

the level of public dissatisfaction with the EU governing institutions. Hence, European integration must be seen as a process, rather than in zero-sum terms.

DEEPENING AND ENLARGEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION – PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Governance Challenges

Further integration and expansion eastward presents numerous challenges and opportunities for European states. EU institutions are affected by two major problems:

First, institutional difficulties plague the Union. For instance, the Commission, based on a Swiss model, has become too large and heterogenous. As well, low voter turnout in European parliamentary elections continues to challenge the legitimacy of EU institutions. Thus, public confidence-building measures need to be pursued in order to increase voter turnout and interest.

In addition, the European Union is characterized by a lack of transparency. To create a stronger Europe, Europe's governing system must be made more accountable. This could be done by generalizing the majority vote in the Council, moving away from a double majority system; recognizing the international character of the Union and its external representation; delegating the surveillance responsibilities of external frontiers and immigration/asylum policy to the Union; allocating a budget for matters pertaining to sovereignty; and anticipating the integration of European states into a federal entity. Above all, methods for integration need to be devised while acknowledging that the process will take time.

Coping with EU Enlargement

It has often been reported that citizens of EU member states fear the additional costs arising from the arrival of immigrants from the east who could overwhelm the job market and increase crime with EU enlargement to Central Europe. Due to this ill-informed perception, citizens of candidate countries risk becoming further alienated from the larger European project. These feelings, combined with any further deepening and enlargement, could result in a swing toward militant nationalism in Central European candidate countries.

If membership of candidate countries in the EU does not proceed quickly, candidate countries run the risk of being further marginalized. This could, in turn, result in negative political, social and economic consequences for the entire continent. Candidate countries may experience serious economic difficulties. As well, candidate countries currently suffering from serious unemployment problems would benefit from market enlargement and EU structural funds. Rapid EU membership for these countries could also assist in the creation of a common European security perimeter.

“Europe's Great Task”

EU governments and societies should not erect us/them divisions within Europe. Rather, the EU should take note of the aspirations and expectations of citizens of candidate countries (particularly young people) for inclusion in a prosperous and peaceful Europe. Thus, EU countries must continue