ABSTRACT

POPOWYCZ, JENNIFER LAUREN. An Ever Closer Union? European Integration in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century. (Under the direction of Dr. Thomas Ort).

In the 1970s three countries from Southern Europe applied to become members of the European Economic Community (EEC), which is now the European Union (EU). Greece, Portugal, and Spain all had newly formed democratic governments and were considerably poor countries. Despite the potential problems surrounding each country’s unstable democratic institutions and each country’s weak economy, all three countries were admitted to the EEC rather quickly and without much difficulty.

Less than five years later, the collapse of communism allowed newly independent nations from Central and Eastern Europe to apply for membership to the EU. However, even though many of the countries exhibited strikingly similar political, economic, and social characteristics to Greece, Portugal, and Spain, it took much longer for the countries from Central and Eastern Europe to join the EU and the accession process was somewhat controversial. The first country to apply was Hungary in 1994 and several other countries from Central and Eastern Europe applied between 1994 and 1996, but none of these countries were admitted until almost a decade later. Why did it take much longer for the countries from Central and Eastern Europe to join the EU than it did for Greece, Portugal, and Spain? Why was the accession of the countries from Central and Eastern Europe much more challenging than the accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain? Further, what does this process demonstrate about lingering notions of an East/West European division after the Cold War?
This thesis will compare the accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain to Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic to demonstrate that one of the reasons it took longer for the countries from Central and Eastern Europe to join the EU was because the idea of Eastern Europe, or the idea of a less than fully Europe, played a role in the negotiations. There are three things that demonstrate this. The countries from Central and Eastern Europe had much more stable democracies and significantly stronger economies when they applied for membership than did the countries from Southern Europe. Secondly, the EU created additional steps for the countries from Central and Eastern Europe to complete prior to admitting them into the EU. Finally, the language used in the evaluations on Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic demonstrate that EU officials believed their “Europeanness” needed to be proven.
An Every Closer Union? European Integration in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century

by
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DEDICATION

To my grandparents, Maria and Ivan Popowycz, whose story inspired me to study history.
BIOGRAPHY

During the Nazi invasion of Eastern Europe, my grandparents, Ivan and Maria Popowycz, were removed from their small village in Ukraine, taken to Germany, and placed in Nazi labor camps where they were forced to work for the duration of World War II. After the war, in 1951, they immigrated to the United States and settled in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. My grandparents’ story not only inspires me, but has made me appreciate the study of history on a personal level. I was lucky in the fact that I could personally see the effect a world event had on two very courageous people. From the time I was in middle school, and understood how my family was affected by World War II, I have been interested in World History, and the impact historical events have on people around the world.

I graduated from Appalachian State University with a BA in History and a minor in Political Science. At Appalachian I was a member of the National Honors Society and Phi Alpha Theta. I also worked for *The Historian*, an undergraduate journal that was created at Appalachian during my third year of college. In 2008 I started my graduate coursework for my MA in History at North Carolina State University. My graduate concentration is Modern European History, with a special interest in Modern Eastern European Studies, and my minor is Early American History. At NC State I am a member of the National Honors Society, Phi Alpha Theta, and the History Graduate Student Association. In March of 2011 I presented a shortened version of my thesis at the Louisiana State University HGSA History Conference.
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I. INTRODUCTION

In the 1970s three countries from Southern Europe applied for membership to the European Economic Community (EEC).\(^1\) Greece applied for membership to the Community in 1975 followed shortly thereafter by Portugal and Spain in 1977. Greece concluded its negotiations with the EEC after only three years and was welcomed as a full member to the EEC on January 1, 1981. Portugal and Spain were both admitted into the Community on January 1, 1986, after about seven years of negotiations. Not only did these three countries apply for membership within a couple of years of each other, but they also had similar characteristics such as new and unstable democratic governments, poor economies with a large agricultural base, and high unemployment and inflation rates. In the 1990s three counties with similar political, economic, and social characteristics applied for membership to the European Union (EU). Hungary and Poland presented their applications for membership to the EU in 1994 and the Czech Republic applied for membership in 1996. However, the process of accession for Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic not only took longer, but was more challenging for both the EU and the candidate countries. As a result, Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic were not granted full membership until almost a decade later on May 1, 2004.

The fifth enlargement of the European Union, which included the accession of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic, poses significant questions regarding the study of Eastern Europe because the accession process for these countries was very different than any of the previous enlargements to the EU. This paper will examine the differences in the

\(^1\) The European Economic Community was founded in 1957 by the Treaty of Rome, and was transformed into the European Union in 1992 with the signing of the Treaty of Maastricht. In this paper I will refer to the EEC prior to 1992 and the EU after 1992.
accession process and negotiation procedures between the enlargement to include the countries in Southern Europe and the enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe. Why did the accession of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic take longer than the accession of Greece, Portugal and Spain? Why was the accession of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic much more challenging than the accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain? Why were different requirements set for Central and Eastern European countries seeking EU membership than for previous enlargements, and subsequently, why did the EU seek to make it harder for the Central European states to join the EU? Further, what does this process demonstrate about lingering notions of East/West European divisions after the Cold War?

One important reason it took longer for Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic to join the EU was because the EU created new requirements for membership that went beyond any of the requirements placed on countries that had previously applied for membership, including Greece, Portugal, and Spain. The new administrative and technical demands significantly lengthened the accession process for the candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe. The new requirements that were created for the countries from Central and Eastern Europe also demonstrate that the EU did not believe that Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic had the necessary characteristics to become members of the EU or, subsequently, be considered members of “Europe.” In other words, the EU created stronger requirements for the Central and Eastern European nations because EU officials believed their “Europeanness” or “Westernness” was something that needed to be proved. In comparison, it was easy for EU officials to view Greece, Portugal, and Spain as part of Europe despite their political, economic, and social weakness and underdevelopment.
However, the smallest indication of political, economic, or social underdevelopment was a strike against Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic’s “Europeanness,” and was used as a reason to delay their entry into the EU. The fact that Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic had much more stable democracies and significantly stronger economies when they applied for membership than Greece, Portugal, or Spain did when they applied, as well as the additional steps the EU required the countries from Central and Eastern Europe to complete, and the language used in evaluations on Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic demonstrate that the notion of a less than fully European part of Europe played a significant part in the accession negotiations with Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic. While Cold War heightened the differences between East and West, the idea of Eastern Europe is much older than the Cold War and is still a powerful image in the mental mapping of Europe today. It was also an important element in the prolongation of accession negotiations between the EU and the countries from Central and Eastern Europe.

A Brief History of European Integration

The idea of a unified Europe is not a new revelation, but a recurring theme throughout the long history of the continent. The Holy Roman Empire, Napoleon, Hitler, and others sought to achieve continental unity based either on alliance, ethnic cohesions, ideology, or force. In addition, philosophers and political thinkers have imagined a unified Europe that would trump national interests and protect against violent economic and political competition. The European Economic Community, which has become today’s European Union, developed out of these same ideas. The founding members of the EEC chose to limit
their own sovereignty in favor of collective peace, economic integration, and supranational governance.²

The reasons for the creation of the EEC are rooted in the early decades of the twentieth century, culminating in the devastation of the Second World War. The war left much of the continent in ruins with unprecedented human and economic costs. Few nations were self-sufficient and all experienced highly distressed local economies. Postwar leaders also believed that if the continent was to achieve lasting peace and economic prosperity after the war, it needed to overcome the nationalism and economic autarky that characterized the 1930s, culminating with the Second World War. As the historian Tony Judt observes, “The same concern to protect and nourish local interests that had turned Europe’s states inward before 1939 now brought them closer together.”³

In the immediate postwar period several countries in Europe took initial steps toward integration. In 1948 the Congress of Europe convened in The Hague, under Winston Churchill’s chairmanship, to discuss ideas for European unity in the postwar years. Nearly one thousand people attended the Congress and although the members of the Congress subscribed to the general goal of European union, they disagreed about what type of union it should be. The Congress created a Council of Europe and a College of Europe but, there were strong divides between ardent federalists advocating for a highly integrated “United States of Europe” and those who opposed giving up national sovereignty. Even though the Congress of Europe highlighted many problems with European unity and demonstrated that


European politicians had a variety of ideas concerning integration, it was one of the first attempts to seriously discuss the issues surrounding European integration.\textsuperscript{4}

France and Britain also concluded an alliance in 1947 known as the Treaty of Dunkirk, which was expanded a year later to include Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg in the Treaty of Brussels. The five countries agreed to come to each other’s defense in the event of an external attack, to hold regular meetings between each country’s foreign ministers, and to cooperate in the economic, social, and cultural spheres. In 1954 it was amended by the Paris Agreement, which created the Western European Union. The Western European Union was responsible for implementing the defense aspects of the Treaty of Brussels and was later merged into the European Economic Community. However, the signatories of the Brussels treaty quickly realized that with the beginning of the Cold War, their common defense was not sufficient against the threat of the Soviet Union. As a result, in 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was created, expanding the Brussels Treaty to include Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Canada, and the United States.\textsuperscript{5}

Although the accomplishments of European integration in the late 1940s were modest, they began the process that led in the 1950s to the creation of the European Economic Community. The first step in the creation of the EEC was the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951. Geographically speaking, the key to European unification in the late 1950s was reconciliation between France and Germany.

\textsuperscript{4} Dinan, \textit{Europe Recast}, 23.
Jean Monnet, a French businessman who devoted much thought to the idea of a unified Europe, proposed that France and Germany combine their coal and steel industries under a joint authority in hopes of eliminating national and economic competition between the two countries. As the historian John Van Oudenaren writes, “With the production of coal and steel- the very sinews of modern military capability- subject to a joint authority, war among Western European states would become unthinkable.” The French foreign minister, Robert Schuman, and the West German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, welcomed the proposal and Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Italy also expressed interest in joining the organization. The treaty establishing the ECSC was signed in Paris in 1951 and became effective the following year. It created a common market in which all tariff barriers and restrictions on trade among the six member countries were banned on the commodities of coke, iron ore, steel, and scrap.

Because the ECSC was successful in easing the immediate economic problems of France and Germany, the six member countries sought other ways to integrate themselves. In May 1952, they signed a treaty establishing a European Defense Community (EDC), in which national armies were united and West Germany was allowed to rebuild its army under supervision of a supranational institution patterned on that of the ECSC. However, in 1954 the French National Assembly rejected the EDC Treaty setting back the process of European integration. The failure of the EDC demonstrates that while some countries were willing to

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6 Ibid., 249.
7 Ibid., 251.
surrender sovereignty in economic areas, this was not the case with defense during the mid-
1950s.⁸

Despite the failure of the EDC the foreign ministers of the six ECSC member states met in Messina in June 1955 to discuss ways to further integrate. Through the Treaties of Rome signed in Messina in 1957, two additional organizations were created: The European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) and the European Economic Community. Euratom promoted research, the protection of health and safety, the supply of ores and nuclear fuels, and the proper use of nuclear materials. Although Euratom became largely irrelevant in light of the formation of the European Economic Community and the increasing abundance of imported oil, it expanded integration into another sector.

Of the two institutions created in 1957, the EEC was far more important because it extended integration into several areas and became the basis for today’s European Union. The primary objective of the EEC was to create an internal market characterized by the free movement of goods, services, persons, and capital. The Treaty of Rome, which created the EEC, included provisions for a customs union, a common monetary policy, a common transportation policy, competition regulations, and the coordination of macroeconomic policy. The treaty also called for the gradual phasing out of all tariffs and quantitative restrictions on trade between the member states. The six original member states agreed to a twelve-year time table for the progressive reduction of internal tariffs to be replaced by a common external tariff. Furthermore, the EEC created a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

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⁸ Ibid.
intended to ensure fair standards of living for the agricultural community by setting prices for consumers.  

The Treaty of Rome also created legal governmental institutions for the EEC including an assembly, commission, council, and court. The EEC was constructed out of the same basic institutional framework as the ECSC. The Council of Ministers was the main decision-making body of the EEC. Through it, representatives from each member state discussed and ruled on key issues put forward by the European Commission. The European Commission was designed to be independent of the members’ national governments and was in charge of upholding EEC law by initiating and implementing Community legislation. The Treaty of Rome also stated that in cases where the treaty “has not provided the necessary powers,” the Council acting unanimously, could take “appropriate measures necessary to attain one of the objectives of the community.” In this way the Council could agree to extend integration into various areas not specifically outlined in the treaty, which acted as an open-ended instrument for further integration.

The EEC proved to be very successful in the decade following its creation. Internal tariffs were removed by 1968, two years ahead of schedule, and trade between the six member states quadrupled in the same period. Business proved to be productive since member states were able to sell to a larger market and were forced to invest in order to meet the competition from other member states. As a result, other countries in Europe sought to become members of the economically attractive EEC. On January 1, 1973, Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom joined the Community, marking the first successful

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10 Ibid.
enlargement of the EEC and raising the number of member states to nine. Shortly thereafter, the military dictatorships in Greece, Portugal, and Spain collapsed, prompting these Southern European nations to quickly apply for membership to the EEC.\textsuperscript{12}

Greece, Portugal, and Spain can be grouped together when discussing enlargement because they all applied to and were accepted into the EEC within a few years of each other. They also had new democratic governments and weak economies compared to the rest of the member states. Greece presented its application for membership in June 1975, negotiations were opened in 1976, and concluded after only three years in 1979. Greece formally became a member of the EEC on January 1, 1981. Portugal and Spain applied for membership in 1977 and negotiations were opened with Portugal in 1978 and Spain in 1979. Both countries completed their negotiations in 1985 and were officially admitted to the Community on January 1, 1986. While there were some challenges with the applications of these three countries, especially in the agricultural sector, the negotiations progressed rather quickly with no major setbacks.

Four years after Portugal and Spain joined the Community, the fall of communism allowed countries from Central and Eastern Europe to gain their independence and in the mid-1990s many of them applied for membership to the European Union. In 1992, partially as a result of the breakup of the Soviet Union, the EEC transformed itself into the European Union through the Treaty of Maastricht, or the Treaty on European Union. The new EU changed the admission requirements for potential members from the former Soviet bloc, making the accession of the countries from Central and Eastern Europe much more difficult.

\textsuperscript{12} Judt, \textit{Postwar}, 309.
The process of accession for Central and Eastern European nations was challenging to both the candidate countries as well as to the EU, and differed significantly from previous enlargements. Even though Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic exhibited strikingly similar political, economic, and social circumstances as Greece, Portugal, and Spain when they applied to the EU, the accession experiences for Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic were vastly different.

Historiography of European Integration

Several important historical works address the process of European integration following the Second World War. Alan Milward’s *The European Rescue of the Nation State*, Stanley Henig’s *The Uniting of Europe: From Consolidation to Enlargement*, Michael Burgess’ *Federalism and European Union: The Building of Europe 1959-2000*, and Andrew Moravcsik’s *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* examine how the defense of the nation state and the pursuit of national interests spurred European integration. In addition, several historians have provided excellent comprehensive overviews of European integration in the second half of the twentieth century including Derek Urwin’s *Community of Europe: A History of European Integration Since 1945*, Mark Gilbert’s *Surpassing Realism: The Politics of European Integration Since 1945*, John Gillingham’s *European Integration 1950-2002*, Desmond Dinan’s *Europe Recast: A History of European Union*, and Richard McAllister’s *From EC to EU: An Historical and

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All of these historians of European integration provide outstanding summaries of the process of European integration over the course of the second half of the twentieth century, but only briefly mention the process of enlargement, or how the process of enlargement changed in the 1990s.

There have also been historical works focusing on the specific accession of one country such as Juio Crespo Maclennan’s *Spain and the Process of European Integration*, Lacovos S. Tsalicoglou’s *Negotiation for Entry: The Accession of Greece to the European Community* and Loukas Tsoukalis’ *Greece and the European Community*. All three of these works provide detailed analyses of Spain and Greece’s accession to the EEC and highlight the challenges of enlargement during the late 1970s and early 1980s. However, there are very few historical works that specifically examine the accession of Central and Eastern Europe states. Graham Avery and Fraser Cameron’s *The Enlargement of the European Union* examines the changes the Treaty of Maastricht made to the enlargement process and the problems associated with enlargement in respect to the Central and Eastern European states, but it was published in 1998 during the height of negotiations with these countries. As a result it does not show how the accession negotiations with the countries

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from Central and Eastern Europe were carried out, or how they were different from previous enlargements. The shortage of historical literature on the accession of countries from Central and Eastern Europe to the European Union is certainly because the fifth enlargement occurred very recently in 2004. This paper will explore in detail the specific processes of accession using key EEC and EU documents. It will compare the accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain to Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic to demonstrate that the “Europeanness” of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic had to be proven, whereas it was presumed for the poorer states of Greece, Portugal, and Spain.

Chapter One of this thesis examines the accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain and argues that it was taken for granted that Greece, Portugal, and Spain were “European” or Western” and that Europe would be “incomplete” without them. Although there were no written criteria that the countries were required to adhere to when applying to the EEC, there were certain standards the Community used to evaluate potential candidates. However, the EEC proved to be tremendously lenient when evaluating the political and economic situations in these countries, providing large amounts of financial aid and granting transitional periods in which to align their economies with the common market after accession. When compared to the accession process of the Central and Eastern European nations in the 1990s and early 2000s, the accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain demonstrates that integration into the European Community in the 1970s and 1980s was a relatively quick process without much controversy. Accession to the Community was also seen as a way to safeguard democracy and help struggling economies grow and prosper.
Chapter Two examines the accession of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic, pointing out the differences between their accession and the accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain. Despite the similar political, economic, and social circumstances between the two enlargement groups, the accession of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic took longer and the EU was much stricter in the evaluation of these three countries. The comparison between Greece, Portugal, and Spain and Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic illustrates that unlike previous enlargements, candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe had to prove their “Europeanness” prior to being admitted to the EU.

The final chapter looks at why the EU created double standards for the countries from Central and Eastern Europe. While it is true that the EU faced several institutional challenges at the same time that an unprecedented number of countries applied to join the EU, I will show that cultural prejudices against the region also had a significant impact on the accession negotiations with Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic. I will also argue that although the notion of a less than fully European part of Europe was magnified during the Cold War, it is an idea that is much older than the Cold War, and it became an important factor in the accession negotiations with countries from Central and Eastern Europe.

The European Union today is a regional organization unlike any other with enormous economic and political authority and enlargement to the Union is an important aspect of European integration. Europe is no longer a purely geographical entity, but instead refers to a set of values surrounding democracy and the protection of individual liberties. The European Union has quickly become the defining element of what it means to be European and therefore judges who belongs to “Europe.” Understanding the processes and problems
associated with enlargement not only allows one to fully comprehend European integration in the second half of the twentieth century, but also sheds light onto fundamental aspects of Europe today.

In the early 1970s the military dictatorships in Greece, Portugal, and Spain collapsed and each country created a democratic form of government. The transition to democracy in these three countries allowed them to apply for membership to the European Economic Community, an organization that sought to protect peace and liberty through economic cooperation. The EEC had previously denied cooperation with these three countries because they violated human rights and did not have democratic governments, but the establishment of democracy in each country paved the way for accession to the EEC. Greece applied for membership in 1975 and Portugal and Spain applied in 1977. The process of accession for Greece, Portugal, and Spain was concluded relatively quickly, without controversy, or any major setbacks. Negotiations were opened with Greece in 1976, were completed in 1979, and the country was officially welcomed into the Community on January 1, 1981. Negotiations with Portugal commenced in 1978 and with Spain in 1979 and both countries concluded their negotiations in 1985. Portugal and Spain were formally admitted into the EEC on January 1, 1986. The accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain reveals that even though each country exhibited political instability and economic and social underdevelopment, their “Europeanness” or “Westernness” was never called into question, making their accession process relatively easy for both sides.

The EEC was created by the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957 and the treaty clearly encouraged Community enlargement. The preamble to the Treaty of Rome states that the members of the EEC were “resolved by thus pooling their resources to preserve and
strengthen peace, liberty, and calling upon the other peoples of Europe who share their ideal to join in their efforts.”

Article 237 of the treaty also briefly laid out the conditions of full member states and the process applicant states must go through to become full members:

Any European State may apply to become a member of the Community. It shall address its application to the Council, which shall act unanimously after obtaining the opinion of the Commission. The conditions of admission and the adjustments to this Treaty necessitated thereby shall be the subject of an agreement between the Member States and the applicant State. This agreement shall be submitted for ratification by all the Contracting States in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements.

Rather than establishing a list of requirements, the Article summarized the process of accession. The only requirement listed in Article 237 was that an applicant nation had to be “European,” and must agree to adhere to all the conditions of the Treaty of Rome. There was no specific list of political, economic, or social criteria that applicant states must exhibit prior to applying to join the EEC, which was very different than when the Central and Eastern European countries applied for membership in the 1990s.

There were three phases to the accession process during the mid-1970s and early 1980s. First, the government of the applicant country submitted an official request for membership to the EEC. Once the request was received by the Council, the Commission prepared detailed Opinions on the applicant country, paying particular attention to the economic situation in each country and the problems that accession could potentially cause the applicant country and the EEC. The second phase of the accession process involved the negotiations between the EEC and the applicant country wherein areas of concern were

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18 Ibid.
addressed and solutions proposed. The negotiations took the form of conferences composed of delegations from the Community and the applicant country, with the European Council acting as the spokesperson for the Community. The two sides met once a month at the ambassadorial level and formally every three months at the ministerial level. The negotiation process usually lasted a couple of years and was mainly concerned with establishing what areas of an applicant country’s economy were able to fully participate in the common market. The economic areas that were not prepared for full economic integration were granted a transition period, usually about seven to ten years after accession, during which the country had extra time to integrate the designated areas of its economy. The third phase of accession was ratification by the applicant country’s parliament, and that process varied from nation to nation.19

Although there was not a list of specific requirements to join the EEC in the 1970s and 1980s, in order to fully accept all the provisions of the Treaty of Rome, an applicant country also had to demonstrate certain elements such as a working democratic government and an operating market economy. Membership would have been impossible without these two conditions since applicant nations would not have been able to accept all the conditions of the Treaty of Rome without them. As a result, exhibiting a both a functioning democratic government and market economy became the basis for accession negotiations with Greece, Portugal, and Spain.

The accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain can be grouped together not only because they applied for membership within a couple years of each other, but also because

they exhibited similar political, economic, and social circumstances in the 1970s. In the mid-1970s all three nations experienced a political transition from military dictatorship to democracy. In Greece the military dictatorship of Georgios Papadopoulos, who had been in power since the early 1960s, collapsed in 1974 during the Turkish invasion of Cyprus and a new democratic government was created. General Francisco Franco ruled Spain since 1936, but his death in 1975 paved the way for a new democratic system in Spain. In Portugal, Antonio de Oliveira Salazar’s regime and secret police ruled the country since 1932, but his death in 1970 and the Carnation Revolution in 1974 allowed democracy to be restored in the country. When Greece, Spain, and Portugal applied to become members of the EEC, each nation had a nascent democratic government, which had been in existence for only about two to three years.²⁰

Even more important, however, were the similarities among the countries’ economies. The Commission at the Copenhagen European Council meeting in April 1978 outlined the commonalities between each of the three economies and stated that, above all, there were relatively large economic imbalances between member states and the three applicant states in the 1970s. For example, each applicant had a smaller per capita GDP than any member state in the EEC. This was particularly a problem in Portugal, where the average per capita GDP in 1975 was estimated by the Commission to be only $1,504, which was much less than fifty percent of the per capita GDP in every existing member state. In comparison, Ireland, the poorest member state, had a per capita GDP of $2,512. Spain’s per capita GDP was closer to Ireland’s, which in 1975 was recorded as $2,384. Similarly,

Greece had a per capita GDP of $2,309 in 1975. Greece, Portugal, and Spain’s per capita GDP equaled about half of the EEC per capita GDP average, which was $5,195 in 1975.  

All three nations also experienced high inflation rates and large foreign trade deficits when they applied to become members to the EEC. In 1974 Greece had an inflation rate of 30%, which fell to 15% the following year and remained at that level until 1980. Greece also had an outstanding foreign trade deficit in the mid-1970s, reaching its peak in 1975 at $1 billion. In 1977 Portugal and Spain both had inflation rates of 25 percent. Portugal’s foreign trade deficit was also very high at $1.5 billion in 1977, and although Spain’s foreign trade deficit was much lower at $8.7 million, the economic imbalances between the candidate countries and the EEC member states posed potential problems for enlargement.

In addition to economic imbalances, all three countries had large and inefficient agricultural sectors. Agriculture represented 16.6% of the GDP in Greece, 11.8% in Portugal, and 10% in Spain, compared to only 4.4% in the rest of the Community. The number of people employed in agriculture in the three applicant countries constituted over a fifth of all jobs, while in the EEC employment in agriculture was only one in ten. In addition there were few modern technologies employed in each nation’s agricultural sector and the agricultural output of the three countries was less than half that in the nine members states.

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The inefficiency of the countries’ agricultural sectors posed potential problems for economic integration.

Greece and Portugal, and to a lesser extent Spain, had weak industrial sectors that were dominated by traditional sectors such as food, textiles, clothing, and wood. In 1978 the Commission declared that Greece, Spain, and Portugal possessed a “stage of development lying mid-way between the less-developed countries and the industrialized countries.” All three applicant countries experienced economic growth in the 1960s and early 1970s, which was mainly fueled by the development of industry. In Spain and Portugal industry accounted for 40.7% and 45.2% of GDP in 1975 respectively. These figures were quite comparable with the Community average of 44.4%. In Greece industry was somewhat weaker, accounting for only a third of the country’s GDP in 1975. The industrial growth in Greece, Portugal, and Spain was accompanied by high protective tariffs and state subsidies aimed at preserving the domestic market for local firms. Industrial growth also attracted foreign investment and modern technologies, which created a dichotomy in the industrial sector, composed of both larger and more modern companies and smaller, more traditional businesses. Moreover, industrialization was concentrated in larger cities such as Athens, Madrid, and Barcelona. In Portugal industry was almost fully concentrated in the northern coastal regions of the country. This industrial dichotomy later created problems during the negotiations in each country.\(^\text{25}\)


All three countries were also considered by the Commission to be socially underdeveloped compared to the EEC’s member states. Close to a third of Portugal’s population lived below the poverty level in 1975. The same year 24.3% of Greece’s population was classified as poor and in 1980 12.9% of Spain’s population lived below the poverty level. Furthermore, in 1977 Portugal had an unemployment rate of 15 percent. Spain had a lower unemployment rate in 1977 of 5.5%, but it increased dramatically to about 12% in 1980. Greece had by far the lowest unemployment level which was only 2.2% in 1975. Greece, Portugal, and Spain also experienced enormous regional differences. Wealth was mostly concentrated in the industrial regions of Athens, Madrid, Barcelona, and cities along the northern Portuguese coasts and, as a result, these regions enjoyed much higher standards of living than the rural regions of both countries.

Finally, all three nations exhibited a very similar path towards full membership to the EEC, applying for full membership within a few years of each other. Greece applied for membership in June 1975, followed closely by Portugal in March 1977 and Spain in June 1977. Negotiations concluded with Greece in May of 1979 after only three years, and the country officially joined the Community on January 1, 1981. Spain and Portugal concluded negotiations after six seven years, respectively. Both countries became members on January 1, 1986. A closer examination of the specific process of accession in Greece, Portugal, and Spain not only reveals the analogous path towards accession, but also illustrates that despite

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27 Ibid.
their unstable democracies and weak economies, negotiations progressed rather rapidly and admission to the EEC served as a way to safeguard democracy and help the economies of the three applicant nations grow and prosper.

Greece

The relationship between Greece and the EEC dates back to the early 1960s when Greece applied to become an associate member of the Community. In 1961 Greece signed an Association Agreement, known as the Athens Agreement. The Athens Agreement granted associate membership, and provided for the establishment of a customs union, the “harmonization of Greek and Community policies” in a range of fields including agriculture, free movement of workers, transportation, fiscal policy, rules of competition, and economic policy. Under the agreement the EEC made resources available to Greece that were intended to stimulate the development of the Greek economy. The Athens Agreement also included a provision stating that the accession of Greece to the Community would be considered once Greece was economically able to accept all the obligations and conditions outlined in the Treaty of Rome. The Association agreement between Greece and the EEC put Greece on a path toward economic development and full membership.

However, following the military coup d’état in April 1962, the EEC suspended the association agreement until democracy was restored in 1974. The military dictatorship collapsed after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus and Constantine Karamanlis formed a new center-right democratic government. Karamanlis was a former prime minister of Greece and

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29 European Commission, “Greece and the European Community.”
30 Ibid.
a respected politician who pushed for quick accession into the EEC. The restoration of a
democratic system on July 24, 1974, renewed the Athens Agreement and on June 25, 1975,
Greece applied for membership to the EEC.31 In a memorandum issued on June 12, 1975,
Karamanlis stated, “Europe has taken the road towards integration. Athens wishes to be
there to make its contribution to what will surely be the greatest event of the century.”32 The
decision to apply for full membership emerged out of the political realities of the mid-1970s
and especially out of Greece’s desire to safeguard and consolidate its newly formed
democratic system while also integrating itself back into the European economy, which had
been the country’s basis for trade prior to 1962.

In the mid-1970s Greece was desperately poor, with a per capita income almost less
than 50 percent of the Community average. The per capita GDP in US dollars in 1975 was
$2,306 compared to the EEC’s per capita GDP of $5,195. Thirty-five percent of the
workforce in Greece was employed in the agricultural sector compared to 8% in the EEC,
and agriculture contributed to 19% of Greece’s GDP (5% among EEC members). Only 28%
of the population was involved in industrial activity (42% in the EEC member states) and
industry contributed to only 30% of the country’s GDP. Additionally inflation reached 15%
in 1975 and remained at the same level until 1978 during the height of the accession
negotiations. Greece also experienced deterioration in trade balances during the 1970s. In
1975 exports accounted for only 14% of the GDP, but covered only 43% of the imports.
This ratio fell to 40.2% in 1977 due to a rapid rise in imports, and the trade deficit rose to

31 Desmond Dinan, Europe Recast: A History of European Union, (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner
32 Quoted in European Commission, “Greece and the European Community.”
$400 million in the same year. The new democratic government sought EEC membership as the key to the institutional rehabilitation, political stabilization, and economic modernization of Greece.

At its session at the end of June 1975, the Council of Ministers took note of the Greek application and called upon the Commission to write an Opinion based on Article 237 of the Treaty of Rome. On January 28, 1976, roughly six months after Greece applied to join the Community, the Commission presented an Opinion on Greece’s application. The Opinion welcomed the prospect of eventual Greek accession, recommending that a “clearly affirmative” reply be given to Greece. When the Council met one month later it also stated that it was in favor of the Greek application and that negotiations should “begin as soon as possible.” The Opinion, a 38 page document, contained a 14 page report on the status of Greece in regard to its future membership, noting the main problems in the Greek economic sector and solutions the EEC sought to correct those problems. The Opinion was divided into two parts, the first section, “General Considerations,” included the history of Greece and EEC relations up to 1976, and the implications of Greek accession. The second section, “Specific Aspects of Greece’s Application for Membership,” listed the general economic state of Greece in regard to several categories such as its customs union, internal market, competition, taxation, social policy, regional policy, monetary policy, energy, external relations, and the progress of Greece in the adoption of the Common Agricultural Policy.

33 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
The Opinion on Greece’s Application for Membership mainly focused on economic considerations and the problems accession could potentially cause for both Greece and the EEC. For example, there were a number of features that limited Greece’s ability to fully integrate into the common market such as the size of the agricultural sector, Greece’s weak industrial base, and problems with applying modern technology. Although the Opinion was focused on Greece’s economic problems, there were also several sections that provided solutions and determined the amount of financial assistance Greece would receive to reform its economy once Greece became a full member. Most importantly was the fact that the EEC did not require all the reforms to take place prior to accession. The Commission stated that “complex considerations will mean that integration of Greek agriculture with that of the Community, whether within the framework of Association or membership will take time.”

The fact that Greece was allowed to reform its economy after it was a full member and the fact that financial aid was provided by the EEC to do so was very different from later negotiations for membership, specifically those involving Central and Eastern European nations.

The accession negotiations between Greece and the EEC took three years to complete. Negotiations were officially opened on July 27, 1976, and ministerial meetings were held throughout the rest of the year. The Commission outlined two phases to the negotiation process to guide the negotiations effectively. The “exploratory” phase was the first phase in which all areas of Community activity were examined: transport; environment and consumer protection; taxation; regional policy; social affairs; institutional, budgetary,

37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
and staff-regulation matters; agriculture, economic and financial affairs; approximation of laws; Euratom acts and EEC and ECSC acts in the areas of research and energy; external relations; customs legislation; and informational statistics. The first phase identified potential problems in each area and possible solutions, and noted whether or not a transitional period was needed in each economic sector. During the second phase or the “substantive” phase, the two sides attempted to align their respective positions regarding all problematic areas thereby reaching a general agreement.39

The actual records of the negotiations do not, however, fit as neatly into this pattern as was originally envisioned. The documents containing summaries of conclusions of the various economic sectors contain statements signaling the end of the first phase and the beginning of the second, but in many cases the negotiations were a continuous process with no specific indication of the beginning or end of either phase. For example, certain areas that lagged in development such as agriculture and social policy took longer to negotiate and necessitated different phases in order to efficiently produce agreements while other areas such as capital movement progressed rapidly and did not need distinctive phases to reach an agreement.40

During the spring of 1978 proposals were made on a “sector-by-sector” basis in meetings at the ambassador level, and by mid-1978 “considerable progress” had been made in the fields of movement of capital, the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and external relations.41 Generally speaking, the areas that took the longest to negotiate were the areas in

40 Ibid.
41 European Commission, “Greece and the European Community.”
which a transitional period needed to be adopted before Greece could fully accept certain aspects of EEC legislation, with the Greek government arguing for a shorter transitional period in order to fully gain the benefits of membership and the EEC advocating an extended time period in order to completely work through the problems it potentially saw with Greece accession.

Although it only took three years for the negotiations to be completed, there were some concerns about admitting Greece into the EEC quickly. Member states feared that admitting Greece quickly into the EEC would set a negative precedent for future negotiations, specifically for the negotiations with Portugal and Spain. In addition, the EEC was concerned that Greece’s entry would upset the delicate balance the Community had tried to maintain between Greece and Turkey. The delay in negotiations upset the Greek government and Karamanlis feared that Greece’s negotiations would be combined with those of Spain and Portugal’s, further delaying the accession process. He argued that Greece was entitled to special treatment because of the 1961 Association Agreement, which had envisioned Greek entry into the Community in 1984. Karamanlis embarked on tours of national capitals of member states in 1978 to press his case and was successful particularly in France since France was especially concerned about the potential impact of Spanish accession due to the country’s competitive agricultural sector. France was an extremely powerful Member state, and the affirmative response from French Council members in 1978 allowed the second stage of negotiations, which began in mid-1978 to proceed quickly.

Greece signed the accession treaty in Athens in May 1979, and in January 1981 Greece joined the EEC. Greece was given five years beginning January 1, 1981, to
implement the *acquis communautaire*, a term used to describe the entire scope of the Community’s achievements in harmonizing legislation and the creation of the common market and common policies. Greek tariffs and quotas were to be gradually reduced on Community products by January 1, 1986, and the EEC’s common agricultural policy was to be phased into the Greek agriculture over the same period. Additionally, the Greek government was to designate which regions would qualify for financial aid. Greece was also given five votes in the Council of Ministers, twenty-four seats in the Parliament, and was allowed to nominate one commissioner and one justice to the Court. In return for the generous settlement, the EEC placed a seven year “suspension of freedom of movement within the Community for Greek nationals.”

At the time many saw the accession as a slow process, but compared to future enlargements, Greece was admitted in record time, and Greece was given very favorable terms of entry.

For Greece and the EEC, Greek accession was a way of “cementing Greece’s Western orientation.” Jean Siotis, a professor of economics and international studies in Geneva during the 1980s, wrote in 1983 that Greece had always historically been tied to Western Europe through cultural elements and the fact that Western civilization, liberalism, and democratic pluralism were considered to have their roots in ancient Greek civilization.

EEC officials cited this historical relationship during the accession negotiations with Greece. For example, in a speech marking the opening of the negotiations between Greece and the EEC, George Thomson, Minster of the European Commission, referred to Greece as

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44 Ibid., 57.
“democracy’s native land.” Max Van Der Stoel, President of the European Council, also stated in 1976 that “Greece is a country whose history is rich in long parliamentary and democratic traditions” and Greece’s entry into the EEC “would reinforce the central nucleus of Europe.” In fact, the EEC overlooked certain elements such as the country’s recent military dictatorship and weak economic and social sectors, arguing that the country had always been committed to European ideals. For example, Max Van Der Stoel stated, “Greece’s loyalty to the European idea has proved unshakable, and the Greek people’s feeling that their place is within the Community is evident to us all.” Additionally, in 1979 Vice President of the EEC, Lorenzo Natali, stated, “With the entry of Greece the Community takes on a more truly European dimension, for Greece is the cradle of the European civilization from which the Community itself sprung.” The accession of Greece to the EEC demonstrates that to the EEC there was no question that Greece had historically been a part of Europe, and so the EEC overlooked the fact that Greece had recently had a military dictatorship that violated human rights and the fact that it had significantly weaker economic and social sectors than any other member state. Despite these factors that seem to diminish Greece’s “Westernness,” EEC officials never questioned Greece’s “Westernness” or “Europeanness.”

48 Max Van Der Stoel, “Conference between the European Communities and Greece.”
Portugal

Portugal and Greece’s path to EEC membership were quite similar. Not only were both nations new to democracy and extremely poor when they applied, they also both had comparable relationships with the EEC prior to accession and followed corresponding processes during negotiations. As early as 1972, prior to the return of democracy in Portugal, the EEC and Portugal signed a free trade agreement, known as the 1972 Agreement. It made provision for the elimination of all tariff barriers applicable to exports from Portugal by July 1977, with the exception of some sensitive products such as textiles, clothing, and cork manufactures, for which quantitative restrictions would apply until 1982. Although the free trade agreements signed with other EFTA countries were limited only to industrial trade, some concessions were given for specific Portuguese exports of agricultural products. The agreement also included a “future developments” clause allowing Portugal to submit “reasoned requests” to the European Commission in areas where they wished to extend cooperation.⁴⁹

As Portugal struggled to democratize between 1974 and 1976, the EEC sought to strengthen its ties with the weak and politically unstable nation. Amidst fears of a complete takeover by the radical left, the Council of Ministers in May 1975 agreed to give Portugal a large financial aid package. Arguing that the Community had “a natural interest in giving its fullest support to Portugal’s efforts to strengthen democracy and promote social and economic progress” and that “the support given by Europe to Portuguese democracy must be expressed in a spectacular manner,” the EEC proposed negotiations to strengthen the free

trade agreement of 1972.\textsuperscript{50} This included a “special emergency” financial aid package given to Portugal by the European Investment Bank (EIB) for 150 million EUA. This loan was intended to finance infrastructure, industrialization, and agricultural projects between 1976 and 1977. An additional 200 million EUA in the form of an EIB loan was also granted to Portugal during the same time period. The Community also permitted Portugal to reestablish customs duties up to a maximum of 20\% in order to protect Portugal’s most vulnerable industries. Furthermore, Portuguese international workers were guaranteed the same rights, such as equal working conditions, pay, and social security, as nationals of member states.\textsuperscript{51} These concessions reveal that the EEC was greatly concerned with stabilizing and strengthening Portugal’s democracy, so much so that it provided huge financial assistance to a non-member country and granted concessions allowing Portugal to place protective tariffs on products traded with the EEC, reversing parts of the 1972 Agreement aimed at eliminating customs duties.

The military uprising and the subsequent Carnation Revolution of 1974 overthrew the authoritarian regime that had been put in place in 1933 by Antonio Olivira Salazar. Prior to the revolution, Portugal’s experience with democracy had not been successful. The First Republic was founded in 1910, but lasted only sixteen years and was replaced by a military dictatorship that ruled the nation until the revolution in 1974. The Carnation Revolution lasted two years and was characterized by social unrest and power disputes between right and left wing political forces. Free elections were held after the adoption of the new constitution.


\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
in 1976. The new democracy faced extremism and was socially divided, but the fledgling Portuguese democracy enjoyed considerable international support, much of which came in the form of financial aid from the EEC after Portugal applied to become a full member.

On March 28, 1977, Portugal formally requested membership to the EEC. The “application” was in fact a brief letter submitted by Mário Soares, Prime Minister of Portugal, to David Owen, British Foreign Secretary and President-in-Office of the Council. It stated:

On behalf of the Government of the Portuguese Republic and in accordance with the position adopted by the Assembly of the Republic, I have the honour to inform you that Portugal herewith submits its application for membership of the European Economic Community in accordance with the provisions of Article 237 of the Treaty establishing that Community.\(^{52}\)

The Council took note of Portugal’s request one week later on April 5, 1977, and asked the Commission to give its Opinion. The Commission cooperated with members of the Portuguese government and in particular with the European Integration Committee, which was set up by the Portuguese government to promote and coordinate the preparatory work for accession in formulating the Commission’s opinion. As a result, the Commission had “ample documentation” on the economic and social situation in Portugal and was able to define the exact nature of potential problems raised by membership.\(^{53}\)

The Opinion on Portuguese Application for Membership was structured in exactly the same way as the Opinion on Greece’s Application for Membership. It provided an overwhelmingly favorable response to Portuguese accession and argued strongly for


\(^{53}\) European Commission, “Portugal and the European Community 1979.”
negotiations to begin as soon as possible, stating in its introduction, “The Commission accordingly feels that an unequivocal Yes should be given promptly to the Portuguese request to open accession negotiations as soon as possible.” The opinion, a 49 page document, contained an 18 page assessment of Portugal’s government, economy, and social structures and 31 pages of tables comparing Portugal’s economic development to the rest of the Community’s. The Opinion was divided into two parts. The first section included the history of Portuguese and EEC relations up to 1978 and noted the implications of Portuguese accession. It also included a statement verifying Portugal’s recent transition to democracy stating, “Democracy in Portugal is now an established political fact. It has already ridden out testing times, due to the aftermath of the revolution and the problem of reabsorbing the refugees from Angola and Mozambique, and has gained indisputable international authority.” This statement proves the Community’s confidence in Portugal’s new democracy, even though two years prior they gave hundreds of millions of dollars in financial aid to Portugal because of its weak political and economic systems.

The second section of the Opinion listed the general economic state of Portugal in regard to several categories such as its customs union, internal market, competition, taxation, social policy, regional policy, monetary policy, energy, and external relations. This section was mainly focused on Portugal’s economy and the potential problems that could arise from Portuguese accession for both Portugal and the EEC. The economic recession of the 1970s hit the country especially hard leaving it with a 15% unemployment rate in 1978 and an

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55 Ibid.
inflation rate of 25% in 1977. Moreover, Portugal’s foreign trade deficit had reached $2.4 billion in 1976. Furthermore about one third of the country’s population lived below the poverty level. While the Opinion noted that Portugal was desperately poor, instead of lengthening negotiations or denying the country membership, the EEC decided to continue to grant Portugal EIB loans and financial aid packages.\textsuperscript{56}

On the basis of the Commission’s Opinion, the Council of Ministers declared itself in favor of Portugal’s request for membership during its session in June 1978 and negotiations formally began on October 17, 1978, in Luxembourg. During the official opening ceremony, Roy Jenkins, the President of the Commission, gave a speech recalling the “historical and contractual bonds linking Portugal to the EEC and Europe” and welcomed the opening of negotiations. He also stated that he hoped the negotiations would proceed quickly so that Portugal could enjoy the full benefits of membership.\textsuperscript{57} The negotiations followed a similar pattern to the Greek negotiations. The first round of negotiations began on December 1, 1978, and was largely concerned with organizational aspects of the negotiations such as setting an agenda for the rest of the negotiations including the procedures that would be followed and the number of meetings to be held at the ministerial level. During this initial phase of negotiations the Commission also outlined a list of the items to be discussed during the second phase of negotiations.\textsuperscript{58} The first round of negotiations progressed rapidly and the second set of negotiations began on February 5, 1980.

The accession negotiations between Portugal and the EEC took seven years to complete. The EEC’s main concern during the negotiations with Portugal was the nation’s

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{57} European Commission, “Portugal and the European Community 1979.”
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
weak economy. Although Portugal had experienced substantial economic growth during the 1960s and early 1970s, it was still not close to the level of development of the member state economies. Both the agricultural and industrial sectors were highly underdeveloped due to the nationalization of the economy during Salazar’s dictatorship, and the country had an extremely large debt. In 1980 the deficit was $1.25 billion and rose to $2.85 billion in 1981 and $3.25 billion in 1982.59 Portugal’s vulnerable economy prolonged the negotiation process since there were several areas that posed problems for accession and those areas need to have transitional periods. As a result, the majority of the negotiation period was aimed at preparing Portugal’s economic structures for the requirements of full membership, including completely restructuring certain sectors, and agreeing upon an appropriate transitional period for the most underdeveloped sectors.

Although Portugal experienced numerous economic difficulties during the accession negotiations, the EEC granted Portugal large amounts of money to prepare the Portuguese economy for accession into the Community stating, “Portugal’s accession to the Community makes it necessary to carry out major economic development and restructuring measures within the country.”60 Thus, as early as September 1979, the EEC granted Portugal 47 million EUA of special aid “designed to adapt Portugal’s economy for Community membership,” this was intended to assist with small and medium sized businesses since they were especially vulnerable to the type of competition that membership would cause. Additionally, in 1980 the Commission also gave aid totaling 300,000 EUA for small business

60 European Commission, “Portugal and the European Community 1979.”
owners affected by the earthquake in the Azores and subsequent floods of that year.\footnote{Ibid.}

Furthermore, to “facilitate application of the common agricultural and fisheries policies in Portugal,” the ECC in December 1984 decided to give Portugal 50 million EUA in the form of grants for the improvement of fisheries and agricultural structures.\footnote{European Economic Community, "Council Regulation No 3598/84" \textit{Official Journal of the European Communities} 21.12.84, No L 333, (Brussels, December 18, 1984), 7-11.} Despite, Portugal’s poor economic situation in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the EEC readily gave Portugal hundreds of millions of EUA prior to accession to help prepare the economy for accession. This was a major difference in future enlargements, since the countries from Central and Eastern Europe had to prepare their economies prior to accession with much less financial assistance from the EU. They also had to prove their economic structures were able to integrate with the EU prior to accession.

Another reason that the accession negotiations took seven years to complete was the fact that Portugal’s accession negotiations were grouped together with Spain’s. Spain did not have a history of close relations with the EEC as did Portugal and Spain had a much larger economy and agricultural sector, which terrified some member states. France was particularly skeptical of Spanish entry because it shared many of the same agricultural exports. Portugal’s diplomatic strategy during the negotiation was to keep its own negotiations separate from Spain’s, in hopes of acceding more quickly. The Community, however, maintained that they would negotiate with both Iberian nations simultaneously.\footnote{Joao Cravinho, “Characteristics and Motives for Entry.” In \textit{The Second Enlargement of the EEC: The Integration of Unequal Partners}, ed. by Seers, Dudley, Constatine Vaitsos, Marja Liisa Kiljunen (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1983), 54.}
Despite Portugal’s economic problems, and particularly due to the amount of financial aid the country received to completely restructure their economy, accession negotiations were concluded in 1985. A transitional period was set for seven years, meaning that Portugal was given seven years to dismantle all customs duties for most industrial and agricultural products. Portugal agreed to limit textile exports to the EEC and abandoned the right to have completely free movement of workers until the seven year transitional period ended. Portugal was granted twenty four seats in the European Parliament and from the date of accession was able to fully participate in all Community institutions, activities, and organizations.\textsuperscript{64}

Portugal’s path to EEC membership, like that of Greece, demonstrates that the country’s political, economic, and social underdevelopment never called into question its “Europeanness” or its compatibility with the “West.” For example, the fact that Portugal changed its government sixteen times between 1974 and 1985 did not cause the EEC to question the country’s political stability. Also, even though Portugal was an extremely poor nation, the EEC gave the country huge financial aid packages and a seven year transitional period to fully align itself with the Community’s common market. Most importantly, however, is the fact that the EEC officials stated that Portugal would greatly strengthen the ideas that lay behind the foundation of the EEC. For example, in the Commission’s Opinion on Portugal’s Application for Membership, the Commission stated, “The Community cannot leave Portugal out of the process of European integration. The resulting disappointment would be politically very grave and the source of serious difficulties. The accession of

Portugal, which set its face firmly towards Europe almost as soon as its democracy was restored, can only strengthen the European ideal.” Additionally, in a brochure welcoming Portugal and Spain into the EEC, the Commission wrote:

Culturally, historically, and sociologically Spain and Portugal are amongst the finest flowers of European civilization. They are indissolubly tied to Europe. Since the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, they have constantly enriched European life with their often crucial contributions. In particular, they pioneered the opening of the Old World towards the New. The influence of their cultures is enormous. The Spanish language has spread widely in the Americas and the Portuguese language in Brazil and through parts of Africa. In the North-South dialogue, in which the Community is one of the principal participants, the two newcomers will provide a united Europe with new points of departure.66

Like Greece, Portugal and Spain were seen as nations that were historically connected to Europe and, therefore, their political, economic, and social weaknesses were not seen as a threat to their “Europeanness” or “Westernness.”

Spain

The process of Spain’s integration into the EEC began with its application for an Association Agreement in Feb 1962 while Francisco Franco was still in power. However, the EEC repeatedly refused any institutional link with Spain during Franco’s regime due to the violation of human rights committed by his government and because the government was not democratic. The Community and Spain did, however, begin exploratory talks in 1966 in hopes of negotiating a treaty strictly of a “commercial nature,” and an agreement was

66 European Commission, “A Community of Twelve: Welcome to Portugal and Spain.”
reached in 1970 in which Spain agreed to phase out its import duty on Community products over a period of five years. This agreement, known as the Spain-EEC Agreement, was strictly a trade agreement aimed at lowering protection tariffs for more free trade and not an Association Agreement, which focused on economic reforms with the aim of a country becoming a member state. The agreement marked the beginning of relations between the EEC and Spain and emphasized the EEC’s desire to develop economic and trade relations with Spain, since it was conducted with a nation that did not have a democratic form of government.

However, the death of Francisco Franco in 1975 paved the way for the establishment of democracy in Spain, culminating with the adoption of a new constitution in 1978. With the coronation of Juan Carlos in November 1975, the EEC and Spain began more comprehensive talks, and on July 28, 1977, Oreja Aguirre, the new Spanish minister of Foreign Affairs, presented President Suarez’s request for Spanish accession to the EEC. The Council welcomed Spain’s application for full membership to the EEC and called for the Commission to submit an Opinion on the applications, following the procedures laid out in Article 237 in the Treaty of Rome. The Opinion on Spain’s Application for Membership, was drafted in collaboration with Spain and the member states through meetings with Spanish authorities in Brussels and Madrid of the same year. During the discussions key problems were identified that could potentially arise from Spain’s accession and conclusions were formulated to be included in the Commission’s Opinion.

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67 European Commission, “Spain and the European Community.”
68 Ibid.
The Opinion on Spain’s Application for Membership supported Spanish entry into the EEC and recommended that negotiations begin as soon as possible. It had the same format as the Greek and Portuguese opinions although it was a longer, consisting of 40 pages on the economic situation in Spain with an additional 44 pages of tables and graphs that were mostly concerned with demonstrating the economic disparities between Spain and the EEC. The beginning of the Opinion discussed the political history of Spain, paying particular attention to the country’s recent transition to democracy and welcomed the prospect of a democratic Spain taking part in a unified Europe. The Commission particularly emphasized the fact that the EEC had not established a relationship with Spain until it had created a democracy political system and ceased its human rights violations, demonstrating that the EEC required an applicant member nation to have a functioning democracy and also demonstrating the Community’s commitment to the protection of individual liberties.  

The EEC seemed to balk at the specific challenges presented by Spanish entry. The Commission’s opinion was distinctly more pessimistic about Spanish membership compared to Greek and Portuguese membership, focusing large sections on the “scale and complexities of the problems arising from Spain’s accession.” The Commission considered that the Spanish market had great potential and would also open up new markets in Latin American due to the traditional links Spain had with the continent. However, the opinion also emphasized the fact that the Spanish economy would need time to be brought into line with the EEC. Certain sectors of the Spanish economy were very competitive and could damage

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70 European Commission, “Opinion on Spain’s Application for Membership.”
their Community rivals, while other smaller economic sectors could be seriously affected by
the introduction of competitors. The industrial sectors also required the elimination of tariffs
that had been pending since the 1970 agreement and certain industries needed to be restricted
in order to adapt them to the needs of the Community.\textsuperscript{71} Although the Opinion was on the
whole not entirely enthusiastic regarding Spanish membership, it was written in a tone
suggesting that Spanish accession was imminent. For example, in the conclusion of the first
section of the Opinion the Commission stated, “Although the accession of Spain may lead to
some difficulties in certain sectors the overall effect will be positive…It is therefore
important to make use of the time remaining to us before Spain’s full integration into the
Community in order to take the necessary precautions to mitigate the effects of the two
economies’ interpenetration.”\textsuperscript{72}

The Commission presented its Opinion to the Council, which expressed its support
for Spanish accession, and called for negotiations to begin without delay. As a result, formal
negotiations officially began on February 5, 1979. Regular meetings of the Joint Committee
of the European Parliament and the Spanish authorities were held twice a year and the
negotiations followed the same two-stage pattern as Greek and Portuguese negotiations,
which were divided into two stages. The first stage identified the problem areas, and the
second formulated solutions that both sides agreed on. By 1983 fourteen meetings at the
ministerial level and twenty five meetings at the ambassadorial level had taken place and
agreements had been made in almost all sectors including: taxation, Euroatom, the ECSC,

\textsuperscript{71} Juio Crespo MacLennan, \textit{Spain and the Process of European Integration} (London: Palgrave, 2000), 153.
\textsuperscript{72} European Commission, “Opinion on Spain’s Application for Membership.”
industrial aspects of the customs union, energy, fisheries policy, transportation, and external relations.\textsuperscript{73}

There were, however, two major factors that delayed the negotiations with Spain and made them last longer than the negotiations with Greece. First, the agricultural sector posed the most serious problem to the negotiations. The French were particularly wary of Spanish accession because the Spanish agricultural sector was highly competitive and Spanish membership would likely lead to fewer subsidies for French farmers. Spain’s entry implied a 30\% increase in the size of agricultural land in the EEC and a 31\% increase in the number of people employed in agriculture. France was concerned about Spanish entry since many of Spain’s most competitive products such as fruit, vegetables, wine, and olive oil were also France’s biggest exports. As a result, France tried to delay negotiations with Spain in the agricultural sector by demanding an extremely long transition period before Spanish agriculture could fully integrate into the EEC.

In addition to French hostility, there were structural problems with Spanish agriculture that lengthened the negotiations. There were several areas of the Spanish agricultural sector that were extremely efficient while other areas had far lower productivity. Spain’s climate and variety of agricultural products meant that together with the highly competitive Mediterranean sector, other agricultural sectors such as maize, vegetable oils, and beef were less productive and less competitive. There was also a disparity between huge estates and small farms, which created an extremely wide gap in agricultural incomes, and led to large deficits in Spain’s agricultural trade in the early and mid-1980s. The agricultural

\textsuperscript{73}European Commission, “Spain and the European Community.”
disparity delayed negotiations because it was hard to adopt a common agricultural policy for the two different agricultural economies. By the end of 1981 there had been twenty-five negotiation sessions, including nine at the ministerial level, but not a single chapter of the accession in regards to agriculture had been completed.\textsuperscript{74}

There was also a setback in negotiations in 1981 when an attempted coup d’\textsuperscript{\grave{e}}tat threatened the stability of the newly established democracy. The Spanish transition to democracy had been carried out quickly and relatively smoothly, but the process of consolidation contained many obstacles. Political unrest increased steadily for the two years after the adoption of the constitution in 1978. The first elected government headed by Suarez was successful at integrating the left-wing opposition into the new democracy but was completely incapable of dismantling the ultra-right, which was indignant about his decentralization policies. In addition there were terrorist acts against members of the army in the beginning of 1981. As the crisis became more acute, rumors of a coup d’\textsuperscript{\grave{e}}tat became frequent and on February 23, 1981, the parliament was taken over by members of the Civil Guard announcing a coup d’\textsuperscript{\grave{e}}tat. A few hours later King Juan Carlos appeared on TV announcing that he had taken the necessary measures to restore constitutional normality and that the attempted coup was over.\textsuperscript{75}

The attempted coup d’\textsuperscript{\grave{e}}tat demonstrates that the democratic government in Spain was still highly unstable and, interestingly, while negotiations were immediately delayed following the political disturbance, later the EEC used the attempted coup as a reason for rapidly concluding negotiations with Spain, so that the weak political system could be

\textsuperscript{74} Gilbert, \textit{Surpassing Realism}, 167.
\textsuperscript{75} Tsoukalis, \textit{The European Community and its Mediterranean Enlargement}, 165.
strengthened by full membership. On March 13, 1981, the European Parliament adopted a resolution stating that because of the “necessary responsibility of the Community with regard to the maintenance of democracy in Spain,” and the “political importance of enlargement” negotiations with Spain should be concluded as soon as possible.\(^76\) As the historian Loukas Tsoukalis states, “political cooperation with Spain became more important than ever and the most efficient way of carrying it out was to speed up negotiations for entry into the EEC and to definitely eradicate the challenge to democracy in Western Europe.”\(^77\)

Negotiations progressed rapidly after the 1981 incident and an accession treaty was signed between Spain and the EEC in 1985. The accession treaty stated that a transitional period of seven years would be set for most industrial and agricultural products and ten years for other products, such as steel, wine, and olive oil. Spain also agreed to reduce the exports of iron and steel, and France succeeded in limiting the amount of wine exported to the Community. Also, during the transitional period only three hundred of Spain’s 1700 vessels were allowed to fish in certain zones within Community waters. However, from the date of accession Spain was allowed to participate fully in all the institutions of the European Economic Community.\(^78\)

In his book *Spain and the Process of European Integration*, Juio MacLennan argues that Spain’s role in modern Europe has been one of “gradual decline from hegemony as the first world power to minor significance.”\(^79\) In the sixteenth century Spain enjoyed supremacy with an immense overseas empire and had a large proportion of Europe under the sovereignty


\(^{77}\) Tsoukalis, *The European Community and its Mediterranean Enlargement*, 166.

\(^{78}\) European Commission, “A Community of Twelve: Welcome to Portugal and Spain.”

\(^{79}\) MacLennan, *Spain and the Process of European Integration*, 9.
of Charles I and Phillip II. By the Congress of 1815, however, Spanish ambitions in the constitution of the new concert of Europe were dismissed. A century later at the Peace Conference in Paris, which ended the First World War, Spain was not even represented. During the twentieth century Spain was completely isolated from Europe, especially after the Spanish Civil War which led to the dictatorship of General Francisco Franco. However, despite Spain’s disconnectedness from Europe in the twentieth century and the nation’s weak and unstable democracy in the 1970s, the EEC still made concerted efforts to join Spain with the European Community and continually emphasized the historic relationship between Spain and Europe during the negotiations for accession. For example, Roy Jenkins, President of the Commission, stated during the opening of the negotiations with Spain, “Spain is part of Europe, and Europe is incomplete without Spain. The new institution of parliamentary democracy in Spain and your respect for human rights have together created the conditions for Spanish membership of the Community.”

Moreover, the Commission in its brochure welcoming Portugal and Spain into the Community, also stated, “The European connections of the Spanish and Portuguese are so strong that Community membership became inevitable, once the two countries returned to traditional European democratic institutions.” It is evident from the process of Spanish accession into the EEC that the Community was especially concerned with consolidating the newly established democratic system in Spain. However, the evidently unstable democracy did not set back accession negotiations. Instead the EEC repeatedly cited the historical

80 Ibid.
82 European Commission, “A Community of Twelve: Welcome to Portugal and Spain.”
relationship between Spain and Europe, demonstrating that cultural conceptions played a more powerful role in the accession of Spain than did the actuality of political stability or economic development.

Conclusions

The accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain demonstrate that although there were not a specific written list of requirements outlined in the Treaty of Rome, applicant countries needed to meet certain conditions before negotiations could commence with the EEC. First, any country wishing to join the EEC had to have a democratic form of government, though the accession of Spain shows that it did not need to be a strong democratic system. The EEC suspended the Association Agreement with Greece when a military dictatorship took control of the state in 1962 and refused Spain’s request for an Association Agreement when Francisco Franco was in power in the early 1970s. The refusal of Spain’s request for an Association Agreement was also based on the violation of human rights in the Franco regime, demonstrating that the EEC required its member states to respect the individual liberties of its citizens.

Second, applicant countries in the 1970s and 1980s needed to be able to adopt all the aspects of the Treaty of Rome and all legislation implemented since the treaty was passed in 1958. In order to do so, countries had to be able to assume the economic requirements of the common market, although the cases of Greece and Portugal demonstrate that a large amount of aid was granted to each country to prepare their economies for full membership. Transitional periods were also given to each applicant country after accession for certain
economic sectors that were not able to fully integrate into the common market at accession. Even though candidate countries had to meet certain political and economic standards, the EEC was very lenient in judging whether a country was able to take on the necessary obligations of membership in the 1970s and 1980s. The EEC granted Greece, Portugal, and Spain considerable flexibility in political and economic areas.

The accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain shows that despite the numerous problems with the three applicant countries, the EEC admitted the countries rather quickly in the 1970s and 1980s. This point was stressed by the Commission in 1978:

> Awareness of these many obstacles must not overshadow the positive aspects which enlargement might bring or a number of favorable objective conditions which might exist. Apart from the act of political commitment enlargement of the market should be of benefit to all. Moreover, the applicant countries are already largely integrated through trade links with the Community, and over the last twenty years their level of growth has been high, resulting in substantial changes in their economies.  

As a result, the Commission started preparing its Opinions on the three applicant countries within a couple of weeks of each country’s application. After the Opinions were written, the Council started the negotiations. Although the negotiations took several years to complete, the longest being with Portugal at seven years, the process went forward rather quickly when compared to the negotiations with Central and Eastern European nations in the 1990s. The reason that the negotiations took several years to complete was because of the weak economic situations in each applicant country. The main obstacle to the negotiations was deciding the appropriate transition period for each nation.

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Even though the negotiations with Greece, Spain, and Portugal progressed rather quickly, the EEC did have several concerns about the southern enlargement. The first major issue was the fear that enlargement would cause institutional problems within decision-making bodies of the EEC. In its “General Considerations” concerning the second enlargement of the EEC, the Commission wrote that “the institutions and organs of the present Community cannot ensure that the process of integration will continue in an enlarged Community; on the contrary, there is reason to fear that the Community decision-making procedures will deteriorate.”84 Additionally, the EEC feared that enlargement would considerably increase the disparity in levels of development within the Community itself. All three applicant states had fairly weak economies, and the per capita GDP in each country was about half of the GDP per capita of the member states. Member states also feared that full integration of Mediterranean agricultural products would upset the delicate balance of agricultural power within the Community, which was the case in France’s desire to delay negotiations with Spain.

However, despite the fears and concerns of the EEC and member states about the prospective enlargement, the Opinions and negotiation documents repeatedly pointed out the positive aspects of enlargement. Interestingly, one of the arguments for enlargement was the fact that the three applicant countries had not yet reached the same stage of economic development as the other EEC member countries. The Commission stated that the economic status of the three Southern applicant states “undoubtedly raises serious problems,” but would also “change the Community’s image, particularly in the Third World by making it

84 Ibid., 9.
even more unrealistic to talk of [the EEC] as a rich man’s club.”

Another argument for the admission of Greece, Portugal, and Spain into the EEC was that each country was a newly established democracy, and membership would guarantee the success of these new democratic systems. Additionally, enlarging the EEC to the south would “broaden and strengthen the Community’s relations with the outside world.” Since Spain and Portugal had strong relationships with South America, the Community argued that an enlarged Community would lead to larger presence on the international scene.

These arguments show that despite the problems accession could potentially cause, the EEC saw benefits in all the potential downsides of Greek, Portuguese, and Spanish accession.

The process of accession for Greece, Portugal, and Spain shows that during the late 1970s and early 1980s, the process of European integration essentially involved helping European nations stabilize new democracies and develop their struggling economies. Despite the number of questions regarding the Mediterranean enlargement, the Commission readily urged the negotiations to proceed as quickly as possible, arguing that, “the challenge of enlargement can and must be the start of a new Community thrust towards the objectives set by the authors of the treaties.”

As Mark Gilbert in his analysis of European integration states, “the EEC’s view appeared to be that by anchoring the Three in the Community, democracy would be safeguarded in the applicant states- and the [EEC] itself would obtain a new lease on life as it altruistically sought to bring the Three’s levels of development up to

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85 Ibid., 7.
86 Ibid., 9.
Although the EEC was essentially an economic organization, the motivations for enlargement were predominantly political. The Commissioner of the European Communities wrote in 1979, “The safeguard and enhancement of democratic liberties has from the onset been a major objective of the European Community,” and the major role of the EEC has always been “to uphold the banner of democracy.” Membership in the Community was seen as a stabilizing factor and a means of strengthening parliamentary democracy throughout Europe.

The most important aspect of the accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain is that despite each country’s political, economic, and social weakness, or the concerns the EEC had with regard to Southern European enlargement, their “Europeanness” or “Westernness” was never questioned. As soon as Greece, Portugal, and Spain applied to become members, the EEC was committed to making them full members because the EEC was certain that the three countries shared the same “Europeanness” as the other member states. In a speech on July 5, 1979, Christopher Tugendhat, Commissioner of the European Communities, stated:

> What makes the European Community a real community today is more than geographical proximity or common material interests. It is our sense of common values, above all our common pursuit of freedom and peace. A belief in that value of the individual lies at the heart of development of our European civilization and today gives it much of its strength and moral purpose.

In the 1970s and 1980s the EEC began to define key elements that made a country European or not. Europe was not only a geographical location, but a group of countries committed to a common value system namely a dedication to pluralist democracy, the protection of

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88 Gilbert, *Surpassing Realism*, 166.
90 Ibid.
individual liberties, and competitive market economics. To the EEC there was no question
that Greece, Portugal, and Spain had historically been a part of “Europe” and many of the
negotiation documents stated the Community’s commitment to “returning” Greece, Portugal,
and Spain to Europe. Accession documents such as the Opinions on each of the three
countries outline the historical contributions Greece, Portugal, and Spain had made to
European civilization and used the countries’ “Europeanness” as a reason to quickly admit
them into the EEC. For example, at the commencement of negotiations with Spain, Roy
Jenkins president of the Council of Ministers stated, “The geography, history, and
civilization of [Spain] are part of the very pith and marrow of Europe and have been so from
the beginning.”91 Additionally, in 1979 Vice President of the EEC, Lorenzo Natali, stated,
“With the entry of Greece the Community takes on a more truly European dimension, for
Greece is the cradle of the European civilization from with the Community itself sprung.”92
In the EEC’s view these three nations had always been a part of Europe and the military
dictatorships or extremely poor economies were but a small blemish in each country’s
otherwise fully European history.

The process of integration into the European Economic Community in the 1970s and
1980s was generally a rapid process based on stabilizing and safeguarding democracy in
Greece, Portugal, and Spain and “returning” the three countries to Europe. The
“Europeanness” of each of the three Southern European countries was presumed, making
accession quick and uncontroversial. However, this process was almost completely reversed

91 Roy Jenkins, “Speech by the Right Hon. Roy Jenkins on the Occasion of the Opening of Spanish
Negotiations.”
92 Lorenzo Natali, “Statement by Vice-President Natali on Greece’s Accession to the Community,” (Brussels,
in the 1990s when several Central and Eastern European nations applied to become members of the European Union. The EU made accession for these countries much more difficult, outlining specific requirements, preparing extremely detailed opinions, and also requiring yearly progress reports for each country several years prior to accession, demonstrating a significant change in European integration over the course of two decades.
The collapse of communism in 1989 marked a significant milestone in the history of the European continent, a continent that had been ideologically and militarily divided for almost half of the twentieth century. The collapse of Soviet control in Eastern Europe caught the European Economic Community by surprise. At the time of the third enlargement in 1986, few politicians would have predicted that within five years they would be debating membership for ten candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe. Many member states assumed that with the accession of Portugal and Spain, the Community had reached its limits of expansion in Western Europe, but this outlook changed dramatically when Soviet power collapsed in Eastern Europe and newly independent nations looked westward for help in strengthening their new democracies and market economies.\(^{93}\)

The collapse of Soviet control in Eastern Europe dramatically prompted the EEC to change its internal structure. This chapter will examine the changes that were put in place by the Treaty of Maastricht as well as subsequent EU enlargement legislation, both of which greatly transformed the procedure for accession. Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic will be examined because they shared similar political, economic, and social conditions as Greece, Portugal, and Spain during the application and negotiation process. Unlike them, however, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic’s paths to membership took significantly longer and were much more controversial. The EU created a list of specific requirements for the candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe, and required them to complete

additional steps and procedures prior to accession. The new criteria and additional requirements, as well as the fact that Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic had significantly stronger democracies and more developed economies demonstrates that the EU felt Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic had to prove their “Europeanness” or their “Westernness” prior to accession. In contrast, the Community presumed that Greece, Portugal, and Spain were “truly European” countries that had historically contributed to the “European civilization” from which the Community was created.

Political change in Central and Eastern Europe began in the late 1980s when Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev was a reformer and his goal was to “improve and streamline the communist system,” not dismantle it. However, by 1989 popular movements rose up against their communist leaders. Partially free elections took place in Poland in June 1989 resulting in an overwhelming victory for the opposition movement. In the same month talks between the government and opposition in Hungary commenced, which were aimed at fundamentally changing the political system. By the fall of 1989 the reform process accelerated and turned into a relatively peaceful revolution against communism, culminating with the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989.\textsuperscript{94}

The EEC was primarily concerned with internal developments such as completing the single market and achieving Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) when the Cold War came to an end but, the unexpected and rapid collapse of communism caused European integration to take center stage. As German reunification appeared imminent and an increasing number of Central and Eastern European nations expressed their desire to “return

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 344.
to Europe” by joining the Community, the EEC debated the idea of Eastern enlargement. Some member states, especially Britain and Denmark, felt a sense of obligation to those who had led the fight against communism and believed that membership in a strengthened Community was a definite way to ensure that Communism was banned from the continent. The majority of member states, however, believed that the breakup of the Soviet bloc should be met by a strengthened Community and wanted to establish a tighter Community of twelve instead of creating wider frameworks for cooperation across the entire continent. Another argument against enlargement was that the costs and complications of enlargement were guaranteed to be enormous and would certainly set back plans for achieving Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the completion of the single market. Nevertheless, with the Cold War over, the Community could not restrict itself to Western Europe since other European countries had a right to seek membership in an organization that claimed to be open to all countries in Europe.95

The first step the EEC took to help the nations in Central and Eastern Europe transform their political and economic systems was the creation of PHARE (Pologne Hongrie: Actions pour la Reconversion Economique), a Community funded program of technical assistance to encourage the development of private enterprise and aid in the conversion to market-oriented economies. Additionally, the Community expanded trade, increased political dialogue, and supported selective admission to Western organizations such as NATO. The European Council in November 1989 also created the European Bank

for Reconstruction and Development, which was designed to specifically help finance the economic transition in Central and Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{96}

The EEC also signed Europe Agreements between the Community and Central and Eastern European nations. These agreements provided a legal framework for political dialogues between the EEC and the Central and Eastern European countries in order to promote trade and prepare these nations for “gradual integration into the Community.”\textsuperscript{97} The key economic provision of the Europe Agreements was the creation of free-trade agreements between the Community and the associated countries within a ten year period. Extended market access was a controversial issue in some member states, especially those that wanted to keep tight quotas on the import of iron and steel, textiles, and agricultural products, which were the exact products many countries in Central and Eastern Europe intended to export. However, in December 1991, Europe Agreements were concluded with Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. (The agreement with Czechoslovakia was later replaced, following the breakup of that country in 1993, with two separate agreements with the Czech Republic and Slovakia). The Europe Agreements made the Central and Eastern European nations eligible for loans from the European Investment Bank and grant assistance under the PHARE program.\textsuperscript{98}

The Europe Agreements presented a pessimistic response to the requests of many countries of Central and Eastern Europe for rapid accession to the Community. The Europe Agreements were different than the Association Agreements the EEC signed with Greece,\textsuperscript{96,97,98}

\textsuperscript{96} John Van Oudenaren, “EU Enlargement: The Return to Europe,” 346.  
\textsuperscript{98} John Van Oudenaren, “EU Enlargement: The Return to Europe,” 346.
Portuguese, and Spain. The purpose of those agreements was to prepare the three countries for membership, however, the Europe Agreements were intended only to help transform the Central and Eastern European economies from socialism to capitalism. They were not designed to prepare the countries for full membership. The preambles to all three Europe Agreements noted the desire of these countries to join the Community, but specifically stated that membership was not assured. Furthermore, even though the Agreements were signed at the end of 1991 with all three countries, few provisions were actually implemented at that time. For example, only Title III on mutual trade came into force in 1992. The rest of the Agreement was not effective until February 1, 1994, more than two years after the signing of the agreements, demonstrating what Desmond Dinan refers to as the Community’s “inability to deal expeditiously and generously with its neighbors to the east.”

Relations between the EEC and the nations of Central and Eastern Europe remained stuck in the form of the Europe Agreements for the next couple of years. It was only after the ratification of the Treaty of Maastricht that the EU began to turn its attention to the challenge of enlargement to the East, but still refused to act promptly when it came to actually negotiating entry into the Community.

After the EEC established Europe Agreements with their neighbors to the east, the EU held several Intergovernmental Conferences (IGCs) to discuss not only the prospect of Eastern Enlargement, but also how to maintain the accountability and legitimacy of EEC institutions in a significantly larger Community. It was clear that the institutional framework of the EEC as it stood in 1990 was incapable of functioning effectively in a greatly enlarged

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99 Desmond Dinan, Europe Recast, 272.
Community. The EEC believed that it should clearly define its federal vocation, including its ambitions for a common foreign and security policy before it admitted new members. The series of IGCs culminated with the signing of the Treaty of Maastricht, or the Treaty on European Union, on February 7, 1992. This treaty completely renovated the entire internal structure of the existing Community.

The Treaty of Maastricht transformed the European Economic Community into the European Union. The formation of the European Union created political union among members and extended sovereignty to new policy areas such as trans-European networks, industrial policy, consumer protection, youth and culture, and education and vocational training, whereas the EEC was an organization based solely on economic cooperation. The Union was set up based on a complicated structure of three “pillars,” which dealt with different and partially overlapping policy areas using several decision-making processes. The first pillar consisted of previously existing institutions such as the European Commission, the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament, and the European Court of Justice, but their areas of sovereignty were no longer solely economic in nature. The second pillar created a new Common Foreign and Security Policy and the third pillar consisted of cooperation in the fields of Justice and Home Affairs, including asylum policy, control of external borders and immigration from outside the Union, and combating drug addiction and international crime.100

Aware of the prospects for Eastern enlargement, the Maastricht Treaty repealed Article 237 of the Treaty of Rome and replaced it with a similar article stating,

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Any European State may apply to become a Member of the Union. It shall address its application to the Council, which shall act unanimously after consulting the Commission and after receiving the assent of the European Parliament, which shall act by an absolute majority of its component members. The conditions of admission and the adjustments to the Treaties on which the Union is founded which such admission entails shall be the subject of an agreement between the 16 Member States and the applicant State. This agreement shall be submitted for ratification by all the contracting States in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements.101

This Article was not much different than the one in the Treaty of Rome. The EU still required applicant states to be “European” and in theory the accession process was largely the same. Each candidate country had to submit an application, the Commission would then respond with an Opinion on the candidate country’s application, and then negotiations could take place. The final step was the signing and ratification of an accession treaty. However, what did change with the ratification of the Treaty of Maastricht was the addition of several new policy areas that candidate countries had to align themselves with prior to accession. The main priority in previous enlargements was economic in nature, however, with the transformation to political union, future enlargements comprised not only economic cooperation, but political and social policy as well. The Treaty of Maastricht also revised the Community’s economic policy. As a result new candidate countries were required to extend cooperation to several new areas including, but not limited to, social and regional development, a common foreign defense strategy, new energy standards, and education and cultural policy.

One year later, the European Council in Copenhagen specifically addressed the challenges and issues regarding enlargement. This was the first occasion on which the EU member states formally acknowledged enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe as a definite goal. The conclusions of this council were the first major developments that changed the procedures for accession and marked the most significant departure from previous enlargements. The Copenhagen Council recognized that “the associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe that so desire shall become members of the Union,” but only when the countries were able to “assume the obligations of membership by satisfying the economic and political conditions required.”

The Council further maintained that “the Union’s capacity to absorb new members whilst maintaining the momentum of European integration is also an important consideration of both the Union and the candidate countries.” The Council recognized that enlargement to the East was imminent, but was also skeptical of the challenges an unprecedented enlargement could have on the newly formed European Union.

As a result, the Copenhagen Council divided the potential candidate countries into three categories and listed the strengths and difficulties each group possessed. The first group included Austria, Finland, Sweden, and Norway. The Council defined them as neutral countries no longer constrained by the Cold War. They were members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and as a result were acquainted with the EU’s policies and procedures, economically well developed, and politically stable. The second group included Turkey, Cyprus, and Malta who were submitting or reactivating membership applications.
due to the changing international circumstances. Finally, the Council grouped all the newly independent countries from Central and Eastern Europe together, including Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia. Although each country’s circumstances were different, the Council saw sufficient similarities between each Central and Eastern European country to warrant a common approach to their desire to become members to the EU, describing them as economically underdeveloped, politically unstable, and lacking a familiarity with the EU’s policies and procedures.  

In the Council’s published conclusions, under the section devoted to “Relations with the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe,” the Council outlined three criteria each country had to demonstrate prior to accession. These three criteria, later famously termed the Copenhagen Criteria, were only listed under the section pertaining to Central and Eastern Europe, suggesting not only that the Council created the criteria specifically for them, but also that the Council did not believe that these countries exhibited the criteria necessary for admission. First, each country needed to have “achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for the protection of minorities.” The second criteria stated that each applicant country had to have “a functioning market economy, as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressures and market forces in the EU.” Finally, any country seeking EU membership had to be able to “take on the obligations
of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic, and monetary union. “  

The Copenhagen Criteria changed the requirements for admission to the European Union and therefore the process of accession. While the Community required previous applicant countries such as Greece, Portugal, and Spain to have a democratic system of government that protected human rights and be economically capable of competing in the Community’s common market, the process of judging these accomplishments were much more lenient than for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. For example, Portugal was politically divided and faced the threat of military takeover when it applied for membership in 1977 and Spain experienced an attempted military coup in 1981, which threatened the stability of the country’s democracy. Nevertheless, the unstable democracies in Portugal and Spain did not substantially prevent or delay accession for either country. However, the listing of requirements in 1993 served as a way to strictly judge the Central and Eastern European countries’ progress in achieving democracy. In the opinions written by the Commission for Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic, the stability of democratic governmental structures were strictly evaluated based on the number of free elections held, the number of different political parties present, laws governing freedom of speech and the right to establish unions, laws restricting the role of the executive, and the efficiency of the judicial system.  

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The functioning of a market economy and ability to cope with competitive pressures was also judged differently than it had been in the past. While the Commission noted the economic problems that the accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain would cause, mainly in regard to agriculture and lack of industrial development, these difficulties did not set back the accession process. Instead the Commission allowed Greece, Portugal, and Spain significant transition periods, usually about ten years after accession, in order to adopt the necessary reforms to increase their economic performance and fully adapt to the economic requirements for participation in the common market. Yet, when analyzing the economic capacity of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic, the Commission again insisted on a variety of measures to quantify each country’s economic ability focusing not only on the economic performance of each country but also on the presence of a legal system, including the regulation of property rights that could be enforced, macroeconomic stability, a degree of consensus about the essentials of economic policy, and the absence of “significant barriers” to market entry. 107 The option of a transitional period was not an alternative for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. They instead had to demonstrate optimal economic conditions prior to accession, which was another major difference from previous enlargements.

The prerequisite that each country be able to take on the all the “obligations of membership” was the hardest to assess and also the most subjective. The “obligations of membership” meant acceptance of what is known in the EU as the *acquis communautaire*, a

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107 Ibid.
term used to describe the entire scope of the Community’s achievements in harmonizing legislation, creating a single market, and creating common policies. As a result, each candidate country had to harmonize their national laws with every EU law that had been created since the formation of the EEC in 1957. For the countries from Central and Eastern Europe the acquis was divided into thirty-one sections. The most important were the free movement of goods, persons and capital, the freedom to provide goods and services, agricultural policy, industrial policy, taxation, competition policy, regional policy, EMU policy, and customs union policy. Compared to previous enlargements this was a major obstacle. Even though Greece, Portugal, and Spain joined the Community when it was solely an economic organization, they did not have to adapt their national economic laws to EEC law prior to accession. They were instead granted transitional periods in which to fully adopt Community laws and regulations to their economic sectors.

The Copenhagen Council created the criteria as a way to evaluate the readiness of countries to join the EU and was a way to make sure that countries from Central and Eastern Europe were politically, economically, and socially similar to member states. The listing of requirements served as a way to judge each country’s political, economic, and social situation in great detail prior to accession. However, it also served to delay the accession negotiations with countries from Central and Eastern. Although the requirements themselves were not significantly different from previous enlargements, the way that the EU chose to evaluate the countries from Central and Eastern Europe in detail was very different and considerably time consuming. Moreover, as the historian Mark Gilbert argues, several

member states that were already a part of EU would not have been able to demonstrate all the requirements the Copenhagen Criteria demanded. For example, if Britain and Denmark had been required to adhere to the Copenhagen Criteria in 1993, they would have been excluded because they were not enthusiasts for political union. Furthermore, Greece would have been rejected due to its extremely weak economy in the early 1990s, not to mention Italy whose political system was in a state of collapse in the early 1990s.\(^\text{109}\) Some Commission officials even claimed that no member state had fully implemented more than 80 percent of EU rules and regulations, but still demanded that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe had to adhere to 100 percent of the EU’s laws before becoming full members.\(^\text{110}\)

One would assume that with the newly specified requirements and the stricter evaluation process it would take all of the applicant countries a significantly longer amount of time to become full members to the EU in the 1990s. However, the opposite is true. In 1995 three countries, Austria, Finland, and Sweden, were admitted in record time. Austria had officially applied for membership to the Community in 1989 and Finland and Sweden applied in 1992. Shortly thereafter, on February 1, 1993, negotiations with Austria, Finland, and Sweden opened in Brussels. Like the accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain, the accession process was concluded relatively quickly. All three countries were members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), a collection of neutral countries during the Cold War that were not members of the EEC. As a result, many of the items that were on the agenda for the accession negotiations were already included in the European Economic Area,


which was an association between the EU and EFTA members that extended the benefits of the single market to consumers and manufactures in the EFTA countries. However, there were still problems that had to be resolved during the accession negotiations such as social policy, energy, the environment, agriculture, and fisheries. For example, social and environmental standards and agricultural subsidies were generally higher in the applicant countries. Further difficulties arose on specific issues including support for remote and sparsely populated areas in Scandinavia, truck transit through Austria, and Sweden’s state monopoly on the sale of alcohol. Despite the difficulties in the negotiations, accession agreements were reached in mid-1994, roughly a year after negotiations commenced. The accession agreements included transitional periods for adopting certain regulatory matters, the creation of a new category of structural funds for Arctic areas, special measures to maintain farmers’ incomes in the new member states after they aligned their prices to EU standards, and the maintenance of higher environmental standards in new member states.  

This was the easiest enlargement for the EU to accomplish. The EU stated that “the candidate countries accepted without difficulty the underlying principles and political objective on which these new policy areas of the Union are based as well as the associated acquis,” which is why they were able to be admitted so quickly. However, the reason that Austria, Finland, and Sweden were admitted without delay is because they were not required to complete as many steps in the accession process as the countries from Central and Eastern

112 European Commission, “Negotiations on the Accession of Austria, Sweden, Finland, and Norway to the European Union: Summary of the Results.”
Europe had to complete. Most importantly, they were not evaluated on the basis of the Copenhagen Criteria. Instead, their accession process resembled the accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain, despite the ratification of the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992. For example, the Opinions on Austria, Finland, and Sweden were relatively short and were mainly focused on the potential problems accession would cause, but also cited solutions to those problems including transitional periods for the economic areas that were not ready for full integration with the common market.

Another way the accession of Austria, Finland, and Sweden was very similar to the accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain was that the EU focused on how the accession of Austria, Finland, and Sweden would benefit the EU. During the accession negotiations the EU stated that these three countries “would indeed strengthen the Community in a number of ways.” The Commission specifically stated that, “The Union will on a whole benefit from the accession of Finland, which would widen the circle of countries whose prospective middle- and long-term economic, monetary, and budgetary performance is likely to contribute to the development of economic and monetary union.” Additionally, the Commission stated in its Opinion on Austria’s Application for Membership that the accession of Austria should be completed quickly since Austria had “historically subscribed to the concept of European cooperation.”

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“Europeanness” or “Westernness” of Austria, Finland, and Sweden was presumed and it was not measured against the Copenhagen Criteria, even though the Copenhagen Criteria was created prior to the opening of negotiations with the EFTA countries. In contrast, the accession of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic raised numerous questions about the “Europeanness” of the region. As Desmond Dinan states in *Europe Recast*, “It is little wonder that many EU officials and politicians buried their heads in the sand and hoped that Central and Eastern European enlargement might somehow never happen.”\(^\text{116}\)

Much more so than the accession of Austria, Finland, and Sweden, the accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain gave the EU some idea of the difficulties they were likely to encounter with the countries from Central and Eastern Europe. Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic in particular had significantly similar political, economic, and social situations to Greece, Portugal, and Spain when they applied for membership to the EU. However, in many instances Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic had more stable political and economic structures, especially in regard to industrial development, than Greece, Portugal, or Spain. Moreover, Hungry, Poland, and the Czech Republic had, on the whole, lower poverty and unemployment levels than Greece, Portugal, and Spain did when they applied for membership to the EEC.

Like Greece, Portugal, and Spain, Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic had newly democratic institutions when they applied for membership. After the revolutionary events of 1989, Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic established democratic governmental systems, held free elections, and ratified new constitutions that defended civil

rights. Whereas Portugal and Spain experienced threats to the stability of democracy, Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic did not. For example, Portugal went through sixteen different governments during their accession negotiations and Spain faced a military coup at the height of their accession negotiations, neither of which made the EEC question either country’s commitment to democracy. In contrast, the EU did question Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic’s commitment to democracy, even though none of the countries experienced political instability. Instead, the EU questioned their commitment to democracy based on minute factors. For example, in the Opinion on Hungary’s Application for Membership, the Commission stated that “justice does not operate in a satisfactory way” since “salaries and wages [of the public administration] are still low compared with earnings in the private sector.”\textsuperscript{117} Similarly, Poland had “certain limitations to the freedom of press,” although the Commission did not list them, or state how the limitations of the freedom of press threatened the citizens’ individual liberties.\textsuperscript{118} Whereas political instability was used as a reason to quickly admit Greece, Portugal, and Spain, the mere threat of political insecurity caused the EU to lengthen the accession negotiations with Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic.

Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic also had fairly underdeveloped economies compared to member states, which mirrored the significant economic disparity between Greece, Portugal, and Spain and the Community in the 1970s and 1980s. After the collapse of communism, Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic experienced a sharp recession as they sought to transform their subsided socialist economies into market capitalist economies.

\textsuperscript{117} European Commission, “Opinion on Hungary’s Application for Membership of the European Union.”
\textsuperscript{118} European Commission, “Opinion on Poland’s Application for Membership of the European Union.”
In the early 1990s all three nations implemented a “shock therapy” program, which was aimed at transforming their economies from socialism to capitalism overnight. The program included building up foreign reserves, removing price controls, allowing enterprises to fail, all at the expense of real domestic wages. In 1995 the Czech Republic had a per capita GDP of 9,410 ECU or about $11,300 and equaled about 55% of the EU per capita GDP average. 119 In 1995 Hungary’s per capita GDP was 6,300 ECU, or about $7,500, which was about 37% of the EU average. Poland’s per capita GDP was 5,300 ECU, or about $6,300, which was 31% of the EU average. 120 The economic difference between Hungary and Poland’s per capita GDP and the EU average was comparable to the economic difference between Greece, Portugal, and Spain and the member states of the EEC in the late 1970s and early 1980s, all of which had per capita GDPs of less than 50 percent of the EEC average. The Czech Republic’s per capita GDP was the highest at almost 60% of the EU average in 1996, compared to Portugal’s per capita GDP, which was not even 20% of the Community’s average when it was granted full membership. However, the potential problems associated with the economic disparity between applicants and member states was not a deterrent for Greece, Portugal, and Spain and it was actually used as a reason to admit them into the Community. Unlike Greece, Portugal, and Spain, the economic weakness of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic served as a reason to prolong negotiations and made the EU question whether these three countries could function in the common market.

Although the disparity between the Central and Eastern European countries per capita GDP and the EU per capita GDP was similar to the disparity between the Southern European

119 The exchange rate of 1 ECU equaled 1.25299 USD in 1995;
states and the EEC, Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic larger and more developed industrial sectors than Greece, Portugal, or Spain did. Industry accounted for 50% of the Czech Republic’s GDP and industry employed 34% of the population. Industry in Hungary and Poland accounted for a lower percent of each country’s GDP, which was around 40% for both nations. All three nations experienced substantial growth in the industrial sector in the 1990s. According to the Commission, “above average growth [was] recorded in manufacturing” in Hungary between 1991 and 1996 and industrial productivity in Hungary increased at a rate of 10% during the same timeframe. In Poland industry grew by 10% per year between 1994 and 1996. In comparison Greece’s industrial growth rate was 3.5% in 1975 and Spain had an industrial growth rate of 5.9% in 1977. Hungary and Poland’s industrial sector accounted for about 40% of each country’s per capita GDP, which was closer to the industrial capacity of Greece, Portugal, and Spain.

Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic also had smaller and more efficient agricultural sectors that employed more modern technologies compared to Greece, Portugal, and Spain. The percentage of GDP that represented agriculture was also closer to the EU average, which was 4.4 percent. This was especially the case in the Czech Republic where agriculture only accounted for 5.7% of the nation’s GDP in 1996. Similarly 7.7% of

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121 European Commission, “Opinion on Hungary’s Application for Membership.”
122 European Commission, “Opinion on Poland’s Application for Membership.”
Hungary’s GDP was from agriculture and 6.6% of Poland’s GDP came from agriculture. In contrast, agriculture accounted for almost 20% of Greece GDP in 1977.\textsuperscript{125}

Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic also had much lower poverty levels and inflation rates than Greece, Portugal, and Spain did when they applied for membership. In 1997 Hungary had the highest poverty level, which recorded 17.3% of the population living below the poverty level. In 1996, 14.6% of Poland’s population lived below the poverty line, and only 2% of the Czech Republic’s population lived in poverty.\textsuperscript{126} In contrast, when Greece applied for membership, 24.3% of its population was classified as poor while a third of Portugal’s population lived in poverty. Spain had a much lower poverty rate, which was 12.9%.\textsuperscript{127} Inflation was also lower in the Central and Eastern European candidate countries. Greece had the lowest inflation rate, which was 15.5% in 1975. Portugal and Spain both had high inflation rates that were over 25% when they applied for membership.\textsuperscript{128} Hungary’s inflation rate was most comparable to the Southern European nations at 23% and Poland had an inflation rate of 19% in 1996. The Czech Republic had by far the lowest rate of inflation, which was recorded at 8.8% in 1996.\textsuperscript{129}

Although Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic were more socially and economically developed, especially in the industrial sector, than Greece and Portugal, and to a less extent Spain, the EU still questioned the level of industrial development in Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic. For example, in 1997 the Commission noted that Czech

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., European Commission, “Opinion on the Czech Republic’s Application for Membership;” European Commission, “Greece and the European Community.”
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid.
Republic had a very strong economy. It recognized it its Opinion on the Czech Republic’s Application for Membership that the Czech Republic was characterized by single digit inflation, low unemployment, a budget surplus, increasing household incomes, and rapid investment. However, despite this, the Commission argued that “further progress will need to be made in the next few years,” although the Commission did not state what that “progress” was or how to achieve it.¹³⁰ The comparison between the three Southern European candidate countries and the three candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe demonstrates that the economic underdevelopment of Greece, Portugal, and Spain never made them any less “Western,” but even the smallest hint of economic underdevelopment made Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic less “Western,” and subsequently, less “European.”

The Accession of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic

In March 1994 Hungary became the first country from Central and Eastern Europe to formally apply for membership in the EU followed shortly by Poland in April 1994 and the Czech Republic in January 1996. Soon after Hungary and Poland formally submitted their applications, the European Council at its 1994 summit in Essen asked the Commission to adopt a pre-accession strategy for the nations of Central and Eastern Europe seeking membership to the EU. Three months later, in March 1995, the Commission issued a White Paper that spelled out the demands of participation in the internal market. The White Paper affirmed: “Any internal market without frontiers relies on a high level of mutual confidence

¹³⁰ European Commission, “Opinion on the Czech Republic’s Application for Membership.”
and on equivalence of regulatory approach. Any substantial failure to apply the common rule in any part of the internal market puts the system at risk and undermines it integrity.” The White Paper also stated that “any systematic checks and controls that are necessary to ensure compliance with the rules take place within the market and not when national borders are crossed.” The 1995 White Paper confirmed that in order to operate in the internal market, candidate countries must adhere not only to the principals outlined in the founding treaties, but also to the large body of secondary legislation passed by the Council of Ministers, including integration in policy areas outside of the internal market such as the environment, transportation, agriculture, and cohesion policies prior to accession. It also made it clear that all candidate countries had to fully adopt all aspects of the acquis prior to becoming full membership. This was another difference between the accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain because the three Southern European nations did not have to adopt all Community legislation prior to accession.

The purpose of the pre-accession strategy was to “provide a guide to assist the associated countries [from Central and Eastern Europe] in preparing themselves for operating under the requirements of the European Union’s internal market,” but it also served as an obstacle to accession. The 1995 White Paper made it clear that instead of simply promulgating new laws, the applicant nations would have to renovate their entire legal and economic structures to adhere to the EU’s single market standards. For example, the White

132 Ibid.
133 Van Oudenaren, “EU Enlargement: The Return to Europe,” 351.
134 European Commission, “White Paper: Preparation of the Associated Countries of Central and Eastern Europe for Integration into the Internal Market of the Union.”
Paper specifically identified key areas in each sector of the internal market and suggested a sequence in which the approximation of legislation should be adopted by each applicant country. It also required each country to create national work programs to help implement the strategy and facilitate reforms, thus creating additional steps in the accession process and extensively prolonging the entire process. The idea of a pre-accession strategy was completely new to accession procedures. There was no pre-accession strategy for Greece, Portugal, and Spain. The adoption of the 1995 White Paper, however, completely reversed the accession process. Now applicant countries were required to fully integrate their economies with the common market prior to accession, making accession longer and much more difficult for Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic.

At its December 1995 session in Madrid, the European Council again changed the protocol for accession to the EU. The Council decided that accession procedures would be concluded with all eight of the associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe simultaneously. The EU argued that this was to “ensure that the applicant countries are treated on an equal basis.” However, the decision to conduct accession procedures with all the countries from Central and Eastern Europe at the same time was another way the EU made it harder for the candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe to become members of the EU. All of the associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe were at different levels of development and, as a result Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic were required to accede with the much poorer nations in the region. The arrangement of all Central and Eastern European nations into one group assured the EU that no Central or

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Eastern European nation would join the EU quickly because the more developed nations had to wait for membership until all the countries in the region were ready for accession.

Before the Commission was able to complete the Opinions on all ten countries from Central and Eastern Europe, it sent out lengthy and detailed questionnaires for each of the applicant countries to fill out and return. The questionnaires were formulated around the Copenhagen Criteria and requested specific information about the candidate country’s political and judicial infrastructure, economic and social situations, and questions pertaining to the applicant’s ability to accept the *acquis communautaire*. Since the EU required all accession procedures between all Central and Eastern European countries to be carried out simultaneously, the countries who submitted their questionnaires first had to wait until the rest of the applicants submitted theirs before the Commission replied with their Opinion. For example, Hungary submitted its response to the questionnaire within three months of receiving it, but had to wait almost two years for the Commission to reply with its opinion.\(^{136}\)

As already decided shortly after Copenhagen, negotiations on enlargement did not begin until after the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) scheduled for 1996. The IGC concluded in the summer of 1997, and as expected, the Commission delivered its Opinions on all of the associated countries from Central and Eastern Europe in a report entitled *Agenda 2000*, published on July 15, 1997. The Opinions on Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic were extremely detailed and were all about 130 pages long, much longer than any previous Opinions. The opinions were divided into three chapters. The first was an introduction that described the history of each country and its relationship to the EU. The

second part of each opinion was the “Requirements for Membership” chapter, which essentially graded each country on the Copenhagen Criteria and the adoption of legislation laid out in the 1995 White Paper in extraordinary detail. Third, each opinion concluded with a “Summary and Conclusions” chapter that provided a final analysis of the country’s ability to accept the membership of the EU.  

Although they were exceptionally long, the Commission’s opinions on all three countries provided the exact same conclusions. Each country had made “adequate” constitutional and institutional arrangements and practices. All had made “good progress” and displayed the characteristics of a functioning market economy, but structural reforms were still necessary especially in the financial sector and in social security. Finally Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic were all in the process of absorbing EU rules and regulations, but all still had a long way to go before they could fully adopt the *acquis communautaire*. The conclusion that all three countries had made considerable progress but still had to continue to develop significantly is not only extremely vague, but also demonstrates that the EU did not consider the three countries’ applications separately, but instead viewed them as a single entity.

The fact that the EU saw all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe as one entity is also demonstrated in the carelessness of the Commission in writing the Opinions. In one paragraph in the “Opinion on Hungary’s Application for Membership,” the Commission loses its “ Hungarian” focus and refers to the country in question as Poland:


138 Ibid.
The Europe Agreement provides for a competition regime to be applied in trade relations between the Community and Poland based on the criteria of articles 85 and 86 of the EC Treaty (agreements between undertakings) abuses of dominant position and in article 92 (state aid) and for implementing rules in these fields to be adopted within three years of the entry into force of the Agreement.\textsuperscript{139}

This paragraph further illustrates that the EU did not write their Opinions on each country independently despite their claim to treat each applicant country on an “equal basis.”

Also, unlike the Opinions on Greece, Portugal, and Spain there were no statements about the “Europeanness” of Hungary, Poland, or the Czech Republic or remarks about how joining the EU would fully integrate these countries back into Europe where they historically belonged. The sections in the Opinions devoted to the history of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic only briefly list the political relationship between each country and the EU. None of the Opinions have statements about the strengths admission of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic would bring to the EU, or statements about Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic’s historical contributions to European civilization or European culture.\textsuperscript{140}

Whereas the EEC tended to focus more on the strengths Greek, Portuguese, and Spanish membership would have on the Community, in the 1990s the EU only paid attention to the negative aspects of enlargement to the East would have on the EU.

Nevertheless, the Commission recommended that accession negotiations begin with Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic and at its summit in Luxembourg in December 1997 the European Council approved the Commission’s recommendation. Accession

\textsuperscript{139} Quoted in Borocz, “The Fox and the Raven,” 861; Also see European Commission, “Opinion on Hungary’s Application for Membership.”

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., European Commission, “Opinion on the Czech Republic’s Application for Membership;” European Commission, “Opinion on Hungary’s Application for Membership.”
negotiations were formally opened in March 1998, four years after Poland and Hungary applied for membership and two years after the Czech Republic applied. The EU organized the negotiation agenda into thirty-one chapters corresponding to the *acquis communautaire*. The initial stage of negotiations examined in minute detail the extent to which the candidate countries had met the rules and obligations of membership. Substantive negotiations, which were conducted bilaterally between the EU and each applicant, began in November 1998.  

However, the Council was not entirely enthusiastic about enlargement, and therefore asked the Commission to prepare annual reports on all the applicants’ progress toward accession in order to review the progress each country had made in the adoption of the *acquis communautaire*. The Progress Reports were conducted regularly for five years and the main their main objective was to see what reforms had been carried out from year to year and how much progress each country had made in the acceptance of the *acquis*. The annual reports served as the foundation for the accession negotiations between Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic, but provided vague conclusions about what each country had actually accomplished from year to year. Many sections, especially in the earlier progress reports, stated that the applicant had made “considerable progress,” but more reforms needed to be completed.  

Desmond Dinan described the annual reports as “accession negotiation scorecards,” and as negotiations progressed more and more chapters were checked off the

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141 Dinan, *Europe Recast*, 277.
The central elements in the negotiations with Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic dealt with budgetary, policy, and institutional questions. How much each new member state was required to pay into and receive back from the EU budget, production quotas and subsidy levels, how many seats each country would receive in the European Parliament, and how many votes each country would receive in the Council of Ministers were all questions that had to be decided during the negotiation process. During the negotiations agriculture proved to be the most difficult issue to agree upon. Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic all requested that direct payments be granted to their farmers at the same level as farmers in the member state received, but member states argued that such payments should not be extended to new members. This was particularly a problem in Poland where twenty percent of the country’s population was employed in agriculture. In 2002, the two sides reached an agreement where subsidies to farmers in new member states would be gradually implemented. Direct payment to farmers was set at twenty-five percent of the EU levels upon entry and would continue to increase over a ten year period until the direct payments matched the EU member state levels.144

Another difficult issue during the accession negotiations was the free movement of labor, which is guaranteed by the Treaty of Maastricht along with the free movement of goods, services, and capital, and was a central part of the completion of the single market in the early 1990s. However, free movement of labor westward from Central and Eastern

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143 Dinan, Europe Recast, 277.
144 Gilbert, Surpassing Realism, 240; Van Oudenaren, “EU Enlargement: The Return to Europe,”355.
Europe was a highly controversial issue among member states during the accession negotiations. Member states feared that with the free movement of labor, an influx of labor moving west would increase unemployment and decrease wages in their own countries. As a result, the EU insisted that an extensive transition period be adopted to delay complete free movement of labor for five years. This was a very significant position taken by the EU because it departed from its usual stance that the *acquis* be kept intact and that transition periods be as limited as possible. The transition period on the free movement of labor was intended to limit the flow of labor from east to west and was one the few areas in which the single market *acquis* was affected by a transition arrangement.\(^{145}\)

The accession negotiations between Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic indicated a significant divergence from the way the accession negotiations with Greece, Portugal, and Spain were conducted. The negotiations with the Southern European nations were carried out largely through ministerial meetings between the heads of government and the Commission. They also focused mostly on the problems accession would potentially cause and both sides collaborated on solutions. The main source of conflict was how long the transitional period for each country would be; the EU advocated longer transitional periods while the Southern European countries sought a shorter period before they could fully integrate into the common market. Although the negotiations with Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic were also conducted through ministerial meetings, the majority of meetings focused on what chapters of the *acquis communautaire* each country had completed, which were published in the annual progress reports. Moreover, the EU did not

\(^{145}\) Van Oudenaren, “EU Enlargement: The Return to Europe,” 356.
negotiate transitional periods with Hungary, Poland, or the Czech Republic. The only areas that transitional periods were agreed on were the free movement of labor and the adoption of the euro to replace the new member states’ national currencies. Outside of those two issues, each country had to be ready to fully integrate into the common market prior to accession.

Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic concluded their negotiations at the Copenhagen summit in December 2002 and subsequently signed their accession treaties in April 2003. Nevertheless, the Commission made certain to point out that most of the candidates had “continuing problems with corruption, economic crime, the lack of an independent judiciary, and gaps in the implementation of the EU’s rules and regulations.”

This statement reveals that despite the fact that negotiations had concluded, the EU still felt that it was necessary to make clear that Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic were not on the same level as the rest of the member states. Despite this, the accession of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic took place on May 1, 2004, along with the accession of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Cyprus, and Malta, marking the largest enlargement to the EU.

Conclusions

The accession of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic was significantly different than the accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain despite the fact that they all exhibited similar political, economic, and social circumstances prior to accession. The fact

that the EU created new requirements specifically for the candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe and the fact that Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic had stronger and more developed political, economic, and social structures than Greece, Portugal, or Spain reveal that they had to prove their “Europeanness” to the EU prior to accession, which was a major difference from any previous enlargements. The result was that it took a decade from the time the first countries from Central and Eastern Europe applied for membership to when they were admitted to the EU.

The EU maintained that the reason countries from Central and Eastern Europe experienced a longer and more complicated accession process was because their recent Communist history left them politically unstable and economically crippled. However, the comparison with Greece, Portugal, and Spain demonstrates that Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic had, in many instances, much more stable political structures and stronger economies. Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic never faced a military takeover as Spain did, yet the EU continuously maintain that none of the countries from Central and Eastern Europe exhibited all the characteristics of a functioning democracy. Additionally, Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic demonstrated that they were more economically developed, especially in the industrial sector than Greece, Portugal, or Spain were when they applied for membership to the Community. The three candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe also had lower inflation rates and lower poverty levels than the three Southern European states, but again, the EU maintained that they were not able to fulfill the requirements of membership.
The comparison between the two accession groups demonstrates that in the 1970s and 1980s European integration was aimed primarily at safeguarding unstable democracies and helping weak economies increase their productivity. A decade later, the process was entirely reversed. Countries from Central and Eastern Europe had to prove that their democracies were stable and their economies were able to compete competitively in the single market prior to accession. First, Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic had to adhere to the Copenhagen Criteria. The EU itself stated in Agenda 2000 that “The Commission’s task was unprecedented because the Copenhagen criteria are broad in political and economic terms and go beyond the acquis communautaire.” As a result, it was difficult to judge whether a country had completed the Copenhagen criteria was subjective and very broad. When the Commission did try to judge the criteria, they provided vague answers because there was no way to quantitatively assess the conditions, which created ambiguity as to when exactly they had been met. They did not, for example, define what constituted a market economy or a stable democracy. The numerous requirements and the ambiguity in them increased the EU’s power in the accession negotiations, allowing the Community to prolong negotiations. This allowed the Community to prolong negotiations and demonstrates that accession was not based on solely one each country’s progress but also on the EU’s political readiness for enlargement. 

The most important difference, however, was that the EU maintained that accession negotiations with all the countries from Central and Eastern Europe be conducted simultaneously, which significantly delayed the date of accession for Hungary, Poland, and

the Czech Republic. Although Portugal and Spain were grouped together during their negotiations because they had extremely similar economic conditions, both countries were evaluated separately. However, this was not true with accession negotiations in the 1990s. The EU argued that grouping all the applicants from Central and Eastern Europe together would ensure equality between each of the states from Central and Eastern Europe. However, Commission documents, such as the Opinions written on each country and the annual progress reports, are so similar (some even use the exact same paragraphs) that it is evident that the EU viewed all the applicant countries as a single entity instead of evaluating them on a state-by-state basis.

The comparison between accession periods of the 1970s and 1980s and in the 1990s reveals that there was a considerable change in the course of European integration. European integration in the 1970s and 1980s was a relatively short process essentially committed to helping European nations stabilize new democracies and develop their struggling economies. Despite the number of questions regarding the Southern European enlargement, the Commission readily urged the negotiations to proceed as quickly as possible, arguing that, “the challenge of enlargement can and must be the start of a new Community thrust towards the objectives set by the authors of the treaties.”\textsuperscript{149} Membership of the Community was seen as a stabilizing factor and a means of strengthening parliamentary democracy throughout Europe.

However, European integration in the late 1990s and early 2000s was almost completely the opposite. Although the process was fundamentally political as it had been two decades earlier, the political ambition had changed significantly. Negotiations were no longer aimed at safeguarding democracy and stabilizing economies, but countries were judged on their ability to exhibit these qualities. The accession of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic reveal that the political aim regarding enlargement in the 1990s and early 2000s was focused on keeping nations that did not adequately display signs of “Europeanness” out of the EU. One reason for this was the changing international scene. With the Cold War over, the European Community no longer had a political need to safeguard weak democracies that could potentially form Communist governments. Following the collapse of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe, the EU felt the need to clearly define what it meant to be a member of the EU, and therefore what it meant to be a member of “Europe.” The Copenhagen criteria undoubtedly indicated that to be a member of “Europe” a country must have a democratic government that protected the individual liberties of all of its citizens and guaranteed the rule of law. It also needed to have having a functioning market economy.

Whereas the EEC presumed the “Europeanness” of Greece, Portugal, and Spain, it did not do so for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Instead, the EU required them to demonstrate their “Europeanness” in advance, which is the primary reason that accession took such a longer time. During the accession negotiations with Greece, Portugal, and Spain the Commission outlined the problems accession would cause, but qualified those problems with the significant contributions each country had made to European culture and
civilization. No such statements were included for the Central and Eastern European countries. The EU did not seem to feel that “Europe” would be “incomplete” without the countries from Central and Eastern Europe as it had with Greece, Portugal, and Spain. In other words, it was completely conceivable for EU officials to imagine a “Europe” without the countries from Central and Eastern Europe. This is because the notion of a not fully European part of Europe played a role in the accession negotiations with Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic.
IV: THE IDEA OF EASTERN EUROPE: A PHILOSOPHICAL AND CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION

The revolutions of 1989 allowed for the reconsideration of Europe as a whole, after being politically divided for almost half a century. Many newly independent nations expressed their desire to “return to Europe” after being politically and militarily alienated from the rest of Europe during the Cold War. One of the most important ways these newly independent nations tried to reconnect with their Western neighbors was by applying for membership into the European Union. However, admission into the EU proved extremely difficult for Central and Eastern European nations, taking more than ten years in many cases. This chapter will closely examine the reasons behind the EU’s desire to prolong the accession of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic, arguing that although the EU faced considerable institutional challenges with the prospect of admitting an unprecedented number of new members, the main reason it took so long for Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic to be accepted into the EU was because of long held cultural prejudices against the region based on the notion that a not fully European part of Europe existed.

The not fully part of Europe was Eastern Europe. While the East/West division of the continent was magnified during the Cold War, the idea of Eastern Europe is an idea that is much older than the Cold War. As a result, they need to prove their “Europeanness” before they were admitted into the European Union alongside their Western European counterparts. The idea of Eastern Europe also played a significant role in the accession negotiations of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic. As a result, the EU created new criteria and additional procedures and requirements for these three countries to complete prior to
acquisition. This served as a way for the EU to judge the “Europeanness” of the countries from Central and Eastern Europe.

In the early 1990s, the EU was facing serious institutional challenges at the same time that an unprecedented number of countries applied for admission to the EU. The Treaty of Maastricht significantly transformed the existing Community in 1992 by creating the European Union, which was defined in the treaty as “marking a new stage in the process of creating an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe.”150 The Treaty of Maastricht extensively amended the Treaty of Rome and added new provisions on matters beyond the scope of the latter treaty. The treaty extended cooperation to new areas such as economic and monetary union, the completion of the single market, and a common foreign and security policy. The reforms were substantial and had a direct impact on enlargement since prospective member had to agree to a much wider set of economic and political standards.151

In addition, the transformation to European Union created new institutions and extended areas of control to existing institutions. The Union was based on a complicated structure of three “pillars,” which dealt with different and partially overlapping policy areas using different decision-making processes. The formation of new organizations and policies as well as the extension of sovereignty to existing institutions greatly transformed the internal structure of the Community at the same time the newly independent nations from Central and Eastern Europe applied for admission to the EU. The costs and complications of

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enlargement were enormous and served as a potential disruption to the plans to create a Union with a single currently, a common foreign and security policy, and increased powers for its central intuitions. The newly established Union believed that admitting several nations quickly would diminish the EU’s efficiency, and firmly stated in 1992, that “widening must not be at the expense of deepening. Enlargement must not be a dilution of the Community’s achievements. On this point there should be absolute clarity, on the part of the Member States and of the applicants.”152 The EU faced a significant challenge of how to ensure that with an increased number of members it could function effectively and efficiently, taking into account the fact that its responsibilities would most certainly be greater in a considerably enlarged Community.

The EU was particularly concerned with how it would be able to operate in a vastly larger Community with a substantially larger population and increased diversity. In 1992 the Commission published a report, entitled “Europe and the Challenge of Enlargement,” outlining the challenges enlargement would potentially pose, maintaining,

It is widely recognized that the Community institutions already suffer from overload of work and difficulties of decision-making, because of the failure to respect satisfactory priorities. This leads to the complaint that there is excessive interference by the community in trivial matters, and an absence of leadership in questions of vital importance. Each new accession will magnify the risk of overload and paralysis, because of the increased number of participants and the greater diversity of issues. The prospect of enlargement reinforces the need for a more rigorous application by each of the institutions of the principle of subsidiary, as defined in Article G of the Maastricht Treaty.153

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152 European Commission, “Europe and the Challenges of Enlargement.”  
153 European Commission, “European and the Challenge of Enlargement.”
The EU’s concerns about enlargement were understandable. The number of countries applying for membership would increase the EU’s population by about 105 million with highly diverse languages, religions, and cultures. Enlargement of this magnitude, therefore, necessitated an overhaul of the Union’s own policies and institutions so it could function with a larger and more diverse group of members.\(^{154}\)

One would assume that with the intuitional challenges and concerns the EU demonstrated, any prospective new member state would cause concern for the EU and that all of the accession processes after 1992 would proceed slower than previous enlargements. However, this was not the case. The accession of Austria, Sweden, and Finland in 1995 demonstrates that it was possible for the EU to admit nations quickly. Austria applied for membership in 1989 followed by Sweden and Finland in 1992. Accession negotiations were opened in 1993, and accession agreements were reached in mid-1994, less than two years after negotiations commenced. These three nations were well off economically and politically stable, suggesting that when an applicant country presented the conditions of membership it could be admitted without difficulty.

On the contrary, the EU maintained that the accession of all the applicant nations from Central and Eastern Europe had to be administered at the same time, which prevented the more economically advanced and politically stable countries, notably Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic, from being admitted in a fitting timeframe. Additionally, since the EU believed that these countries were economically and politically crippled by communism, the EU insisted that candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe prove that they

were ready to take on the conditions of membership through the adoption of specific criteria and conditions. The fact that Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic had comparable political, economic, and social conditions to Greece, Portugal, and Spain during each country’s accession negotiations yet accession took almost twice as long and the fact that Austria, Sweden, and Finland were admitted within two years of applying for membership demonstrate that something besides institutional challenges was behind the prolongation of accession for nations in Central and Eastern Europe.

The main reason that negotiations between the EU and the nations from Central and Eastern Europe took so long was because the EU did not believe that Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic had the necessary characteristics to become members of the EU or, subsequently, be considered members of Europe. As a result, the EU created stronger requirements for the Central and Eastern European nations because EU officials believed their “Europeanness” or “Westernness” was something that needed to be proved. The idea that Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic needed to prove their “Europeanness” is based on the notion that Eastern Europe was a less than fully “European” part of Europe.

Larry Wolff argues that the idea of Eastern Europe dates back to the eighteenth century in his book, Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment. He argues that the creation of Eastern Europe as a philosophical and cultural concept was produced during the Enlightenment and “it was not a natural distinction, or even an innocent one, for it was produced as a work of cultural creation, of intellectual artifice, of
ideological self-interest and self-promotion.”\textsuperscript{155} The philosophers of the Enlightenment, created the idea of both Western and Eastern Europe as complementary halves, which defined each other by opposition and adjacency. According to Wolff, “we have passively inherited the Europe that they actively reconceived.”\textsuperscript{156}

The idea of Eastern Europe continued and spread over the course of two centuries and played a significant role in the accession negotiations with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s. It is evident that the EU used preconceived notions of the countries from Central and Eastern Europe in the accession negotiations with Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic because they repeatedly used eighteenth century characteristics of the region in the opinions and annual progress reports for these three countries such as economic underdevelopment, political instability, and cultural backwardness. Most importantly, Enlightenment philosophers and EU officials grouped the entire region into one entity, refusing to look at the political and economic differences between the countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

Prior to the eighteenth century the primary theoretical division of Europe was between North and South. During the Renaissance the Italian city states were the center for art, learning, philosophy, finance, and trade, which greatly contrasted with the barbaric Northern tribes of Europe. This rhetorical division of Europe between North and South continued until the eighteenth century when the centers of trade and culture shifted from Rome, Florence, and Venice to Paris, London, and Amsterdam. Additionally, the old barbaric lands and backwardness that had previously defined Northern Europe were

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., 5.
displaced to Eastern Europe. It was during this time that the intellectual work of the Enlightenment brought about the modern reorientation of the mental mapping of the continent, producing a separate Western and Eastern Europe, based on “the distinction between primitive backwardness and enlightened civilization.”

The idea of Eastern Europe was a “philosophical and geographical synthesis,” which was invented by the men and women of the Enlightenment, and replaced the old notion of a North-South division of the continent, with an East-West division. In his book, Orientalism, Edward Said argues that “the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, and experience” in order to “dominate, restructure, and have authority over the Orient.” While Orientalism deals primarily with the relationship between Asia and Europe, the idea of Orientalism is intertwined with the idea of Eastern Europe since Eastern Europe helped to define the West as its complementary other half. Although Eastern Europe was geographically part of Europe, it was not considered as politically, economically, socially, or culturally developed as the West was, which allowed Enlightenment philosophers to create an intermediate region between Europe and Asia known as Eastern Europe. Eastern Europe was not fully European, but it was also not considered to be part of the barbaric Asian lands. In other words, Eastern Europe served as a middle ground between the civilized West and the barbaric lands of Asia. Just as the Orient helped to define the Occident, Eastern Europe helped to define Western Europe.

The region and lands of Eastern Europe were not themselves invented or created, they were real and they did lie to the East of the other lands that lay to the West. The

157 Ibid., 42.
159 Larry Wolff, Inventing Eastern Europe, 7.
Enlightenment was a time of increasing travel and critical observation and the lands of Eastern Europe were studied and visited more frequently than they ever had been before. As Wolff argues, 

The work of invention lay in the synthetic association of lands, which drew upon both fact and fiction, to produce the general rubric of Eastern Europe. That rubric represented an aggregation of general and associative observations over a diverse domain of lands and peoples. It is in that sense that Eastern Europe is a cultural construction, an intellectual invention, of the Enlightenment. 

While there are some clear resemblances between some of the lands that lie in the Eastern part of the continent, there are also striking differences among them, and the men and women of the Enlightenment failed to pick out the differences. Instead they chose to highlight the resemblances, creating a “pattern of relations” between East and West based on dramatic contrasting cultural generalizations that have survived into the twentieth century. In this way the Enlightenment changed Eastern Europe from a geographical domain to a philosophical idea.

An important aspect in the “discovery” of Eastern Europe was the emerging presence of travelers in the region, producing an increase in the knowledge of these lands that had not been frequently visited prior to the eighteenth century. It was on the way to St. Petersburg or Constantinople that eighteenth century travelers “discovered” Eastern Europe and catalogued their discoveries of the relatively unknown lands, which were then published, publically circulating their accounts of the region. Travelers focused on the contradictions they saw in Eastern Europe and compared them to Western norms and values, allowing a “common

160 Ibid., 356.
161 Ibid., 357.
perspective” among travelers from Western Europe to develop. This, coupled with the “the assumed presence of Oriental elements and the eagerness of the traveler to discern them,” helped give Eastern Europe its eastern character.\textsuperscript{162}

Philosophical writers of the Enlightenment also played an exceptionally important role in the construction of Eastern Europe through their “critical observation” of the region. For example, Voltaire’s \textit{History of the Russian Empire under Peter the Great} and his \textit{History of Charles XII} were both extremely powerful in the mental mapping of Eastern Europe, even though he never traveled east of Berlin, demonstrating that “the philosophers could explore the domain with no more cumbersome traveling apparatus than a curious imagination.”\textsuperscript{163} Enlightenment thinkers analyzed the lands of Eastern Europe, classifying them, and placed them in their proper place on the map in relationship to Western Europe.\textsuperscript{164}

The Enlightenment also redefined the idea of civilization, as that which is the opposite of barbarism. In the 1770s dictionaries in both France and England had printed new meanings of the word in economic and cultural contexts associating civilization with wealth and refined manners. Larry Wolff argues, “the new idea of civilization was the crucial and indispensable point of reference that made possible the consolidation and articulation of the inchoate idea of Eastern Europe in the eighteenth century.”\textsuperscript{165} The concept of civilization was especially fundamental to creating an identity for those in the West and became a standard way to measure themselves against others.\textsuperscript{166} As a result, Eastern Europe was seen

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{162} Ibid., 47.
\item \textsuperscript{163} Ibid., 90.
\item \textsuperscript{164} Ibid., 93.
\item \textsuperscript{165} Ibid., 12.
\item \textsuperscript{166} Ibid., 14.
\end{itemize}
as the middle space on the cultural spectrum, the intermediate space between civilization in the West and barbarism in the East.

Edward Said argues that “European culture gained strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self,” which is also the case in the invention of Eastern Europe. By shifting the border of Asia further west, Western Europe was able to exclude Eastern Europe from itself by creating a separate and distinct classification of civilization for them and therefore strengthening Western Europe’s own identity as superior. As the Enlightenment thinkers saw it, Western Europe embodied the whole of modern civilization: tolerance, diversity, the respect for human rights, democracy and the nation state. These “emblems of modernity” were now the defining factors of Western Europe, causing its complementary half to be classified as backward and distinctly unmodern in terms of traditions, culture, economics and politics.

The inheritance of the idea of Eastern Europe as the Enlightenment philosophers envisioned it is particularly important when analyzing the accession of Central and Eastern European to the EU because the EU used characteristics of Eastern Europe that developed in the eighteenth century when they evaluated whether Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic’s had the necessary characteristics to become members of the EU. Even more important, the EU continued to classify Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic as politically unstable and economically underdeveloped even when they demonstrated otherwise. This reveals that preconceived notions of the region played a significant role in delaying their accession. The idea that Eastern Europe was economically, politically, and

167 Said, Orientalism, 3.
socially backward as well as culturally inferior served as reasons to prevent the entry of nations from this region into the EU two centuries later.

One of the most widely acknowledged characteristics of Eastern Europe in the eighteenth century was economic backwardness. During this time Eastern Europe provided Western Europe with its first model of an underdeveloped region. Since the regions in Eastern Europe did not embody the same economic prosperity and modernization as those in the West, they were not regarded on the same economic scale, and were therefore not considered as “European” as their Western counterparts. Travelers making the journey through the Eastern lands of Europe characterized the region as “fine and fertile but uncultivated,” and a land of poverty and misery, distress and desolation.”169 Agricultural cultivation was “the source of the only meaningful economic power and prosperity,” but it was “still in its infancy on account of slaves and peasants.”170 These characterizations by travelers in the eighteenth century started the idea that Eastern Europe was economically backward compared to the West.

The word “slavery” also was frequently used by travelers to describe the harsh nature of serfdom and peasant life in Russia, Poland, and in the Ottoman Empire. Wolff argues that “the traveler who discovered slavery in Eastern Europe had learned from it to appreciate the superiority of his own civilization.”171 The association between backwardness and slavery was an essential element in recognizing the distinction between civilization in Western and Eastern Europe in the eighteenth century because slavery and despotism greatly contrasted with the individual freedoms and social contract that Enlightenment thinkers in the West

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170 Ibid., 82, 84.
171 Ibid., 87.
championed. As a result, Enlightenment intellectuals argued that in contrast to more people gaining freedoms in the West in the eighteenth century, the peasant masses on the whole increasingly lost their freedom in Eastern Europe.\footnote{Ibid., 52, 84.}

Although there were economic differences between the lands of Western and Eastern Europe in the eighteenth century, travelers and Enlightenment philosophers generalized the entire region as economically backward, rural, agricultural but uncultivated, and underdeveloped. The economy for many regions in the eastern half of Europe was largely based on agriculture, and in some areas the feudal and manorial economic structure did increase in the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries. For example, local landlords in part of the Habsburg Empire increased their control over peasant labor and movement in the beginning of the eighteenth century and the implementation of Russia’s second serfdom created a similar system in Poland.\footnote{E. Garrison Walters, The Other Europe: Eastern Europe to 1945 (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 116.} However, the Enlightenment invented a “scale of ‘progress towards improvement’” in which a nation might be measured against its own past as well as against other nations.\footnote{Wolff, Inventing Eastern Europe, 87.} As a result, the entire region of Eastern Europe was classified as economically inferior as measured against the West’s economic development, a characteristic that persisted until the end of the twentieth century.

There were other factors that strengthened the idea that Eastern Europe was economically inferior to Western Europe. At the end of the eighteenth century the Industrial Revolution, which began in Britain and extended to the continent around 1800 reinforced the awareness in the minds of those in the West that Western Europe was “progressing” rapidly...
while Eastern Europe was stagnating. The British economists Adam Smith, Thomas Malthus, and David Ricardo developed the idea that capitalist development equaled “progress” and that Western Europe was “progressive” while the rest of the world, including Eastern Europe was “backward, stagnating and despotic.”

Immanuel Wallerstein argues that the emergence of a capitalist core in Western Europe created a periphery in Eastern Europe, which allowed Western Europe to exercise its economic hegemony over its eastern “periphery.” He argues that this created the east-west economic relationship in which Eastern Europe served its economic role as a supplier of unprocessed materials (such as grain) and as a market for manufactured goods. However, the entire region did not serve as the West’s periphery and areas that were close to raw materials such as the northwestern Czech land’s and parts of Poland and Hungary did industrialize and experienced significant development. In fact these industrialized Eastern regions were much more economically advanced than the resource-poor areas of Spain, Portugal and southern Italy, which were considered part of the economically superior West. For example, Austria-Hungary had a substantially more advanced rail system in the nineteenth century than Spain, Italy or Greece.

In the twentieth century the economic disparity between East and West increased. The First and Second World Wars devastated the entire continent, but the devastation of the Second World War was far worse in the Eastern half of the continent. Moreover, the advent of the Cold War and the implementation of socialist economic structures in the Soviet Bloc

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in the second half of the twentieth century continued to divide the continent. Even though the USSR further industrialized Eastern Europe, it was not industrialized to the extent that France, Germany, or Britain was. As a result, the socio-economic inequality between West and East during the Cold War led to increased feelings of cultural superiority on the part of the West and According to Piotr Wandycz, “condescension was often mixed with ignorance.” The feeling of cultural superiority on the West’s part during the Cold War added to the idea that Eastern Europe was economically “backward” and “underdeveloped.” Consequently, the Cold War magnified the economic differences between East and West.

However, after the Cold War ended, the idea of an economically backward or underdeveloped Eastern Europe did not go away. During the accession negotiations between Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic, one of the main concerns of the EU was that these three countries did not measure up to the economic standards of the current member states. In 1992 as the European Economic Community was preparing to set itself up as an economic union, a special bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, was created to deal with the “special problems of Eastern Europe.” While the EU blamed most of the economic disparity between applicant nations and member states on the recent socialist economic structure in the candidate countries, the idea of an economically inferior Eastern Europe began during the Enlightenment and persisted for two centuries. The fact that Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic had a significantly more developed economic structure than Greece, Portugal, or Spain did, especially in regard to the industrial sector, demonstrates that the idea of Eastern Europe played a part in the accession of the countries

178 Wolff, Inventing Eastern Europe, 9.
from Central and Eastern Europe. When Greece, Portugal and Spain applied for membership to the EEC in the mid to late 1970s their economies were weaker than that of their Eastern European peers. Greece, Portugal, and Spain all had per capita incomes of less than 50% of the EEC averages prior to their accession. At the time it applied for membership Portugal’s GDP per capita was barely 20% of the EECs. In comparison, in 1998 the Czech Republic had per capita incomes of over 60% of the EU average, Hungary had 49%, and Poland, with 40 million inhabitants, had 39% of the EU’s average.\(^\text{179}\) Certainly, the presence of Communism did have an effect on the economies of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic, but these three nations restructured their economies rather quickly and proved that they were more developed than several countries that had previously been quickly admitted by the Community, yet had to wait more than a decade before they were admitted into the Union.

The EU’s Opinions and annual progress reports on Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic reveal that the EU continued to characterize the nations of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic as outside of the Western realm. For example, in the Opinion on Hungary’s Application for EU Membership, the EU classified Hungary’s wages as “low by Western standards.” The Opinion further stated that, “In comparison with a ‘typical’ market economy in the West, it is likely that the Hungarian enterprise sector will be characterized by a relatively large proportion of very small enterprises in the years to come,” illustrating that the EU did not regard Hungary’s market economy as “typical,” but also that Hungary’s

market economy was also not comparable to “Western” standards.\textsuperscript{180} In the “Opinion on the Czech Republic’s Application for Membership,” the Commission maintained that some of the laws concerning the protection of journalists’ rights to access to government documents were “outdated compared to Western standards.”\textsuperscript{181} Additionally in Poland’s Opinion, the Commission stated that Poland “appears to respect the essential rules of democracy,” suggesting that the Commission expressed doubt as to whether this was the case.\textsuperscript{182} The fact that Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic were compared to an elusive “Western standard” is important because Greece, Portugal, and Spain were never compared unfavorably to Western standards. The fact that this kind of rhetoric was used repeatedly in accession negotiations with Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic, but was absent in respect to Greece, Portugal, and Spain demonstrates that the idea of Eastern Europe played a role in the EU accession negotiations.

The Enlightenment also gave rise to the idea that Eastern Europe had unstable political structures compared to the West. Travelers traveling through the region in the eighteenth century experienced and wrote about a chaotic environment in which violence among ungoverned masses was ubiquitous due to a lack of rules and regulations. The idea that Eastern Europe was politically unstable was also a result of shifting borders in the region which continually redefined international relations in the eighteenth century. The territorial confusion that accompanied the partitions of Poland and the recessions of the Ottoman

\textsuperscript{180} European Commission, “Opinion on Hungary’s Application for Membership.”
\textsuperscript{181} Commission, “Opinion on the Czech Republic’s Application for Membership.”
\textsuperscript{182} Commission, “Opinion on Poland’s Application for Membership.”
Empire not only generated geopolitical uncertainty, but also characterized the region as one of “geopolitical chaos, of sliding borders and slipping parts.”

The other political characteristic frequently used was that of extreme political sentiments, expressed in the eighteenth century as an “extreme love” for one’s land, and later characterized as strong nationalism. One traveler observed, “The Hungarians could be identified by the childishness of their political discussion and their extreme prejudice in favor of their country, which according to them, was the first country of the world.” From a Western European traveler’s perspective “political constitutionalism in Hungary appeared as a matter of infantilism, of immaturity, of retarded development.” Both the unstable and inefficient political structures as well as nationalistic sentiments became key components in the political construction of Eastern Europe in the eighteenth century and remained in evidence during the end of the twentieth century during the accession negotiations of countries from Central and Eastern Europe.

The French Revolution and the emerging idea of the nation-state in the western part of the continent in the late eighteenth century intensified the idea that Western Europe was “progressing” while Eastern Europe was “stagnating,” this time in terms of political modernization. Nineteenth century historians impressed by the universal appeal of the democratic values of the French Revolution, such as equality, liberty, and brotherhood, repeatedly cited the ancient Greeks and their democratic institutions and republics as a key to understanding the “rise of the West.” As a result democracy, tolerance, diversity, and the respect for human rights became synonymous with Western Europe. Nineteenth century

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184 Ibid., 44.
185 Ibid., 45.
historians also concluded that the political structures in the West were increasingly allowing popular participation and were manifesting lower levels of internal class and nation tension, while the eastern half of the continent seemed to have extremely limited democratic tendencies and increasing tensions between classes and nationalities.\textsuperscript{186}

In the nineteenth century another political dimension surfaced that in the minds of Western Europeans that further separated East from West: the rise of nationalism. Although national consciousness and national conflicts had existed prior to the nineteenth century, and in fact was observed in its earliest form in the eighteenth century, nationalism became a new and more powerful phenomenon after 1800. In the past, dynastic questions, religious differences, or the desire to overthrow a ruler or system had always been the dominant factors for conflict, however, after 1800, the situation changed and nationalism became a key element of conflict. The Enlightenment’s travelers and their observations of Eastern European’s “extreme love” for their country combined with political instability in the region during the mid-nineteenth century, notably the revolutionary wave of 1848, caused highly nationalistic sentiments to be fused with the political definition of Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century. Even though the revolutionary wave of 1848 began in Paris and as E. Garrison Walters states, “fierce hatred for neighboring states was the norm everywhere [in Europe]” at this time, extreme nationalism became more and more frequently a characterization of Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{187}

Political instability in the region during the first half of the twentieth century significantly reinforced the classification that Eastern Europe was highly nationalistic, with

\textsuperscript{187}Walters, \textit{The Other Europe}, 119.
the potential for provoking conflict both internally and externally. The region was the site of
many international wars and conflicts especially at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of
the twentieth century including the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, Russo-Turkish War of
1877-78, The Balkan Wars of 1912-13 and both World Wars, all of which involved extreme
nationalism. Even though nationalism played a role on both sides of the continent in World
War I and World War II, Eastern Europe continued to be classified as more politically
unstable. Milan Kundera argues in “The Tragedy of Central Europe,” that one reason for this
is because the history of Central and Eastern Europe has been “turbulent and fragmented,”
and as a result the histories of statehood have been weaker and less continuous than those of
the larger European nations because they have been the center of many large international
conflicts. After the First World War, Central Europe was divided into a region of small,
weak, states whose vulnerability allowed Hitler’s and Stalin’s conquest, which is perhaps
why “in the [Western] European memory these countries always seem to be the sources of
dangerous trouble.”188

Extreme nationalism and political instability were also fears held by the EU during
the accession negotiations of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic even though each
country had shown that they were politically stable. The language used in the Opinions for
Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic demonstrate that although each country proved
that they had a stable political situation, the EU was not certain of the reality. In all three
Opinions the Commission frequently uses phrases words such as “appears,” “seems to,” and
“can be regarded as” to characterize the political stability of each country. For example, in

the Commission’s Opinion on Hungary, the Commission concluded that “Hungary presents the characteristics of a democracy,” which “can be regarded as functioning smoothly.”

Additionally, the Commission stated in its Opinion on the Czech Republic that “The secret services operate in a manner which would appear to respect the essential rules of democracy.” In the Commission’s Opinion on Poland, the Commission states, “No cases of inhuman and degrading treatment appear to have been recorded in Poland.” This type of pessimistic and distrustful language implies that what is being presented is not reality but a mere appearance. The EU’s distrustful language also reveals that preconceived notions played a significant role in the accession of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic.

The comparison with Greece, Portugal, and Spain is very important when discussing the issue of political stability because all three nations, like Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic, had new democratic governments when they applied for membership. Greece and Portugal applied for membership only one year after transitioning from military dictatorship to democracy and Spain applied after three years. Spain also experienced an attempted coup d’état in the middle of accession negotiations and terrorism in the Basque region, which threatened the stability of the newly established democracy, but did not affect Spain’s accession. Portugal was also threatened by revolution, and there was almost a war between Greece and Turkey. Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic all applied more than four years after they had established democracies and did not experience any threats to the stability of their democratic institutions, yet were regarded by the EU as more politically unstable than their southern European predecessors.

189 European Commission, “Opinion on Hungary’s Application for Membership.”
190 European Commission, “Opinion on the Czech Republic’s Application for Membership.”
191 European Commission, “Opinion on Poland’s Application for Membership.”
Not only was the EU concerned about the political instability of the applicant countries in Central and Eastern Europe, but it was also concerned about nationalism in the region. In a report published in 1999 and entitled, “Countering Racism, Xenophobia, and Anti-Semitism in the Candidate Countries,” the Commission explicitly stated that “For the candidate countries, the issues of national and ethnic origin are particularly relevant.” As a result, the EU paid special attention to national minority issues and racism during the accession negotiations. It was not enough for applicant countries to protect minority rights through constitutional laws as it had been in the late 1970s, but they also had to demonstrate their progress in their efforts to create community programs, agencies, and provide education to protect national minorities. In 1998 the Commission asserted that prior to accession the candidate countries “must step up their own efforts by ensuring implementation of government plans or programs to protect and promote minorities and tackle racism,” making sure to distinguish between the Western member states who had “been actively addressing [racism] for a number of years.” In contrast, the history of human rights violations in Spain by the Franco regime never caused concern for the EEC. Terrorism in Spain and the threat of revolution in Portugal also did not cause concern for the EEC, or cause EEC officials to question their commitment to democratic ideals. However, the historical presence of racism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism caused the EU to seriously question whether Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic respected individual liberties. The comparison between Greece, Portugal, and Spain and Hungary, Poland, and the Czech

193 Ibid., 7
194 Ibid., 3.
Republic demonstrate that the stereotype of a strong nationalist presence in Eastern Europe, a characteristic that developed in the eighteenth century and affected the EU’s negotiation process of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic two centuries later.

Conclusions

The Enlightenment defined the characteristics of Eastern and Western Europe in a way that had lasting implications. The fact that the EU used similar, and in some instances the same, characteristics of Eastern Europe that the Enlightenment philosophers popularized, demonstrates that the idea of Eastern Europe was a factor in the accession of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic. The two characteristics of Eastern Europe that had lasting implications were economic backwardness, or economic underdevelopment, and political instability and nationalistic tendencies. Although these characterizations were originally created in the eighteenth century, historical circumstances caused them to continue to play a role in the mental mapping of Europe two centuries later.

In other words, the result of Eastern Europe’s “lack of civilization” created a cultural spectrum that lasted for more than two centuries. In the eyes of Enlightenment philosophers, Western Europe was civilized, Asia was barbaric, and Eastern Europe was not civilized but was geographically a part of Europe, a gray area in the cultural spectrum. Larry Wolff contends, “It was Eastern Europe’s ambiguous location, within Europe but not fully European, that called for such notions as backwardness and development to mediate between the poles of civilization and barbarism.”

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European cultural sphere turned a geographical entity into an idea, an idea with strong cultural implications in which both sides were defined by the other. In the eighteenth century Western Europe was “civilized” and Eastern Europe was “backward,” or “lacked civilization,” but by the twentieth century the separation between the two poles of Europe meant much more.

The cultural scale that developed justified the ideas that Western Europe should have authority over the region. Larry Wolff argues, “Certainly, in inventing Eastern Europe the Enlightenment created the cultural context for presumptuous projects of power in the eighteenth century and thereafter.”

Diplomatic undertakings concerning the map of Eastern Europe became a frequent practice in the nineteenth century, reaching its peak at Versailles after World War I, which revised the political geography of Eastern Europe completely. The remapping of Eastern Europe at Versailles operated in a way that exhibited a “certain fundamental imbalance in the conception of subject and object, of who operated upon whom, and from what philosophical and geographical perspective.”

The Enlightenment created the cultural context, highlighting the distinction between civilization in the West and backwardness in the East, in which that “fundamental imbalance” of authority was justified and acceptable. The characteristics that began during the Enlightenment remained and grew throughout two centuries, making them central to the mental mapping of Europe in the 1990s and today.

After the Second World War the term “Eastern Europe” became synonymous with the Soviet bloc. Piotr Wandycz states in The Price of Freedom, “What is more, the

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196 Ibid., 362.
197 Ibid., 364.
dependence of this region on the USSR received, so to speak, a historical legitimization. It seemed that if these lands, unable to stand alone, fulfilled their destiny by becoming part of the Russian-led communist empire.” The outcome of the World War II left Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia as a westward extension of the Soviet empire entangled in a semi-colonial relationship of dependence with the USSR. The Cold War further cemented the division of Europe into East and West in both the physical and mental mapping of Europe since the formation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact militarily divided the continent. By 1989, the issue of backwardness in Eastern Europe had certainly been dramatized as new governments sought to clear away their communist economies and enter the world of market capitalism, but even as the newly independent countries of Central and Eastern Europe transformed their governments and economic structures, the mental map of Europe remained divided between East and West. This is because the invention of Western and Eastern Europe in the eighteenth century neatly fit together with the rhetoric of the Cold War.

During the 1990s, the EU faced an unprecedented challenge when several countries from Central and Eastern Europe applied to join the Union. The Cold War served as a viable reason to delay admission to these nations. The EU reasonably argued that the recent communist history left the region economically weak and politically unstable. However, the EU’s claim does not correspond with the political and economic evidence that they included in the Opinions and annual progress reports. Moreover, previous enlargements show that countries with weaker economies and much more unstable democratic systems have been admitted astoundingly quickly.

199 Ibid., 236.
While it is true that the EU faced considerable institutional challenges at the same time that an unprecedented number of countries applied to become full members, the EU did not use institutional challenges as a reason to justify the long and drawn out accession negotiations with the countries from Central and Eastern Europe. Instead EU officials repeatedly argued that the countries of this region did not exhibit the necessary requirements for admission, using preconceived notions and eighteenth century characteristics of the region to delay the accession of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic. This makes it evident that the EU had serious questions about the Central and Eastern European nations’ claim to “Europeanness.” This is why even though the Treaty of Maastricht guarantees the admission of any “European state” that shares the same fundamental principals may become a member of the EU, the EU did not readily admit the countries from Central and Eastern Europe.

Beginning during the Enlightenment and continuing into the twentieth century, Europe has ceased to become a geographical entity, and instead encompasses a wide variety of cultural, political, economic, and social values. A country may geographically be a part of Europe, but that does not mean they are “European.” The EU could not contend that Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic were geographically outside of Europe, but they could argue that they did not possess the same values as their Western counterparts, giving them a strong reason to delay their admission into the Union. Eastern Europe began as an idea in the eighteenth century, but that idea flourished throughout two centuries, becoming a strong idea once again after the collapse of the Soviet Union when countries who had previously been under Soviet control stated their desire to return to Europe. The idea of
Eastern Europe combines economic, political, historical, and cultural elements and remains a deeply powerful idea even today.
V. CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS SURROUNDING THE IDEA OF EASTERN EUROPE

The idea of Eastern Europe as a philosophical and cultural construction began in the eighteenth century and has continued to impact the way people mentally map the European continent. One example that demonstrates the powerful legacy of Eastern Europe as a philosophical idea is the accession of Central and Eastern European nations into the European Union. Since its founding in 1957, the European Union has increasingly been the center for European integration in the second half of the twentieth century, although the processes and criteria for membership have changed throughout the decades. In the 1970s and 1980s countries were evaluated based on the presence of a democracy and respect for human rights. The accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain demonstrate that accession negotiations were conducted relatively quickly and primarily consisted of negotiating transitional periods, a time period in which new members had to fully align their economies with the common market. Accession to the Community in the 1970s and 1980s was also seen as a way to safeguard weak and unstable democracies in the midst of the Cold War. Accession also guaranteed that significant amounts of financial aid would be given to new members in order to secure democratic institutions and aid in the restructuring of economies so they could fully participate in the common market.

However, the changing international scene in 1989 greatly transformed the process of accession into the Community. After the collapse of Soviet control in Eastern Europe, many of the newly independent nations expressed their desire to “return to Europe” by applying for membership to the European Union. Although the EU symbolized European unity and advertised itself as an organization of shared sovereignty aimed at protecting the essential
ideals of liberal democracy, joining the EU proved to be an extremely challenging process for both the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the EU. The applicant countries continually argued that the EU was dragging their feet during the negotiation process and the EU repeatedly countered that the applicants were not ready for membership.

The reason that it took so long for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to join the European Union is because the idea of Eastern Europe as a separate cultural sphere, a region that is geographically part of Europe, but not really European, is still a prevailing idea even today. Western Europe invented Eastern Europe as its complementary other half in the eighteenth century during the age of the Enlightenment. The idea has flourished and developed since then, and has created a lasting image of a divided continent in both popular culture and mental maps of Europe. As Larry Wolff argues, “Eastern Europe also began as only an idea, and now, since 1989, has become an idea once again, no longer under the military control of the Soviet Union. Eastern Europe, however, remains an extremely powerful idea, deeply embedded in the history of two centuries, so influential in its political consequences that its intellectual origins are barely recognized, hidden in historical camouflage.”

The comparison between the accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain and Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic demonstrate that the idea of Eastern Europe, and specifically cultural prejudices against Central and Eastern Europe played a significant role in the accession of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic. Greece, Portugal, and Spain exhibited extremely similar political, economic, and social situations as Hungary, Poland,

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and the Czech Republic, yet were admitted without significant difficulty. Both accession
groups had newly formed democratic systems and had weaker economies than the rest of the
member states when they applied for full membership. In some ways Hungary, Poland, and
the Czech Republic had stronger democratic systems and more prosperous economies than
Greece, Portugal, and Spain. However, the Community viewed Greece, Portugal, and Spain
as historically part of Europe, countries that had significantly contributed to the European
tradition. This was not the case with Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic.

The EU reasoned that the challenges to Eastern enlargement were a result of the
region’s recent Communist history, which left the entire area politically unstable and
economically underdeveloped. However, it was a cultural prejudice against the region that
delayed the accession of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic’s admission into the EU.
Three things which demonstrate that preconceived cultural conceptions of the region played a
significant part in the extension of accession negotiations. First, the EU created new criteria
and additional steps for the applicants from Central and Eastern Europe to complete prior to
accession. The most important was the Copenhagen Criteria, which drastically changed the
way Central and Eastern European nations were evaluated on their political commitment to
democracy, protection of individual liberties, market economies, and ability to take on the
obligations of membership. It is important to note the Copenhagen Criteria was created in
early 1993 specifically for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Even though
accession negotiations commenced with Austria, Sweden, and Finland in 1993, those three
countries did not have to go through the rigorous evaluation process the Copenhagen Criteria
entailed, revealing that the EU designed the criteria in order to extend accession negotiations
with the countries from Central and Eastern Europe. It is also evident that the Copenhagen Criteria was created because the EU did not believe that the associated countries from Central and Eastern Europe exhibited the requirements necessary to become full members. They therefore had to prove that they were ready to take on the obligations of membership by demonstrating they fulfilled the Copenhagen Criteria.

The EU also maintained that the candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe had to fully align themselves with the *acquis communautaire* prior to accession, which was a major difference from previous enlargements. Greece, Spain, and Portugal were given substantial ten-year transitional periods in which to fully align their economies with the common market and convert their national economic laws to the Community’s laws. This was not an option for the applicant countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The Commission’s 1995 White Paper specifically stated that all applicant nations had to fully align themselves with the *acquis* prior to accession.

Additionally the EU required the countries from Central and Eastern Europe to undergo annual evaluations. The annual progress reports served as the structure for the accession negotiations, which was another major difference between previous enlargements. Previous enlargements, including both the accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain and Austria, Sweden, and Finland, held ministerial meetings to conduct their accession negotiations. The central part of the negotiations revolved around deciding a proper transitional period for each of the applicants. However, the accession negotiations with the countries from Central and Eastern Europe were not actually negotiations, but instead consisted of the EU annual evaluation the progress each applicant country had made in
adopting the Copenhagen Criteria and aligning their national laws with the acquis. The only “negotiation” part with the Central and Eastern European nations included the number of seats each applicant would receive in the European Parliament and the amount of financial aid each country would receive. The requirements designed for the Central and Eastern European nations as well as the additional steps these countries had to complete demonstrate the preconceived notions concerning the region’s political stability and economic capacity played a role in the accession negotiations.

Secondly, the EU maintained that accession negotiations with each applicant from Central and Eastern Europe be conducted simultaneously. The EU argued that this was to ensure equality between all the candidates, but it instead demonstrated that the EU viewed the entire region as one entity, refusing to take into account the political and economic differences between each candidate country. Never, in any of the previous enlargements had accession negotiations been conducted simultaneously. While some countries did join the EU on the same date such as Portugal and Spain and Austria, Sweden, and Finland, opinions on each country’s application and accession negotiations were conducted separately. This also demonstrates that the EU believed that the entire region exhibited the same characteristics, notably political, economic, and social weakness.

Finally, and most importantly, the EU used characteristics of the region that were created in the eighteenth century during their evaluations and accession negotiations with Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic. The EU repeatedly noted that these three countries were economically underdeveloped, did not measure up to Western standards, and had serious problems with nationalism and xenophobia. Additionally, the EU used
statements to suggest that even when these countries demonstrated political stability or a functioning market economy, the EU did not believe this was the case. The opinions and annual progress reports continuously used phrases such as “appears to resemble,” “seems to demonstrate,” or “can be regarded as functioning.” The pessimistic and distrustful language demonstrates that cultural conceptions of the region greatly affected the accession of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic and consequently delayed their accession to the EU. In addition to the distrustful language used in the opinions and annual progress reports on Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic, the EU never stated the historical contributions any of these countries had made to the European tradition, unlike they did with the accession of Greece, Portugal, and Spain.

The Commission stated in 1992, “The accession of new members will increase its diversity and heterogeneity. But widening must not be at the expense of deepening. Enlargement must not be a dilution of the Community’s achievements.”202 This statement perfectly sums up the EU’s position on Eastern enlargement. It is obvious that the EU viewed the applicant countries as politically, economically, socially, and culturally inferior and, as a result, did not want them to “dilute” the rest of the Community. The idea of a culturally distinct Western and Eastern Europe dates back to the Enlightenment and clearly played a powerful role in the accession of countries from Central and Eastern Europe. As Jozef Borocz argues “the contempt, disdain, hatred, confusion, paralysis, sense of inferiority and superiority, competitiveness, and shapeless fear contained in this counter-conceptual

relationship” could hardly have been disregarded since it has played such a powerful role in the mental mapping of Europe for two centuries.203

The EU sought to postpone the enlargement to the East for several reasons including fear of a change in the balance of power and a redistribution of financial aid. The most important reason was that the EU based the idea of Eastern enlargement on preexisting historical stereotypes and cultural prejudices against the region. The Cold War intensified the division between East and West, but the disparity existed long before the Cold War began. Differences in history, culture, economics, politics, and society have historically created a division between East and West Europe, and those differences allowed a cultural prejudice to develop in Western Europe against the rest of the continent long before the Cold War began, but that cultural prejudice continued and was a decisive factor in the prolonging of accession for the nations from Central and Eastern Europe.

The accession of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic demonstrates that Europe has ceased to become a geographical notion. In 1992 the newly formed European Union stated:

The term ‘European' has not been officially defined. It combines geographical, historical and cultural elements which all contribute to the European identity. The shared experience of proximity, ideas, values, and historical interaction cannot be condensed into a simple formula, and is subject to review each succeeding generation. The Commission believes that it is neither possible nor opportune to establish now the frontiers of the European Union whose contours will be shaped over many years to come.204

203 Borocz, “The Fox and Raven,” 859
204 Commission, “Europe and the Challenge of Enlargement,” 11.
As a result, a country could be graphically part of Europe, but not really European. Likewise, a country could be considered European, but be geographically a part of Europe. The fact that Europe is no longer a purely geographically notion is particularly important when discussing European integration.

The very idea of enlargement raises significant questions for the future, notably where should the final borders for the EU be set. Common sense suggests that the EU cannot expand indefinitely, that it will most likely have ultimate borders. However, few EU politicians have been willing to give a definite answer to the question of which countries will be included and which will be excluded. Russia is seen as far too large to be absorbed by the EU, and has not expressed an interest in membership. In contrast, Ukraine, Moldova, and even countries further afield such as Georgia have declared their aspirations to join the EU. The EU is currently conducting accession negotiations with Turkey, but has faced considerable challenges especially with aligning its national laws to EU laws and with the problems associated with the Kurdish minority. Croatia formally submitted its application to join the EU in February 2003 and accession negotiations began in October 2005. However, elsewhere in the Western Balkans the outlook for accession is less promising.

The European Union is a regional organization unlike any other with enormous economic and political authority. Enlargement has proved to be an important aspect to the growing authority of the EU. The history of enlargement to the EU demonstrates that the EU has quickly become the defining element of what is means to be European and therefore judges who belongs to Europe. Understanding the processes and problems associated with
enlargement not only allows one to fully comprehend European integration in the second half of the twentieth century, but also sheds light on important aspects of Europe today.

For example, in April of 2010, the Greek government requested an EU bailout package to help with the country’s debt crisis. After years of unrestricted spending, cheap lending, and failure to implement financial reforms, Greece was enormously affected by the global financial downturn of the past couple of years. Their national debt reached $413.6 billion in April 2010, which is substantially larger than the country’s economy. A few weeks ago, Portugal also announced that it would be joining its Greek brethren in asking the EU for financial bailout package. Portugal was the third nation to request assistance, behind Greece and Ireland, and it is estimated that the EU will be granting Portugal about $70 billion to help with the country’s financial crisis. Many economists and politicians have been asking whether this contagion will spread to Spain, a failure that would lead to serious questions about the EU and its Euro experiment.205

The financial crisis in Greece and Portugal clearly highlights the risks of admitting extremely poor nations into the EU. More importantly, however, it also leads one to question whether the recent economic and financial developments in Greece and Portugal will lead any of their European neighbors to question their “Europeanness,” or lead them to argue that Greece and Portugal have become economically incomparable with the West. I would argue that this will not happen because the idea of Eastern Europe is still a powerful concept today. In the history of relations between Greece and Portugal and the EU, the EU has never

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questioned these two countries “Westernness,” even though they undoubtedly have exhibited similar, or in this instance significantly worse economic situations than the countries in Central and Eastern Europe. I would also argue that the same kind of economic instability or financial crisis in Hungary, Poland, or the Czech Republic would surely be taken as a sign of the “Easterners” or incompatibility with the West. This is because the idea of Eastern Europe still plays a powerful role in the cultural conception of the continent today.
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