

Newsletter May 2005

FIRST SECRETARY OF THE SLOVENIAN EMBASSY VISITS CEUROSTO MARK “EUROPE DAY”

On the 9th of May 2005, the First Secretary of the Slovenian Embassy, Leon Marc, paid a visit to UL to speak on “The Role of Slovenia in European Integration”. At the outset, the Chair expressed how fitting it was to have him speaking for CEUROS on Europe Day, bearing in mind that Slovenia is a country very dedicated to the European idea.

Mr. Marc’s presentation was divided into three parts: the history behind Slovenia, Slovenia today and the future of Slovenia in the EU. Beginning with a little history, he drew attention to a number of relevant points. After WWII, for example, Slovenia remained within Yugoslavia and fell within the Communist world. After 1948 there was a specific Yugoslav foreign policy, but no room for a distinct Slovenian policy. In the 1980s there was a revival of the European idea, along with the idea of democratisation and independence. While the struggle for diplomatic recognition, delayed the EU vocation of Slovenia compared to Visegrad countries.

In relation to Slovenia today, Mr. Marc highlighted certain areas, such as the economy and the political transformation. The main investors in Slovenia are Austria, Germany, Switzerland, France and Italy. The main exports to Ireland consist of kitchen appliances, prefab houses and car tyres, to name but a few. The main trading partners are Germany, Italy, Austria, France and Croatia.

When addressing the political transformation, Mr. Marc, in a similar to fashion to the history of Slovenia, focussed on certain areas. One such topic was the reform of the Communist party and other pre-1990 political organisations. Continuing on, he also mentioned the problem of retention of the political, administrative, business and civil-society elite, the ownership of media and the shaping of (new) political parties.

The last part of the presentation dealt with the Slovenian future in the EU – first impressions. Some believe that nothing happened, Slovenia merely joined ‘the club’. While evidence shows, there has been no economic shock and no soaring prices, but a loss of preferential trading status with Bosnia and Macedonia. In addition, Slovenia has played a greater role in EU affairs than ever before.

In conclusion, Mr. Marc emphasised the main goals for Slovenia. These include, exceeding the EU average GDP within 10 years, adopting the Euro by 1st of January 2007 and ultimately, the continuation of the Slovenian success story.

Deirdre Kelleher

“CLEANING UP THE REGIONAL MESS? EXPLAINING SWEDEN’S REGIONAL PILOT PROJECT”

Dr. Malin Stegmann McCallion presented a paper for CEUROS on the 5th of May 2005, on “Cleaning Up the Regional Mess? Explaining Sweden’s Regional Pilot Project”. Malin began her presentation with reference to Sweden’s ambiguous regional level, stating that there are many actors such as the County Council, County Administration Board, municipal association and central state agencies located at regional level. This has left the regional administrative level of Sweden, as Malin pointed out, with uncertain jurisdictional borders, diverse ad-hoc institutions and cross-county border co-operation with a net of interlocking authorities and loyalties.

Pre-1997, the Swedish form of governance could be described as an hourglass structure, with strong central and local tiers of governance, while the regional tier was weaker. However, in 1997, regional pilot projects were introduced in Sweden. Addressing numerous questions as to why this occurred, Malin pointed out that the driving level behind this process has been a bottom-up with a dash of top-down process in the middle. The main reason behind this being that in the beginning it was county council politicians, who were later joined by strong local politicians and their interest organisation the Swedish Association of Local Authorities, which were the main driving actors.

Malin’s presentation also questioned whether EU membership was a catalyst in the current regionalisation process. Swedish EU membership put focus on the regionalisation issue, but Malin suggests from her research, that it was not a catalyst, but rather a collection of circumstances which brought about the process.

The regional pilot projects in Sweden can be divided into two phases. The first phase, firstly marketed as a trial run, ran from 1st July 1997 – 31st December 2002. The second phase started on 1st January 2003 and will end in December 2010.

To conclude, Malin put forward the question: is this sorting out the regional mess? She believes not. In fact, as she stated, it is making it even messier. Malin’s presentation was followed by numerous questions from the audience. This paper, part of a work in progress was extremely interesting, and there are without doubt, many people who would be interested to see her finished work.

Deirdre Kelleher

CEUROS REPRESENTED AT OXFORD CONFERENCE ON SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN STUDIES

After the eight ex-communist states from Eastern Europe joined the EU in 2004, Bulgaria and Romania are also returning to the European family. They completed their membership negotiations in 2004 and are expecting to fully join the EU in 2007. On 25 April 2005, the signing of their accession treaty to the EU took place, under the auspices of the Luxembourg's presidency. To mark this historic moment, the Ambassador of Luxembourg, HE Mr Jean-Louis Wolzfeld ; the Head of the EC Representation in the UK, Mr Ian Barber; the Ambassador of Bulgaria, HE Mr Valentin Dobrev; and the Ambassador of Romania, HE Mr Dan Ghibernea offered a reception on 28 April at the Romanian Cultural Institute in the centre of London. For Romania, it was the time to thank old friends (like the UK) who stood by it, assisting its efforts and to make commitments for the future: 'we will not forget that the road to accession has been as important as accession itself. [...] we will continue to give all the necessary assistance, advice and support to the countries that are knocking at Europe's door, in the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe'. Personally I am happy to have participated in this celebration and to have been a witness at the ongoing process of unification of Europe after more than half a century.

The second part of my visit to England was dedicated to attending a one-day conference organised at St Antony's College, Oxford, by the South East European Studies Programme (SEESP), European Studies Centre, University of Oxford with the support of the University Association for Contemporary European Studies (UACES). The conference title was 'South East Europe: The EU's Next Enlargement'. After the recent big-bang enlargement of 2004, the EU is preparing to take in another group of East European States: Romania and Bulgaria in 2007. Bulgaria and Romania signed the accession treaty, while Croatia and Turkey are in the process of starting their negotiations with the EU in 2005. Bulgaria and Romania's accession pushes the borders of the EU to South Eastern Europe. This enlargement will impact on the EU's internal politics and policies, on the countries joining, and indirectly on the region of South East Europe. The lovely weather outside was unable to compete with the interesting presentations and debates.

The conference was divided into four panels. The first dealt with the EU perspective on the next enlargement(s) and the second focussed on the impact of the accession process on domestic politics. The third panel analysed the economic impact of accession and the last looked at wider South East Europe and their road to future EU membership. One scholar pointed at the dual nature of the EU (state/ non-state) and from here, the difficulty of selling EU membership to the electorate in future applicant countries. His view of the EU today is close to a medieval Europe with soft borders, big social and economic discrepancies and a lack of a common cultural identity.

A view emphasised more and more refers to the EU as being a rather different creature after the 2004 enlargement because of the huge 'impact of diversity'. In addition, new member states might support other developments in other policy areas than the old ones. The enlargement has brought

new views on Russia and Eastern Europe. Romania and Bulgaria's accession will bring the EU into South Eastern Europe. The EU's relations with Turkey, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, Kosovo and Albania were presented, and it was underlined that clear conditions on these countries to join represent good news for them because these conditions would bind the Union. Heather Grabbe from the Cabinet of Commissioner Olli Rehn talked about the new criteria for a successful candidate state, in addition to the well-known Copenhagen criteria. She also pointed to the meaning of a successful EU. What makes the EU a successful union is that it is adding value to what member states do. So, 'What does Europe do?' is the key question and not 'what is Europe?'. From here we can see that the stress is not on European identity, but on what it actually does.

It is believed Romania and Bulgaria's accession to the EU will have a major stabilising impact on South Eastern Europe. Western Balkan states are going to follow them as a model for EU integration. Antoinette Primatarova from the Centre for Liberal Strategies in Sofia pointed out that in fact, the prospects to get inside the EU in 2007, even if not realistic at first, was a factor for Romania and Bulgaria to prepare for integration. The same is going to happen with the ex-Yugoslav republics and Albania. Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, from the Romanian Academic Society, a leading think-tank in Romania, pointed out that the division in the administration in accession countries: the part that deals with EU being professional and efficient, and the rest being backward. She emphasised also that the gap between the adopted legislation and its implementation has been increased by the speed-up in negotiations. She finished by offering some friendly advice to Western Balkan states on how to prepare themselves better before beginning the accession negotiations with the EU when the time comes.

A Croatian presenter lit up the atmosphere by talking about the EU suffering of an 'enlargement fatigue' while Croatia, under strain to finish its transition period, does not complain of a 'transition fatigue' and carries on, eager to join the EU. The conference finished with a very interesting debate on the future enlargement rounds towards Turkey and the Western Balkan states, pointing out the new conditionality for them. Among the presenters of the last panel, I'd like to mention David Phinnemore from Queen's University Belfast and Gergana Noutcheva from the Centre for European Policy Studies in Brussels. The comparison between the enlargement of the Eastern Balkans and Western Balkans was well presented and discussed.

Alina Georgescu

RECENT PUBLICATION: ROLE OF CEUROS IN SPANISH CIVIL WAR HISTORY ACKNOWLEDGED

Barrie Wharton, a member of the Centre of European Studies and current Course Director of the B.A. in European Studies recently published an article on Irishmen in the Spanish Foreign Legion in the leading military history journal in Spain Estela. The internationally refereed journal comes out annually and is financially supported by the Madrid-based Istolacio Cultural Foundation. The article, in Spanish, deals principally with the role of Irish legionaries during the Spanish Civil War and more specifically, the role played by a significant number from Limerick. The role of the Catholic Church in recruitment of Irish volunteers for the Spanish Legion is examined and how this recruitment reflected other fissures in an evolving modern Ireland. It recounts how the Irish legionaries were one of the few foreign groupings ever to form a separate battalion within the Spanish Foreign Legion having their own seal, flag and uniform and how this impacted on Hispano-Irish relations. The article is based principally on a variety of archives in Spain along with interviews, private papers and correspondence of legionaries. Eddie Moxon-Browne, Director of the Centre for European Studies was invited to the launch of the article in Almería where the journal is based in the Spanish Foreign Legion Archive. Although he was unable to attend, his role as a hispanist, and commentator on Spanish politics, was noted at the launch by Lt. Col. Miguel Ballenilla y García de Gamarra and the Centre's record of research into contemporary Spain was acknowledged.

Barrie Wharton

NEW STAGIAIRE STARTS AT CEUROS ON 24 MAY

Under the Leonardo da Vinci Mobility Scheme, a new stagiaire has just arrived for a four month internship at the Centre for European Studies. Ilenia Bertorello has a degree in International and Diplomatic Sciences and worked most recently for the Codex Development Agency in her native city Turin where she was responsible for editing a regular newsletter, preparing website material, and organising seminars, conferences and study visits. Fluent in three languages (Italian, English, French) and bravely tackling "basic German", her role in the Centre will be devoted partly to the Jean Monnet Summer School, partly to research funding applications, and partly to research assistance.

Edward Moxon-Browne

EIGHTH JEAN MONNET SUMMER SCHOOL OPENS ON 9 JUNE

This year's Jean Monnet Summer School is entitled "New Directions for a New Europe in a New Neighbourhood". While assessing progress of EU25 since the 2004 enlargement, the summer school's 28 seminars will focus on the EU 'neighbourhood' to the east and south examining the influence of the EU in the Mediterranean, the Middle East, central Asia, the Caucasus, Russia, Belarus, and the Ukraine, as well as the Western Balkans. Over twenty-five participants have signed up for the three-week programme and come from a wide range of countries: Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Serbia, Georgia, Malta, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Croatia, Romania, Portugal, Norway and the USA to name but a few. We are again happy to welcome ambassadors to the Summer School: both the Romanian and Turkish envoys in Ireland will address their own countries' intricate relationships with the EU in special keynote sessions. This year, the CEUROS annual postgraduate research colloquium will form an integral part of the summer school programme allowing our researchers to benefit from a rich and mutually beneficial forum for criticism and feedback, as well as providing a valuable "shop window" for our own researchers, no fewer than ten of whom will be presenting papers in this forum. Anyone reading this Newsletter is, of course, welcome to drop in to any of the summer school seminars and contribute to the discussion. The provisional schedule of seminar topics can be accessed at www.ul.ie/~ceuros/summerschool/upcoming.html and the programme will be updated definitively on 9 June when the Summer School formally opens.

Edward Moxon-Browne

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