

ANALYSIS

Why Not

The Commission Monitoring Reports released for Romania and Bulgaria last Wednesday confirmed our earlier analysis anticipating that EU membership of the two applicants would be differentiated and for the first time the enlargement timetable would not be taken for granted.

The two reports carried Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso's political "philosophy", which is quite simple and pragmatic. New comers to the European Union must adapt to the European Union, not the other way around.

Both reports carried two categories of suggestions: a list of general recommendations under the introductory statement "Increased efforts are also needed for..." and a list of "musts" marked as "areas of serious concern." The "musts," despite not explicitly stated, are clearly meant to be irrevocable preconditions for membership. This may refer the membership, especially of Bulgaria, at a later time.

For Romania, which enjoys the strong support of France, things are rather easy. Important "musts" are all for agricultural issues (Chapter 7), which can be fulfilled with the proper effort. For Bulgaria things are different. Besides a couple of agricultural "musts," others refer to citizens' rights, transparency and justice and mafia eradication from the administration (Chapters 24 and 28).

The political message carried by the Monitoring Reports is that the enlargement procedure has changed. So far, the practice has been that a date of entry is set and followed regardless of the real changes achieved. Requirements not achieved by that date were left to be implemented after entry. Now a new practice has been introduced. Applicants must first comply with all terms of Community law and will then be allowed membership.

This new approach was introduced by the big Member States, in spite of the strong reaction from Eurosceptics, as a preventive way to arrest Turkey's process of association. Indeed, if Turkish membership seemed extremely difficult before, it has now become practically impossible. It is now more likely that Turkey will have a "special relation" with the EU instead of gaining EU Membership. Achieving this special relation, at this point, will itself be the result of very tough negotiations.

The prospects of Turkish membership are rapidly fading out, and have generated debate over the geographical concept of European borders. Turkish membership is not limited anymore by the fact that Turkey is an Asian country. It is limited by human rights, social structures, uneven distribution of national wealth and the military rule, which cannot change because, if it does, the country will collapse like the Soviet Union.

Readers of this column may well remember Kassandra's column a few months ago (issue 668, March 12, 2006) on the unbelievable story of the Turkish Prosecutor Ferhat Sarikaya who pressed charges against army general Yasar Buyukanit on the grounds that the good general was responsible for organising the bombing of a Kurdish bookshop. The charges were withdrawn immediately thereafter because Turkish generals are not referred to justice (Mustafa Cemal Attaturk rule of Law). Instead, the prosecutor was prosecuted for prosecuting the presumed criminal. The story goes on. Mr. Yasar Buyukanit, who in any European Member State would have been in jail for the rest of his life, was recently promoted to Chief of the Turkish Armed Forces and we are welcoming him in Brussels at the next NATO meeting!

It is obvious that under the new European Union approach applicants must first comply with European rules and then become members. This should be a "must" for EU membership.

Under the current circumstances, we expect Ankara to harden its position and decelerating the process of talks even with temporary, brief suspensions. At the same time, justified by the acceptance and the opening of entry negotiations with an Asiatic Muslim country, in the not so far future, we might witness membership applications from countries located just a few hundred miles outside the EU border, but very close to Europe in terms of values, democracy, religion and culture.

Basil A. Coronakis



Urban planning. New apartment buildings under construction in Steenokkerzeel, Lo-Molenstraat, at a distance of 50 meters from the peripheral anti-noise wall and 100 meters from the new control tower of the Zaventem airport

What petty politics and human stupidity can achieve

At a distance of only seven kilometres from "Rond Point Schuman", the political and administrative centre of the European Union since 1957, a situation has developed, which for no essential reason is undermining the future expansion of Brussels as the capital of Europe. It is the national airport of Brussels at Zaventem, which alone serves the air-transport growing needs of the capital of Europe. The airport was built by the Nazis during World War II because the location was convenient for bombing London and sufficiently far from the Allied Forces. This explains why the airport is so close to the centre of the city, but it does not explain why Belgian authorities did not build a second airport at a certain distance and why they let local interests play around with the use of the airport.

Just to mention two examples: the Italians in Milan constructed Malpensa 60 kilometres from the centre to replace Linate, which is just a few kilometres from the Duomo; in Rome they limited the use of Ciampino, located near the city centre, to official visitors and have replaced it by constructing Leonardo Da Vinci at Fiumicino, located some 40 kilometres from the centre. It is quite difficult to explain why the Belgians, with the massive income they receive from EU related traffic, do not build a new airport outside Brussels? Moreover, Brussels would likely receive heavy subsidies from the EU for such a project. Zaventem airport is within the Brussels city conglomerate. Its

traffic, especially after the enlargement of the EU, has grown dramatically. The Belgian authorities, instead of building a new airport with a highway and a fast train line to the city, are expanding the existing facilities. As a result, all passengers are forced to walk with their hand luggage for half an hour from the counters to the gates. To make the sour pill more distasteful, airlines limit outgoing passengers' hand luggage to five kilos, yet do not apply this rule for

incoming passengers arriving from outside airports. A second even more important drawback of this situation is the under grading of the quality of life and the value of the properties of citizens living in the part of the city adjacent to the airport, mostly Commission and Parliament executives. The problem became much more acute for the people living near the airport in early 2004 when the notorious air traffic plan "Ancliaux-Landuyt-Cornillie" was introduced. Bert Ancliaux

and Renaat Landuyt are the successive Ministers for Mobility and Transport of the Belgian Federal Government since 2004, respectively, and are both from the Flemish socialist party SP-Spirit. Jan Cornillie is the Head of Cabinet of both. The base of the SP-Spirit was the "Ancliaux Plan", which aims to route departing planes by forcing them to make a left turn over the city instead of allowing them to turn right over the fields. In this way, noisy and polluting flights fly over Brussels day and night all days of the week, with whatever risks it implies for one and only reason, to bother, yes to bother, the French speaking areas of Brussels in the context of the eternal Flemish-Walloons war games at the expense, this time, of 25,000 European Union functionaries living in the areas between 'Rond Point Schuman' and the airport.

The issue is very serious and certainly requires further investigation, which New Europe just opened and welcomes comments from all sides, not only because it is a matter seriously involving the human rights of Europeans at the very heart of Europe, but because it is a classical example worth studying of how petty politics of narrow-minded people can affect the life and future of many people. Indeed, the case of Zaventem airport (long walking and other defects stemming from expanding under pressure an already existing old military infrastructure) is one of the reasons that the European Commission is locating all of its new Agencies outside Belgium.

Sudoku

Medium

		4		9				6
	3	7				1		
6	9	5		3				
1	8	2				6		
	6						2	
		9				8	1	3
			6		3	9	2	
		6				5	7	
8			2	5				

Hard

6	7							1
	1		2	6	3			
	2		9		7	6		
7					2			
1			6		4			9
			1					2
		1	7		5		8	
			4	8	6			5
	8							2
								4

Answers to last week

Medium

1	4	8	9	5	7	2	3	6
9	7	2	1	6	3	5	4	8
5	3	6	2	8	4	1	7	9
4	6	1	7	9	5	8	2	3
2	9	3	8	4	1	7	6	5
7	8	5	3	2	6	9	1	4
6	5	7	4	1	9	3	8	2
8	1	9	6	3	2	4	5	7
3	2	4	5	7	8	6	9	1

Hard

1	2	4	7	5	3	6	8	9
3	7	8	9	6	4	2	5	1
5	9	6	8	1	2	3	4	7
6	3	9	5	2	7	8	1	4
8	1	2	3	4	9	7	6	5
7	4	5	6	8	1	9	2	3
4	8	3	1	7	6	5	9	2
2	6	7	4	9	5	1	3	8
9	5	1	2	3	8	4	7	6

Australia \$3.4, Austria EURO 1.81, Balkans EURO 4, Belgium EURO 3.50, Holland EURO 2.70, Central Asia USD 7.5, Central Europe USD 5, Canada \$5, Cyprus CYP 1.50, Denmark DKK 19.95, Eastern Europe USD 7.5, France EURO 3.04, Germany EURO 3.50, Greece EURO 4, Hungary HUF 450, Japan YEN 100, Italy EURO 3.62, Nordic countries USD 7, Pacific Rim USD 8.5, Russia USD 4, Switzerland SF4, UK GBP 4.5, USA \$2.95, all other countries EURO 6

