

UACES 41st Annual Conference

Cambridge, 5-7 September 2011

Conference papers are works-in-progress - they should not be cited without the author's permission. The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author(s).

www.uaces.org

EU negotiations and small states in regional alliances¹

Manja Klemenčič, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia (manja.klemencic@gmail.com)

Abstract

Regional alliances – the Franco-German, Benelux, Nordic and Baltic cooperation and Visegrád Four – have been seen to have lost their significance in the “renaissance of bilateralism” in the new Europe. Studies of EU negotiations tend to support this view that the governments’ coalitional choices are preference-based rather than displaying stable patterns of regional cooperation. Accordingly, regional alliances have become marginalised within the scholarly study of EU negotiations. This paper suggests bringing regional alliances back into EU negotiations research. A motivation for such a revisionist position lies in the empirical observation of continuous and even rising frequency of intra-alliance meetings before and during EU negotiations. So what is the purpose of these interactions? And do they have any effects on EU negotiations? Addressing the case of Visegrád Group specifically and small states in regional alliances more generally, this paper investigates the viability of these groupings for capacity-building and coalitional strategy in EU negotiations. It suggests that first and foremost regional alliances present a vital *capacity-building* strategy for alliance partners. Their viability as a platform for *coalitional behaviour* is significantly more limited, yet not precluded. The paper proposes several scope conditions which increase the likelihood for regional alliance-based coalitional cooperation.

¹ The paper is work in progress – please do not cite without author’ permission.

‘Actors create structures which take on a life of their own and in turn shape subsequent action’, Martha Finnemore (1996: 30).

Introduction: conceptualising regional alliances in the context of European integration

The leading opinion-making newspaper *The Economist* suggested during the time of the Constitutional Treaty negotiations that ‘there are no more fixed and reliable alliances in the EU. Countries team up with each other, depending on issue and circumstances’.² Former Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, also commented that the Constitutional Treaty negotiations have shown a “renaissance of bilateralism” in the new Europe: ‘With each new issue we are likely to see changing ad hoc coalitions of member states’ (De Hoop Scheffer 2003: 1). Similarly, Lord Kerr in his address at the Center for European Studies, Harvard University (11 July 2003) suggested that ‘[a]lliances [were] increasingly a matter of convenience; we can expect more of a wide-spread promiscuity among member states’. These are puzzling suggestions in view of the history of institutionalised cooperation among EU member states; that is regional alliances which represent a broad array of permanent and formalised bilateral and multilateral government relations outside a domain of a specific set of EU negotiations and even possibly outside the domain of EU affairs (Klemenčič 2006).³

Regional alliances in this paper refer to those bilateral and multilateral government relationships that stem from high volume and complexity of transactions between the countries based on geographic proximity, historical affinities, trade relations, security ties and membership in the same multilateral organisations (H Wallace 1986b: 136). The formal alliance is actually formed when governments decide to ‘put their bilateral dealings on to a privileged basis’ and create a “special relationship” (H Wallace 1986b: 137). The governments make strategic decision to long-term intergovernmental cooperation, they record this decision in formal documents specifying the purpose, the scope and depth of cooperation, and they create a structure to facilitate it, i.e. mechanisms of reaching collective decisions, determining the common objectives and - where applicable - the allocation of costs and payoffs. The relationships permeate different levels of the government (and extend also to inter-parliamentary and civil society cooperation). The participating states maintain autonomy, but have common goals which entail the pooling of resources and activities. The common characteristic of these alliances is, hence, of being “durable, deeper and more organised” (Schoutete 1990: 106-108). The most prominent examples of such regional alliances within the

² The Economist, 6.2.2003: 3.

³ In practice, various terms have been used in EU studies literature when referring to such forms of cooperation: “axis”, “tandem”, “bloc” and “partnership”, and more recently “regional groupings” and “institutionalized cooperation” (Panke 2010, 2011). In general, authors in European Studies literature avoid using the term “alliance” due to the association it has with “security alliances” in international relations literature (e.g. Walt (1987) and “inter-business alliances” from management studies. I have chosen the term alliance for its unambiguous reference that it includes “a formal agreement or treaty between two or more nations to cooperate for specific purposes” (dictionary.com). The term “alliance” is also conceptually different from “coalition”. A coalition is as any group of states that coordinate their positions and act cooperatively on all or some negotiation issues in a particular negotiation situation.

EU include the Franco-German cooperation, the Benelux, the Nordic and the Baltic cooperation and the Visegrád Group [V4]. These alliances have been a target of an extensive scholarly investigation;⁴ especially as to the role of the Franco-German and the Benelux alliances in the EU integration project. These two arguably acted as catalysts of the integration process (De Schoutheete 1990: 121) and can be merited to have played a part of the “cement” for deep European integration (H Wallace 2001: 5).

In view of this role in the European integration project, the assertions that regional alliances have lost their significance in the “renaissance of bilateralism” in the new Europe are puzzling. Yet, scholarly work seems to support them. Several studies of EU negotiations affirm that governments’ coalitional behaviour displays ever-changing constellations (Kaeding and Selck 2005), (Elgström, Bjurulf et al. 2001). Member states typically choose their coalitional partners on the basis of issue preferences (ibid.). While certain patterns can be observed – such as the likelihood of a North-South divide -, stable coalitions according to regional groupings are not typical (ibid.). Accordingly, regional alliances have become marginalised within the analytical toolkit of studies of EU negotiations. While the negotiation research proliferated, the scholarly interest in regional alliances withered within the mainstream European Studies research.

This paper suggests bringing the regional alliances back into EU negotiations research. A motivations for such an endeavour lies in the empirical observation of continuous and even rising frequency of intra-alliance meetings before and during EU negotiations. During my field research on EU treaty negotiations, national representatives from regional alliances testified near unanimously that they held intensive intra-alliance consultations during the Convention and the IGCs (Klemenčič 2006). These interactions took place even if not all the regional groupings emerged as negotiation coalitions (ibid.). Furthermore, the intra-alliance meetings before Council meetings have become a routine, and even - as in the example of V4 (Visegrád Group 2004) - an institutionalised practice. So what is the purpose of these interactions then? And are there any effects on the EU negotiation dynamics or outcomes? How viable are regional alliances in EU negotiations?

The conceptual approach towards answering these questions is divided into two sections. One section investigates viability of regional alliances for capacity-building. The basic assumption here is that EU negotiations are not a perfect information environment. Given the technical and political complexity of policy issues, and the sheer volume of negotiating actors with diverse interests and complex relational structures data on these is not easy to access. Also, governments’ interests, preferences and the perceptions of the situation are not pre-fixed and

⁴ Most of this literature focuses on the origins and development of the Franco-German partnership, addressing the depth and scope of this ‘special relationship’ (Morgan and Bray 1986; McCarthy 1993; Wood 1995; Kocs 1995; Bulmer and Paterson 1996; Bocquet 1997; Clemens and Paterson 1998; Pedersen 1998; Webber 1999; Hendriks and Morgan 2001; Krotz 2002). Other alliances that have been researched are the Benelux (Bossaert and Vanhoonaeker 2000), the Nordic cooperation (Lawler 1997; Miles 1996; Ingebritsen 1998; Arter 1999; Archer 2003; Egeberg 2003) and the role of Spain in the context of the Mediterranean partnership (Aliboni 1990; Closa 1995; Magone 2004). Alliances between the new member states: the Visegrád Group (Davy 1990; Bukalska and Bocian 2003; Dangerfield 2008) and the Baltic cooperation (Ozolina 1999) have been subject to much less research.

exogenously-given but subject to discursive effects during the negotiations (Christiansen 2002; Falkner 2002a, 2002b; Stubb 2002; Sverdrup 2002; cf. Risse and Kleine 2011).

Next, government representatives come into negotiations with diverse level of experience and correspondingly expertise, be that “content specific knowledge” or “technical expertise” about the subject matter of negotiation Radaelli 1995; Wallace 2005; Quaglia et al. 2008); (2) “relational knowledge” about others states’ (and EU institutions’) preferences, domestically defined “zones of possible agreement” (i.e. the worst deal they can/would accept - *BATNA*), possible or existing advocacy coalitions (i.e. states who share broad normative views and paradigms about public policy; and (3) “procedural knowledge” about the process of negotiations (Tallberg 2006). Yet, expertise and bargaining skill are increasingly seen as one of critical resources - next to voting weight and economic size - for improving states’ ability to defend national interests (Majone 1999, Tallberg 2006; c.f. Bailer 2011: 745). This is shown to be the case in particular in pre-negotiations and early stages in negotiations – such as in the “preparatory bodies” of the Council – where the vast majority of EU policy agenda is set and majority of policy formulations are agreed upon even if all legislative decisions have to be formally adopted by a ministerial Council formation (Beyers and Dierickx 1998; Hayes-Renshaw & Wallace 1997: 78; Haeghe 2007a, 2007b, 2008a). The Council working groups primarily focus on technically complex dossiers and technical details of policy issues and, as such, they are particularly conducive to deliberation (Risse and Kleine 2011).

In the most comprehensive empirical investigation of small states in EU negotiations so far, Diana Panke (Panke 2010a; Panke 2010b; Panke 2011) recognises “institutionalised coordination on regional basis” as one of capacity-building strategies by which states can periodically exchange and acquire general information on other states’ position on upcoming issues. She concludes, however, that it is ‘the least often applied strategy [as compared to setting priorities, information from the Commission, information from the Presidency] to increase capacities available for policy shaping strategies’ (Panke 2010: p.40, Figure 3.6). This conclusion is plausible if one generalizes across all EU small states. If one, however, extracts the results for states from the Benelux, Nordic, Baltic or V4 alliance, the findings show a relatively high(er) frequency of usage of institutionalized coordination as compared to the frequency of usage of other strategies or as compared to “non-allied” countries’ use of other strategies (Panke 2010: p. 805, Table 1). At the same time, consultations within regional alliances do not preclude – but rather complement - other capacity-building strategies, such as consulting the Presidency or the Commission (Panke 2010a). The question of regional alliances’ role in governments’ capacity-building, hence, begs for further investigation.

The other section is concerned with emergence of coalitions that are based on regional alliances rather than formed *ad hoc*. Coalitions are the premier power-enhancing strategy in negotiations. The more heterogeneous the participating actors are, the more uncertainty there is in strategy decision-making, and the more motivated governments are to choose concerted action to reduce these uncertainties. As Midgaard and Underdal point out, for multiparty conferences with a large number and diversity of negotiation actors ‘there will probably be more uncertainty as to

the interests and motives of some of the others and as to perceptions of one's own utility', and hence 'increased situational complexity' (Midgaard and Underdal 1977: 331-332). Thus, governments will be more likely to form coalitions to structure the process, and reduce the complexities and uncertainties associated with diverse actors. In general, with many more governments present (or other actors), an individual government may easily be 'left out' from the negotiation game.

Coalitions emerge in majority-voting as in unanimity setting. As Elgström et al (2001: 114) suggest, in a consensus-seeking environment 'process coalitions might be formed during negotiations with the purpose of demonstrating combined strength, to put emphasis behind the persuasion effort, or to boost morale among a group of advocates'. To generate direct effects on EU negotiation outcomes, governments form coalitions. Other strategies they can apply include arguing and bargaining, lobby EU institutions, act as mediator or compromise broker (cf. Panke 2010a). When analyzing small states' shaping strategies, Panke (Panke 2010b: 802-303) suggests that limited bargaining capacities of small states – due to structural disadvantages – can potentially be counterbalanced with institutionalized co-ordination on a regional basis, but that these 'presuppose homogenous interests within groups and between partners'. This condition is, however, as aforementioned studies show, neither frequently nor necessarily easily achieved. Yet, examples of coalitional cooperation exist. Hence, when and under what conditions are such coalitions likely to emerge?

The conceptual approach draws upon intergovernmental theory of strategic action and social constructivist-institutionalist tradition of political analysis. The intergovernmentalist perspective assumes that the interactions in regional alliances reflect the interests and strategic calculations of the governments, i.e. national administrations. Thus, decisions on consultations and on coalitional cooperation are results of rational political decisions by top officials in the administration and delegation – that is a political mandate – to lower level officials to implement it. The common decisions taken are result of negotiations where national interests and strategic calculations play the key role.

The social constructivist perspective assumes that intra-alliance interactions and decisions can be subject to socialisation effects and deliberative moments. As the scholarly work on EU comitology informs us, frequent and regular interactions within working bodies can initiate processes of socialization which can have several effects: development of supranational roles and identities (Egeberg 2002; Beyers 2005; Radaelli and Banducci 2008), internationalisation of supranational norms and normative views (Quaglia et al. 2008), propensity to achieve deliberative effect, i.e. intentional or unintentional persuasion (Risse and Klein 2011). Krotz (2002: 2) rightly notes that regional alliances through their institutional framework 'standardize and routinize the conduct of a single state involved in the relations', 'bind and cultivate personnel', and 'generate and perpetuate social meaning and purpose, such as the meaning of normality and normal expectations'. A key assumption in the socialization theory is that socialization affects not only officials' role perceptions – how they see themselves and what they perceive as their interests, but also their behavior – which tends to be more cooperative.

Empirically, the paper addresses the case of Visegrád Group specifically and small states in regional alliances more generally.⁵ As a formal alliance between Check Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, V4 is the youngest and the least formalised among the existing regional alliances in the EU. I suggest that findings for V4 may be generalizable to other – more institutionalised – alliances. The viability of both strategies is investigated in two sets of negotiations: the most recent treaty negotiations (2002/03 Convention on the Future of Europe and 2003/04 and 2007 Intergovernmental Conferences [IGC]) and the negotiations of the Multiannual Financial Framework (2007-13) [Financial Perspective].⁶ Data is obtained from the formal documents of the V4 and in total of 46 interviews with officials from V4 and other countries' permanent representations (in 2004 as part of my doctoral research), and with V4 government officials in capitals (in February 2011).

Regional alliances as capacity-building strategy

In order to effectively participate in negotiations governments need resources. Expertise and bargaining skill – as discussed earlier – are recognized as critical for negotiation success. Expertise is critical in the process of formulation of positions and in during the negotiations as argumentative and ideational power resource. Bargaining skills come from experience, but also from understanding of procedures and relational structures that involve other actors, their preferences and network capital - 'the quantity and quality of cooperation partners one has' (Nurin 2007: 9). Both resources are subject to structural – administrative limitations of states: size of government administration, experience of officials, access to epistemic communities, and are inevitably limited. Intra-alliance consultations can be understood as governments' strategic choice to access information, acquire knowledge through common learning and skills through practice of intra-coalitional interactions, and thus build capacity to defend national interests in EU negotiations. They can, hence, provide opportunities for offsetting administrative shortages, such as. lack of personnel working on a policy dossier, no access to experts and epistemic communities and/or high transaction costs in reaching out to experts.

⁵ Due to the special empirical interest in alliances including small states, it also relates to the growing – and advancing - literature on small states in the EU (Thorhallsson 2000; Panke 2010a, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b; Laffan, 2006; Bunse, Magnette, & Nicolaidis, 2005; Maes & Verdun, 2005; Raunio & Wiberg, 2001; Tiilikainen, 2006).

⁶ The treaty negotiations started in 2002 with the Convention on the Future of Europe, continued with the 2003/04 IGC and 2007 IGC resulting in the Lisbon Treaty. They overlapped with the negotiations concerning the EU's multi-annual financial framework for the period 2007–13 (called Financial Perspective), which started in 2003 and were concluded in 2006. Both sets of negotiations are of fundamental strategic significance for the integration project. Treaty negotiations comprise a whole array of constitutional issues emerging from the definition of the EU institutional architecture and constitutional lines of orientation and policy direction (Elgström and MH Smith 2000: 678-679; Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace 1997: 8). Negotiations on a multi-annual financial framework tackle three main questions: the overall amount of the EU budget; which country contributes how much; and annual ceiling for all major budget provisions (Begg 2005: 14).

(I)As a rational calculation, the choice to start consultations is actually rather unproblematic as all alliances have formally and in unambiguous terms institutionalized consultations as a cooperation mechanism.⁷ At the same time, the formal documents tend to suggest a possibility, yet not an obligation, to – when possible – develop common positions. For example, Benelux states as one of its tasks ‘developing the Benelux political cooperation’, which ‘involves the joint preparation of the European Councils’, and that ‘[w]herever possible, a common position is taken in European meetings in order to be of greater weight in the decision-making process’.⁸ Nordic cooperation includes similar aims: ‘[t]he High Contracting Parties should hold joint consultations on matters of common interest which are dealt with by European and other international organisations and conferences’ (The Helsinki Treaty, Article 1) and that these consultations should be ‘on a permanent basis and, where necessary, take co-ordinated measures’ (Helsinki Treaty, Article 39). Indeed, the consultations and sharing of expertise may affect the negotiation processes and outcome by leading to formulation of common positions and coalition formation, but this aspect is typically not expected even if it is desired. The expectation of the officials is to access and acquire knowledge which will help them prepare instructions for particular negotiation dossier. This low expectation can intensify deliberative effects since the representatives are – in fact – not formally negotiating just consulting.

These enabling conditions weaken as we move up the political ladder of intra-alliance social interactions. There the expectation for common positions tends to be – at least in some negotiations – higher and correspondingly the representatives are more cautious and reserved in their interactions. Intra-alliance consultations, in a way present highly enabling conditions for deliberation: they are voluntary; there is low or no-expectation of reaching agreements; the majority of issues is technical in nature and the majority of interactions takes place on technical and lower-political levels; they are conducted under socializing effects of regular (or at least frequent) and reiterative interactions and cultural affinities that stem from geographic proximity and historical affinities of the countries. In addition, if one of the key cleavages in EU negotiations stems from what is broadly termed the “North-South” divide, the alliances tend to be similar in terms of their economic-social structures and corresponding normative and paradigmatic underpinnings.

(II)Furthermore, such consultations do not preclude consultations with other states, groups of states or alliances; however they might highlight the importance of maintaining the ‘internal dimension’ of the alliance. For example, the Bratislava Declaration (Visegrád Group 2011) affirms that V4 is “open to cooperation [...] with countries and other regional groupings

⁷ The goal of administrative capacity-building has been approached very practically – through joining diplomatic representations - in some alliances. For example, the Nordic foreign ministers have agreed to implement the recommendation of the Stoltenberg report concerning strengthened Nordic cooperation on diplomatic representations (NB8 Report 2010). There has also been a recommendation by another ‘wise men’ report to extend this cooperation to include also Baltic representation (ibid.). The idea behind is that ‘exchange of diplomats among the ministries of foreign affairs would contribute to improving mutual cooperation and understanding at working level’ and that ‘this practice could later be expanded to other ministries and fields’ (ibid., p.7). The exchange of civil servants is widely practiced in Franco-German cooperation, for example.

⁸ Website of Benelux: http://www.benelux.int/en/sg/sg_taken.asp [Date accessed 1.9.2011].

through the V4+ format” (ibid.). The V4+ format has become an important dimension ever since 2000. As demonstrated in the Annex 2, the V4 representatives held several meetings on highest political levels with Benelux, the UK, and with Austria and Slovenia in the framework of the Regional Partnership during the treaty negotiations and with Romania and Bulgaria especially on issues pertaining regional development after these countries accession to the EU. The V4 Prime Ministers’ statement in 2001 highlights “the external dimension of V4 cooperation” (Visegrád Group 2001); explicating, however, that V4 treats these relationships just as informal and irregular bilateral relationships on issues of common concern while protecting the ‘internal dimension’ of the V4 by agreeing on V4 positions before contacting third parties (see Visegrád Group 2002).

(III) In general, the alliances’ formal institutional structure - as recorded in formal documents - tends to specify the meetings at the highest political level and provide for *ad hoc* and flexible formulation of working bodies when this is deemed beneficial.⁹ However, these provisions hardly describe the full picture of intra-alliance governmental interactions, and thus, the full potential for capacity-building for participating governments. The most significant capacity-building within alliances does not take place at the high political level, but rather technical level within the participating governments. Most of the negotiation preparation and pre-negotiations in the preparatory bodies of the Council takes place at the lower – technical – level. It is at this level, as Risse and Kleine (2011: 714) point out that ‘rules of procedure privilege expertise and thus arguments based on knowledge rather than interest. In such a setting, authority may stem from the recognition of an actor’s superior expertise on a subject matter instead of his or her reputation or formal position’. Thus, it is at this technical level – rather than higher political level - that the demand for knowledge and information is highest. Political level consultations are fewer, more carefully following institutionalized practice, as these tend not to be shielded from public scrutiny, issues discussed may be of political salience and the implicit expectation on common decisions higher – already in view of anchoring as ‘united voice’ for the upcoming negotiations. However, there are also differences at this level in terms of frequency and intensity of consultations. Typically, more consultation is in policy areas that are salient to all alliance partners or particularly salient to one or more. In the latter case, the one in need for expertise, initiates consultations and others tend to reciprocate under ‘shadow of the future’, i.e. expectation that their demand for consultation will be reciprocated in the future. Furthermore, more consultations take place in technically more demanding areas.

The interviews I have conducted with V4 government representatives in 2004 and 2011 testify of dramatic increase in interactions between the four countries’ administrations already before the accession; i.e. during the accession negotiations, the first set of treaty negotiations and in preparation of the Financial Perspective negotiations.¹⁰ These interactions further expanded in frequency and scope after the accession.¹¹ While the meetings of Prime Ministers and Foreign

⁹ For example, the new Benelux Treaty (2008) also provides for a simplified organizational structure to allow for such flexibility in formulating working parties on specific policies.

¹⁰ Interviews: PR#13, 18.11.2004; PR#21, 20.9.2004; PR#23, 17.9.2004.

¹¹ Ibid.

Ministers remained fixed and those of sectorial ministers' relatively steady, there was a dramatic increase of meetings and consultations on technical level and lower political levels.¹² These would take place in particular in preparation for the Council working group meetings, where the bulk of policy formulation actually takes place.¹³ During the time of intensive pre-negotiations the officials on technical level are likely to be in contact daily or at least several times in a week.¹⁴ High intensity of consultations can be observed also in the case of treaty and budgetary negotiations. Government representatives from all participating countries confirmed that the bulk of preparatory work, i.e. preparing instructions for negotiations, has been undertaken through consultations within the V4 (Klemenčič 2006).¹⁵ Yet, in neither of the cases – as will be discussed more in detail in the next section - V4 did not emerge as a perfect coalition.

Typically, if one is to inquire about the importance of V4 cooperation a high ranking official – on ministerial or state secretary level - , they tend to refer to purposes of cooperation as stated in the V4 declaration or some of the supporting documents while adding that V4 is for them a “launch platform for seeking additional allies”.¹⁶ If one poses the same question to the officials at the technical level, they tend to respond “we talk to each other almost every day”.¹⁷ There are advantages in terms of information resources, learning and “being taken more seriously by the Commission and others if acting as a group”. In addition, the officials report of “knowing each other well” and “having more things in common to discuss informally” as other reasons why they interact also informally.¹⁸

Similarly, Benelux representatives confirmed in interviews that the cooperation was very intense especially in the early Convention stages.¹⁹ This intensity was influenced also by the domestic situation in the Netherlands. Precisely during the beginning phase of the Convention, the Netherlands were undergoing difficult political developments.²⁰ Political debates in Netherlands in this period were thus preoccupied with domestic issues, and EU affairs hardly entered the agenda. Consequently, the Dutch government was poorly prepared for the Convention, did not know what they wanted in the negotiations and had difficulties catching up (Bruter 2004: 136).²¹ The Benelux cooperation was thus in the initial stages an important platform for clarifying the preferences and forming joint positions and hence enabling a more

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Interview NG#3, 18.2.2011.

¹⁴ Interview NG#2, 17.2.2011.

¹⁵ Interviews: PR#13, 18.11.2004; PR#21, 20.9.2004; PR#23, 17.9.2004.

¹⁶ Interview with Slovak Foreign Affairs Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda: Balogová, B. (2010) “Visegrad spirit will resonate within the EU”. *The Slovak Spectator*. 13.12.2010.

¹⁷ Interviews: NG#1, 18.2.2011; NG#2, 17.2.2011; NG#3, 18.2.2011; NG#4, 22.2.2011.

¹⁸ Interviews: NG#1, 18.2.2011; NG#2, 17.2.2011; NG#3, 18.2.2011; PR#13, 18.11.2004.

¹⁹ Interviews: PR#13, 18.11.2004; PR#21, 20.9.2004.

²⁰ These included a rise of populist parties in local elections, the assassination of far right politician Fortuyn and resignation of the second cabinet of Prime Minister Kok in April 2002. The Christian Democrat Balkenende was elected in July 2002 and stayed in power until May 2003 when another election was called. Balkenende again became Prime Minister, but paid little attention to EU affairs. Interview PR# 35, 25.9. 2004.

²¹ Interview: CS#1, 24.8. 2004.

pro-active approach in the Convention than the Netherlands could have done alone at the time.²²

(IV) Consultations on the technical level continue also during high-level crises in cooperation due to an internal political dispute related or not to EU negotiations or changes in party-political families within governments. While such disputes and cooling of relations due to political party disparities do not necessarily break the dense networks of interactions on lower governmental levels, they nevertheless raise “opportunity costs” in the sense of full utilization of the alliance and sour the “spirit” of cooperation among the officials. In other words, capacity-building is more effective when consultations are politically mandated and supported by political decision on formulation of working parties that ensure regular and systematic interactions.

Again, V4 serves as case in point. In 2002, the media reported of major crisis of V4 cooperation due to an internal dispute. In early 2002, a Prime Ministerial Summit was scheduled to take place in Budapest to discuss – among other issues – also the EU proposals for farm and regional subsidies for the acceding states, which was a salient issue for all four countries. The Czech Republic and Slovakia, however, opted not to attend the Summit due to “remarks by Victor Urban, the Hungarian Prime Minister, suggesting that the Benes decrees were incompatible with EU membership.”²³ Hence, amidst several simultaneous negotiations of key strategic importance (accession plus both sets of negotiations); there was effectively a break of relations on the highest political level among the V4 until the elections in Hungary the same year that resulted in change of government. The technical level officials, however, reported continuous interactions with their alliance counterpart.²⁴ Similarly, the changes in party-political constellations after the elections do not obfuscate the relations on the technical and lower political level of administrations to the same extent that this is the case on the highest political level.²⁵

(V) Size-related disparities and different geographic/policy orientations are not the obstacle to capacity-building. On the contrary, they may be seen as enabling conditions. In V4, Poland’s greater size is reflected also in its size of administration and relatively higher number of officials in the EU institutions. This is seen as an important resource that Poland brings to the consultation tables. In the words of two government representatives from two smaller V4 states: “Poland is always much better informed than any of us. They have extremely effective information channels. We appreciate getting information. It helps us in our own decision making.”²⁶ The same interviewees reported that Poland indeed proposes the majority (estimated two-thirds) of the policy initiatives within the V4, but that this is not seen as necessary the problem by the other three.²⁷

²² Ibid.

²³ Financial Times, 23-24.2.2002.

²⁴ Interview NG#1, 18.2.2011; PR#13, 18.11.2004.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Interviews: NG#1, 18.2.2011; NG#2, 17.2.2011; NG#3, 18.2.2011; PR#13, 18.11.2004.

²⁷ Ibid.

(VI) Alliances have adapted their structures to better serve capacity-building strategies. The case of V4 demonstrates well this point. In the founding Visegrád Declaration (Visegrád Group 1991) the structure of coordination was rather sketchy: “The cooperation of the signatories will be realized through meetings and consultations held at various levels and in various forms” (ibid.). The ‘Contents of Visegrád cooperation’ (Visegrád Group 1999) during the accession negotiations stipulated a more elaborate – indeed a quasi-institutionalised - structure of the intergovernmental cooperation to cater for the expanded scope of policy cooperation. The cooperation was to be coordinated by a one-year long chairmanship on a rotating basis. The Prime Ministers would meet once a year officially in the chairing country and once a year unofficially. Other meetings on the political level were also foreseen: of other Government members “as and when the need arises”; State Secretaries of Foreign Affairs twice a year to prepare the Prime Ministers’ meetings and draft recommendations on V4 cooperation; ambassadors in V4 countries at least 4 times a year. In addition, the document mentions the existence of Visegrád Co-ordinators within each government responsible for reviewing and co-ordinating the co-operation, preparation of the state secretaries’ and prime ministers’ meetings.

In wake of the enlargement, and – importantly – while V4 countries had already participated in the EU negotiations within the Convention on the future of Europe, the Annex to the Content of Visegrád Cooperation (Visegrád Group 2002) clarified few important points regarding operationalizing the cooperation. First, for meetings at any level that were to include also third country or countries, the Presidency was required to discuss any initiative initially within the V4 alone; only after the proposal was to be presented to a third country. Second, expert consultations at the level of departments of individual ministries could be called at any time by any V4 country and needed not to take place in the presiding country. Also, the ministries themselves organize cooperation between individual ministries. These two additions institutionalised the already existing norms of interactions among the officials and were believed to serve better for purposes of preparing for and participating in EU internal negotiations.²⁸ In 2004, after actual EU accession, the four countries reiterated their commitment to cooperate and fine-tuned the areas of cooperation including those within the EU - as well as reaffirmed the existing the structure of cooperation (Visegrád Group 2004a,b). Occasional informal meetings of Primer Ministers and Foreign Ministers before international events were now included in the document. Also, meetings of other ministers and intensified communication of V4 national co-ordinators and their key role in internal and inter-state co-ordination were highlighted. In the words of the Slovak Foreign Minister: “The success of the V4 depends on our ability to continuously seek common meeting points and to look at our cooperation as a launch platform for seeking additional allies. Our goal is not to create new blocks within the EU, to splinter EU integration or to weaken its unity. After all, it was our EU membership which gave a significant kick to intensifying V4 cooperation”.²⁹

²⁸ Interviews: PR#13, 18.11.2004; PR#21, 20.9.2004; PR#23, 17.9.2004.

²⁹ Interview with Slovak Foreign Affairs Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda: Balogová, B. (2010) “Visegrad spirit will resonate within the EU”. The Slovak Spectator. 13.12.2010.

Regional alliances in coalitions

Regional alliance partners may develop joint negotiation positions and emerge as coalitions in a particular set of negotiations. As a coalition, i.e. as a *unitary* actor, they may engage in other power-enhancing strategies, such as arguing and bargaining, networking with other member states, lobbying EU institutions, act as mediator or compromise broker (cf. Panke 2010a). The purpose of these strategies is to influence the negotiation outcomes in the desired direction based on *commonly defined* preferences. Hence, these strategies are distinctly different from capacity-building strategies. Capacity-building presumes strategic interest in exchange of information and building of expertise which can be exercised at any government level, with or without a political mandate, often away from public scrutiny. There is no formal expectation of coalitional cooperation even if that is near universally believed desirable. For regional alliance to engage in coalitions, there needs to be a political decision taken, typically, formulated as joint policy position. Often these positions are then publicized, as for example in the case of Benelux in form of Benelux memoranda.³⁰ Such decision also implies a formulation of joint negotiation strategy.

Such political decision is, however, not taken regularly by formal alliances' members. As mentioned in the introduction, several studies affirm that governments' coalitional behaviour in legislative EU negotiations typically does not include a pattern of regional groupings (Kaeding and Selck 2005), (Elgström, Bjurulf et al. 2001). Rather, member states make their coalitions choices *ad hoc* based on policy issue preferences (ibid.). In other words, coalitions in the Council are not pre-fixed, but shift from issue to issue (Nurin 2007: 9) Studies using the prominent DEU data set on coalitional behaviour in Council negotiations suggest that coalitional patterns tend to be organised along a North–South divide (Thomson et al. 2006; Zimmer et al. 2005), a regulatory versus market-based dimension (Thomson et al. 2004), and an EU budget-related dimension (Zimmer et al. 2005) (cf. Bailer 2011). However, while regional groupings do not translate into coalitions automatically or even regularly, it is also not the case that they never appraise their relationship to coalitional cooperation. The question emerges then under which conditions this is most likely to happen. This paper suggests following conditions for regional alliances' coalitional behavior: (i) when all partners have convergent preferences; (ii) on policy issues of marginal interest with no salient preference of some partners and salient to other partners; (iii) on issues of high salience for all partnering governments, even if they do not have convergent preferences on all issues, but share the broad ideological; such as, for example, in treaty and budgetary negotiations, and (iv) on issues of high salience for the alliance, i.e. one of the policy areas or issue for which is identified as alliances policy objective. It is important to note, however, that these conditions – especially in the two latter cases - only explain the emergence of regional coalitions, but not also their durability in the course of negotiations. Again, for the emergence of a coalition, there needs to be a political agreement made on the highest governmental level, i.e. ministerial and Prime Ministerial.

³⁰ E.g. Benelux Memorandum on the IGC and on the Future of Europe, The Hague, 29 September 2000, CONFER 4787/00. Brussels: Council of Ministers.; and Press Release of the Benelux accompanying the Benelux Memorandum 'Benelux in Agreement on Joint Contribution to the Nice European Summit', 29 September 2000.

(I)The classical negotiation theory suggests that coalitions naturally emerge among partners with convergent preferences. In a negotiation-game, the distance between member state positions determines their coalitional choices. *Ceteris paribus*, the more converging the interests, and the more overlapping the win-sets of the partnering governments, the likelier it is that coalition will form. According to this perspective, intra-alliance coalitions are as likely to occur as any other coalition among EU governments. This perspective works under the assumption of fixed – domestically-defined – preferences. This assumption is, however, highly problematic in case of intra-alliance interactions in context of EU negotiations.

As mentioned in the previous section, regional alliances are first and foremost highly likely to act as platform for consultation activity. One of the primary purposes of these consultations is – in fact – to gather information and expertise to formulate national positions. Apart from the specific areas of high national interests, for which the national preferences are already assumed if not defined, participants in these consultations will not have developed preferences or these preferences – given early stage of the process and related informational and situational uncertainties – will not be very firm. Thus, in these consultations deliberation will inevitably take place and common views on and understandings of policy issues will be formed even if these are at the top political level eventually not translated into formal common positions.

(Ia)Regional alliances provide an institutional setting which is highly conducive to arguing in the sense of ‘reason-giving and justifying one’s preferences on the basis of some commonly accepted principles and norms’ (Risse and Kleine 2011) in view of influencing negotiation outcomes. In other words, if the alliance partners made a strategic choice to act as a coalition, the likelihood that their intra-coalitional agreements are based on arguing is rather high. The scope conditions under which deliberation actually matters in terms of influencing outcomes (Risse and Kleine 2011: 710) are present in alliances in a more ideal form than this is typically the case on the EU level, i.e. in Council working groups. Deitelhoff and Mueller (2005, cited in Odell 2011), suggests several hypotheses about conditions that increase the likelihood and effectiveness of deliberation: (a) when negotiators are members of a common institution and already committed to common norms, approximating a common lifeworld; (b) when talks take place in an international institution that gives the weak some authority despite power inequalities, approximating the ideal speech situation; (c) when the negotiators are free of strong pressures from domestic or international politics; and (d) when negotiators are more uncertain of their interests.

As mentioned in the introduction, the social constructivist-institutionalist perspectives suggest that in iterative interactions participants interact under ‘shadow of future’ and assume supranational roles and identities making cooperation more possible. Regional alliances, due to sheer volume of transactions and interactions, provide ample opportunities for reciprocation which is seen as highly conducive to consensus-seeking negotiation behavior (Bailer 2011: 749).³¹ As Bailer (2011: 749) submits: ‘Negotiation partners who engage in relatively frequent

³¹ Bailer (2011: 749) defines reciprocation as ‘returning to one’s exchange partner a behavior of the same valence that s/he just performed’.

negotiations are likely to be more consensus-orientated and willing to grant concessions, since they might soon be in a position to ask for favours in the following round'. The officials at this level are thus highly likely to cooperate also in EU-level negotiations – in the pre- and early negotiations. Findings from interviews with V4 officials testify of this dynamic. According to one V4 national representative: 'It is common that in the Council working groups the Presidency turns to V4 as a group asking what their position on particular issue is'.³²

(II) In view of reiterative intra-alliance interactions, alliance partners are also highly likely to engage in coalitional cooperation on policy issues of marginal interest with no salient preference of some partners and salient to other partners. As in the case of initiating consultation activity, here 'the shadow of the future' combined with absence of pronounced interest divergences, the interested party can initiate a coalition and others follow. The expectation is that in the future negotiations this will be reciprocated.

(IIa) Political mandate, i.e. delegation becomes a significant factor in decisions over coalitional cooperation as the level of politicisation increases (i.e. as we move from technical dossiers and preparatory stage to political issues and end negotiations). It is the top political level officials who decide on the level of autonomy of the officials participating in intra-alliance consultations (c.f. Olsen 2010).³³ As suggested by Olsen (2010:13), '[b]ased on an assumption that the politicians are rational when delegating authority, delegation literature expects legislators to delegate more authority in information intensive issue areas (Epstein & O'Halloran: 1999: p.197). The rationale is that the gains from the officials' expertise will gradually compensate the possible losses from agency drift. In other words, from the perspective of the politicians, the optimal level of autonomy increases with growing issue complexity'. Similarly, the officials will increase their autonomy they more experienced and verse they become in a particular policy dossier (ibid.). The autonomy of the officials ceases as we move from technical to political issues and from early to end-stages of negotiations. As level of politicization increases – the more national control mechanisms tighten - the more coalition-formation, and unitary alliance acting in EU negotiations becomes again subject to rationalist exchange logic and conflictual or converging national interests. The more pronounced the ideological, institutional and material conflicts are the less likely is that intra-alliance coalitions will endure. Furthermore, the narrower the domestic win sets – due to strong preferences of domestic stakeholders or public opinion – the more narrows space for maneuver negotiators have at the political level – where such issues typically end up being negotiated and which are subject to more close public scrutiny.

During the Convention, all V4 states were largely subsumed in the "advocacy coalition" of the "Friends of the Community Method" consisting largely of small states (Klemenčič 2006: 220-221). Poland eventually broke off from this coalition and - based on interest convergence - allied with Spain (Klemenčič 2006: 273-277). In budgetary negotiations, the V4 countries acted unified,

³² Interview NG#3, 18.2.2011.

³³ This proposition is a variation of the proposition by Olsen (2010) on the role of delegation in the Council working groups.

yet not homogenous. They all participated in the “Friends of Cohesion Method”, yet towards the end of negotiations, in words of one government official ‘each country went on its own. This is not really surprising since in the end-game every country looks for itself’.³⁴ Also the decision on joining the advocacy coalitions of “Friends of the Community Method” and “Friends of the Cohesion” was reached within the V4.³⁵

There were two main characteristics for the V4 cooperation during these negotiations. First, in both sets of negotiations, V4 appeared ‘unified, yet not autonomous’.³⁶ In the treaty negotiations, the V4 joined the “Friends of the Community Method” and Poland eventually - towards the end of the Convention and during the IGC - drifted away to form an issue-coalition with Spain, and during the 2007 IGC acted alone to yield several specific legal opt-outs: from the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and the delay in the entry into force of double-majority voting until 2017. In the Financial Perspective negotiations, V4 joined the “Friends of the Cohesion” opposing the British rebate and focusing on increasing the share of regional aid. Again, in the final negotiation rounds each state basically negotiated on its own. Poland traded support for the winning proposal on lump-sum compensation payments for side-payments amounting to 1 billion Euro to take account of the zloty exchange rate over 2007-2013 and 206 mil EUR for the five Polish regions where GDP per inhabitant is the lowest in the EU25. Hungary and the Czech Republic were also restored some previously cut aid, and Slovakia was offered funds for decommission of their nuclear plants.

(III) The example of treaty negotiations and budgetary negotiations offer, however, also a different observation. Alliance partners may emerge as coalitions also on issues of high salience for all partnering government, even if they do not have convergent preferences on all issues, but share the broad ideological views.³⁷ The “pragmatic regional alliances” – such as the V4, the Baltic cooperation, the Nordic cooperation– cooperate in negotiation coalitions when and until this seems the right strategic choice in terms of their cost-payoff calculations. They might not even emerge as a visible autonomous coalition in specific negotiations, as it was the case with V4 in both sets of negotiations. It is perhaps only for the Franco-German (and perhaps the Benelux) alliance that active coalitional cooperation in EU negotiations of such strategic importance as the treaty and financial perspective negotiations is almost an “an existential question” (Klemenčič 2006). Had they not decided (or managed) to cooperate in such important negotiations, the effectiveness or purpose of the alliance as such might be put under question. They have the legacy (and the corresponding burden of expectation to act) as “leadership alliances” in the European integration project. Hence, they tend to be compelled to active coalitional cooperation in key negotiations to nurture the integration process, and most importantly to overcome internal differences and come up with common positions in EU

³⁴ Interview NG#2, 17.2.2011.

³⁵ Interviews: PR#13, 18.11.2004; PR#21, 20.9.2004; PR#23, 17.9.2004.

³⁶ Interviews: PR#47, 18.1.2011.

³⁷ More recently, some of the most critical decisions amidst the global financial crisis, such as on the bailout for Greece, also initiated Franco-German coalitional cooperation (EUobserver, 21.07.11: France and Germany reach deal ahead of crucial summit).

negotiations that are most significant for the future of the European integration. Contrary to the liberal intergovernmentalist explanation of coalition formation, in such cases issue preferences may not be decisive in guiding coalitional choice. It may be that intra-alliance supranational roles and identities guide the formation and consolidation of coalitional partners' preferences. In other words, governments may not decide to cooperate *because* they have shared preferences, but will share preferences because they *are in relationship* and *have decided to cooperate*.

The case of Benelux coalition in the Convention on the Future of Europe affirms this view. Benelux coalition displayed the most publicly-visible coordinated behaviour of all government coalitions during the Convention and remained largely in-tact also during the IGCs (Klemenčič 2006: 216). The alliance issued several memoranda with joint positions. The alliance allied also with other actors – such as Franco-German coalition and the Friends of the Community Method – but throughout acted as unitary actor. Similarly, for France and Germany, cooperation within the Convention was a “serious effort” (Klemenčič 2006: 219). In fact, for both countries it was seen as ‘existentially important to set the agenda for the constitutional future of Europe’.³⁸ In anticipation of the enlargement and a Constitutional Treaty being drafted, it was widely expected that the two countries would cooperate given the leadership role they played for most part of the EC/EU’s history. Had they failed to cooperate in these historically important negotiations, their future partnership may have been put into question.³⁹ Both countries were rather open about the intra-alliance trade-offs to make coalitional cooperation viable (Chirac 2003): ‘... France agreed to the Commission President being elected by the European Parliament, and Germany agreed to the European Council being headed by a president elected by qualified majority by the Council for a once-renewable two-and-a-half-year term or a single one of five years.’ Both countries shared the view that there would be a need for leadership in the enlarged EU to keep the integration process on track and each saw their bilateral relationship as particularly suited to offering this leadership, given the past role it had played in the integration process. The words of French president Chirac illustrate this idea well: ‘When Germany and France get along, Europe advances - when they don't, Europe stops’.⁴⁰

(IV) Similar “existential” pressures to coalitional cooperation as drive the Franco-German and Benelux alliances to coalitional cooperation in in “history-making” negotiations, the other “pragmatic” regional alliances experience when issues on negotiation agenda pertain issues of highly regional concern, i.e. one of the policy areas or issue for which is identified as alliances policy objective (e.g. for Nordic-Baltic cooperation the EU Northern Dimension Initiative; for V4 EU’s Eastern Partnership, etc.). For example, Nordic Council emerged as coalition in the negotiations on the ‘Northern Dimension Initiative’ (Arter 2000).

(V) In all above mentioned cases, further limitations on coalitional cooperation can be posed by party politics. Partisan politics plays a role in regional alliance-based coalition formation.

³⁸ Ibid. Information was triangulated with interviews: PR#28, 23.11.2004 and CS#2, 29.9.2004.

³⁹ Interview: CS#1, 24.8. 2004.

⁴⁰ In the article ‘Radical reform plan gets first Euro-test’ on 18 February, 2003. Obtained from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2676379.stm>.

Ideological similarities between alliance partners reduce conflict and promote stability over time (Carrubba and Volden 2004, cf. Bailer 2011: 748). While intra-alliance political disparities, as discussed earlier, in general do not preclude consultations, achieving cooperation is more strenuous even if not impossible. When there are sufficient reasons for coalitional cooperation, the government officials will try to overcome the differences and come up with common positions, but these may be watered-down proposals based on lowest common denominator agreements. In general, alliances with governments of the same party political affiliation and that are also relatively steady (i.e. overlap for some years) are the most lively as coalitions.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding their importance as sub-polities in European polity with social purpose of strengthening the European ideals of trans border cooperation, regional alliances also have a purpose within EU negotiations. First, in multiple ways, they serve as capacity-building strategy for the participating states: they provide platform for sharing of information, acquiring expertise and a laboratory for experimenting the actual negotiations. Second, they also provide opportunity, yet not necessarily expectation for shaping coalitional cooperation in negotiations. This social purpose makes their limits salient since the coalitional cooperation happens only exceptionally bound by several conditions, rather than automatically. If one, however, focuses on pre-negotiation stage in the Council working groups - where the majority of issues get settled -, then the viability of regional alliances might be evaluated even more positively. Alliance partners report high intensity and regularity of interactions on technical level. This even intensifies with salience of negotiation issues, and it is not conditioned by party political animosities or other political conflict among alliance members. The viability of regional alliances as a platform for coalitional behaviour is significantly more limited, yet not precluded. The paper proposes several scope conditions which increase the likelihood for regional alliance-based coalitional cooperation: (i) when all partners have convergent preferences; (ii) on policy issues of marginal interest with no salient preference of some partners and salient to other partners; (iii) on issues of high salience for all partnering governments, even if they do not have convergent preferences on all issues, but share the broad ideological; such as, for example, in treaty and budgetary negotiations, and (iv) on issues of high salience for the alliance, i.e. one of the policy areas or issue for which is identified as alliances policy objective.

While the iterative interactions among alliance partners alone are not a sufficient condition for active coalitional cooperation within EU negotiations, the propensity to such cooperation is high given established personal contacts, channels of information, mutual understanding and trust. In fact, all alliance countries report their alliance partners to be in the first circle of countries they draw their coalitional partners from. The alliance partners are in most cases the most 'convenient' coalitional partners due to the low transaction costs of cooperation. The transaction costs of coordinated action among strategic partners tend to be lower than the costs of coordination with other governments with whom similar ties have not been built.

In other words, formal alliances appear as another level of the negotiation game, where not only governments' strategic choices are formulated, but also their preferences shaped and often their 'win-sets' defined. This adds a new thinking to the prominent account of 'two-level games' by Putnam (1988) which has influenced most of the recent literature on EU negotiations. My argument goes that next to the domestic constituencies and EU-level negotiations, as depicted by Putnam (1988), governments involved in regional alliances also simultaneously negotiate with their alliance partners. The domestic games define the 'win-sets' of possible agreements, i.e. those agreements that are ratifiable domestically (Putnam 1988: 435-442). The government negotiators care about domestic opinion because they wish to be re-elected and because (often) the EU agreements need to be ratified (as in the case of constitutional issues). The intra-alliance negotiations too can define the 'win-sets' of possible agreements. These would typically take into consideration the broad values shared by the alliance as well as bottom-lines of the alliance partners.

Finally, regional alliances when acting as autonomous coalitions in EU negotiations tend to be popularly seen as making the negotiation process more difficult and lowering the levels of common negotiated agreements since their bargaining tends to be more positional (as opposed to integrative). Again, this might be indeed true in the end-game of negotiation processes. However, looking the agenda-setting process and pre-negotiations their cooperation is –in fact – tremendously contributing to the efficiency of the decision-making. They fill in information shortages, settle misunderstandings and process the material amongst themselves before they come to the meetings within the Council and with the Commission.

References

- ALIBONI, R. (1990) *The Mediterranean dimension*. IN WALLACE, W. (Ed.) *The dynamics of European integration*. London: Pinter Publishers.
- ARTER, D. (1999) *Security and co-operation in Scandinavia*. IN ARTER, D. (Ed.) *Scandinavian politics today*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- AVERY, G. (1995) *The Commission's perspective on the negotiations*, Brighton: Sussex European Institute.
- AVERY, G. & CAMERON, F. (1998) *The enlargement of the European Union*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- BEGG, I. (2005) 'Funding the European Union', In *A Federal Trust Report on the European Union's Budget*. London: Federal Trust.
- BEYERS, J. & DIERICKX, G. (1998) "The Working Groups of the Council of the European Union: Supranational or Intergovernmental Negotiations?" In: *Journal of Common Market Studies* 36:3, pp. 289-318.
- ARCHER, C. (2003) *The Nordic States and European Integration. The Small States and European Integration*. Reykjavik, Iceland.
- ARTER, D. (1999) *Security and co-operation in Scandinavia*. IN ARTER, D. (Ed.) *Scandinavian politics today*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- BOCQUET, D. (1997) *The Future of the Franco/German Relationship*, London: RIIA, Paper 71.
- BOSSAERT, D. & VANHOONACKER, S. (2000) *Relaunch of the Benelux?* IN PIJPERS, A. (Ed.) *On Cores and Coalitions in the European Union*. The Hague: Clingendael.
- BUKALSKA, P. & BOCIAN, M. (2003) *A new Visegrad Group in the new European Union - possibilities and opportunities for development*, Warsaw: Osrodek Studiow Wschodnich.
- BULMER, S. & PATERSON, W. E. (1996) *Germany in the European Union: Gentle giant or emergent leader?* *International Affairs*, 72(1): 9-32.
- CLEMENS, C. & PATERSON, W. E. (Eds.) (1998) *The Kohl chancellorship*, London: Frank Cass.
- CLOSA, C. (1995) *National Interest and Convergence on Preferences: A Changing Role for Spain in the EU*. IN RHODES, C. & MAZEY, S. (Eds.) *The State of the European Union, Vol. 3, Building a European Polity?* Boulder: Lynne Rienner/Longman.

DANGERFIELD, (2008) The Visegrád Group in the Expanded European Union: From Preaccession to Postaccession Cooperation. *East European Politics & Societies* Summer 2008 vol. 22 no. 3, pp. 630-667.

DAVY, R. (1990) The Central European dimension. IN WALLACE, W. (Ed.) *The dynamics of European integration*. London: Pinter Publishers.

DE HOOP SCHEFFER, J. (2003) Address by Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands on "Making Europe stronger: our common task" at the Parliamentary Commission on Foreign Affairs, Paris, 14 May 2003.

DE SCHOUTHEETE, P. (1990) The Community and its sub-systems. IN WALLACE, W. (Ed.) *The Dynamics of European Integration*. London: Royal Institute of International Affairs.

ELGSTRÖM, O. & SMITH, M. H. (2000) Introduction: Negotiation and policy-making in the European Union - processes, system and order. *Journal of European Public Policy: Special Issues*, 7(5): 673-683.

EGEBERG, M. (2003) *The Nordic Countries and the EU: How European Integration Integrates and Disintegrates States Domestically*. Stockholm: ARENA Working Papers WP 11/03.

Haas, Ernst B. (1990) *When Knowledge Is Power* (Berkeley: University of California Press).

HAYES-RENSHAW, F. & WALLACE, H. (1997) *The Council of Ministers*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

HENDRIKS, G. & MORGAN, A. (2001) *The Franco-German Axis in European Integration*, Cheltenham and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.

INGEBRITSEN, C. (1998) *The Nordic States and European Unity*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

KLEMENČIČ, M. (2006) *GOVERNMENTAL COALITIONS IN EU INSTITUTIONAL REFORM NEGOTIATIONS: the Convention on the Future of Europe and the 2003/04 Intergovernmental Conference*. PhD Thesis submitted to and approved by the University of Cambridge.

KOCS, S. A. (1995) *The Franco-German Relationship and Europe's Strategic Choices, 1955-1995*, Westport, CT: Praeger.

KROTZ, U. (2002) *Structure as process: The Regularized Intergovernmentalism of Franco-German Bilateralism*. Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies Working Paper 02.3.

LAWLER, P. (1997) Scandinavian Exceptionalism and European Union. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 35(4): 565-594.

MAGONE, J. M. (2004) *Contemporary Spanish Politics*, London: Routledge.

MILES, L. (Ed.) (1996) *The European Union and the Nordic Countries*, London and New York: Routledge.

MORGAN, R. & BRAY, C. (1986) *Partners and rivals in Western Europe: Britain, France and Germany*, Aldershot: Gower.

OZOLINA, Z. (1999) *The Impact of the EU Enlargement on Baltic Cooperation*. IN MALFLIET, K. & KEYGNAERT, W. (Eds.) *The Baltic states in an Enlarging European Union : Towards a Partnership between Small States ?* Leuven: Leuven University Press.

SMITH, J. & TSATSAS, M. (2002) *The new bilateralism: the UK's relations within the EU*, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs.

PUTNAM, R. (1988) *Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games*. *International Organization*, 42(1): 427-460.

PEDERSEN, T. (1998) *Germany, France and the Integration of Europe*, London and New York: Pinder.

Saam, Nicole; Sumpter, David (2009) *Peer selection in EU intergovernmental negotiations*, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 16:3, 356-377.

STUBB, A. C. G. (2002) *Negotiating flexibility in the European Union: Amsterdam, Nice and beyond*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Tallberg, Jonas (2007) *Bargaining Power in the European Council*, Sieps publication, 2007:1

WALLACE, H. (1986a) *Bilateral, Trilateral and Multilateral Negotiations in the European Community*. IN MORGAN, R. & BRAY, C. (Eds.) *Partners and rivals in Western Europe: Britain, France and Germany*. Aldershot: Gower.

WALLACE, H. (1986b) *The Conduct of Bilateral Relationships by Governments*. IN MORGAN, R. & BRAY, C. (Eds.) *Partners and rivals in Western Europe: Britain, France and Germany*. Aldershot: Gower.

WEBBER, D. (Ed.) (1999) *The Franco-German Relationship in the European Union*, London: Routledge.

WOOD, P. C. (Ed.) (1995) *The Franco-German Relationship in the Post-Maastricht Era*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner/Longman.

Primary sources:

Draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, European Convention (2003). Visegrád Group (1991) Declaration on Cooperation between Czech and Slovak Federal, the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Hungary in striving for European Integration, Krakow, 15 February 1991.

Visegrád Group (1999) Contents of Visegrád Cooperation approved by the Prime Ministers' Summit Bratislava on 14th May 1999.

Visegrád Group (2001) Visegrád Group Prime Ministers meeting in Krakow (1 June 2001).

Visegrád Group (2002) Annex to the Contents of Visegrád Cooperation approved by the Prime Ministers summit Bratislava on 14th May 1999.

Visegrád Group (2004a) Declaration of Prime Ministers of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland and the Slovak Republic on cooperation of the Visegrád Group countries after their accession to the European Union (12 May 2004).

Visegrád Group (2004b) Guidelines on the Future Areas of Visegrád Cooperation.

Visegrád Group (2011) The Bratislava Declaration of the Prime Ministers of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland and the Slovak Republic on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Visegrád Group (15 February 2011, Bratislava).