

# **Research Paper on Foreign Policy Strategies of New EU Member States<sup>1</sup> (WORKING DRAFT, DO NOT CITE!)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research paper examines the formulation and pursuit and foreign policy preferences by post-communist new member states (NMS) of the European Union. The paper seeks to identify any policy innovations pursued by the NMS in external agendas. It also has the ambition of explaining the NMS' strategies by considering factors such as size, economic issues and the domestic political situations of individual post-communist Member States. The paper draws on empirical research, interviews with representatives of the NMS and the results of expert questionnaires. Through this examination of policy preferences the paper seeks to contribute to a larger debate on differences between old and new EU Member States in their respective abilities to formulate and to pursue specific foreign policy agendas.

## **Introduction**

Following the 2004 EU enlargement, there has been a rising interest in studying the policy preferences of new EU member states as well as in comparing these to strategies of older EU member states.<sup>2</sup> Academic literature has for some years tried to identify key factors that determine preferences of member states in the EU. The survey of literature on preference formation reveals an ever-growing list of factors behind member states' preferences.<sup>3</sup> Authors of different academic schools have tended to emphasize different explanatory variables whose importance, moreover, has varied with different periods of European integration. Economic

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<sup>1</sup> This work was supported by the Slovak Research and Development Agency under the contract No. APVV-0660-06. I am grateful to Darina Malova for her comments.

<sup>2</sup> See Copsey, N.-Haughton, T.: *The Choices for Europe: National Preferences in New and Old Member States*, JCMS 47:2, 2009, pp. 263-286. Dimitrakopoulos, D.G.-Kassim, H.: *Inside the European Commission: Preference Formation and the Convention on the Future of Europe*, Comparative European Politics 3:2, 2005, pp. 180-203.

<sup>3</sup> Malova, D-Rybar, M.-Lastic, E.-Dobis, P: *Hlavné trendy formovania preferencií členských štátov Európskej únie*, Survey study supported by the Slovak Research and Development Agency under the contract No. APVV-0660-06.

factors such as trade and financial transfers, institutional settings including coordination of EU policymaking, domestic determinants - especially public opinion and the role of organized interests and political parties as well as historical predispositions ranging from the size of the state to the timing of its EU accession have all played their respective roles in explaining member states' preferences in the EU.

This paper seeks to contribute to the study of preferences pursued by the new member states (NMS) whereby the NMS stand principally for eight post-communist countries that entered the EU in 2004. We focus on foreign and security policy. We choose this policy area because we seek to highlight agendas outside first pillar issues that present potential realms of new integration or cooperation among member states. Our aim is thus to identify any new preferences that the NMS have brought to the EU since 2004. While informed in emerging theories of preference formation the paper is chiefly empirical drawing on research and interviews conducted with policymakers in Brussels in 2008 and 2009. Our aim in this research paper is to present the main findings of what the NMS want with respect to foreign and security policy and offer some explanations for our data.

### **Foreign Policy Preferences**

In terms of foreign policy or more broadly external relations we can cluster our findings on NMS positions into three categories of preferences. The first concerns the key policy areas that are of vital security interest for the NMS. The second draws out geographically delineated foreign policy priorities by the NMS. Finally the third category of preferences has to do with power relations inside the EU and thus deals with preferences for the institutional makeup and workings of the EU in the realm of foreign policy.

### **Themes**

From our interviews we identify three distinct priorities that are with varying degrees of intensity common to the NMS. The first such theme is *energy security*. The NMS are concerned with independence and sufficient and steady supplies of energy and as a result inclined toward greater cooperation and possibly integration in energy policy at the EU level. The Baltic states' concerns stem from virtually complete dependence on Russian supplies of natural gas and oil as well as dependence on Russia's electric grid for supplies of electricity.

For example for Latvia, the historical legacy of 100 percent reliance on Russia's deliveries makes the topic of energy security a top priority.<sup>4</sup> The position of Visegrad countries<sup>5</sup> is a bit more diverse but Central Europe is heavily dependent on supplies of Russia's oil and especially natural gas. Since recent stoppages of natural gas and oil deliveries from Russia, the issue of sufficient and secure supplies has been Hungary's important priority.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the Czech Republic supports the establishment of common EU energy policy as a reaction to current worsening situation in this area.<sup>7</sup> Energy security is also a big concern for Poland. Especially in light of the gas crisis in early 2009 Polish representatives have favored "effective common energy policy based on solidarity and equality of member states: if one country has problems with energy deliveries, other countries should help."<sup>8</sup> Energy security is a strongly articulated priority by the NMS that has had an explicit impact on the contents of the Lisbon Treaty that introduces the concepts of solidarity and security with respect to EU energy policy.

*Nuclear energy* represents a specific area of the NMS's policy initiative. Slovakia and the Czech Republic initiated the founding of the European Nuclear Energy Forum whose task is to foster regular discussion on the use of nuclear energy in the EU. The first meeting of this forum took place in Bratislava on November 26-27, 2007. The participants discussed possibilities for EU legislative and regulatory framework for simplifying administration and permits for constructing new nuclear energy sources. Prime Minister Fico highlighted the country's interest by stating that "the Slovak government is keen to carry on constructing nuclear power plants."<sup>9</sup> Slovakia is keen to reverse the consequences of its pre-accession pledge to close down the Soviet-type nuclear power plant in Jaslovske Bohunice. The country's *Strategy on energy security*<sup>10</sup> adopted in September 2007 declares that in addition to finishing two blocks of a nuclear power plant in Mochovce, Slovakia intends to build a new nuclear power plant on the site of the nuclear power plant in Jaslovske Bohunice whose definitive closure in 2010 will full highlight Slovakia's new position of a net importer of electricity.

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<sup>4</sup> NCS-08-10, Interview in Brussels, 7 October 2008.

<sup>5</sup> The Visegrad Four countries include Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

<sup>6</sup> NCS-08-13, Interview in Brussels, 8 October 2008.

<sup>7</sup> NCS-08-13, Interview in Brussels, 3 December 2008.

<sup>8</sup> NCS-09-38, Interview in Brussels, 11 March 2009.

<sup>9</sup> See more for more details

[http://ec.europa.eu/energy/nuclear/forum/bratislava\\_prague/2007\\_11\\_26/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/nuclear/forum/bratislava_prague/2007_11_26/index_en.htm)

<sup>10</sup> The text of the strategy is available in Slovak at <http://www.economy.gov.sk/index/go.php?id=3167>.

At the spring EU summit in 2007 Slovakia joined the group of EU member states led by France that pushed for including the nuclear energy among “clean” energy sources (it does not produce CO2 emissions). Such emphasis is in accordance with the existing energy strategy of the Slovak Republic, which projects a gradual transition to nuclear fuel, gas and renewable fuels as the main energy sources until 2030, mainly because of the high level of production costs of the so called green energy (from renewable sources). During the European Nuclear Energy Forum meeting in Prague on 22-23 May 2008<sup>11</sup> representatives of Slovakia’s company JAVYS and the Czech company CEZ, a.s. signed an agreement on the construction of new blocks of the nuclear power plant in Jaslovské Bohunice.<sup>12</sup> The importance of energy policy for the NMS is further underlined by still ongoing competition between Slovakia, Slovenia and Romania for the seat of a newly created EU Energy Agency (ACER).

*Transatlantic relations* represent the second distinct foreign policy theme pursued by the NMS though there is a varying degree of emphasis on the importance of transatlantic ties. While all the NMS claim relations with the U.S. are vital, they represent an utmost priority especially for the Baltic states due to their negative Soviet era historical experience.<sup>13</sup> In terms of EU membership the NMS support the deepening of cooperation and complementary relations between the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). For the 2009 Czech Presidency it was important to underline, on the one hand, the importance of Czech – U.S. ties while at the same time the Czech Republic stressed the very importance of “transatlantic alliance” between the EU and the USA.<sup>14</sup> Hence, EU membership has created a dimension of relations with the United States when NATO is no longer an exclusive forum for transatlantic dialogue. The NMS claim to be equally keen to cultivate the EU-U.S. ties. Poland as the largest NMS “supports the project of common EU armed forces but respects the North Atlantic Alliance as the main security guarantor of NATO’s member countries”.<sup>15</sup> Thus, while striving for complementary EU-NATO ties, in matters of hard security threats there is still a clear hierarchy in favor transatlantic ties.

*Enlargement* is the third distinct policy priority for the NMS. However, unlike in the case of firm and constant preferences vis-à-vis energy security and transatlantic relations, the

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<sup>11</sup> Pozri viac detailov na [http://ec.europa.eu/energy/nuclear/forum/bratislava\\_prague/2008\\_05\\_22/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/nuclear/forum/bratislava_prague/2008_05_22/index_en.htm).

<sup>12</sup> *Jadrové fórum spečatilo dostavbu Bohuníc*. EurActiv.sk, 29. 5. 2008.

<http://www.euractiv.sk/energetika/clanok/jadrove-forum-specatilo-dostavu-bohunic-012928>.

<sup>13</sup> NCS-08-10, Interview in Brussels, 2 December 2008.

<sup>14</sup> NCS-08-10, Interview in Brussels, 12 March 2009.

<sup>15</sup> NCS-08-31, Interview in Brussels, 9 March 2009.

positions of the NMS toward further enlargement have shifted over time. Slovakia is a good example when around the time of Slovakia's EU accession the country's political leaders showed strong resolve to carry on the EU's policy of widening. Already in 2003, Slovakia as an acceding country endorsed the proposed schedule of admitting Bulgaria and Romania into the Union by 2007. Beyond this, then Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda was a vocal advocate and one of the driving forces of Croatia's swift incorporation into the Union. Slovak leaders were not happy with the Council's decision to postpone the opening of accession talks with Croatia beyond March 2004. Slovakia's diplomacy thus continued to push for a re-examination of the Council's decision and was happy to welcome the compromise solution whereby both Croatia and Turkey officially began their respective accession talks on 3 October (or early morning hours of 4 October) 2005. In the aftermath of the launch of official talks with the two countries, Prime Minister Dzurinda stated during his press conference that Slovakia would offer Croatia cooperation in negotiations on the various chapters of the *acquis*. At the same time, the Prime Minister said that Slovakia would strive that both Ukraine and Serbia and Montenegro enter the same path of European integration.<sup>16</sup>

In recent years the positions of the NMS have become more refined and less enthusiastic about EU enlargement. Turkey has always been a specific case as Slovakia's former Foreign Minister Eduard Kukan highlighted by saying that the negotiations with Ankara "will be demanding and very, very long."<sup>17</sup> But even beyond Turkey support for enlargement in the NMS has somewhat waned. Already on an official visit to Germany on 3 November 2005 then the Slovak Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda stated rather surprisingly that the absorption capacity of the European Union has its limits and that the EU needs a 'pause' in its further enlargement.<sup>18</sup> A representative of Hungary openly described Hungary's changing perceptions vis-à-vis enlargement. While at the start of its own accession talks Hungary supported enlargement unequivocally, since EU entry Hungary has been in favor of admitting other candidates for membership from the Western Balkans but not at any price. Hungary's position toward Turkey underwent the most notable shift when five years ago Budapest supported Ankara's EU entry but today Hungary has no clear stance on Turkey's EU membership.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> "Ano Turecku a Chorvatsku posilni bezpecnost v Europe", *SITA*, 4 October 2005.

<sup>17</sup> "SR presadzuje rokovania s Chorvatskom este dnes, turecka delegacia na ceste", *TASR*, 3 October 2005.

<sup>18</sup> "Dzurinda: EU potrebuje pri rozsirovani pauzu" *SITA*, 3 November 2005.

<sup>19</sup> NCS-08-10, Interview in Brussels, 7 October 2008.

There are problems beyond Turkey, though. Slovenia's support of Croatia's EU bid is conditional upon delimitation of sea borders. In 2009 official accession talks between the EU and Croatia are stalling due to continuing bilateral conflict between Slovenia and Croatia. The Baltic states and Poland have been keen supporters of other post-soviet countries' EU ambitions, most notably Ukraine. However, representatives of these countries no longer speak of possible EU enlargement to Ukraine. While they do not rule out this option, they openly support the Eastern Partnership Initiative. Their current aim is greater cooperation and deepening of relations with Ukraine, Moldova and other ex-USSR countries as well as the democratization of Belarus.<sup>20</sup> A Latvian representative also spoke very openly about the strategic context of deeper engagement of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova with the aim not to let Russia dominate this post-soviet zone.<sup>21</sup> While a Czech representative underlined Prague's support for "approximation" of countries of the Western Balkans to the EU with the "eventual aim of full integration", the Czech Republic is interested in the "stabilization" of the post-soviet region.<sup>22</sup> In short, preferences of the NMS for further enlargement have been toned down.

In addition to the themes of energy security, transatlantic cooperation and enlargement the NMS have pursued more specific individual foreign policy agendas. It is worth noting three other areas that have emerged from our research based on content analysis of documents and official statements. The first is the topic of *cyber-crimes* and *cyber-security*. In the context of Eastern Partnership and EU-Russian relations this theme is of particular importance for Estonia that suffered from a heavy cyber attack in 2007.<sup>23</sup> The second are *economic priorities of foreign policy*. While this term means different things in different NMS, the NMS as smaller and open economies are keen to support free trade agreements and cooperation agreements with regions that may bring economic benefits for the NMS.<sup>24</sup> Finally, several NMS are keen to support the civilian dimension of the European Security and Foreign Policy (ESDP) as these provide potential real opportunities for participation of the NMS in ESDP operations.<sup>25</sup>

### **Geographic priorities**

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<sup>20</sup> NCS-08-28, Interview in Brussels, 3 December 2008.

<sup>21</sup> NCS-08-27, Interview in Brussels, 2 December 2008.

<sup>22</sup> NCS-09-42, Interview in Brussels, 12 March 2009.

<sup>23</sup> NCS-08-25, Interview in Brussels, 12 March 2008.

<sup>24</sup> NCS-08-25, Interview in Brussels, 12 March 2008.

<sup>25</sup> NCS-08-21, Interview in Brussels, 16 October 2008 and NCS-09-42, Interview in Brussels, 12 March 2009.

As the discussion of thematic priorities in external relations has already highlighted, the NMS foreign policy interests are fairly clearly geographically confined. One could say that in the context of the EU their nature is rather local. The only exception may be Poland whose official ambition is to “take part in nearly every EU and ESDP operation... with the basic aim to increase the responsibility and participation of the EU in solving the world’s security questions.”<sup>26</sup> Yet, given Poland’s constrained resources the primary focus of Polish foreign policy in the context of the EU still remains largely with eastern neighbors in the context of the Eastern Partnership initiative. In short, foreign policy of the NMS (as mostly smaller states) largely concentrates on ties with immediate neighbors or regions in the relative proximity in the enlarged EU. The two clear geographic priorities are eastern neighbors of the EU and countries of the Western Balkans. In addition, though, virtually all the NMS declare Afghanistan as an important area for their foreign policy. The interest in Afghanistan and especially the military involvement of the NMS in NATO mission as well as in EU police mission in Afghanistan testify to the significance of transatlantic security relations. At the same time, our research also indicates that the NMS justify their interest in Afghanistan in terms of paying attention to an important global issue that is relevant for the EU as a whole.

#### *Eastern Partnership and Russia*

All the NMS state strong interest in eastern policy of the EU though for some relations with particular eastern neighbors are of absolutely vital importance. This goes especially for Baltic states whose relations with Russia are a crucial priority. Estonia has one priority in eastern policy and that “is traditionally Russia.”<sup>27</sup> Latvia is strongly interested in the eastern dimension of the European neighborhood policy (ENP). The main activities of Latvian foreign policy focus on Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. Latvia’s interests in these countries are both economic and political. Riga is keen to bind these countries closer to the EU and away from Russia’s influence. Yet, for strategic reasons and issues of energy security, Latvia also has to cooperate with Russia and is therefore actively engaged in EU-Russia dialogue.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Lithuania’s priorities focus on the Eastern Partnership initiative of the EU. A Lithuanian diplomat was laconic about it: “Something like the Eastern Partnership announced

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<sup>26</sup> NCS-09-31, Interview in Brussels, 9 March 2009.

<sup>27</sup> NCS-08-15, Interview in Brussels, 9 October 2008.

<sup>28</sup> NCS-08-13, Interview in Brussels, 8 October 2008.

yesterday by the Commission is the issue that we are pursuing consistently throughout the years.”<sup>29</sup> Lithuania is especially keen to pursue two issues in the EU’s eastern neighborhood. The first is democratization in Belarus and Minsk’s gradual approximation to the EU. Second, Lithuania underlines the strengthening of EU energy policy.

The case of the Visegrad countries and Slovenia is a bit more diverse due to varying historical legacies of Russia and also due to differing degrees of energy dependence on geographic proximity to EU’s eastern neighbors. While the Eastern Partnership initiative was originally launched by Poland and Sweden in 2008, the Czech Republic’s presidency in the first half of 2009 adopted further development of the Eastern Partnership as its priority.<sup>30</sup> Poland as the official co-sponsor of Eastern Partnership views this initiative as “a specific tool for deepening cooperation with countries of East European region.”<sup>31</sup>

Slovakia is a good case in point of a more nuanced attitude when it welcomed the launch of the Eastern Partnership Initiative by Poland and Sweden in June 2008 and the subsequent elaboration of the Eastern Partnership by the European Commission in December 2008. However, the experience with the gas crisis when Russia stopped its deliveries of natural gas due to a conflict with the Ukraine has made Slovakia’s diplomacy more lukewarm to Ukraine’s ambitions to achieve ultimately both EU and NATO memberships. Most Slovak governing politicians and the Slovak public blamed the Ukraine for the crisis with deliveries of natural gas.<sup>32</sup> In a public radio discussion, political director general of the Foreign Ministry, Igor Slobodník, questioned whether “the strategic culture of this country [Ukraine] has reached the state when it could be a reliable and responsible ally in this moment in 2009 and the answer is unclear.”<sup>33</sup> While Slovakia’s official position vis-à-vis Ukraine has not changed and Slovakia actively supports Kyïv’s ambitions to work more closely with the EU and NATO (for example, Slovakia’s embassy in Kyïv serves as the contact point for NATO),<sup>34</sup> Slobodník underlined that Slovakia would be more critical in its evaluation of Ukraine’s ability to digest Slovakia’s technical assistance to this country. In short Slovakia is

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<sup>29</sup> NCS-08-26, Interview in Brussels, 1 December 2008.

<sup>30</sup> NCS-09-42, Interview in Brussels, 12 March 2009.

<sup>31</sup> NCS-09-31, Interview in Brussels, 9 March 2009.

<sup>32</sup> SITA: “Slováci dávajú krízu za vinu Ukrajine”, 8 February 2009.

<sup>33</sup> See Slovak Radio: “Sobotné dialógy”, 7 March 2009, available at: <http://www.slovakradio.sk/> (last access: 18 March 2009).

<sup>34</sup> See: [http://www.nato.int/structur/oip/all-co\\_p.pdf](http://www.nato.int/structur/oip/all-co_p.pdf) (last access: 18 March 2009).

likely to be more demanding in relation to the Ukraine since Ukraine's credibility has suffered as a consequence of the recent gas crisis.

### *The Western Balkans*

Although all the NMS declare the importance of relations with countries of the Western Balkans, these relations are highest on the list of priorities for Slovenia and Hungary, two immediate geographic neighbors of ex-Yugoslav aspirants for EU membership. Yet, Slovenia's officially declared interest in integration of south-eastern neighbors in the EU<sup>35</sup> has been tarnished by the ongoing bilateral sea border dispute with Croatia. For historical and ethnic reasons Hungary openly supports its southern neighbors' EU integration and in preparation for Hungary's EU presidency in 2011 Budapest has declared Croatia's EU membership as an important policy priority.<sup>36</sup>

Slovakia is a good example of internal limitations of a small country in engaging with the Western Balkan countries. Slovakia's activities have largely focused on developing ties with Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia. Bratislava's engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina is comparatively more recent and more limited since Slovakia opened its own embassy in Sarajevo only in 2004 and in Macedonia only in June 2009. In contrast, Slovakia does not have its own diplomatic missions in Albania or in Kosovo. Hence, the degree of engagement in these places is certainly lower than in other parts of the Western Balkans. Slovakia also offers another example of the NMS engagement in EU policy in the Western Balkans. Namely, a proof of Slovak diplomacy's active role in the Western Balkans came on 16 December 2005, when the EU High Representative for the CFSP Javier Solana appointed Miroslav Lajčák, then General Director of the Foreign Affairs Ministry's Political Section and Slovakia's former ambassador to Belgrade, to be his personal envoy in Montenegro.<sup>37</sup> Lajčák's principal role was the facilitation of Montenegro's referendum on its independence, which was held in May 2006. Lajčák's later became the EU's High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He left this post to become Slovakia's Foreign Minister in early 2009.

### *Afghanistan*

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<sup>35</sup> NCS-08-03, Interview in Brussels, 30 September 2008.

<sup>36</sup> NCS-08-10, Interview in Brussels, 7 October 2008.

<sup>37</sup> *TASR* news agency, 16 December 2005.

Most NMS have declared Afghanistan as their priority. While most the NMS are principally involved in NATO activities there, Estonia, for example, also participates the EU's European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) police mission launched in Afghanistan in June 2007.<sup>38</sup> Afghanistan remains the top priority in terms of Slovakia's physical and material contribution to US-European military cooperation. In a public interview Lajčák reiterated Slovakia's commitment to doubling the number of its soldiers in Afghanistan by June 2009.<sup>39</sup> According to Defense Minister Jaroslav Baška, Slovakia plans to have 280 soldiers, including fighting units, in Afghanistan by 2010.<sup>40</sup> Although the participation of the NMS in Afghanistan is principally tied to military resources and the commitment to NATO, it also indicates some willingness to take part in operations that are important for the EU as a whole.

### **Institutional issues**

Attitudes of the NMS to institutional makeup of the CFSP and ESDP are indicative of general preference for *institutional status quo* rather than major changes. All NMS support the inter-governmental mode of decision-making in CFSP. According to a Hungarian representative especially in questions of security policy the member states should have "the last and decisive word".<sup>41</sup> Few NMS openly declare willingness to integrate further in second pillar matters. Even Lithuania, generally more willing and open to more integration than its Baltic neighbors declares readiness for "more cooperation" rather than integration.<sup>42</sup> Most NMS did not initially support the creation of EU foreign minister in the EU Constitution or the EU Representative for foreign and security policy in the Lisbon Treaty.

Rather, their biggest concern in the first years of EU membership has been with *adaptation to existing structures* and decision-making processes in the CFSP and ESDP. While the NMS's foreign policy priorities are generally independent of ideological makeup of a particular domestic government, the NMS's ability to convey its foreign policy priorities in the EU has been constrained by a) inadequate representation of the NMS in EU institutions; b) difficulties in communication between Permanent representations and domestic capitals due

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<sup>38</sup> NCS-08-22, Interview in Brussels, 1 December 2008.

<sup>39</sup> Mirek Tóša: "S Ficom si vo všetkom rozumiem", Sme, 16 February 2009.

<sup>40</sup> Miroslav Kern/Veronika Šutková: "Na vojakov číha najnebezpečnejšia misia", Sme, 25 April 2008.

<sup>41</sup> NCS-08-10, Interview in Brussels, 7 October 2009.

<sup>42</sup> NCS-08-26, Interview in Brussels, 1 December 2008.

to technical and organizational deficiencies in exchanging classified data; c) ongoing learning process on the functioning of EU institutions.<sup>43</sup>

In this context the NMS have voiced repeated concerns about the workings of the future EU External Action Service. While even representatives of Poland claim that they “do not have a more detailed idea on functioning and makeup of the External Actions Service”<sup>44</sup>, virtually all the NMS underlie the principles of just representation of smaller member states as well as clear and effective financing and clearly delineated competencies of this new diplomatic body. A Hungarian representative has voiced Budapest’s concerns very openly when he argued that Hungary’s restrained position stems from fears of insufficient influence on policies of the External Action Service.<sup>45</sup> The Czechs argue that the representation of “particular member states should be proportional to the representation of the European Commission.”<sup>46</sup> In sum, the NMS are no institutional revolutionaries. Their positions reflect their keen instincts to protect any little national influence that they may have vis-à-vis EU foreign policy making.

## **Explanations**

Academic literature has for some years tried to identify key factors that determine preferences of member states in the EU. The survey of literature on preference formation<sup>47</sup> reveals an ever-growing list of factors behind member states’ preferences. Authors of different academic schools have tended to emphasize different explanatory variables whose importance, moreover, has varied with different periods of European integration. Economic factors such as trade and financial transfers, institutional settings including coordination of EU policymaking, domestic determinants - especially public opinion and the role of organized interests and political parties as well as historical predispositions ranging from the size of the state to the timing of its EU accession have all played their respective roles in explaining member states’ preferences in the EU. More recently Copsey and Haughton have argued that a state’s foreign policy preference has to do with the state’s perceived size and self-importance as well as with

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<sup>43</sup> NCS-08-21, Interview in Brussels, 16 October 2009.

<sup>44</sup> NCS-09-37, Interview in Brussels, 11 March 2009.

<sup>45</sup> NCS-08-10, Interview in Brussels, 7 October 2008.

<sup>46</sup> NCS-09-42, Interview in Brussels, 1 March 2009.

<sup>47</sup> Malova, D.-Rybar, M.-Lastic, E.-Dobis, P: *Hlavné trendy formovania preferencii členských štátov Európskej unie*, Survey study supported by the Slovak Research and Development Agency under the contract No. APVV-0660-06.

geographical proximity. In the case of EU enlargement states' attitudes are rather shaped by geography, attitudes to migration and stances on more integration.<sup>48</sup>

While size, especially in the case of Poland, matters and geography plays an important role, based on findings from our interviews we identify three different legacies that help explain the NMS foreign policy preferences with greater analytical focus.

The first is what I term as *territorial legacy*. Geography is a factor in explaining the focus of the NMS on particular countries outside the EU but geography alone does not explain the specific nature and intensity of the NMS's engagement vis-à-vis particular countries. Why, for instance, is Poland so keen on Ukraine and Slovakia is rather lukewarm vis-à-vis its largest neighbor? Or why is Lithuania so concerned about developments in Belarus while Latvian officials do not place an equally strong emphasis on relations with their neighbors from Minsk? In addition, why are the Slovaks and the Czechs so keen on relations with Belgrade although they share no common border with Serbia? Our explanation for these questions (also supported by our interviews) points to historical territories that once included parts of today's EU neighbors inside the former NMS's state structures (Western Ukraine vis-a-vis Poland, Belarus vis-à-vis Lithuania or ethnic Slovaks in northern Serbia vis-à-vis the Habsburg monarchy).

The second explanation for especially clearly articulated security preferences stems from the NMS's *communist legacy*. It is neither size nor geographic position that fully accounts for some of the NMS's strong preference for primacy of transatlantic hard security guarantees. All NMS declare the importance of the North Atlantic Treaty Association but some are more open to doing business with Russia or relying on other EU partners. More importantly, Poland's size does not make Warsaw any less vulnerable in matters of hard security. Rather, the intensity of focus on the U.S. and NATO has to do with the specific Soviet era experience. At the same time, the EU's single market has performed wonders in redirecting the flow of trade and economic ties of the NMS. However, the communist legacy still leaves a decisive mark on energy dependencies of the NMS. Therefore, while the Cold war past makes the NMS cling to NATO, at the same time it makes the NMS keen to push for more cooperation and integration in EU energy policy and energy security.

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<sup>48</sup> Copsey, N.-Haughton, T.: *The Choices for Europe: National Preferences in New and Old Member States*, JCMS 47:2, 2009, esp. pp. 277-280.

The historical territorial legacy and communist legacy help explain the clearest and firmest external preferences of the NMS. However, they do not account for certain shifts in foreign policy preferences of the NMS such as a gradually more realistic approach to future EU enlargement. Here, we find the waning effects of the *accession legacy* for the NMS. Unlike the longer periods of more distant historical experience, the experience of EU accession process has more temporally limited effects on policy preferences of the NMS in EU foreign relations. While in institutional terms the NMS are still adapting to EU realities and are therefore hesitant about institutional reform in foreign policy, in EU enlargement policy the NMS have moved beyond their respective accession legacies and become more calculating and considerate of internal aspects of EU policy making.