of stability of the national currency. The long-term interest rates in Turkey are 7,5% which is also an incompatible value according to convergence criteria. The country's ratio of deficit to GDP is compatible with the criteria and equals to 1,3%. The debt to GDP ratio is compatible with the convergence criteria, as it is equal to 49,08%. To summarize Turkey is a strong economy which however in the long run should introduce policies which would lower the interest rates and stabilize the currency.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Gini index of Bosnia and Herzegovina is quite close to the mean value, showing the average level of the stratification among the citizens. The country's inflation level is negative, showing the strengthening of national currency, which has a good exchange rate in relation to Euro. The GDP of the country is quite high as compared to its size, and both budget to GDP and the external debt to GDP ratios are compatible with the convergence criteria, as they are equal to 2,2% and 45,5% respectively. The interest rates in the country are equal to 6,39% which is more than 2% higher than in the three economies with the lowest harmonized consumer price index inflation.

Ukraine

The Ukrainian Gini index is actually the lowest among all potential members and is equal to 24,82. This value shows the low level of inequalities between the rich and the poor in the country. It is only 0,62 higher than the lowest indicator of Gini index in the economies of current members, which is represented by Slovakia. However more inequality indicators should be used in order to really examine the poor-rich situation and distribution of wealth in the country. The Ukrainian budget deficit to GDP ratio is not compatible with convergence criteria, as it is equal to 4,6%. The Ukrainian governmental debt to GDP is also not compatible, as it is equal to 71,36%. The long run level of interest rates is also not compatible, as it is higher than the necessary value of the current members by more than 2%. Ukraine has a lot of work before it could even become an official candidate country as there are many criteria which have to be met, none of them are impossible to be met however to meet them it will require a long time and strong Ukrainian determination.

Switzerland

The Gini index of Switzerland is 32,35, which is also a value close to the mean showing the average differences between the poor and the rich. The ratio of the budget deficit

to GDP is 0,2% and the ratio of the external debt to GDP is 16,5%, which is even lower than in the economies of most of the EU members showing the perfect compliance of the country to the convergence criteria. The long-run interest rates are only 2,9%, which also shows the compatibility of Switzerland with the criteria. It is possible to conclude that the economic criteria are not the decisive factor, which prevents Switzerland from entering the Union.

The data about all the countries presented in the current economic analysis is derived from Ec.Europa.eu (2015) website and, specifically its Eurostat part for the current members. Xe.com (2015) is used for the analysis of the exchange rates. The data for the potential members is taken from such sources as Tradingeconomics.com (2015), Data.worldbank.org (2015), and IndexMundi.com (2015).

Finally, since the convergence criteria require the relative stability of the currency of its potential members, the graphs of the fluctuations of the currencies of Georgia, Ukraine, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Switzerland are given separately as appendices (See Appendix 7, Appendix 8, Appendix 9, Appendix 10, Appendix 11). The graphs clearly show that the fluctuations of Georgian currency are quite moderate and do not exceed the limits of 1 Lari in both directions over the last five years. The fluctuations of Ukrainian Hryvnia were also moderate until 2014, when the Russian military invasion damaged the country's economy and caused the currency to depreciate significantly.

The Turkish Lira also fluctuates moderately and does not show critical spikes as in the case of Ukraine. The Bosnia and Herzegovina convertible mark is pegged to the Euro value in the same way as the German mark once was. Thus, its fluctuations are minimal, and its exchange rate remain at roughly 1, 95 marks per Euro. The Swiss Franc seems to be not as stable as the Swiss economy during the last five years. The graph shows that the Franc depreciated twice: after the 2007-2008 financial crises in mid-2011 and in late 2014. The

franc still did not recover after the latter period of depreciation and is currently exchanged at a rate of 1,03 per 1 Euro.

4.6. Chapter 6. Political analysis

The website Freedomhouse.org provides a concentrated analysis of the political situation in the world and measures the overall freedom level based on the availability of political rights and civil liberties to the citizens of individual countries. The website assesses these indicators using a 7-point scale with 1 being the highest level of availability of the political rights and civil liberties and 7 being the lowest. The results of the analysis as it is applied to the current and potential members of the EU can be found in Appendix 12 and Appendix 13 (See Appendix 12, Appendix 13).

Unfortunately, the analysis shows clear distinctions between the mean indicator of civil liberties and political rights in the potential and current members. The mean score in the political rights of the potential members is 3,33 as opposed to the 1,18 score of the current members. The mean score of the civil liberties of the potential members is 3,13 as opposed to 1,21 of the current members.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice (2008) “the term civil liberties refers to fundamental individual rights such as freedom of speech, press, or religion; due process of law; and other limitations on the power of the government to restrain or dictate the actions of individuals” (p. 3). The same report defines the political rights as the rights that enable a citizen of a particular country to take part in its political life by involving in such processes as voting, protesting, or lobbying. Civil liberties are generally more difficult to limit because they are protected by international conventions, even though this claim might be arguable. Political rights are easier to limit. In its assessment, the Freedomhouse.org (2015) assesses political rights based on such factors as electoral process, political pluralism, and the overall

functioning of government. The civil liberties are assessed based on the freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, the rule of law, and personal autonomy and individual rights.

The main finding of the analysis is that both civil liberties and political rights are significantly limited in potential member countries, especially in such countries as Belarus, Azerbaijan, Kosovo, and Armenia. The political rights in the potential member states are more limited than the civil liberties. If to refer to the analysis of the potential member states, which are in the focus of the thesis, it is possible to draw the following conclusions.

Georgia

According to Freedomhouse.org (2015), Georgia has the index of civil liberties equal to 3 and the political rights equal to 4. Freedomhouse.org (2015) points out that the country is not an electoral democracy, one of the recent reasons being the fact that there were significant problems with voting during 2008 parliamentary and presidential elections.

Some other areas of concern are corruption, societal violence against women, and domestic violence. Some other political problems mainly manifested themselves during the rule of Saakashvili and are now being gradually fixed. Nodia and Scholtbach (2006) take a more thorough look at Georgian politics using the historical perspective, as they speculate about the political development of the country in the post-Soviet period. This period is characterized by political instability and territorial conflicts between the Abkhazs and Ethnic Ossetians. The first Georgian government was led by Zviad Gamsakhurdia, and his policy was highly discriminating towards ethnic minorities in the country. Gamsakhurdia was dismissed from the post of the president as the result of the violent coup in August 1991. The next era of Georgian history was still far from presenting the country in the democratic light, as Shevardnadze came to power and introduced the corrupted elections and caused the Rose Revolution, which should have abolished the regime. As a result of Revolution, Mikheil

Saakashvili came to power and tried to settle certain territorial conflicts in the country not without the help of Russia. As a result and also due to the recent developments in Ukraine asserting the power of Russia, even though Georgia has signed the association with the EU, it still remains under the significant control of Russia and remains pro-Russian in many of its political affairs, even though the pro-European voices are more frequent than in the past.

Turkey

Turkey is characterized as partly free by Freedomhouse.org (2015). The civil liberties are limited more than political rights in the country and are equal to 4 and 3 respectively. Freedomhouse.org (2015) points out that the country is significantly militarized and is currently under the influence of army in many questions, especially in diplomatic questions, such as the relationships with Cyprus.

The freedom of speech is also limited in the country, and it is illegal to defame Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as well as to be suspected in conspiring to break the Turkish state. The freedom of association is compromised in Turkey, as the government forbids forming pro-Kurdish associations if they disturb public order. The prison system in Turkey remains cruel and has many punishments, which are non-compliant with basic human rights, such as torture, deprivation of sleep and food, and so forth. Independence of the judiciary system might also be questioned. Questioned could be also the freedom of media. Karci, Ustubici, and DeClerk (2010) further speculate about the political regime in the country. They point out that Turkey strongly adheres to its tradition of secularism, but experienced a military coup d'état in 1980, which has caused the referendum that formed the today's constitution. Migdalovitz (2010) gives further details about the controversy related to the secularism in the country and the significant pressure of the pro-Islamic opposition headed by the Justice and Development Party. In 2007, there was a significant controversy regarding the ban on the wearing of the traditional head scarf for women in governmental institution. As the result of

the tensions between the party and the secularists, Turkish police has found several sets of explosives and the documents, which were intended to organize the coup d'état in the period from June 12, 2007 until January 2010. The potential coups were suppressed with the help of highly centralized power in the country. This said, even though the religion and politics is separate in the Turkish society the fact that coups led by army powers happen once in a while in order to keep the country secular might be viewed as a potential threat. It could be viewed as such even more so when looking at the fact that there is always a party which wants to introduce more Islamic traditions to public life, over time the party gets more and more radical, getting more support of the society; once it becomes too radical, the army intervenes, the party is stripped of some of its support and power and everything starts all over again. So far the army has kept the country in the secular direction however the question is what if it will not have enough power in the future and the country will really introduce more Islamic law into the public policy and private life.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The main problem in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains the significant stratification between the levels of government divided among the three main ethnic groups: Bosnians, Croatians, and Serbs. The republic elects three presidents that operate simultaneously, the parliamentary House of Peoples consists of the citizens from three main ethnic groups, and all legislative procedures are largely complicated by the differences in the views of the different presidents and parties. This power-sharing system was established after the signing of the Dayton agreements in 1995 to end the war, to state the general framework agreement for the peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to introduce the consociational democracy.

Freedomhouse.org (2015) puts the score of 3 for civil liberties and political rights of Bosnia and Herzegovina mainly because of such high stratification, but also because of the discrimination of minorities by the large ethnic groups, the limitation in the freedom of press,

and the limitations of the rights to be elected in governmental bodies if a candidate is a member of minorities. Corruption is also an issue in the country, although it has been more efficiently addressed since 2013 when president Budimir was arrested for one of the corruption acts. The rule of law in the political environment of Bosnia and Herzegovina also remains inefficient because of the three jurisdiction systems, and the country is used as a buffer zone for human trafficking. The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is further reviewed in the report of the European Commission (2014), as it points out that “given the political climate, very limited progress has been made in reforming public administration and improving its capacity to fulfill the requirements of EU integration” (p. 2). However, the present situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not as catastrophic as it was from 1993 to 1995, when the country was torn by the civil war between the main ethnic groups that comprise the government at the moment.

Ukraine

Ukraine has received a 3 mark in both civil liberties and political rights according to Freedomhouse.org (2015). Freedomhouse.org (2015) points out that Ukraine faced numerous political issues during the rule of Yanukovich, but after his exile, which was the result of the violent coup followed by the events on Independence Square in Kyiv, the situation has improved considerably. The high pressure that was imposed by him on judicial system and the high number of presidential powers were instead delegated to the parliament resulting in a slightly more democratic state. Political pluralism in the country is supported by the constitution, but the parties themselves are rather passive in their political position following the ideas of their leaders.

The government was quite opaque under the rule of Yanukovich, but now the major fight against corruption is conducted, and the latest elections were held with no issues concerning their freedom and transparency. The civil liberties are fully granted to all citizens

of Ukraine except of the disputed territories in the east and Crimea, which were subjected to Russian military pressure. The citizens of Eastern territories in particular are often humiliated and deprived of their basic rights. The remaining territory of the country, however, is also subjected to corruption. The freedom of speech and the freedom of organization are excessively influenced by the pressure from oligarchs. The judicial system also remains opaque, despite the fact that the attempt to reform it was taken in April 2014. Kuzio and Hamilton (2011) go a little further in their analysis, as they speculate about the political regimes in Ukraine before and after of the Orange revolution, which took place before the violent coup of Euromaidan. They point out that Ukraine was always split between the pro-Russian autocracy and European democracy model. The main aim of the Orange Revolution was to assert democracy in the country, but it was unsuccessful due to Yanukovich's coming to power because of his course towards Russian-like autocratic political model from which the country only slowly recovers.

Switzerland

Swiss political environment is categorized as free and received the highest score in both political rights and civil liberties from Freedomhouse.org (2015). The country has a transparent electoral process, no restrictions for political pluralism, highly efficient decentralized government, effective judicial system, and guarantees the full range of individual's rights and freedoms. Freedomhouse.org (2015) points out that four main political parties in the country are stable and form a coalition since 1959.

Pasquier and Villeneuve (2005) provide the additional background concerning the transparency in Swiss government, due to the introduction of the legislative initiative in 2004, which made the information legislation in the country gravitate towards transparency. Pasquier and Villeneuve (2005) point out that the nature of Swiss politics is that it is highly decentralized, which is why the information about all citizens and certain governmental

initiatives had been managed by the regional authorities. The Law of Transparency introduced in 2004 made the country more transparent and open towards international cooperation.

This said Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey, and Georgia have to work on their rights and liberties and personal and other freedoms in order to become more competitive in these fields compare to the current members of the EU. Switzerland in this field is well situated.

4.7. Chapter 7. Civilization factors

4.7.1. Religion

The reports of the U.S. Department of State allow creating a complete picture of the major and minor religions as well as the problems associated with these religions related to the current and potential members of the EU. The analysis shows that 19 countries out of 28 have Roman or another form of Catholicism as their major religion. The major religion of 4 more countries is Orthodox Christianity. Protestantism is the major religion in the five countries of the EU. Among the potential member countries four countries have Islam, seven countries have Orthodox Christianity, and two countries have Protestantism as their dominant religion. Bosnia and Herzegovina has three dominant religions: Islam, Orthodox Christianity, and Catholicism. Some of the current EU members have the similar situation, as there are two dominant religions in Germany, which are Catholicism and Protestantism, two dominant religions in Hungary, which are also Catholicism and Protestantism, three dominant religions in Latvia where roughly the equal number of people professes Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity, and Protestantism, and two dominant religions in the Netherlands where the roughly equal number of people professes Catholicism and Protestantism.

Although, Islam is not the dominant religion of any of the current member states, it is often represented by the minorities as well as Judaism and other religions depending on the dominant religion in a country. However, the attitude towards the minority religions is not always positive. On the contrary, these religions often face societal pressure even if they are protected by the government, but there are also cases when even the government imposes certain restrictions and discriminates against the minorities in some of the current EU member states.

In Austria, for example, 71% of the citizens think that Islam is not compatible with democracy. In Greece, strong bonds of the government and local Orthodox Church put a high pressure on the minor religions including taxes, in Poland there are laws that prohibit ritual killing of animals as a part of the halal and kosher rites, in France there is a law prohibiting wearing the headscarf in public, in Germany Muslims are still not granted the law corporation status with the exemption from taxes. Social discrimination manifests itself far more often than the governmental and is represented in almost all members of the EU except Estonia, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, and Slovenia. This type of discrimination often involves violence and vandalism; it is also frequently manifested in the form of anti-Semitism and anti-Islamism. Although the governments of all EU members criminalize the manifestation of such discrimination, the extent to which the criminalization takes place differs significantly. For example, in Germany, a citizen may get a 100 Euro fine for only mentioning Holocaust or other anti-Semitic topic in public, whereas in Greece anti-Islamic attitude is quite open despite the freedom of religion, which is established by the country's constitution.

The situation in the potential members is not better than in the current members and, in the cases of Turkey, Belarus, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Kosovo, it is even worse. In Armenia there are restrictions limiting the freedom of press of religious minorities as well as strong anti-Semitism and anti-Islamism in the society. In Bosnia and

Herzegovina, the country is torn among three religions and three ethnic groups, which violently discriminate minorities among them. Turks were successful in implementing secularism as their governmental doctrine so far, but the government remains under constant pressure from the Justice and Development Party, which attempts to establish Islam as a main religion at the governmental level. Violent protests against minorities are common in the potential member countries, and are present even in such highly developed countries as Norway, the crime of Andreas Breivik can be cited as an example. Thus, it is possible to conclude that the situation with religious tolerance is problematic to some extent in both member and potential member states. The main difference between these two categories is that the major religion of all existing member states is some form of Christianity, whereas four potential member states have Islam as their dominant religion. Another difference is that most of the current member states employ stricter measures against the social discrimination of minor religions, whereas in some potential member countries, such discrimination is commonplace. The situation in both current and potential member states is analyzed in Appendix 14 and Appendix 15.

The additional analysis of the five potential member states allows identifying the following characteristic features of their politics with regards to religion.

Turkey

Karakas (2007) gives a comprehensive overview of the development of secularism in Turkey and the role Islam has in its political system using the historical approach to the current policy of secularism or laicism was founded by Ataturk, after the Turkish War of Independence. As a result, the country has become subjected to numerous reforms, such as the introduction of Swiss civil law, Italian criminal law, and German commercial law. The Islamic calendar was replaced by the Gregorian calendar, and the Arabic script was replaced by the Latin script. The process of reformation was conducted without any resistance, as Turkey has

become the only Islamic country, which separates its religion from politics. Even though the AKP party imposes some radical Islamic views on the society, it does not act as a negative force on the path of the democratization of the Turkish society. Thus, the current religious problems of Turkey might not be considered to be an obstacle on its path to the EU, however the fact that major religion is Islam might be viewed as a point to be considered not necessarily because of the religion itself but because of the current Islamic tendencies, current problems with Islam within the EU, and because of bringing even more heterogeneity in the EU might not be viewed as essential.

Ukraine

Ukraine's religious peculiarities are sufficiently summarized by the U.S. Department of State (2012). This country is quite heterogeneous in terms of its religious variety, as it has a large number of Orthodox Christians, Protestants, Muslims, Roman Catholics, and minor religions including Buddhists, Jews, and even Krishnaites. Moreover, the government supports all these religious organizations and provides the religious freedom it guarantees to provide in the constitution. Although there are certain social tensions, especially in the sphere of anti-Semitism and anti-Islamism, the government continues to work on these issues to ensure that the country's society is tolerant and adheres to the European standards.

Switzerland

The religious climate in Switzerland is reviewed using the publication of De Mortanges (2012). De Mortanges (2012) gives a valuable historical background of the development of the legislation concerning the religion in the country. It appears that the current secular state of the country is a result of the evolution of five centuries in the spheres of religion and law. Although the confrontation among the different religious movements in the country was never too sharp, the denominational exceptions for the freedom of the establishment of religion were not removed until 1980. Switzerland has turned into a truly

tolerant society since that moment, which is able to incorporate the representatives of different religions. However, social tensions remain quite strong in the country, and neo-Nazi groups are operating in some parts of the country. Also, as pointed out by De Mortanges (2012), certain Cantons, the name of the regions in Switzerland, give preferential rights to the representatives of historically dominant religions on their territories.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The report of the U.S. Department of State (2009) identifies the state of religious freedom in Bosnia and Herzegovina as highly unstable, as minor religions are highly oppressed in the country. In fact, there are only two minor religions in the country: Judaism and Protestantism, both of which have virtually no freedom. The situation is worsened by the fact that there are three major religions in the country: Orthodox Christianity, Catholicism, and Islam. All three religions readily express hostility to their non-ethnic rivals. Stuebner (2009) provides historical perspective on the religious conflict structure in the country. It appears that all three religions that are now dominant in the different regions of the country were solely dominant in the whole country during the different historical periods: The Orthodox Church dominated in the period from 1918-1941, Catholicism was dominant during the Austro-Hungarian rule, in the period from 1875-1918, “and Islam dominated during approximately 450 years of Ottoman rule” (p. 2). All religions were then stripped off their power by the Communistic Party, which promoted Marxist ideology. Now that the religious freedom is restored, the country is torn by the conflict of its three main religions, which can be called one of the causes of the excessive political differentiation and overall instability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Georgia

Georgian religion is mostly characterized by tolerance to major religions, but the lack of tolerance to non-traditional religions. Even though the official position of the government

is characterized by religious freedom, Regional Conference on the Freedom of Religion and Belief (2013) points out that “the constitution assigns a special role to the autocephalous (self-governed) Orthodox Church of Georgia” (p. 6). The report also points out that there are also many Muslims and Jews in the country besides the Orthodox Church, but the overall attitude towards them is tolerant, one of such regions being Autonomous Republic of Adjara where majority of population is Muslim. The society and government are, however, not so tolerant to other minor religious groups, such as the Evangelical Church, the New Apostolic Church. Still, the negative attitude to these minor religions is mostly expressed in a non-violent manner. Both the report by Regional Conference on the Freedom of Religion and Belief (2013) and the report of the U.S. Department of State (2013) indicate that the government still retains the right of withholding the Orthodox Church’s property confiscated during the Communist rule.

4.7.2. Frozen conflicts, separatist tendencies, minorities, and heterogeneity/homogeneity

One of the reasons behind the promotion of democracy and equality in the EU is that the Union represents in some areas heterogeneous society, which must be tolerant to successfully coexist and develop in cultural, political, economic, and social spheres. As more heterogeneous the society gets, the more challenging it becomes to keep it united and following one direction. This said both the EU and the potential members should be capable of accepting some sort of differences which is why the examination of the extent to which the potential members are able to accept it is necessary.

Turkey

According to Aschner et al. (2009), the main ethnicities that live on the territory of Turkey are Turks (70-75%), Kurds (18%), and other minorities including Caucasians, Arabs,

and Europeans. Turks define themselves by the common culture and comprise the largest ethnical group in the country. Kurds is the second largest ethnicity on the territory of Turkey. Their number is approximately 26 million, and their diasporas are dispersed among Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. According to Aschner et al. (2009), “the Kurds are of a nation that has never been politically unified into a state of its own” (p. 6). However, they are seeking sovereignty or even independence on the territory of Turkey, creating separatist tendencies and being a source of frozen conflicts. The remaining minorities do not create such problems, as they are represented by Armenians, many of whom were violently killed during the governmental genocide in 1915.

According to Migdalovitz (2010), Kurds had founded the Kurdistan Workers’ Party in 1984, which was labeled as the terroristic organization in 1996 because of its continuous guerilla war against Turks, the aim of which was to recognize the autonomy of regions. The leader of the party was imprisoned for life in 1999, and the party eased its pressure on the government, asking only to provide Kurds with autonomy and improve their leader’s conditions in prison until 2010, when the Turkish military bus was destroyed by the party’s front group. Turkish answer involved bombing Kurd’s bases in northern Iraq and further pressure on their political representatives. According to Migdalovitz (2010), although attempts were made to introduce the so-called “Kurdish opening” (p. 15) in 2009, the conflict remains apparent, and the separatist tendencies in the southeast of the country remain strong. Thus, it is possible to conclude that Turkey is a heterogeneous society that has many active minorities, can experience potential separatist tendencies and has unsolved problems within its society.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Given the current religious situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is no wonder that the country is torn among different ethnic groups and, consequently, is subjected to the

high degree of separatism or division. According to Sujoldzis et al. (2006), Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of three main ethnic communities: Bosniaks previously called “Muslims” (42%), Serbs (33%), and Croats (18%). Sujoldzis et al. (2006) gives a brief historical overview of the country and, it appears that Bosnia and Herzegovina has long been under the rule of Turkish Ottoman Empire, which is why the country is characterize by numerous traits of the Islamic civilization. The Austro-Hungarian occupation, which started in 1878 has introduced the European governmental mechanism followed by the Catholic religious orientation. In 1945, Bosnia and Herzegovina entered the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, which later was reformed into independent states, two of which were Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to History.com, Serbs in the east of the country have long cherished the idea of “The Greater Serbia” and started the armed conflict in the east of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992. As a result of the conflict, a large part of the country was occupied by Serbs. As international organizations refused to intervene, Serbs conducted major military offensive killing with over 80% of victims being Bosniaks. Only after the assault on the city of Srebrenica, during which Dutch peacekeepers were killed the UN intervened and bombed Serbian positions. Later, in November 1995, Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians signed the peace treaty in Dayton, Ohio, forced to do so by international pressure. However, internal conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina still remains strong, mainly because of the pressure from Serbs, as they continue to assault local people whenever they find themselves within the territory of Serbian ethnic group.

The political system is divided among Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians, creating many constraints on the path of the introduction of the EU political system. As a result, there is no wonder that the report of the European Commission (2014) identifies that “there has been very limited progress on political and economic issues and on moving towards European

standards” (p. 1). Thus, it is possible to conclude that Bosnia and Herzegovina is highly heterogeneous; in fact heterogeneity is the main cause of the current separatism in the country.

Georgia

The overall demographic situation in Georgia and the consequences of its heterogeneity are well summarized by Nodia and Scholtbach (2006), as they point out that “ethnic minorities comprised somewhat under thirty per cent of the population of Georgia, with Armenians, Russians and Azeris making up the largest groups” (p. 9). However, the problems arose not with the mentioned ethnicities but with the Abkhazs and Ossets who enjoyed the status of autonomous units during the period of the Soviet Union. While there were no major problems with Abkhazs at first, Ossetians proved to be more radical, as two-thirds of this autonomous republic’s territory population comprised of Ossetians, which made the democratic secession possible. The radical policy of the Georgian president Gamsakhurdia caused the newly elected Ossetian Supreme Council to proclaim the South Ossetian Republic. Later, the Abkhazs joined them creating two zones of frozen conflicts to the north and northwest of the country. At the moment, both South Ossetia and Abkhazia are partially-recognized states with significant autonomy and Russian support creating the separatist tendencies in Georgia. One more region is an autonomous republic Adjara. The republic does not necessarily want to become a separate country however relations between the authorities of Adjara and Georgia have been unstable since the 1991 thus creating another conflict zone.

Ukraine

The current political climate in Ukraine clearly characterizes its territorial and demographic structure as heterogeneous. According to Kuzio and Hamilton (2011), the main minority, if it can be called so, is represented by Russians who comprise 17% of the total number of citizens. Ukrainians comprise 78% of the population. Other minorities include Belarussian, Tatar, Polish, Moldavian, Armenian, and many other ethnicities. Thus, it is safe to claim that Ukraine is a heterogeneous country. However, the recent conflict in Ukraine brings the Russian diaspora's issue to the fore. Valdai Discussion Club's (2014) report, for example, provides a great example of how Russian political elite perceives Ukraine as a country. The official opinion of the report is that Ukraine was ruled by oligarchs since the moment of its independence and that the country's government was always afraid Moscow would take away Ukrainian independency. The report also provides demographic background pointing out that Ukrainian population is clearly divided into two groups, one of which speaks Russian and the other one Ukrainian creating a distinct differentiation and the consecutive orientation of the groups on Russia and the EU respectively, this causing the division of the East and West parts of the country. Thus, the certain degree of separatism and division has always existed in Ukraine. Fueled by the Euromaidan revolution and caused by the interference of Russian unmarked soldiers, separatism increased significantly, as the referendum annexed the Crimea peninsula after putting it under the military control of Russian troops. The eastern regions of the country also suffered from the military intervention of unmarked soldiers, conducted their own referendum, and are currently labeled as the territories occupied by separatists by the official government.

Switzerland

According to IndexMundi.com (2015), Swiss population comprises of the following groups: Germans who constitute 65% of the population, French constituting 18%, Italian (10%), Romansch (1%), and other minor groups that together comprise 6% of the population. The large number of ethnic groups allows considering Switzerland a heterogeneous country. However, such heterogeneity was hardly a source for any conflicts in the recent years. Switzerland, known for its policy of neutrality, remains a peaceful country with no significant separatist tendencies, except of the phenomenon of Jurassic separatism, which does not result in any violent actions. Consequently, there are also no frozen conflicts in the territory of Switzerland. Therefore from this view point the country is potentially ready to enter the EU.

To summarize this point all four previously mentioned countries have either internal and/or external problems including actual or potential conflicts, some of them potentially frozen conflicts. One of the prerequisite of becoming a member of the EU should be at least some internal and external stability and therefore these countries should work on solving at least some of their difficulties. Switzerland despite its heterogeneity is a stable economy and even though it also deals with problems such as immigration it does not have any problems which would harden its entrance into the EU.

4.8. Chapter 8. The status of the five potential EU members

The status of the potential members varies significantly and is highly dependent on civilization, religious, economic, and political factors, which are chosen as the framework for the analysis. The official status of the potential members, on which the current research focuses on, can be summarized as follows.

Switzerland

Switzerland is bound with the EU “by more than hundred bilateral agreements” (Europa.eu, 2015). These agreements include the agreement concerning the free movement of persons and affect numerous spheres of trade. Switzerland is part of the Schengen Area, as well as the Council of Europe. Switzerland joined the NATO’s Partnership for Peace in 1996. Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development are additional intergovernmental and international organizations respectively Switzerland belongs to. The country also belongs to the European Free Trade Association which gathers four countries, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, which do not belong to the Union but closely cooperate with it. However, the country’s historical stance of political neutrality and its current economic independency prevents it from entering the EU in the present day. The monetary union does not offer many tempting options to Switzerland and, as shown by the economic analysis, many of the Swiss economic indicators are better than in numerous EU countries. Despite the fact that Switzerland submitted the membership application already in 1992 the multiple referendums conducted since then showed that Switzerland so far wishes to stay outside the EU, even though the two entities closely cooperate.

Turkey

Turkey belongs to the Council of Europe and EU Customs Union. Besides this Turkey belongs to the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and Organization for European Co-operation and Development to which both some EU members well as some non-EU members belong. Turkey belongs to NATO as well. As pointed out by the Ec.europa.eu (2015), Turkey has a long history of cooperation with the EU, which started in 1963 with the signing of Ankara Association Agreement and the customs union relationships were established in 1995. Turkey

is also a Dialogue Partner with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization where also Russia belongs to. Turkey is the official candidate country with multiple negotiations chapters opened. It has been a candidate for an extensive time period and it depends on both the EU and Turkish attitude towards the various potential problematic sections of negotiations whether Turkey will get closer to the EU membership.

Ukraine

Ukraine also belongs to the Council of Europe. European Union (2014) points out that the relationships between Ukraine and the EU can currently be described as Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. Ukraine takes part in the Eastern Partnership program. Ukraine signed the Ukraine–European Union Association Agreement in 2014. It is believed to be an important step towards Ukrainian cooperation with the EU. Also, the current president of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, claimed that the goal of Ukraine is to apply for EU membership by 2020. Besides the cooperation with the EU, which includes for example also Baku initiative formed by the European Union, Ukraine belongs to numerous other international organizations including Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development. It is a potential candidate for the Central European Free Trade Agreement. The country has taken part also in the NATO's Partnership for Peace since 1994. It is also observer of the Eurasian Economic Community, which is under direct influence of Russia. It is also important to mention that Ukraine is a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States Free Trade Area. Finally Ukraine claimed it will not become a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization led by Russia, it would rather become a member of NATO, but it will most likely conduct a referendum prior to the final decision.

Georgia

Georgia in 2014 signed the Association Agreement and established with the EU the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area enhancing the cooperation with the EU. Georgia also takes part in the Eastern Partnership program. It also cooperates on various other levels and have numerous bilateral and regional programs related to the Union. In the recent past Georgia claimed it would like to strive to become a member of the EU however the recent developments in regards to separatist tendencies, relations with Russia, and other internal problems postponed the tendencies. According to European Parliament Georgia has a potential to become a close partner and potentially even member of the EU if it meets all the necessary economic, political, and other criteria in the future. Georgia is also member of the Council of Europe, Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development. Georgia is an aspirant country for the NATO membership and takes part in the Partnership for Peace. Finally in 2008 Georgia left the Commonwealth of Independent States which is under control of Russia.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ec.Europa.eu (2015) indicates that the relations of the EU and Bosnia and Herzegovina are currently countersigned by the Stabilization and Association Agreement, which was signed in 2008, ratified in 2010, however it is still not in force. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a potential candidate country as it was identified in 2003 however so far the country has not applied to the official membership. The country is member of the Council of Europe and the Central European Free Trade Agreement. It is also a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. It takes part in the NATO's Partnership for Peace program and is in the negotiation phase for full membership since 2010.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

In the course of the current research, it has become possible to prove or disprove the stated hypothesis.

The first hypothesis has been proved using the research of this thesis as well as the historical data, past expansion waves, the fact that the last country entered only in 2013. It is also supported by the fact that the EU has numerous official candidates including Montenegro (negotiations started in 2014), Albania, Turkey (negotiations started in 2010), Macedonia, Serbia, and Iceland despite the fact that negotiations with Iceland were terminated as of right now. Obviously the EU might shrink as well in the future, however the current research as well as the history have shown that the expansion of the EU is a dynamic process and that we are most likely to see some kind of expansion in the future. To analyze whether it would be prosperous or not is not the purpose of this paper.

The answer to the second hypothesis should include the summarizing analysis of the five representative countries which follows.

Turkey

Turkey could become the member of the EU only if it settles the political instability in the country, as well as the Kurdish question. Geographically Turkey lies partially on the European continent and therefore this criteria is met, even though it is partially an Asian country. In regards to the sphere of influence, the country is influenced by other Islamic countries due to cooperation with them and it partners with the U.S. in many areas, however it could be assumed that it is not under any direct sphere of influence. Not all economic criteria of Turkey allow it to become the member of the European Union as well; its interest rates are too high, however EU could make an exception in this field as all other economic criteria as well as the strength of the economy are fine. The country should work on their freedoms and liberties because a better score in these fields is a prerequisite not only for the EU

membership but a Turkish development in general. The major drawback however is the uncertainty in regards to the religion and its effect on the public life not only in Turkey but in the EU as a whole. This said, Turkey could become member of the EU but the religious question might be such a significant unknown for both of the sides that it might hinder its accession for a very long time.

Ukraine

Ukraine can become a member of the EU only in the long run. Its economy is too weak at the moment. For example, the Ukrainian debt to GDP ratio is 71%. In the Gini index section Ukraine scored very well, the results being comparable to the current members. It has high both inflation level and interest rates, both indicators making the country economically unstable. The political tensions in Ukraine, especially increased separatism, also make it incompatible with the EU's membership criteria. Also, the influence of Russia and the current conflict between the two countries is something the EU would not want to be part of as the entity which would Ukraine be part of. Obviously Ukraine is an important partner for both Russia and EU as it is one of the buffer states between their spheres of influences, possess natural resources, and is potentially in the future a huge economy providing significant working force. This said, because of the current economic, political, and corruption troubles Ukraine will not be able to be a member in the near future, however the EU will probably try to keep the Ukraine moving the European direction using various funding programs and thematic and cultural platforms.

Georgia

The primary constraint that does not allow Georgia to be accepted to the EU at the moment is its economic conditions. The country's debt to GDP ratio is more than 81%, and the overall state of economy is not appropriate. The Gini index showed significant disproportionalities in the society, and even though the inflation rate is comparable to the

mean inflation rate of the current members the interest rates are much higher. Georgia also has its frozen conflicts and separatist tendencies, which may make the political climate in the Union unstable if it accepts the country in the nearest future. There would have to be an extensive border control if it would become an EU member and under the current circumstances it would not be able to put in place such security measures. By leaving various international organizations under direct influence of Russia, Georgia might want to show that it is decided to move towards the European integration and get rid of the Russian influence. Therefore, even though Georgia lies geographically on the European continent and thus can be a member of the EU, it needs to work on its economic stability and on solving its internal problems as country with so many recent problems could not be an essential part of the EU.

Switzerland

Switzerland could become a member of the Union if its citizens vote for such an initiative through the referendum which Switzerland uses for important decisions. However, given the country's policy of neutrality Swiss people will hardly make such a decision in the short-run. Still, there are no constraints for Switzerland if its citizens will ever express the desire to enter the Union as it is politically and economically stable and it enjoys adequate rights and freedoms for religion and personal liberties.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina is torn by the differences in the worldview of three major ethnic groups that live in the country, as well as three governmental systems that lead to the incredibly bulky bureaucracy incompatible with the flexibility of the EU political model. The economic conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina are also not compliant with convergence criteria. Therefore even though the country has a potential candidate status it first has to deal by itself with its numerous internal problems and settle the disputes among the various ethnic and religious groups for example through education and more cooperation with international

bodies. However before these issues are solved there is still a threat of further separation, inner division, and frozen conflicts, and thus the country is not suitable for becoming a member of the EU in a thinkable future.

This said, the only country which could potentially directly enter the EU, after fulfilling all the judicial and other criteria, is Switzerland which is economically stable and even though it could not be called homogenous the political and religious situation has been stable for so long that this fact does not hinder its position.

The other countries as they meet the geographical scope condition could also become members but there is a lot to do from both the countries' and the EU's sides as the countries have to work on their individual internal and external problems and the EU has to analyze carefully how more heterogeneous it wants to get and how large area it can successfully, effectively, and efficiently lead.

Therefore, the second hypothesis is also proved as the research has shown the most suitable member which is economically stable, even though it is not completely homogenous.

The hypothesis number three about the grouping of the countries can be called partially proved and partially disproved if to refer to the economic development and integration into the EU. Some of the countries are economically well stabled but do experience other problems within their societies such as religious tensions as in France, immigration difficulties as in the case of Germany, division tendencies (Scotland) as in the UK. Other countries do have a good economic situation but are not so integrated into the EU as in the case of Sweden which is not part of the monetary union but has good economic indicators. In the case of potential members for example Belarus might be rather grouped with Russia in the future research than with Ukraine as it is politically much more similar to Russia, forming even a union state together, and in the thinkable future will not be willing to disrupt its ties with it order to become closer to the EU. This said, even though the countries

within the groups which were created at the beginning of the research share some commonalities it cannot be confirmed that they belong solely only to these groups as the groups overlap because the countries score variously in the numerous fields studied in this paper.

After the analysis of the hypothesis and conclusion about the five representatives of the potential countries it could be claimed that potentially all the countries which are not currently members of the EU and are mentioned in the methodology part could be part of the EU, some more recently, some in very far future, but the doors to EU are most likely opened to all of them, but they have to fulfill the criteria mentioned throughout the thesis.

In regards to the research itself it is necessary to underline some drawbacks of the research and recommendations for future studies. In order to get a really comprehensive study it would be vital to conduct the research for all the potential countries, not only for five representative ones. It would also be essential to use more fields in which the countries are analyzed in order to get even more comprehensive knowledge of the countries. These fields might include the system and quality of education, standards of living, corruption level, demographic analysis including birth and death rate, immigration and emigration, quality of health care, and so forth. It would also be interested to conduct official referendum in all the countries in regards to their attitude towards the EU membership, even though this is in the hands of the individual countries. Also, some in field research could be prosperous, more specifically a questionnaire distributed in the country asking what the citizens view as major problems and benefits of their countries, their attitude towards the EU, etc.. Finally primary sources such as interview with professors from the European integration field or with a knowledgeable public official could bring more light into the potential expansion.

To conclude, the project of the European Union is a successful example of creation of an international organization and of European regionalism. It has developed from an

economic community of few countries into a Union of ever-integrating 28 countries. It should not be forgotten that one of the principles of the Union was creation of a stable community of countries, thus increasing its strength and importance on the international level. Therefore enlargement should be viewed as one of the motivators of cooperation, integration, and common European identity, which might in the far future be a real bond, however the future expansion should be wisely analyzed and considered so it brings mostly benefits to all the members in the long run – the long run not meaning years or decades but centuries...

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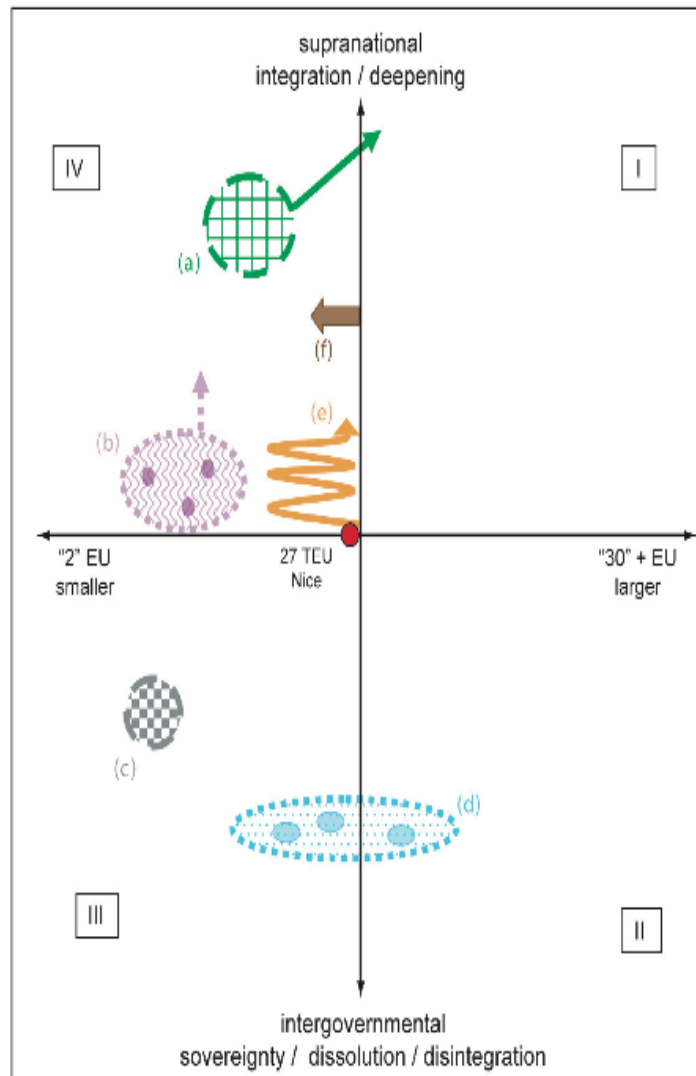
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7. Appendices

Appendix 1: The four quadrants of flexible integration. (Source: Tekin and Wessels, 2008)

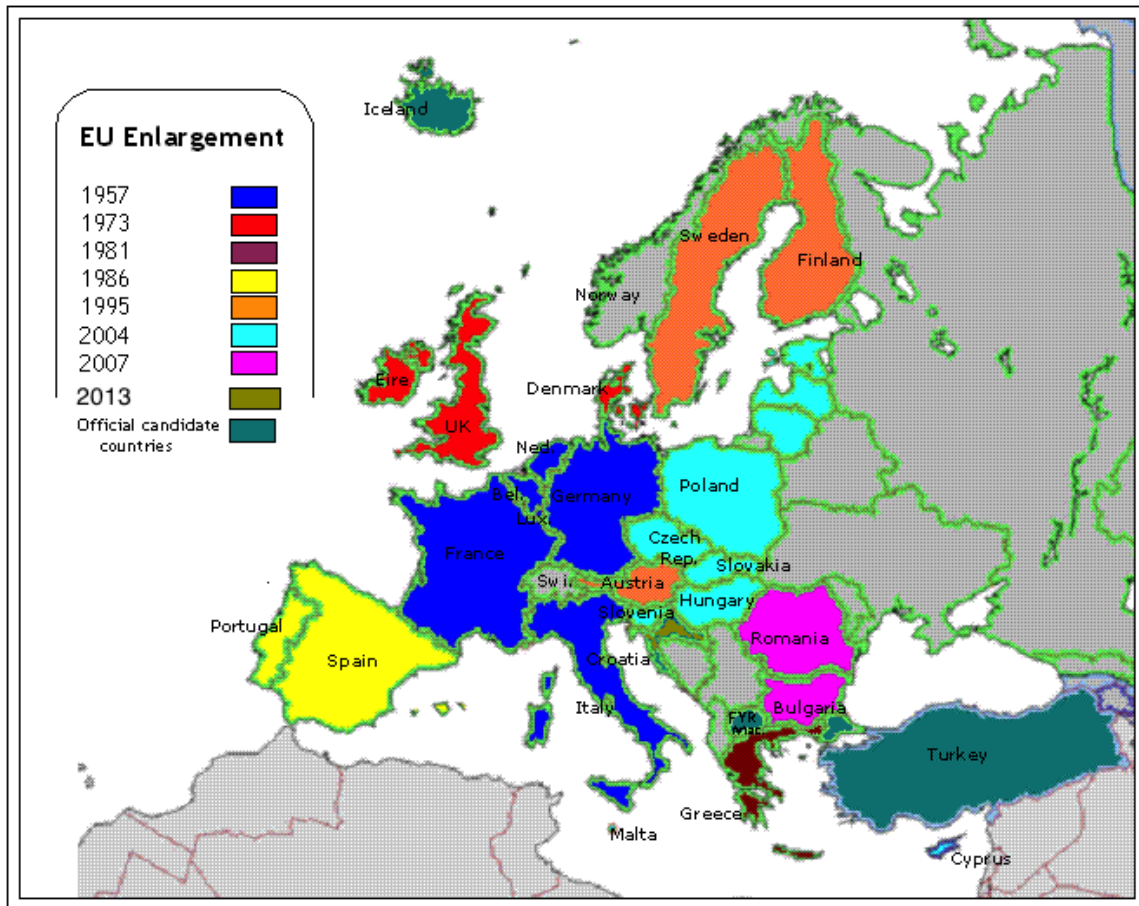


- a. **Core Europe ("Avantgarde"):** functional and/or constitutional deepening by a group of „willing“ and „able“ Member States to attract others to follow
- b. **Variable geometry:** sectoral integration of different groups of Member States with opt-outs accepting that not all Member States might join the fully integrated group
- c. **Directoire:** intergovernmental cooperation between a few large Member States (EU3, EU5) excluding smaller states by definition
- d. **L'Europe à la carte:** ad hoc groups of interested states (including more or less than the actual number of EU members) engaged in limited functional or sectoral cooperation outside the TEU framework
- e. **Treaty-based flexibility:** pre-defined flexibility; case-by-case flexibility; enabling clauses; thus enhanced cooperation(!!!)
- f. **Withdrawal by single Member States:** complete opt out of one or more Member States.

Appendix 2: The map of the European Continent (Source: (Worldatlas.com, 2015)).



Appendix 3: The European Union map with the years of accession (Source: Keeping Cool, 2010).



Appendix 4: Maritime Realms and Zones of Compression (Source: Cohen, 2003).

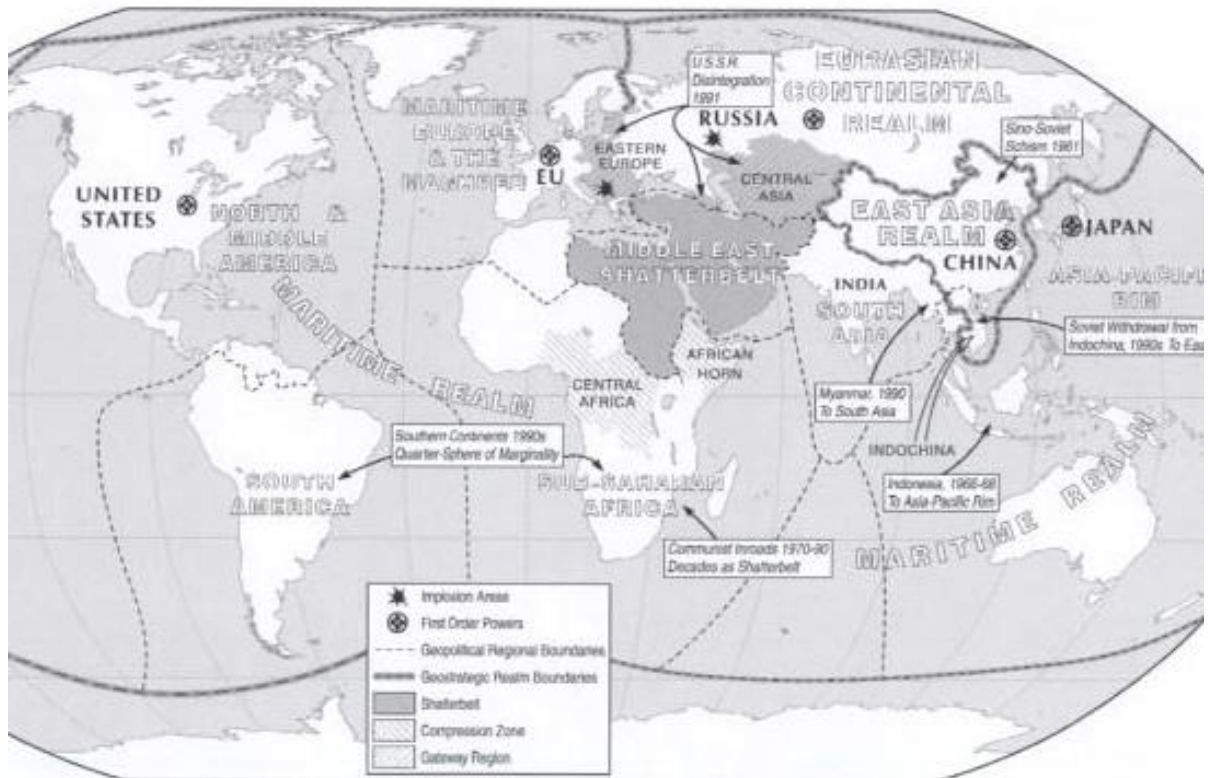


Figure 4.1 Realm and Regional Changes from the End of World War II to the Present

Appendix 5: The Economic Indicator of EU members

CURRENT	gini index	inflation level, %	level of interest rate, %	budget deficit, million of euro	budget debt, million of euro	exchange rate, euro/currency of a non Eurozone member	GDP, EUR million	Deficit/GDP	Debt/GDP
Austria	27,00	2,60	0,37	-7916,00	278088,80		313000	-0,02529073	0,888463
Belgium	25,90	2,60	0,49	-13057,40	428364,60		383000	-0,03409243	1,118445
Bulgaria	35,40	2,40	2,49	-1194,90	11603,60	1,81	40000	-0,0298725	0,29009
Croatia	30,90	3,40	3,08	-2468,40	36506,80	7,57	43000	-0,05740465	0,848995
Republic of Cyprus	32,40	3,10	6,00	-1543,50	18818,60		17000	-0,09079412	1,106976
Czech Republic	24,60	3,50	0,35	-3070,80	65481,80	25,34	149000	-0,0206094	0,439475
Denmark	27,50	2,40	0,30	3211,60	116576,50	6,90	249000	0,012897992	0,468179
Estonia	32,90	4,20	0,00	121,30	2072,50		18000	0,006738889	0,115139
Finland	25,40	3,20	0,39	-6435,00	121050,00		193000	-0,03334197	0,627202
France	30,10	2,20	0,51	-84839,00	2037771,90		2060000	-0,04118398	0,98921
Germany	29,70	2,10	0,23	19422,60	2170000,50		2738000	0,007093718	0,792549
Greece	34,40	1,00	10,52	-6356,00	317094,00		182000	-0,03492308	1,742275
Hungary	28,00	5,70	3,29	-2648,60	77723,90	301,19	98000	-0,02702653	0,793101
Ireland	30,00	1,90	0,80	-7629,20	203319,40		164000	-0,04651951	1,239752
Italy	32,50	3,30	1,29	-49056,00	2134920,10		1560000	-0,03144615	1,368539
Latvia	35,20	2,30	0,56	-347,00	9633,20		23000	-0,01508696	0,418835
Lithuania	34,60	3,20	1,11	-242,00	14826,30		35000	-0,00691429	0,423609
Luxembourg	30,40	2,90	0,16	289,00	11123,50		45000	0,006422222	0,247189
Malta	27,90	3,20	1,31	-168,30	5417,40		7000	-0,02404286	0,773914
Netherlands	25,10	2,80	0,33	-15035,00	451006,00		603000	-0,02493367	0,747937

Poland	30,70	3,70	2,33	-13202,00	202775,70	3,73	390000	-0,03385128	0,519938
Portugal	34,20	2,80	1,74	-7716,90	225280,40		166000	-0,04648735	1,357111
Romania	34,00	3,40	3,01	-2232,50	59202,10	4,42	142000	-0,01572183	0,416916
Slovakia	24,20	3,70	1,19	-2156,90	40296,90		72000	-0,02995694	0,559679
Slovenia	24,40	2,80	0,99	-1819,30	30132,60		35000	-0,05198	0,860931
Spain	33,7	2,4	1,23	-61391	1033857		1023000	-0,06001075	1,010613
Sweden	24,90	0,90	0,58	-8098,50	182578,20	8,60	420000	-0,01928214	0,43471
The UK	30,20	2,80	1,59	-126281,40	2055285,70	1,38	1909000	-0,06615055	1,076629
Mean	29,86	2,88	1,65	-14352,18	440743,14	40,10	467035,71	-0,03	0,77
median	30,15	2,80	1,05	-2859,70	118813,25	6,90	165000,00	-0,03	0,78
Max	35,40	5,70	10,52	19422,60	2170000,50	301,19	2738000,00	0,01	1,74
Min	24,20	0,90	0,00	-126281,40	2072,50	1,38	7000,00	-0,09	0,12

Appendix 6: The economic indicators of potential members

POTENTIAL	gini index	inflation level	level of interest rate	budget deficit, millions of eur	budget debt	exchange rate	GDP, millions of EUR	Deficit/GDP	Debt/GDP
Albania	29	1,6	7,1	-33,39	7147,44	140,25	11944,44	-0,002795443	0,598391
Armenia	30,3	3	8,9	-161,27	3541,67	510,48	9657,41	-0,016699094	0,366731
Azerbaijan	33,03	2,4	16	40,86	884,44	1,13	68111,11	0,000599902	0,012985
Belarus	26,46	18,1	4,6	46,47	37093,89	15440,9	66398,15	0,000699869	0,558658
Bosnia and Herzegovina	33,04	-0,9	6,39	-36,32	7502,91	1,96	16509,26	-0,002199977	0,454467
Georgia	41,35	3,1	6,5	-44,35	12407,41	2,43	15296,3	-0,002899394	0,811138
Iceland	26,3	2	6	-2,71	3496,31	147,25	13537,04	-0,000200191	0,258277
Kosovo	30	0,4	12,5	-262	415	1	6444,44	-0,0406552	0,064397
Macedonia	43,56	-0,3	8	-38,67	1598	61,5	9462,96	-0,004086459	0,168869
Moldavia	30,63	5,1	6	-13,23	5757,41	19,51	7351,85	-0,001799547	0,783124
Montenegro	30,6	-0,7	6,4	-16	2736,74	1	4101,85	-0,003900679	0,667197
Norway	26,83	2	2	52725	0	8,47	475000	0,111	0
Switzerland	32,35	0	2,9	117,48	99698,058	1,03	602777,78	0,000194898	0,165398
Turkey	40,04	8,9	7,5	-987,04	372606,48	2,9	759259,26	-0,001300004	0,49075
Ukraine	24,82	12,2	9,3	-753,88	116950,93	22,54	163888,89	-0,004599946	0,713599
Mean	31,89	3,79	7,34	3372,06	44789,11	1090,82	148649,38	0,00	0,41
median	30,60	2,00	6,50	-33,39	5757,41	8,47	15296,30	0,00	0,45
Max	43,56	18,10	16,00	52725,00	372606,48	15440,90	759259,26	0,11	0,81
Min	24,82	-0,90	2,00	-987,04	0,00	1,00	4101,85	-0,04	0,00

Appendix 7: Georgian inflation rate during the last 5 years (Source: Xe.com (2015))

GEL per 1 EUR

27 Apr 2010 00:00 UTC - 26 Apr 2015 14:00 UTC
EUR/GEL close: 2.48226 low: 2.00518 high: 2.61668



Appendix 8: Ukrainian inflation rate during the last five years (Source: Xe.com (2015))

UAH per 1 EUR

27 Apr 2010 00:00 UTC - 26 Apr 2015 14:02 UTC

EUR/UAH close: 24.95474 low: 9.43747 high: 37.75450



Appendix 9: Turkish inflation rate over the last five years (Source: Xe.com (2015))

TRY per 1 EUR

27 Apr 2010 00:00 UTC - 26 Apr 2015 14:03 UTC

EUR/TRY close: 2.95168 low: 1.90021 high: 3.19584



Appendix 10: The inflation rate in Bosnia and Herzegovina over the last five years (Source: Xe.com (2015))

BAM per 1 EUR

28 May 2011 00:00 UTC
EUR/BAM close: 1.95583



Appendix 11: The inflation rate of the Swiss Franc over the last five years (Source: Xe.com (2015))

CHF per 1 EUR

27 Apr 2010 00:00 UTC - 26 Apr 2015 14:06 UTC
EUR/CHF close: 1.03720 low: 0.98207 high: 1.44467



Appendix 12: The political rights and civil liberties of the current EU members

CURRENT	political rights	civil liberties
Austria	1	1
Belgium	1	1
Bulgaria	2	2
Croatia	1	2
Republic of Cyprus	1	1
Czech Republic	1	1
Denmark	1	1
Estonia	1	1
Finland	1	1
France	1	1
Germany	1	1
Greece	2	2
Hungary	2	2
Ireland	1	1
Italy	1	1
Latvia	2	2
Lithuania	1	1
Luxembourg	1	1
Malta	1	1
Netherlands	1	1
Poland	1	1
Portugal	1	1
Romania	2	2
Slovakia	1	1
Slovenia	1	1

Spain	1	1
Sweden	1	1
The UK	1	1
Mean	1,178571429	1,214285714
Median	1	1

Appendix 13: The political rights and civil liberties of the potential EU members

POTENTIAL	political rights	civil liberties
Albania	3	3
Armenia	5	4
Azerbaijan	6	6
Belarus	7	6
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3	3
Georgia	4	3
Iceland	1	1
Kosovo	4	4
Macedonia	3	3
Moldavia	3	3
Montenegro	3	2
Norway	1	1
Switzerland	1	1
Turkey	3	4
Ukraine	3	3
Mean	3,333333333	3,133333333
median	3	3

Appendix 14: The analysis of the religions of current members

CURRENT	major religion	minor religion	problems
Austria	Roman Catholicism	Islam, Protestantism, Orthodox Christianity, Judaism, Atheism	Discrimination against Judaism and Islam, 71% of Austrians believe Islam is non-compatible with democracy
Belgium	Roman Catholicism	Islam, Protestantism, Judaism, Atheists	Some discrimination against Judaism, Holocaust denial, discrimination against Muslims, flaws in governmental policy towards non-concessional organizations, such as Buddhists
Bulgaria	Orthodox Christianity	Islam, Judaism, Roman Catholicism	Islam discrimination because of the activity of the organization Al Waqf Al Islami, derision of Jehowah's witnesses
Croatia	Roman Catholicism	Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Protestantism	Discrimination against Orthodox Christians, arson of the entrance to a Christian church on Christmas Eve
Republic of Cyprus	Orthodox Christianity	Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Judaism	Discrimination against Muslims and Jews. There was a case of vandalism of Jewish communities and mosques.
Czech Republic	Roman Catholicism	Protestantism, Judaism, Islam	Mainly no issues, but some anti-Semitism and anti-Islamism
Denmark	Protestantism	Islam, Roman Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity, Judaism	Anti-Semitic, anti-Christian, and anti-Islamic harassments
Estonia	Protestantism	Orthodox Christianity,	No major issues

		Judaism, Islam	
Finland	Protestantism	Orthodox Christianity, Roman Catholicism, Islam	Mainly anti-Semitic claims, no violent actions
France	Roman Catholicism	Islam, Protestantism, Judaism, Atheists	The law prohibiting covering face in public, anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic claims, sometimes coupled with small-scale violent activities
Germany	Roman Catholicism, Protestantism	Islam, Orthodox Christianity	The delays with granting a public law corporation status to the Muslim Coordination Council, a ban from wearing headscarves in governmental institutions,
Greece	Orthodox Christianity	Islam, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism	Limited governmental support of minor religions, taxation of the organizations related to minor religions, anti-Semitism and anti-Islamism including violent actions
Hungary	Roman Catholicism, Protestantism	Judaism, Orthodox Christianity, Islam	Changes in legislation causing some minor religions to lose their status, high anti-Semitism in society as well as vandalism against Judaism and Muslims
Ireland	Catholicism	Protestantism, Islam, Orthodox Christianity, Judaism	Some anti-Muslim hostility, no open violent actions
Italy	Roman Catholicism	Islam, Judaism, Orthodox Christianity	General hostility against Muslims in the society
Latvia	Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Orthodox Christianity	Judaism, Islam	Some anti-Semitic actions including vandalism
Lithuania	Roman	Orthodox	Some discrimination against Judaism

	Catholicism	Christianity, Protestantism, Judaism, Islam	
Luxembourg	Roman Catholicism	Protestantism, Islam, Orthodox Christianity, Judaism	No problems
Malta	Roman Catholicism	Protestants, Orthodox Christianity, Judaism, Islam	No problems
Netherlands	Roman Catholicism, Protestantism	Islam, Judaism, Orthodox Christianity	Some discrimination against the religious groups that condemn homosexuality, a few cases of anti-Semitism and anti-Islamism, an attempted arson of a Mosque in 2012.
Poland	Roman Catholicism	Protestantism, Orthodox Christianity, Judaism, Islam	The law prohibiting halal and kosher slaughter discriminate against Judaism and Islam, vandalism against Catholics, Judaism, and Muslims, including violence.
Portugal	Roman Catholicism	Protestantism, Islam, Orthodox Christianity, Judaism	No problems
Romania	Orthodox Christianity	Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, Islam	Some legal discrimination of minority religions, such as the unwillingness to give tax exemptions or land space to build a religious structures, difficulties in conducting religious rites for minor religions, the tensions between Catholic and Orthodox churches, some hostility against Judaism.
Slovakia	Roman Catholicism	Protestantism, Orthodox Christianity, Judaism	Legal restrictions against smaller religious groups, discrimination of certain religious rites, such as the burial of a dead person not quicker than 48 hours after death, anti-Violence shown by Neo-Nazi groups.
Slovenia	Roman	Islam, Orthodox	No problems

	Catholicism	Christianity	
Spain	Catholicism	Protestants, Muslims, Judaism	Some local governments restrict the freedom of Muslims and non-Catholic Christians, hostility against Muslims and Judaism.
Sweden	Protestantism	Catholics, Judaism, Orthodox	Anti-Semitic and anti-Islamic hate crimes, often coupled with violence.
The UK	Protestantism	Catholicism, Islam, Judaism	Anti-Semitism and anti-islamism, sometimes with violence.

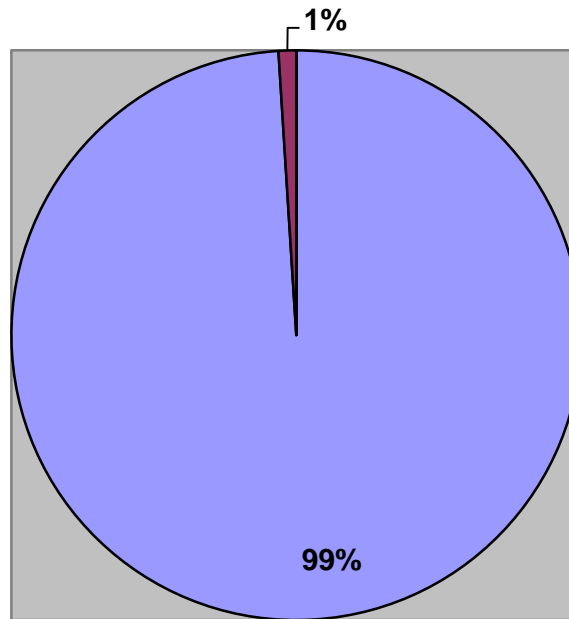
Appendix 15: The analysis of the religions of potential members.

POTENTIAL	major religion	minor religions	problems
Albania	Islam	Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity	Property ownership disputes with regards to minor religions.
Armenia	Orthodox Christianity	Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam	There are restrictions on the rights of minority religious groups limiting their freedom of press, and the amount of land that can be used for building religious structures. Strong anti-Semitism and anti-Islamism in the society, a few causes of the abuse of religious freedom.
Azerbaijan	Islam	Orthodox Christianity, Judaism	Some laws and policies restrict religious freedom, all religious organizations must be officially registered, hostility against Christians.
Belarus	Orthodox Christianity	Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism	Some laws and policies restrict religious freedom, all religious organizations must be officially registered, hostility against non-traditional minor religions, visa refusals to religion missionaries, several cases of the abuse of religious freedom, the cases of anti-Semitism, vandalism, and violence.
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Islam, Orthodox Christianity, Catholicism	Protestantism, Judaism	The minority religions are oppressed, often with the involvement of violent actions.
Georgia	Orthodox Christians	Islam, Protestants, Judaism	There are certain tensions concerning the church property currently possessed by the government, there is significant prejudice towards homosexuals, prosecution of the religious rites of minor religions, cases of anti-Semitism and anti-Islamism including violence.
Iceland	Protestantism	Catholicism Judaism	No problems
Kosovo	Islam	Catholicism, Orthodox	Headscarves are not encouraged in governmental institutions, there were some violent actions against Orthodox minorities in the country.
Macedonia	Orthodox Christianity,	Catholicism, Judaism	Some cases of vandalism

	Islam		
Moldavia	Orthodox Christianity	Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism	Some laws restrict religious freedom, religious groups must be registered, the role of the major religion is dominant, there were cases of the harassment against Judaism and Protestants, particularly Jehovah's Witnesses
Montenegro	Orthodox Christianity, Islam	Catholicism	Anti-Islamic actions including violence
Norway	Protestantism	Catholicism, Islam, Judaism	Hate crimes, the case of Breivik who detonated a large explosive device next to the governmental buildings; one of the causes was excessive Muslims immigration. There were some cases of anti-Semitism, although not so violent.
Switzerland	Catholicism, Protestantism	Islam, Orthodox Christianity, Judaism	Refusal to build mosques in some territories, racism and anti-semitism including violence enacted by the neo-Nazi groups.
Turkey	Islam	Orthodox Christianity, Judaism, Protestantism	Some constitutional laws restrict religious freedom, the minorities are not considered to be legal bodies, worshipping in non-specific locations is illegal, there is a minimal capital requirement necessary to create a religious foundation. The government often brought the unfounded blasphemy charges against the members of minority religions. The most powerful political party of the country continuously attempts to impose religious rites on the citizens, although its actions are confronted by secularist politicians. Minority religions are seen as a threat to Islam and national unity, there are numerous cases of violence against the members of minorities.
Ukraine	Orthodox Christianity	Islam, Catholicism, Judaism	There were a few cases of discrimination against Crimean Tatars during their employment in local administrative buildings. There were also the cases of anti-Muslim and anti-Judaism discrimination including violence.

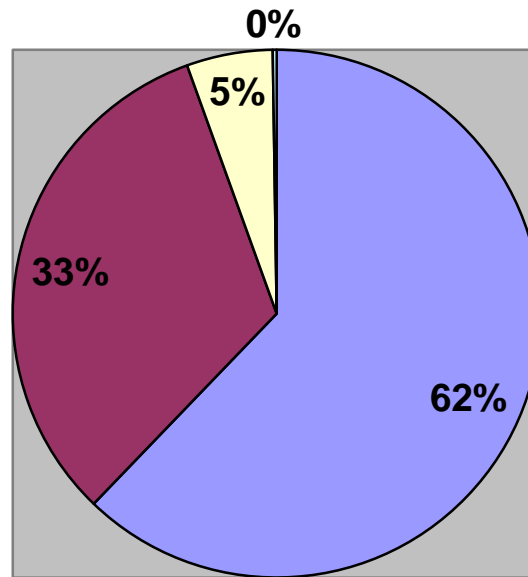
Appendix 16. The religious demographics of Turkey

Turkey



Appendix 17. The religious demographics of Ukraine

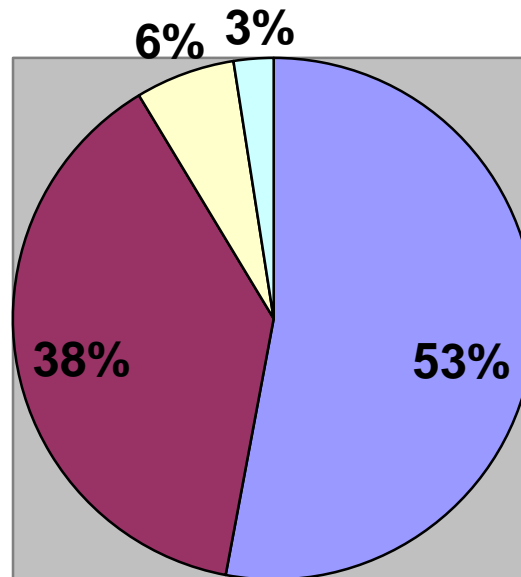
Ukraine



Appendix 18. The religious demographics of Switzerland

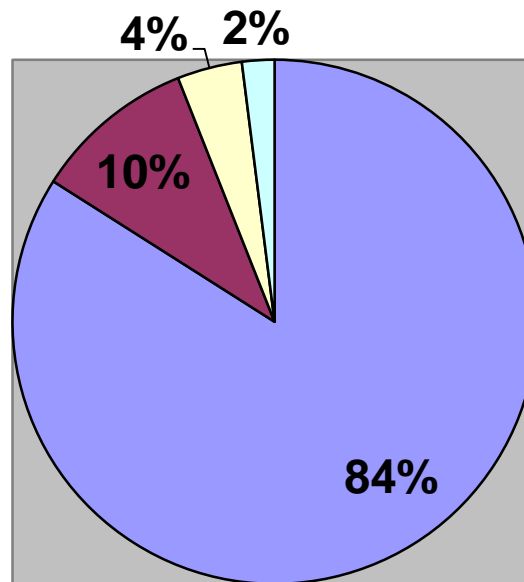
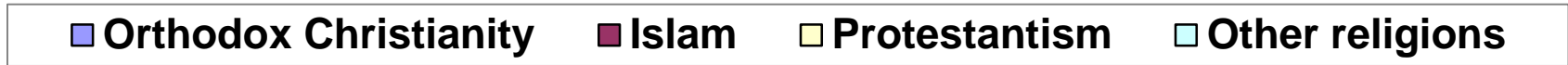
Switzerland

■ Roman Catholicism ■ Protestantism ■ Islam ■ Orthodox Christianity



Appendix 19. The religious demographics of Georgia

Georgia



Appendix 20. The religious demographics of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina

