The Eastward Enlargement of European Parties: Party Adaptation in the Light of EU-enlargement
To my mother
The Eastward Enlargement of European Parties
Party Adaptation in the Light of EU-enlargement
Abstract


The aim of the study is to map out and analyse the integration of political parties from Central and Eastern Europe into the main European party families. The prospect of eastern enlargement of the EU implicated opportunities and above all challenges for the West European party families. The challenges consisted of integrating new parties with a different historical legacy. The study focuses on mainly how the European party families handled these challenges and what motives that have driven them in this engagement. At a more general level the thesis sketches two alternatives interpretations of the process: Western neo-colonialism and contribution to democratisation. The method used for the study is comparative case-study method and the main sources that have been utilised are party documents and in-depth interviews. The study is delimited to the three main European party families: the Christian democrats, the social democrats and the liberals. The countries of interest in Central and Eastern Europe are those post-communist countries that became EU-members in 2004 and 2007: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. The time-frame is limited to the first party contacts in 1989 to the final inclusion of the new parties in 2000-2006.

The results suggest that the European parties have responded with ambitious means to the challenge of integrating new parties from a post-communist context. They have set up new coordinating bodies and organised educational programmes for the applicant parties, mainly directed to young politicians. The Christian democrats and the social democrats have also used parallel organisations as buffer-zones, which provided certain flexibility. As for motives, the Christian democrats stand out as the party family with the clearest power-oriented motives. At the other end, the liberals stand out as the party family that is most steered by ideology and identity. The social democrats went through a change with ideological considerations dominating the early phase and became increasingly power-oriented as the EU enlargement drew closer. When it comes to the two alternative interpretations of this process, the main conclusion is that they are intertwined and more or less impossible to separate from each other.

Keywords: Transnational political parties, European Union, Central and Eastern Europe, Christian democracy, social democracy, liberalism.

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Preface

Writing a thesis resembles a kind of intellectual journey. The working process has at least in my case continuously offered new alternatives and strategies to reach a better understanding of the chosen subject, theoretically as well as empirically. At the same time the writing process has in itself a peculiar ability to reveal ill-chosen research designs or theoretical frameworks. Although this is sometimes a painful and time-consuming process, I think it is necessary in order to filter the work from inappropriate components. In this sense, writing is a learning process. However, the learning process was also a result of the on-going discussions and meetings with colleagues. Throughout the years as PhD student, I have had the privilege to be a part of a multi-disciplinary environment through the Research School Conditions of Democracy. To have joint seminars and courses with PhD students from disciplines such as history, sociology, business, social work, educational science, psychology, media and communication and finally music, has indeed been a learning process. It has above all broadened my view of possible theoretical interpretations. To share workplace with such an interesting mix of PhD students and senior researchers has also been very stimulating.

In my case, the work with the thesis has also involved a journey in a more literal sense of the word. In order to perform my research for this study, I had to travel a lot. I have visited party headquarters in Brussels and party archives in Belgium and Germany. In order to interview politicians, I have travelled mostly to Brussels, but also to London, Budapest and various places in Sweden. Especially the year as a guest PhD student at the Central European University in Budapest gave me new perspectives but also new friends. All these visits and meetings have given me new dimensions of what party politics and political parties mean in practice, and above all forced me to step away from my ‘Swedish’ view of how things should be.

If the writing process gave me intellectual and practical abilities to perform academic work, these travels and meetings gave me a more long-term experience and insight into EU-politics and how parties at the EU-level really work. Had I written this thesis from my desk at home, mostly with the help of statistical data gathered from Eurostat or the European Social Survey or similar, the thesis would for sure have been finished earlier but I would have been less informed of ‘how things are really done’ in EU party politics. Therefore I am, despite the somewhat drawn-out time-span, glad that I ended up in the chosen approach.

Many persons have contributed to the work with this thesis. First I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Gullan Gidlund and my co-
supervisor Professor Sten Berglund. Especially throughout the last two years, both of you have patiently read my chapter drafts as well as the whole thesis and tried to give me the best possible comments and support. I would also like to thank Professor Magnus Jerneck from the University of Lund, who carefully read and scrutinised my final draft. There are furthermore several other colleagues that have supported me by commenting on chapter drafts or related conference papers: Luciano Bardi, Elisabeth Bakke, Joakim Ekman, Zsolt Enyedi, Björn Horgby, Karl Magnus Johansson, Paul Lewis, Jan Olsson and Joakim Åström. All of you have given me comments that have forced me to think a second time about aspects of the thesis both great and small.

When it comes to the empirical work I would like to thank first and foremost all the politicians and party officials that have reserved time to meet me and reflect on their own experiences related to this study. Without you this thesis would not have been possible. Apart from the very fact that it is interesting to meet and listen to politicians and their experiences, the interviews have in fact given me many new insights into EU-level party politics, of which all are not represented in this specific study. I would also like to send my gratitude to the helpful staff at the archives related to the European parties. Especially Raymond Pradier at the ELDR archive at the Friedrich Naumann headquarters and Pieter Ronsijn at the EPP archive in Brussels were very kind and helpful.

I also want to express my gratitude to those who made this thesis possible financially. Firstly, Örebro University (indirectly the Swedish taxpayers) has sponsored my PhD programme full-time during four years. Secondly, Political Science at Örebro University has contributed financially to several conferences, interview visits, archive-material orders and a language check. Thirdly, I have received a generous grant from STINT (Stiftelsen för internationalisering) to spend one year at the Central European University in Budapest. Furthermore, Helge Axelsson Johnson Foundation has contributed with grants for interview visits. GESIS-ZA Eurolab in Cologne sponsored two visits, in which I had the opportunity to elaborate on various quantitative data for my thesis. Unfortunately it was not possible to use these data in the thesis but at least you offered me the opportunity. Last but not least, Régis Dandoy has always kindly offered me a sleeping-place on his couch in Brussels. Not only did you save me from hostels and hotels Régis. You also updated me on Belgian politics and lectured me on the various Belgian beer sorts. Also Lars-Johan Decker, my loyal friend in Örebro, has generously offered me a guest-bed in his flat during the recurrent Örebro-visits in the last two years when I lived in Malmö.
Finally, I want to send a big thank you to all my colleagues, friends and family members who have supported me throughout this work. Especially my wife Sara has encouraged and supported me a lot and had to put up with a good many late evenings due to this work. I dedicate this book to my mother who unfortunately is not with us anymore to see it.
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ALDE</td>
<td>Alliance of Liberals and Democrats in Europe</td>
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<td>ANO</td>
<td>Aliancia Nového Občana (Alliance of the New Citizen (Slovakia))</td>
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<td>AWS</td>
<td>Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność (Solidarity Election Action (Poland))</td>
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<td>BBWR</td>
<td>Bezpartyjny Blok Wspierania Reform (Nonpartisan Block for Support of Reforms (Poland))</td>
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<td>BSP</td>
<td>Balgarska Socialisticheska Partiya (Bulgarian Socialist Party (Bulgaria))</td>
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<tr>
<td>BZNS</td>
<td>Balgarski Zemedelski Naroden Sayuz (Bulgarian Agrarian People’s Union (Bulgaria))</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDR</td>
<td>Conventia Democrată Română (Democratic Convention of Romania (Romania))</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDU</td>
<td>Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (Christian Democratic Union (Germany))</td>
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<td>CELE</td>
<td>Centre d’Etudes Libéral, Démocratique et Réformateur Européen (European Liberal, Democratic and Reformist Study Centre)</td>
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<td>ČSSD</td>
<td>Česká strana sociálně demokratická (Czech Social Democratic Party (Czech Republic))</td>
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<td>DPS</td>
<td>Dvizhenie za Prava i Svobodi (Movement for Rights and Freedoms (Bulgaria))</td>
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<td>DS</td>
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<td>Demokrati za Silna Bulgaria (Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria (Bulgaria))</td>
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<tr>
<td>DU</td>
<td>Demokratická únia (Democratic Union (Slovakia))</td>
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<td>EI</td>
<td>Erakond Isamaaliit (Fatherland Union or Pro Patria Union (Estonia))</td>
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<td>Eesti Kristlik-Demokraatlik Erakond (Christian Democratic Party of Estonia (Estonia))</td>
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<td>European Liberal Democrat Reform Party</td>
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<td><em>Frontul Salvării Naționale</em></td>
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<td>MEP</td>
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<td>MKDH</td>
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<td>PDSR</td>
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<td>Unia Wolności</td>
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<td>Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie</td>
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<td>Wyborcza Akcja Katolicka</td>
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Part I: Introduction
1. Introduction
The fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the following collapse of the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe involved both challenges and new opportunities. For the European Union (EU)¹, the relations with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Russia became a prioritised issue soon after the changes. Security and stability was certainly one important issue with the new power-vacuum but support for democracy and the development of a market economy and the rule of law were also highly prioritised by the EU. For most countries of Central and Eastern Europe, there was an early demand for deepened relations with organisations such as the EU and other Western organisations² with the ultimate goal of membership. In two consecutive enlargements, 2004 and 2007, ten Central and East European countries eventually became EU members.

All this is common knowledge. It is furthermore recurrently assumed that the prospect of EU-membership has been a guiding-line and contribution to the democratisation process in these countries. However, what is less known is the parallel process of integrating the political parties in Central and Eastern Europe into the West European transnational party families. This process has taken place in the shadow of public media and yet it has had implications for both the EU-enlargement and the democratisation process and reveals at the same time interesting questions on how transnational party organisations work when it comes to bridging different political cultures. This is the main theme of this dissertation. More specifically, this is a study on how the Christian democrats, the social democrats and the liberals have integrated like-minded political parties from Central and Eastern Europe into their European party organisations.

The general research problem concerns the contradictory circumstances and needs that surround political parties and their ability to adapt to a changing external environment. The case chosen for this study is exceptional in several ways and as such it has the potential to reveal the driving forces behind transnational party co-operation. The EU had certainly earlier experiences of enlarging the Community into recently undemocratic countries.³ These were also preceded by transnational party contacts, which to some degree contributed to the democratisation process in these

¹ This was at the time entitled the European Community (EC). However, in order to avoid conceptual confusion, I will also use the term EU for the period before the formal founding of the European Union in 1991.
² For example the Council of Europe and NATO.
³ This concerned the inclusion of Greece in 1981 and thereafter Spain and Portugal in 1986.
countries.\textsuperscript{4} However, the EU enlargement into Central and Eastern Europe is ‘...unprecedented not only in its scope, but also because the majority of the countries had to simultaneously convert to democracy, develop capitalist and plural societies, adopt full national sovereignty, and meet the Community conditionality criteria within a relatively short period of time’.\textsuperscript{5} The same goes for the eastward enlargement of the transnational party families.

This process was exceptional in several ways. Firstly, the very fact that the transnational party organisations managed to integrate member parties from around ten countries in a short time-period is intriguing. This concerned parties from countries with different historical experiences, a recent authoritarian or even totalitarian past and above all a weak legacy of multiparty systems.\textsuperscript{6} Moreover, these parties had been isolated from Western Europe for more than 40 years, which in itself meant a ‘cultural and mental gap’.\textsuperscript{7} The challenge of internal heterogeneity within a transnational party family is thus a central problem of the study. Secondly, there were several strategic and ideological incentives for expanding the party families that did not always coincide. This poses interesting questions on how political parties in a transnational setting navigate between survivalist and identity-based forces in a context of a possible EU-enlargement. Thirdly, there is a power aspect in this process, which cannot be ignored. This mirrored to some degree the EU-conditionality that characterised the eastward enlargement of the EU in general. When these different aspects are combined they create an interesting test-case of how political parties use transnational channels as a reaction to increasing internationalisation.

\textbf{1.1 Earlier research}

In order to fully grasp the empirical and theoretical potential of this study, it is necessary to place it in the context of earlier research. It combines two party research traditions that are seldom used in the same study, the research on European transnational party organisations and the research on political parties in Central and Eastern Europe.

\textsuperscript{4} For a thorough scrutiny of the importance of political parties for the democratic consolidation process in Southern Europe, see Pridham ed. (1990).
\textsuperscript{5} Delsoldato (2002) p 284
\textsuperscript{7} Interview with Leon Peijnenburg, 14 July 2008.
European transnational party organisations
The literature on European-level transnational party families is generally dominated by studies on individual party families. The most extensively studied party family has been the Christian democrats. This is partly built on a long tradition of historians working on catholic parties and their transnational links. Also the social democratic party family has been fairly well researched and the same goes for the greens and the communists. However, when it comes to works focusing entirely on the liberal party family, they are rather few.

If we turn our attention from individual party families to more specific work on transnational party organisations, the literature have tended to follow the development of these organisations themselves. Transnational party co-operation or alliance building has existed within the EU, both within the emerging European parties and within the party groupings in the European Parliament (EP). Early studies focused on the party groups in the EP and its precursor the Common Assembly. The next phase that aroused the curiosity of party researchers was the mid-1970s as a response to the decision to hold direct European elections.

During the late 1980s and 1990s, researchers became again increasingly interested in the transnationalisation of party politics as the party groups in the EP had their powers extended. At the same time, in the early 1990s, a process began towards an institutionalisation of the so-called party federations. The social democratic party family initiated the process by strengthening the links to the party headquarters and urged their member parties to form a European social democratic party. Accordingly, the organisation Confederation of Socialist Parties of the European Community (founded in 1974), was transformed into the Party of the European Socialists (PES) in

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8 See for example Hanley (1994), Jansen (2006a) and Johansson (1997).
9 Buchanan & Conway (1996) and Gehler & Kaiser (2004) are two examples.
10 For studies on the social democratic party family, see Ladrech (2000) and Lightfoot (2005). For the greens, see Bomberg (1998) and for the communists, see Claudin (1975).
11 See for example Hrbek (1988) and Sandström (2003).
12 See for example Fitzmaurice (1975), Haas (1958), Lindberg & Scheingold (1971).
November 1992. Likewise, the Federation of European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Parties (founded in 1976) became the European, Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party in December 1993. The European Greens assumed the new name European Federation of Green Parties in June 1993.15 The Christian democratic party family was, from the very outset when it founded the European People’s Party – Federation of Christian Democratic Parties of the European Community (EPP) in 1976, seen as the most advanced transnational party co-operation structure and its party, the EPP, was seen as an embryonic European party.16

Several scholars have emphasised the constitutional development of the EU as a major driving force behind the creation and development of European transnational party co-operation. Already in the Common Assembly of the Coal and Steel Union, there were regulations concerning how the delegates could form party groupings. A major step was certainly the introduction of direct elections to the EP in 1979, which encouraged more coordination between like-minded parties from different EU-member states.17 The gradual institutional power transfer towards the decision-making arenas at the European level has created new demands on the political parties for coordination with like-minded parties from other member states. This concerns the central point of exercising political influence in the arenas where the decisions are prepared and this involves a great deal of information exchange and network contacts.18

As the transnational party organisations within the EU began to institutionalise in the early 1990s, there was also increased academic interest in both opportunities and constraints for such organisations. The on-going process of European integration has certainly provided incentives for more intense and institutionalised transnational party co-operation. This has in turn led to a debate about the degree on which political parties within the EU are ‘Europeanised’.19 The main challenge raised in earlier research con-

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16 Johansson (1997) p 21. The name was later changed into a shorter version: European People’s Party – Christian Democrats.
18 See for example Ladrech (2000).
19 This debate is most conveniently illustrated in the special issue of Party Politics with the title ‘The Europanization of Party Politics’ where Robert Ladrech proposes an analytical framework for these kinds of studies. See Ladrech (2002).
cerns internal heterogeneity. The fact that transnational party families consist of national parties, embedded in their own national culture and party system, implies a constant risk for difficulties for example when it comes to the possibility to reach common positions and decisions. It is therefore reasonable to expect that conflicts may arise in this process between ideological goals, national ambitions and transnational ambitions.

Several studies judge this challenge a crucial constraining factor for transnational party building. Also within the EP party groups, national differences are a constraining factor and ideological heterogeneity, as well as other divides than the socio-economic, are important elements. Johansson and Zervakis draw the conclusion that it is in fact the member parties themselves that constrain a further development and strengthening of the transnational parties.

In short, the emerging European parties are ‘parties of parties and groups’ and this situation severely constrains the leadership authority at the European level of party organisation as well as the evolution and consolidation of a European party identity.

At the same time, the driving forces behind these organisations became increasingly debated. Earlier studies demonstrate that we can differentiate between shared motives and individual motives. As for shared motives, earlier research has identified the need for like-minded parties from different EU-member states to come together in order to maximise their influence at the EU-level. This is above all related to the possibility of maximising the parliamentary influence, and thereby also the values that the party family stands for. The individual parties’ motives to join are more diverse. There are studies that indicate that the membership in a transnational party alliance may be motivated as a ‘party-diplomatic strategy’, i.e. a way for political parties (especially in smaller countries) to defend national interests. At the same time, there may be organisational or ideological motives where parties would find a complementary channel to expand their influence. The main advantages for national parties are access to transnational channels and EU-institutions. This in turn implies greater possibilities ‘to influence political debates and agendas alike’.

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20 See for example Demker (1998), Featherstone (1988), Gidlund (1992), Hanley (2008), Johansson (1997) and Sandström (2003). Other constraining factors that have been identified are number of parties, fractionalization and differences in party size.


23 Jerneck (1990) p 151-152

24 Johansson (1997) p 214
Political parties in Central and Eastern Europe
The emergence, development and consolidation of party politics in Central and Europe has been analysed in several major studies of the region. A recurrent theme in these studies has been (i) that the countries in Central and Eastern Europe are new democracies and (ii) that the new party systems have been implicitly analysed from a West European perspective. Along with this come naturally a comparative viewpoint and a tendency to evaluate these new parties with analytical tools developed for the political parties in Western Europe.

This approach has been criticised for analysing the political parties in Central and Eastern Europe with ‘old glasses’, often with the result that they do not live up to Western standards. Yet, it is necessary to identify these differences, as they are of central importance in this study. The countries of Western Europe, it must be mentioned, share some rudimentary historical experiences, which have led to relatively similar party systems today with a dominating socio-economic divide. A key explanation lies to a large degree in the development of modern political parties in parallel with the expansion of the suffrage. The rise of workers’ movements that aimed at full suffrage provoked in turn a mobilisation of alternative groupings such as industrialists, farmers and the Church. This intense mobilisation led in turn to what Lipset and Rokkan have termed the ‘freezing’ of party systems in Western Europe.

However, the history of Central and Eastern Europe has, more or less depending on country, been less involved in the ‘critical junctures’ of Western Europe, i.e. the reformation and the industrial revolution. A central claim by party researchers is that these differences in historical legacy are of central importance when analysing the post-1989 political parties and party systems in Central and Eastern Europe. The general conclusion is that the socio-economic divide has had to compete with other issues such as nationalism-cosmopolitanism, religion-secularism and to some degree a transitional divide. Thus the structure of competition was not automatically the same as that in party systems in Western Europe.

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26 See for example Karasimeonov (2004).
Party scholars have also identified certain traits in the organisational features of the parties in Central and Eastern Europe that set them apart from their West European counterparts. This is based on the specific features of the democratisation process, in which the new party systems emerged. It has been argued that the democratisation process in itself was without precedent and furthermore defined as a ‘triple transition’; firstly the ‘normal’ democratisation process of enforcing civil rights, secondly a state-building project (which meant that constitutional issues dominated the arena) and thirdly the transition from planned to market economy. Even if the western democracies had dealt with the same processes, this took place in a series of processes over several centuries.\(^{29}\)

The intense transformation process within a limited time-period and with high stakes, paved the way for fierce competition and unpredictability among the newly-created party systems. Moreover, the new political parties in Central and Eastern Europe emerged in the absence of a civil society. With the exception of Poland and to some degree Hungary, the social organisations that existed prior to the communist regimes enjoyed little or no autonomy from the ‘communist power monopoly’. Scholars that stress this ‘missing middle approach’ suggest that the communist legacy had resulted in a situation with weak or non-existent social identities, from which political interests separate from the state could be developed.\(^{31}\) In this sense, the context for the emerging parties in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989-1990 was reversed compared with that of Western Europe, i.e. when the parties were created (or recreated) the citizens were already ‘effectively incorporated, mobilised, activated and fully politicized’.\(^{32}\) This, combined with the intense transition process, paved the way for elite-based parties with weak organisational loyalties in a political context with a high degree of fractionalisation. In short there was a high degree of fluidity and unpredictability of the new party organisations and party systems.\(^{33}\) On the whole, the parties and party systems in Central and Eastern Europe still differ from Western Europe in many respects and with higher fluidity and unpredictability as a major factor.\(^{34}\)

\(^{29}\) Offe (1992) p 14-15

\(^{30}\) This is usually referred to as the gradual process in three phases; from the formation of the nation state, to capitalism and then towards democracy.

\(^{31}\) See for example Schöpflin (1993) and Kolankiewics (1993).

\(^{32}\) Mair (1997) p 180


\(^{34}\) Lewis (2007) p 190
Linking the two fields together

In this thesis, the two research fields above are combined. This has been done before, primarily as limited case studies focusing on one party family or one country. Some scholars have taken a broader focus that covers all party families and several countries in Central and Eastern Europe but these studies have either been published in the form of book chapters or as articles. What is missing is a systematic empirical study, which links the two research fields together. Such a study has the potential of enriching both research fields with new input.

Apart from expanding research on European parties into a new empirical field, this thesis will hopefully contribute to our understanding of the driving forces behind transnational party co-operation and how problems and dilemmas are solved. Moreover, earlier research demonstrates that this is what could be called an extreme case. The size of the upcoming party enlargement combined with certain time-pressure involved great challenges for the West European party families. This study could therefore serve as a good test-case for how political parties react to internationalisation, how they handle the challenges it brings and what drives them to pursue transnational co-operation. During this process, the European party families faced a scenario with opportunities and challenges and sometimes conflicting demands. In the following I will present some of them.

Firstly, the EU institutional framework of the EU-accession negotiations functioned as a sort of ‘institutional imperative’ for the party families to do their part in the EU project of securing a democratic development in these countries. This meant ‘expanded contacts between political institutions, parties, organisations etc. in EU member states on the one hand and in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe on the other’. This was accordingly an institutional demand for an expansion of the party families and it is difficult to separate the West European party families from these macro-level conditions.

Secondly, there was also a general supportive or ideological demand, i.e. that the West European parties would support their fellow parties in Cen-

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37 COM (94) 320, Final, 13 July 1994, via Dellenbrant & Lindahl (1996) p 13. It was furthermore regarded that openness to this type of practical exchange of knowledge and experience was of great importance for the continued democratic consolidation and stabilisation process.
tral and Eastern Europe and assist them in building up stable parties and party systems. In parallel there was also a strategic demand. The large number of potential new EU-member states opened up new opportunities. When it was obvious that the EU was planning an enlargement, a strategic scenario became a fact. EU-enlargement meant that the new countries would be represented in the EU institutions. To have allied parties in each country before the enlargement was therefore not only ideologically preferable, but a strategic necessity to secure future influence.

Thirdly, there was a great challenge when it comes to bridging the ‘cultural gap’ and the different historical experiences in relation to their sister parties in Central and Eastern Europe. Earlier research has concluded that cultural and ideological heterogeneity among the national member parties were the decisive constraining factors for transnational party organisations already before 1989. Considering the different character of the new parties in Central and Eastern Europe described above in terms of historical legacy, political culture and democratic experience, the challenge of integrating these parties was huge. For example if we compare with the EU enlargement into Southern Europe, this concerned countries with a totalitarian rather than an authoritarian legacy.38

The fluidity and unpredictability of the new parties in Central and Eastern Europe was in this sense a complicating factor. However, there is also a paradox here. The fact that the new parties in Central and Eastern Europe were more fluid, less stable and elite-based could ironically serve as a possibility for the West European transnational party families to integrate them into their structures. West European parties are generally more entrenched in their respective national experience and accordingly less flexible in a transnational party setting. Even if the mass party is more of an abstract model, West European parties are probably the most appropriate examples with stable national party organisations including regional and local units. Just like in Greece, Spain and Portugal, the political parties in Central and Eastern Europe are generally professional elite-parties with weak mass party organisations. This facilitates an ability to adapt to new circumstances or in this case a new transnational party family.

Moreover, the fluid and more elite-based parties of Central and Eastern Europe mirrored to a larger degree the fluid and elitist character of the

38 See O'Donnel, Schmitter and Whitehead, eds. (1986). The opposition movements in Southern Europe were also not isolated from Western Europe in the same way as those in Central and Eastern Europe before 1989. This contributed to a relatively smooth process of integrating the parties into the European party families and furthermore the elite-character of the South-European parties simplified the adaptation process.
transnational European party structures. Earlier studies have shown that there is a potential for a ‘diffusion of ideas’ with increased transnational party co-operation.\(^{39}\) The fluid and elite-based character of the new parties was in this sense also a chance for the West European party families to influence the very character of the potential member parties and in the long run the structure of the party systems of Central and Eastern Europe. If we compare again with Southern Europe we also find another distinguishing quality of the political parties in Central and Eastern Europe; they were in general young, inexperienced party organisations, which facilitates more openness to, or even need for external input. Apart from the factors mentioned, there is also an East-West power dimension at work here. The historical legacy of Central and Eastern Europe is marked by foreign domination, either by German or Austrian powers in Central Europe or the Russian or Ottoman realms further east. This historical legacy, combined with strong pro-Western discourse after 1989, point towards a situation where power is another factor that characterises the relation between the parties in the East and West.

Altogether this can be summarised as a situation with several parallel aspects like history, strategy, legitimacy and power that the transnational parties as well as the potential member parties had to relate to in different ways.

1.2 Purpose and research questions

The purpose is to scrutinise this process of party family enlargement, identify the challenges that arose and how the parties have dealt with them. In a wider perspective, the purpose is to increase our understanding of how transnational party families deal with the challenge of bringing different political cultures into one party family. Or to put it another way, the purpose is to analyse and critically evaluate a new, deeper aspect of the historical unification of Western and Eastern Europe through transnational party co-operation at the political elite level. The following research questions have guided the analysis:

- What kinds of challenges arose in the process of integrating parties from a post-totalitarian context into the European parties and how were these handled?
- What motives or driving forces have influenced party behaviour in this process?

\(^{39}\) Svåsand, (2000) p 18. Another example is Sandström (2003) where it is concluded that the development of the liberal ELDR is characterised by some degree of diffusion of ideas.
How do the European party families differ from each other in the light of the questions above and what may be the underlying reasons?

The first question is strictly empirical and concerns political parties’ ability to adapt and learn in a constantly changing environment. The aim here is to map out and scrutinise the kinds of challenges and dilemmas that the transnational party families experienced in relation to the new parties and how they have dealt with these problems. The second question deals with the issue of motives for transnational party co-operation. Here the aim is to identify the strategic dilemmas that confronted the party family, especially when it comes to the tension between ideological and strategic considerations. The third question is comparative and sets out to identify the main differences between the Christian democrat, the social democrat and the liberal party families in this process. Each party family’s historical background and organisational culture is of special interest here.

1.3 Methodology and sources
This thesis is a qualitative case study with some comparative aspects. It is first and foremost a case study in the sense that each of the three party families will be presented, scrutinised and analysed on its own premises. The comparative aspect in this thesis lies firstly in comparing the three European party families and to some degree country comparisons in Central and Eastern Europe.

Delimitations
The empirical study is delimited to three European party families: the Christian democrats, the social democrats and the liberals. The name of the Christian democratic European party organisation is the European People’s Party (EPP), the social democratic European party is called the Party of the European Socialists (PES) and the Liberal equivalent is called the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party (ELDR).

There are undoubtedly other European party families of importance but the three selected are by far the most prominent. First, they are the historical political families of Western Europe. The dominant parties on the national level are in most cases connected to one of these three party families. Moreover they dominate the scene in the European Parliament. In the period of 2004-2009, the three party families held together three quarters of the seats and after the European elections 2009 they hold together

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40 The most prominent are the greens, the regionalists and the nationalists.
72 per cent. Secondly, these three party families are the most institutionalised. They formed party federations in the mid-1970s and when the countries in Central and Eastern Europe opened up in 1989-1990 these three were the only organised European party families that existed. In this sense, the selection of these three party families is reasonable.

The ten countries that are included in the empirical analysis are those post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe that joined the EU in 2004 and in 2007. These are Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Slovenia. They have been selected because they have all been prospective EU-members during the time-frame of the analysis. This has in fact been one of the main incentives for transnational party co-operation. The fact that the ten countries have been EU-members since 2004 (Romania and Bulgaria since 2007) has also opened possibilities to scrutinise the first years of EU-membership and therefore also members of the party groups in the European Parliament.

The study is delimited in time starting with the very first informal contacts made between West European parties and their prospective sister parties in Central and Eastern Europe at a time when the communist regimes started to (or had) collapsed. Depending on the country, this means 1988-1990. The endpoint of the study is when the applicant parties became full members of the European party family. However, since different parties became full members at different dates, there is no exact end-date of the analysis. The general procedure was to give full membership in the European party organisation at the time when the country became member of the EU, but it could happen also before and some parties remained observer also after EU-membership. In this study, however, I am also interested in the informal processes, i.e. how the new parties have fitted in, if the party family has been in some way affected by the new members. Therefore, the first years of EU-membership may be included in the analysis. Thus the end-date of the analysis is in the interval of 2000-2006, depending on individual parties.

The process of integrating the new parties into the European-level party families is divided into three phases: ‘identifying possible partners’ (1989-1992), ‘evaluation and education’ (1993-1999) and ‘incorporation’ (2000-2006). Obviously, these phases overlap each other to a certain extent and should be regarded as approximate. The inspiration for these phases comes

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41 After the 2009 European elections, some conservative parties decided to split off from the alliance with the Christian democrats and form their own group. Thereby the aggregated share of the three party families became somewhat weaker.
from other studies\textsuperscript{42} but also through the interviews. The main argument of dividing the process into phases is to simplify an empirical and theoretical analysis. A time-period of 17-18 years is difficult to analyse in terms of pointing out the main elements of party behaviour. Moreover, each of these three phases had its own characteristics of challenges and opportunities.

Case Study Analysis – Process tracing

This is a qualitative case study of European transnational party cooperation. To be more specific, there are three case studies involved; one for each of the three chosen party families. The choice of case-study was not obvious in the early stage but the more I realised that the three party families respectively represented three relatively isolated worlds, the more the case-study approach seemed a convenient method. As Stake notes, ‘the case is a ‘bounded system. In the social sciences and human services, the case has working parts; it is purposive; it often has a self. It is an integrated system.’\textsuperscript{43}

In order to do justice to each of the three chosen party families, I had to study them on their own terms, i.e. try to understand their organisational history and culture and the specific challenges that they had to deal with in 1989 and after. Case study research may include both single- and multiple-case studies. Within political science, multiple case studies are generally referred to as the comparative case method, but according to Yin this is just another variant of the case study design.\textsuperscript{44} Thus, with three cases, this thesis is a form of a multiple case study.

Moreover there is a general distinction between intrinsic, instrumental and collective case studies. An intrinsic case study is characterised by a strong interest in the case itself and a very limited interest in the possibilities to generalise the findings. The instrumental case study is on the other hand examined mainly to provide insight and understanding of a certain issue. Even if the case is of secondary interest as it only plays a supportive role, it is still investigated in depth. Finally, the collective case study has even less interest in one particular case. It tends to focus on a number of cases with the aim of investigating a phenomenon or general condition.\textsuperscript{45} This study fits best, I think in the ‘instrumental case study’ category as my

\textsuperscript{42} Mainly from Delsoldato (2002). The phases applied here are not identical with those exercised by Delsoldato. Through my own empirical research I have revised them somewhat to include the evaluating and educating elements of the process.

\textsuperscript{43} Stake (2000) p 436

\textsuperscript{44} Yin (2009) p 19

\textsuperscript{45} Stake (2000) p 437
main interest is to understand and to some degree explain party adaptation but also the unique characteristics for each party family.

The analytic focus is a process over time in which the parties in Central and Eastern Europe were gradually integrated into the European party families. The method applied is therefore a strategy of process-tracing. This method is, as its name indicates, about mapping and scrutinising a chain of events in the process which are related to the research questions. This means a strong focus on within-case analysis to identify and specify the mechanisms and link them together in a causal pattern. George and MacKeown describe it as follows:

The process-tracing approach attempts to uncover what stimuli the actors attend to; the decision process that makes use of these stimuli to arrive at decisions; the actual behaviour that then occurs; the effect of various institutional arrangements on attention, processing and behaviour (...).46

Process-tracing could resemble a detective’s work. Having collected evidence in different bits and pieces, the researcher has the task of analysing them both individually and as a part of a whole. The main task is thus to identify causal chains of events, not only that something has happened or that a significant change has taken place.

This also means that process-tracing is a useful strategy for theory testing or theory development. Firstly it produces a dense network of observation within a case and secondly because it aims at linking these observations together to constitute a deeper understanding or explanation of the case. As for this study, process-tracing is a natural choice of method. It is a study of a process of gradual integration of new parties into party families. Strategic decisions have been made by different actors at different times and on different levels for which they all have their reasons and these decisions in turn have led to events that were either expected or unexpected. To base the analysis on statistical or any other macro-data would perhaps enable us to see a change but it would not inform us about the reasons behind the change or how politicians reflected about their decisions.

Process-tracing is also useful when it comes to explaining deviant cases. This means that it can be seen as a complement to large-N studies and by aiming at explaining also the deviant cases, it can enrich the theory.47 Moreover George and Bennet distinguish between different forms of process-tracing. The detailed narrative is a highly specific study on a certain story and how an event came up. There is no ambition to link the study to

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47 George and Bennet (2005) p 208-209
any theory or generalisation. In the use of hypothesis and generalisations, parts of the narrative are accompanied by explicit causal hypotheses. A third variant is analytic explanation, in which the historical narrative is converted into an analytical causal explanation. Finally there is the more general explanation where the researcher builds a general explanation rather than a detailed tracing of a causal process. This does not require a detailed minute scrutiny of the causal chains. 48

This study does not fit in exactly into any of these types, but the closest is probably the more general explanatory strategy since I follow the party families during a period of 10-15 years where a detailed scrutiny of the whole period is not possible. Instead, the focus has been to identify the different phases in this process and explore each party family and the strategic challenges they faced within each phase. It is self-evident that the study does not aim at building exact causal chains with an overview of all the parties, organisations and individuals that have been engaged in the process. That is not possible within the framework of this thesis. Instead it aims at mapping out and scrutinising the main actors and building understanding and explanations from this. One of the conditions for this approach is that the main actors involved in this process constitute a relatively small group of key-individuals. I will return to this further down in the section of respondents for research interviews.

The main actors in this process are individual parties on the national level and the party organisations at the European level. Thus it is these two actors that are the units of analysis, not party systems at the national level. Party systems will however be discussed occasionally in the analysis since they play such a prominent role for individual parties’ behaviour. It should finally be mentioned that there is a potential problem of unit of analysis in this study. The main focus is on the three European-based party families, thus there is obviously a European level involved. But within these European party organisations, the national member parties play an equally, sometimes even more, important role. This leads to a constant uncertainty on the level of actors, i.e. when a European party is analysed, the national member parties are in some way a part of this. I have tried to deal with this potential confusion with a note on who the actor really is in the documents and the interviews. When I mention a certain European party e.g. the EPP or the PES, I allude to the European party proper with its own leadership structures. When there is a sole national-level political party in question this is therefore clarified.

48 George and Bennet (2005) p 210-211
Data

This thesis is built on mainly two sources: archive documents and interviews. The archive documents have been collected in order to systematically map out the general process of integration and main actors in the process. They have also had the function of checking facts from the interviews. When it comes to the interviews, the main purpose has been to map out and scrutinise how the key actors in this process argued in their choices and about the specific context around their actions.

Archive material

The archive documents have been collected from the party families’ archives and consist of internal reports, newsletters, meeting records and letters. A wider range of material has been added like newspaper articles and in some cases party programmes and party statutes. The material has been collected from mainly three archives. The documents on the Christian democrats have been gathered from the archive in the EPP-headquarters in Brussels. For the liberal party family, the material has been collected from ‘das Archiv des Liberalismus’ at the headquarters of Friedrich Naumann Foundation outside Cologne. When it comes to the social democratic party family, I have been admitted to access their documents which are stored outside Brussels. In addition I have visited the Konrad Adenauer Foundation’s archive in Bonn which provided a good source of news articles related to the Christian Democratic family and secondly I have visited the ‘Liberaal Archief’ in Ghent, Belgium for additional material on the liberal party family.

The main purpose of the study of archival documents is to map out the general process of integrating the new parties from Central and Eastern Europe. The party documents reveal for example when and why certain working groups on ‘Eastern Europe’ were formed within the European party and records can reveal who in the European party argued for certain strategies and who was against. Another example is correspondence between different individuals within the European party, which was sometimes written in a surprisingly open way, about how the European party handled the ‘Eastern European’ issue. A secondary purpose has been to identify the key individuals in this process who would be suitable for an interview. These were the persons who were active in the contacts with the parties in Central and Eastern Europe and therefore had influence on or at least insight into the motives behind the European party’s strategic decisions. This also made the interviews more effective. I was to some degree already informed about the respondents’ travels and contacts in Central
and Eastern Europe and could therefore focus more on questions of details and motives.

*Elite interviews*

The second part of the data in this study is based on interviews with the politicians or party officials that were involved in this process. The main argument for using elite interviews is the possibility to access data which are unavailable in documentary form and thus not in the public domain. Although I have scrutinised party documents, there are always factors in party adaptation that are not written down and which can only be accessed through interviews with those who were involved.

In this study, the main purpose has been to map out and scrutinise how the key actors have reasoned in their choices and the specific context around their actions. The interviews have therefore first and foremost had a respondent-interview character. But parts of the interviews have also been used as informant-interviews as they have contained facts that I have not been able to find in the documents. Sometimes facts provided in the interviews have also been a good tool for cross-checking with the party documents to check the reliability of both sources. The aim has been to locate the persons who played a key role in this process. When it comes to the party families, I have therefore focused on the individuals who were directly involved in the decisions on how to integrate new parties in Central and Eastern Europe. These were persons with a coordinating role like secretary-generals or coordinators of relevant working groups. When it comes to the parties from Central and Eastern Europe the aim was to locate the individuals who have been active in the relations with the European party, for example persons responsible for the foreign relations of the party. Many of these persons could be identified in the party documents as those who were active in the process from both sides. This has been the main method of locating people. The so-called snow-ball method has been used to some degree but I have been consciously careful about this since there is always the risk that politicians put higher priority on directing me towards their friends or allies rather than to the most appropriate persons for my research questions.

It should be mentioned that getting in touch with the respondents was not easy. Some of them had retired and preferred their privacy while others were, and are still, active politicians and were difficult to reach for an appointment. Some of those key persons were unfortunately not possible for me to meet. Therefore I feel obliged to point out to the reader the fact that

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even though I had a clear strategy when choosing the respondents, I was sometimes forced to be satisfied with those who received me. Thus the selection of respondents was sometimes more steered by practical possibilities than scientific precision.\textsuperscript{50} This should be kept in mind in the analysis and conclusions and a complementary study with a new set of respondents would be welcomed for my part.

All in all, 32 interviews have been performed between 2007 and 2010. These were mainly conducted in the European Parliament in Brussels but also in Budapest, London, The Hague and in different locations in Sweden. All interviews have been performed face-to-face with a semi-structured strategy. A majority of them were recorded, while in four cases, notes were made during the whole interview. When designing the actual questionnaire, the first step was to summarise the main themes, so-called content mapping questions.\textsuperscript{51} Since some of the events of interest in this thesis took place as early as in 1988-1989, there is a problem of reliability involved. The manuscript with the mapping questions was therefore always sent to the respondent two-three days before the interview giving him/her the possibility to review the questions and recall his/her experiences of certain situations. Before the interview I always tried to find out some information that was unique for the specific respondent and prepare follow-up questions accordingly.

During the interviews many different kinds of questions were used, like introductory, follow-up, probing, specifying, direct, indirect, structuring, and interpreting questions.\textsuperscript{52} There is always a risk during an in-depth interview that the interviewer will lead the respondent in a certain direction with for example leading questions. I will not swear myself free from this as each interview situation was unique, some leading to a very friendly and frank atmosphere where I dared to go further with my probing questions. But the risk for leading questions has in my view not been a serious problem for this study as the respondents are all high-level politicians or party staff, some of whom have a long experience of giving interviews. This did in fact sometimes lead to situations where they took over the interview and spoke about things that they found interesting. Sometimes it was valuable for the study but often it was outside the subject. All taped interviews have been transcribed afterwards, and of those which were not taped, the notes

\textsuperscript{50} The lack of systematic choice in elite interviewing is however not unusual. According to Jeffrey M. Berry, this is a common trait in elite interviews. See Berry (2002) p 679.

\textsuperscript{51} Legard, Keegan and Ward (2003) p 148

\textsuperscript{52} Kvale (1996) p 133
were summarised. This ensures that the reliability of the material can be checked by other researchers.

1.4 Outline of the thesis

The introductory part starts with a theoretical chapter which specifies the analytic framework for the research questions. This is followed by two background chapters, the first presenting the development of European party families and the second focusing on the historical differences between Western and Eastern Europe.

The bulk of the empirical work is presented in the second part of the thesis. This consists of three chapters, each of which deals with one party family and the process of integrating the new parties. The focus in these three chapters is to map out and describe the challenges, opportunities and driving forces that surrounded the parties during the process. As mentioned earlier, each empirical chapter is structured according to three phases: ‘identifying possible partners’ (1989-1992), ‘evaluation and education’ (1993-1999) and ‘incorporation’ (2000-2006).

The third part consists of three analytical chapters, which reflect on the results in the light of the research questions. The first deals with the concrete challenges the European party families met in the process of integrating new parties from a post-communist context. Furthermore, it brings up how the European party families responded to these challenges. This relatively brief chapter can be seen as a summary of the main empirical results. The second analytical chapter elaborates on the driving forces that steered the behaviour of the European party families in this process. Finally, in the third analytical chapter the empirical results will be discussed from a wider perspective, i.e. how the whole process may be interpreted in more general terms. Two alternative images will be discussed and contrasted with each other.
2. Theoretical Approaches

The theoretical theme of this thesis is party adaptation in a context of European integration and European Union enlargement. This will be elaborated on two levels: actor and structure. This division is made as I am interested in both motivations and behaviour of the actors, (i.e. political parties) in this study as well as the question of how the study may be interpreted more generally. It must be underlined that actor and structure are not seen as two opposing perspectives in this study. Rather they are regarded as two different analytical levels which can complement each other. Before going into these two sections it is, however, necessary to deal with the question of how we can understand the European party families in theoretical terms.

2.1 Institutionalised party co-operation at the European level

International co-operation between likeminded political parties is as old as political parties themselves. The global constellations have received the label ‘party internationals’ and are relatively easy to define: a co-operation between independent parties, which share the same identity and values. However, when it comes to the institutionalised co-operation between political parties within the EU, there is a certain conceptual confusion. ‘Party federations’ have been in use since the 1970s when the three main party organisations formed extra-parliamentary organs. The official term is ‘European political parties’ as it is defined in the EU party regulation. ‘Europarties’ has become a popular term in recent years used by several party researchers. Another term that has been applied is the somewhat less catchy ‘transnational political parties’ shortened to TNP. Yet another term used to frame the European-level party organisations is ‘party networks’.

The background to this conceptual confusion is to some degree explained by the simple fact that the European-level party organisations are still rather young and still – some argue – in the embryonic stage. Yet it is also to some degree explained by different views on how to define these organisations. The European-level party organisations are more institutionalised than the party internationals but less so than national parties.

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53 Only in the early communist international Comintern have supra-national decision structures been identified.
55 See for example Bardi and Calossi (2008)
56 See for example Hanley (2008)
The question that has been raised is whether these party formations should be viewed as political parties in their own right or merely coordinating structures. The starting point in this debate is the traditional definitions, which are generally based on national-level political parties. It has normally been claimed that the European-level party organisations do not qualify for the epithet ‘parties’ since they do not run in the elections to the European Parliament as parties with their own candidates and lists and since they lack their own core of voters. Moreover, they are too loosely organised during and between the elections to qualify as real parties. Others have argued that it should be possible to depict the European-level party organisations as real political parties. Departing from the strictly organisational view it has been claimed that the looseness and heterogeneity among the European-level parties can be found among national political parties as well. Sartori for example writes that a party may be ‘a loose confederation of groups’ and in the same line Duverger argues that ‘a party is not a community but a collection of communities’.

A related question is to what degree European-level party organisations can be understood in relation to traditional party models, i.e. the ‘elite party’, the ‘mass party’, the ‘catch-all party’ and the ‘cartel-party’. Elite parties are here characterised as parties with flexible and loose structures, and that prioritise the quality rather than the quantity of their members. Mass-based parties are on the contrary depicted as stable organisations with a strong hierarchical structure. Moreover their members identify themselves more with the ideology of the party than with its leader. It is above all the mass-party model that has been portrayed as the most preferable party type. The catch-all party model appeared as a counter image to the mass-party ideal as the social context began to change in the 1950s and 1960s. As previously strong social identities became gradually weaker and the strong growth in Western Europe enabled general policies instead of

58 It must be mentioned that the research on European-level party organisations generally still builds on theoretical models and concepts that are developed from the research on national-level political parties.

59 See for example Mogensen (1996) p 16

60 Sartori (1976) p 72

61 Duverger (1959) p 17

62 This model assumes a societal context where the political life consists of clearly separated social groups with group specific interests. Moreover, this type of party implies a democratic ideal that builds on active popular participation and where parties constitute the most important link between citizens and the state. Duverger (1959) p 63-67.
group-specific welfare policies, it shaped the conditions for the catch-all party with the novel ambition to seek political support from all social groups in society. Finally, the cartel party model was developed as a reaction to the development in the 1970s and 1980s. Politics became increasing professionalised and political parties have made themselves in principle independent from individual members since the introduction of state-financed party funding. The main assumption in the cartel party model is that political parties tend to use the resources of the state to maintain their position within the political system. But this is only one side of the argument. The other side is the claim that the dominating existing parties cooperate in order to monopolise political power. In the words of Klaus Detterbeck ‘...the interpenetration of party and state (...) has been achieved through co-operation between the major parties. The former opponents now run a cartel which excludes new and smaller elites’.

There is a general consensus that European-level party organisations do not fulfil the criteria for a classical mass party. The question then is whether the European party families resemble any of the other traditional party models. The early literature on transnational party co-operation often drew parallels to the classical elite party model that dominated in the early 20th century. Just like the situation with the elite parties, the transnational party co-operation emerged from groupings in the parliament, in this case the European Parliament. The general hope was that the emerging European party organisations would soon follow the same logic as the old elite parties at the national level and develop into full-scale mass parties. These hopes were crushed after the first direct elections to the European Parliament, since the transnational party families did not succeed in mobilising voters. Moreover, the similarity with the catch-all party model with its formal and permanent party organisation is also tenuous.

An alternative idea is that the European party organisations might represent a new type of party that over time will replace the cartel party as the main model. Bardi and Calossi put this idea to the test and compare the European party families with earlier party models using the same framework as Katz and Mair deployed when they marketed the cartel party model (see table 2.1 below). The main conclusion drawn from this table is that the European party as a model resembles most the cartel party, especially when it comes to principal source of party resources and character of membership.

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63 See Kirscheimer (1966) p 177-200.
64 See Katz and Mair (1995)
65 Detterbeck (2005) p 173
66 Sandström (2003) p 36
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time period</th>
<th>Elite party</th>
<th>Mass party</th>
<th>Catch-all party</th>
<th>Cartel party</th>
<th>European party</th>
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<tr>
<td>19\textsuperscript{th} century</td>
<td>1880-1960</td>
<td>1945-1970-1979</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th>Principal source of party resources</th>
<th>Personal contacts</th>
<th>Members’ fees and contributions</th>
<th>Contributions from a wide variety of sources</th>
<th>Public subventions</th>
<th>Fees from member parties and limited EU public subventions</th>
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<th>Character of membership</th>
<th>Small and elitist</th>
<th>Large and homogenous; actively recruited and encapsulated</th>
<th>Open to all; rights emphasized but no obligations</th>
<th>Needed only for legitimacy for the party</th>
<th>Indirect through national member parties</th>
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<th>Relations between ordinary members and party elite</th>
<th>The elite are the ordinary members</th>
<th>Bottom up: elite accountable to members</th>
<th>Top-down: members are organised cheerleaders for elite</th>
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<th>Bottom up: elite accountable to national party elites</th>
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<th>Party channels of communication</th>
<th>Inter-personal networks</th>
<th>Party provides own channels</th>
<th>Party competes for access to non-party channels</th>
<th>Access to state-regulated channels</th>
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<th>Position of party between civil society and the state</th>
<th>Unclear boundary between state and politically relevant civil society</th>
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<th>Party limited to the EU. Only indirect contact with civil society through state-level member parties</th>
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</table>

Source: Adapted from Bardi and Calossi (2008).

It has been argued that the European party organisations may be compared to the cartel party but in a different context. The state is then replaced by the EU and the European parties compete for recognition as the party that can best guarantee the continuation of European integration.\textsuperscript{67} However, as demonstrated by Pridham and others, the main power lies in the national member parties rather than in the European party leadership.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{67} See for example Demker (1998) p 64.
\textsuperscript{68} See Bardi (1994), Hanley (2008) and Pridham (1982)
An alternative approach to depict the European party organisations is that they constitute a new type of party, which is more like a network of different political actors on different levels. The network metaphor is convenient when defining the complex European party organisations. It provides a set of associations and logics that catch the nature of how European party families work. A network may be defined as follows:

A network is constituted by a pattern with a certain continuity, which is based on focal points (nodes) and lines that hold them together (links). The task of the network is to handle the various flows that are generated in the nodes. There are plenty of potential configurations and directions of flows in complex networks.69

An important ingredient of social networks is longstanding personal relations and friendships. This goes well together with the European party families which are more characterised as ‘families of parties’ rather than as hierarchical organisations. Robert Ladrech has emphasized the flexibility and adaptability with the network-based European party organisations. According to Ladrech, the European party co-operation can be defined as ‘[...] new patterned relations responding to the needs of their respective members adapting to a new level of political action.’70

Gullan Gidlund has identified three arenas (or ‘nodes’) that constitute the main organisational units in the organisational network of the European party families: (i) the national member parties; (ii) the party group in the EP and (iii) the European-level party leadership.71 Except for these three nodes, there are several forums where the European party family is present, like in the Council of Europe or in NATO. As illustrated in the figure 2.1 below there is no obvious power centre in the network-like organisation of the European party family. The national as well as the global level are natural parts of the party family and in some cases even regions within countries.

69 Gidlund (1990) p 121. The quote has been translated from Swedish.
70 See for example Ladrech (1996) p 52; see also Sandström (2003).
71 Gidlund (1992) p 91
The triangular relationship between the three main arenas was, in the early stage of European party organisations, i.e. in the 1970s, relatively autonomous from each other. However, it has become increasingly obvious that the three nodes are ‘nested’ into each other and to understand party behaviour in one arena, it is necessary to at least consider possible influence from the other arenas. In order to understand the internal dynamics of a European party family, it is therefore important to study the links between the three nodes. This will also be done in the subsequent analysis of this study.

2.2 Logics of party adaptation: Actor level

In this section I depart from the actor-perspective. This means that I am interested in the driving forces behind the behaviour of the main actors (i.e. European party families) within the framework of this study. Consequently, the theoretical focus is on individual parties, their motivations, their dilemmas etc. This implies a focus in on the behaviour of individual party families or parties and not on the general implications of the whole process. Considering that this thesis focuses on transnational party cooperation in a specific context, it has certain limits on the prospects of

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72 Pridham (1982) p 319
73 See for example Hrbek (1988) p 466
74 For a deeper elaboration on the implications of the actor-perspective see for example Berton et al (1999).
generalisations to parties in general. A more precise description of the theoretical theme is therefore how to understand the driving forces behind transnational party co-operation.

Inspired by the debate within the paradigm of institutionalism between ‘rational-choice institutionalism’ and ‘normative institutionalism’, I have chosen to focus on the tension between power and ideas as driving forces of political parties. Are political parties mainly steered by noble ideas or by shrewd power tactics? This question has been raised several times in the literature on political parties and the answer is not given. Political parties are on the one hand actors competing for power in a political system, but on the other hand they are institutions with ideological and cultural traditions. The debate about driving forces behind political behaviour has been more explicit within the institutional perspectives of organisational research than in party research. A convenient starting point is therefore found in this paradigm. According to David Hanley there is a general lack of institutional perspectives in party research. In the same way Lars Svåsand notes that there is a lack of political parties as research objects in the literature on institutionalism.

Although this study will not delve too deeply into institutional theory, I hope that it will contribute at least with some new impulses to the research in the two different areas. The point of departure is March and Olsen’s argument that there are mainly two logics that govern the behaviour of actors and organisations: the logic of expected consequences and the logic of appropriateness. These two alternative logics of action are derived from two variants of the so-called new institutionalisms, which developed in the 1970s: rational choice institutionalism and normative institutionalism. Now follows a brief presentation of the two approaches and how they have been applied on political parties.

Logic of expected outcomes
The first logic of action, the logic of expected consequences, has its roots in rational choice institutionalism. This perspective views institutions mainly as a tool for lowering transaction costs. The main presupposition is that actors have a stable set of preferences, which are basically about their own utility maximisation. In politics, however, different individuals and groups have differing interests. In this dilemma of collective action, institutions are

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75 See for example Downs (1957); Sjöblom (1968); Panebianco (1988).
76 Hanley (2008) p 4
77 Svåsand (2000) p 4
78 See March and Olsen (1998) p 949-952
set up to mediate these conflicting interests and to create the sub-optimal solution for all groups.\textsuperscript{79} Thus institutions are defined from a functional perspective. They are created as a result of rationally-based choices by actors to perform certain functions. The main function of an institution from a rational-choice perspective is to create an environment of order and predictability to lower the cost of collective decision-making. Moreover institutions are defined as formalistic bodies and sets of decision rules. The effect of institutions on political outcomes is thus the constraining effect of these rules on decision-makers.\textsuperscript{80} The main assumption is thus consequent-ly that actors are seen as rational and with a fixed set of objective interests. They aim at maximising their gains according to their interests.

In order to describe this utilitarian approach from an action-oriented point of view, the rationalist conceptions of agency explain behaviour by referring to a logic of expected consequences. From this perspective, actors always act with considerations to the expected outcomes of their behaviour. This rationalist approach of behaviour has been very popular in IR-studies. It has been applied to ‘almost every aspect of international relations – ranging from why states decide to wage war against each other, to the emergence of co-operation and international regimes, to how NGOs try to influence international negotiations’.\textsuperscript{81}

When it comes to the traditional research on political parties, the basic assumptions of rational-choice institutionalism have been most influential when it comes to explaining party behaviour. The traditional approach on the driving forces of parties is based on the presupposition that they are rational actors, seeking to maximise their influence and secure organisatio-nal survival and continuity.\textsuperscript{82} A classical work within this tradition is Anthony Downs’ *Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957), where he applies a market model for analysing party behaviour. This implies a strictly materialistic view on parties’ ideas and policies. Consequently parties are seen as entrepreneurs, which compete for voters just like companies with profit maximisation as the prime goal compete for customers.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{79} Hall and Taylor (1996) p 943-945; Pollack (2004) p 138
\textsuperscript{80} Rosamund (2000) p 115
\textsuperscript{81} Hofferberth et al (2011) p 208
\textsuperscript{82} See Hanley (2008); Panebianco (1988); Pedersen (1996)
\textsuperscript{83} It should be mentioned however that Downs recognises possible imperfections in decision-making processes, at least among party activists. See Downs (1957) p 82-113.
With these basic assumptions, Downs’ main argument (roughly interpreted) is that parties adapt their ideas and policies so as to win as many votes as possible. As most voters are expected to be positioned at the political centre in the left-right spectrum, the parties must move towards the centre to maximise voter support. In this sense, Downs’ model reflects the argument of a so-called ‘end of ideologies’; that conservative and social democratic parties are forced to adapt their ideas and policies towards a liberal centre. Although Downs’ model is strong in its simplicity and clarity, it has met criticism. For example it has been criticised for its inability to explain the existence of membership party organisations.\(^{84}\) Another criticism is that there is a discrepancy between the model and the empirical reality.\(^ {85}\)

Downs’ party-model was originally developed with the United States as the empirical model.\(^ {86}\) This means that it was originally built for a two-party system.\(^ {87}\) One important adaptation of Downs’ model to a multi-party system was presented by Gunnar Sjöblom in *Party Strategies in a Multi-Party System* (1968). Sjöblom departs from the same basic presuppositions but introduces a more sophisticated model of four party goals:\(^ {88}\)

(i) programme realisation
(ii) vote maximisation
(iii) maximisation of parliamentary influence
(iv) party cohesion

The first goal (i) relates to what Sjöblom called ‘the evaluation system of the party’. This goal is different in character from the other three, which were referred to as ‘pure strategic goals’. This first goal of programme realisation is an important modification of Downs’ naked materialist approach. The claim here is that parties in fact want to implement their ideas and values and this applies to election promises as well as to more broad social reforms. In this sense it relates to the more idealistic view on political parties.

The second (ii) and third (iii) goals, vote maximisation and maximisation of parliamentary influence, moreover constitute an important modification of Downs’ model. In contrast to a two-party system, one party ma-

\(^{84}\) See for example Berglund (1980) p 119-124.
\(^{85}\) See for example Green & Shapiro (1994).
\(^{86}\) Grofman (2004)
\(^{87}\) Downs’ model can be modified to a multi-party system, where voters are not distributed according to the ‘normal distribution’ but instead polarised to the left and right. See Pettersson (2004) p 28.
\(^{88}\) Sjöblom (1968) p 74
The party must therefore be constantly prepared for different forms of coalitions with other parties in order to maximise its possibilities of becoming a part of the government. In this sense, it may be rational for a party to avoid vote maximisation in order not to destroy its possibilities of reaching coalitions with others. In a multi-party system it is thus more advantageous for a party to take its position in the political centre, close to the median voter. The fourth goal (iv), party cohesion, means that in parallel with maximising party influence, a party must always be careful in keeping its unity and avoid the creation of fractions. There is a tension here between party cohesion on the one hand and parliamentary influence on the other. In order to maximise parliamentary influence, there may be a need to engage in unpopular coalitions, which in turn may threaten party unity.

The main challenge for political parties is, according to Sjöblom, to find a way to balance these four contradictory goals. His main conclusion is that instead of trying to maximise the party goals, parties attempt to ‘satisfy’ them and thereby minimise potential risks. This means a cautious rather than risk-taking strategy due to the priority of organisational survival.

The decision makers in a certain party hold their positions in trust. Their first obligation is to keep the organization alive; their second, to maintain the position that the organization already has; their third, to try to improve the positions of the organization. Situations arise when attempts to achieve this third obligation can result in failure, and also in the failure of the second obligation and in worse cases, also the first. It is under such circumstances, hardly likely that they choose strategies with very high degree of risk taking. Therefore, it is probable that in most instances they attempt to satisfy certain goals, not to maximize them.90

Sjöblom’s model was as mentioned a modification of Downs’ where it is taken into consideration that political parties have programmes, which they aim at implementing. However the main focus in Sjöblom’s model is not on the ideas and programmes of parties but on the tension between influence maximization and party coherence. In short, Sjöblom takes into consideration that parties have ideas and perhaps even identities, but only within the framework of the rational choice perspective, meaning that parties are rational actors with fixed preferences and strategic behaviour.

89 Sjöblom (1968) p 80
90 Sjöblom (1968) p 95
Logic of appropriateness
The second logic of action, the *logic of appropriateness*, has its theoretical roots in normative institutionalism. This perspective has a radically different view of institutions and their implications compared to the rational choice school. It puts special emphasis on the fact that actors are embedded in institutional settings which structure their behaviour. Consequently this perspective adopts a broad definition of institutions, which are seen as ‘collections of interrelated rules and routines that define appropriate actions in terms of relations between rules and situations’. Moreover, rules, norms and values are regarded as institutions in their own right and are seen as independent variables. The institution is expected to exert a significant influence on the actors as it defines a set of behavioural expectations. It reinforces behaviour that is appropriate and sanctions behaviour that is inappropriate. Thus it is argued that an institutionally determined ‘logic of appropriateness’ influences the outcomes in political decisions. This means that the normative institutional perspective rejects some assumptions of its rational-choice counterpart as it claims that the rationality of actors is culturally determined. Within this approach identity plays a significant role when interpreting actors’ behaviour. Actors are seen as acting in accordance with rules and practices, which are socially constructed, known publicly and accepted. In short, instead of the question ‘How do I get what I want?’ the actor asks him/herself ‘What kind of situation is this’ and ‘What kind of behaviour is appropriate?’

Normative institutionalism has been applied in several ways. Within the field of international relations, it has been used in analyses of states’ foreign policy. The assumption is that states are guided by a logic of appropriateness and follow international rules and norms, not only because they would most likely be punished if they did not but also because

91 For some researchers, the normative institutionalism is subsumed under ‘sociological institutionalism’. According to Guy Peters, there is however a difference between the two as normative institutionalism stresses the importance of values and norms in institutions and sociological institutionalism focuses more on their cognitive dimension. See Peters (2005) p 120.
92 Marsh & Olsen (1989) p 21
93 Peters (2005) p 31
94 March & Olsen (1989) p 55
95 Koss (2011) p 34
96 March and Olsen (1988) p 952
97 Finnemore (1998) p 29
98 See for example Browning (2008); Nalbandov (2007); Rittberger ed. (2001)
they are ‘encapsulated’ in the network of norms as a part of their identity. States seek, in the words of James Marsh and Johan Olsen:

[…] to fulfil the obligations and duties encapsulated in a role, an identity, and a membership in a political community. Rules are followed because they are perceived to be adequate for the task at hand and to have normative validity.99

Normative institutionalism has also been applied in European integration studies. One example is the research on the system of comitology, i.e. the committees of the representatives of the EU member states, which were established to supervise the EU Commission in the implementation of EU-law. For researchers with a rational-choice approach, the comitology committees constitute a typical example of a principal-agent relation as they are designed by the EU member states as a control mechanism in order to supervise the supranational Commission (agent). Furthermore it has been assumed that the preferences of the member states are fixed and that the purpose of the comitology-system is control. Yet case studies have demonstrated that instead of being an arena for tough intergovernmental bargaining, the comitology committees constitute a forum in which national and supranational experts meet and deliberate and search together for the most convenient solution to common policy problems.100

The logic of appropriateness has also been applied in the research on EU-enlargement. It has been argued that it is difficult for rational-choice theory to explain why the EU member states have gradually and somewhat reluctantly embraced the final goal of eastern enlargement despite the substantial financial costs this would bring. Such decisions can hardly be explained without any references to common norms and standards of legitimacy.101

Explicit use of the logic of appropriateness in studies of political parties is rare. One example however is how many left parties shifted rightwards as a reaction to the new ‘logic of appropriateness’ that won ground in the 1980s and 1990s with the free market and the fall of socialist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe.102 Yet a significant share of party research has implicitly built on the same normative premises. Departing from normative institutionalism, political parties are in themselves institutions in the normative sense as carriers of identities, values and norms closely connected to the modern democratic ideals. More than a half century ago Schattschnei-

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100 See Joerges & Neyer (1997)
101 Schimmelfennig (2001); Sedelmeier (2000)
102 Peters (2005) p 133
The Eastward Enlargement of European Parties

Mats Öhlén

The Eastward Enlargement of European Parties

103 Schattschneider (1942) p 1. This statement of the centrality of political parties for modern representative democracy is widely accepted among later scholars. See for example Epstein (1967); Lawson (1993); Lipset (2000).

104 Epstein (1986) p 157. This observation of Epstein was mainly rooted in the American political context.

105 In the late 19th century, the political establishment viewed parties with strong scepticism. They broke the republican tradition of consensus and were generally considered as a threat against the common good as a norm for all members of parliament. Manin (2002) p 210f

106 Van Biezen (2004) p 704-705. In this specific article, van Biezen analyses the introduction of publicly financed state subventions to political parties, which has been institutionalised in most contemporary democracies.
norms. What does it mean to be a social democrat or a Christian democrat? What is the expected appropriate behaviour of a liberal politician?  

**Competing or complementing logics?**

In theory, the two logics dealt with above represent two opposing ontological positions. In later years, however, there have been attempts to link the two logics together both theoretically and empirically. As will be argued in this thesis, in empirical research, they constitute a convenient analytical tool to understand how actors think and why they behave in a certain way. In fact, March and Olsen themselves conclude that ‘any particular action probably involves elements of each logic’ and thereby assume some degree of simultaneity between them.

When it comes to political parties and action-oriented explanations, the trend seems to have been that the two logics have been combined although implicitly and with the rationalist model as the point of departure. The only prominent theoretical work that strictly departs from only one of the two logics seems to be Downs’ rationalist model of party behaviour. Since then, the most known theoretical works have departed from rationalist models and modified them where consideration is taken to factors such as legitimacy, ideas and identity.

Sjöblom’s analytical framework is a good case in point. On the one hand it is clearly a modification of Downs’ model as it departs from the standpoint that parties have two kinds of goals: the evaluation goal (i.e. programme realisation) and strategic goals (i.e. vote maximisation, maximisation of parliamentary influence and party cohesion). On the other hand, it hardly even mentions factors like identity, ideas and norms that might influence the evaluation goal. Instead, it reflects on the concept of ‘programme’ in terms of ‘principles’ and ‘abstract evaluation systems’.

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107 See for example Barrling Hermansson (2004) about the party cultures within the Swedish Riksdag.
108 Zürn & Checkel (2005) p 1046
109 March & Olsen (1998) p 952
110 The difficulty of defining a party’s programme is discussed here by Sjöblom. He proposes a thought experiment: what kind of decisions would a party leadership make for the polity if the party could act independently from strategic considerations? They would still act under normal conditions of limited resources of the economy and various demands from different groups in the society. The system of values that would lie as basis for these hypothetically authoritative decisions would in Sjöblom’s view mirror the party’s ‘programme’. However, Sjöblom admits shortly afterwards that this is difficult or even impossible to operationalise. See Sjöblom (1968) p 75.
Moreover Sjöblom is more focused on explaining why decision-makers have been forced to accept certain programme contents or why others have implemented 'their' programme, than discussing the possible implications of informal rules and norms both internal and external to the party that might have influence on the programme formulation.\footnote{Sjöblom (1968) p 75-78. It should be mentioned that the strict methodological rules that are self-imposed in Sjöblom’s work basically exclude factors such as identities and norms as they are hardly possible to operationalize into goals that can be tested empirically. See Sjöblom (1968) p 74.}

Another study that implicitly touches upon the tension between the two logics is Sten Berglund’s \textit{Paradoxes of Political Parties} (1980). Departing from a case study of party organisations in the northern parts of Sweden, Berglund concludes that there is a contradiction between Downs’ model of strictly materialist party goals and reality.

Downs’ study is not empirical. He does not really know what party leaders and voters want to get out of politics; nor does he care. He postulates a self-interest axiom which reduces politics to a question of individual side-benefits. […] It does not matter if the model rests on unrealistic and even erroneous assumptions, as long as it really works. […] It is because the model fails to meet that requirement that we have the paradoxes of participation and motivation.\footnote{Berglund (1980) p 122.}

Berglund’s study disconfirms the claim that party leaders are influenced by material or career incentives. Instead it points to the fact that social types of incentives seem to matter most for party leaders. This means ‘the friendships and acquaintances with fellow party workers’.\footnote{Also when it comes to the party members, it was not the materialist self-interest factors, but instead the social types of incentives that seem to be the main incentive for party activism. See Berglund (1980) p 123-124.} However, this study - it must be mentioned - is made within the rational-choice theoretical framework, just like Sjöblom’s.\footnote{In the concluding discussion, alternative explanatory models are not pointed out. Instead the main theme is to what degree the rational choice framework may hold despite these empirical findings. See Berglund (1980) p 125-127.}

Angelo Panebianco’s well-known \textit{Political Parties: Organization and Power} (1988) is also an example of an implicit compromise between the rationalist and normative institutional frameworks. Political parties are here portrayed as organisations that over time change from being ‘tools’ to becoming organisations with their own survival as the main goal. The main argument is that a party, after the initial idealistic and emotional stage,
goes through a process of institutionalisation.\(^{115}\) In this way the preservation and survival of the party turn into a ‘goal’ for many of its supporters. In order for this to happen, however, a certain internal system of incentives needs to develop, which provides both ‘selective incentives’ for those with an interest in leadership and ‘collective incentives’ that nurture diffuse loyalty to the party. The selective incentives in Panebianco’s framework are naturally linked to the rationalist viewpoint of human action. These are positions in the party, which naturally only involve a few and involve materialist rewards in terms of power, prestige and privileges. The collective incentives are referred to as ‘incentives of identity’ and have a broader implication than only material interests or ideology but also of party identification, which is connected to the inner social life of the party.\(^{116}\) This is exemplified by the problem that emerges when a party grows rapidly:

A rapid increase in a party’s membership can, for example, undermine its internal cohesion (because of socialization differences between the old members and the newcomers) and give rise to a crisis in the party’s collective identity.\(^{117}\)

A party member is thus not loyal to his/her party exclusively for materialistic reasons. It is also not enough to add the ideological incentive to explain party adherence. Identity and unwritten rules also play a significant role. In order to be integrated into the social room of the party organisation, time for social learning and socialisation is necessary in order to acquire the norms and codes of behaviour in the group. In the same way, a party may be confronted with an identity-problem if it after a long time in opposition takes a government position and is forced to work more with bureaucratic processes than with ideological debates.\(^{118}\)

**National party dilemmas in the European arena**

When it comes to party politics at the European level, it should first and foremost be said that the tension between the two logics dealt with above

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115 By this he means the process when the organisation solidifies and ‘slowly loses its character as a tool: it becomes valuable in and of itself, and its goals become inseparable and indistinguishable from it’. Panebianco (1988) p 49, 53.

116 For a thorough elaboration on selective and collective incentives to join organisations, see Olson (1965), especially chapter 6.


118 It should be mentioned that Panebianco has met some criticism for ignoring the ability of political parties to be flexible and adapt to external changes. His view of institutionalization is on the contrary occupied with explaining how it could hinder adaptability and flexibility. See for example Randall & Svåsand (2002).
is the same but the context is different and thereby also the character of party dilemmas.

The main difference is that a new level is added to the traditional national dimension of party politics. Thus, a political party must consider two different levels: the national level and the European level.119 Furthermore, the incentives for party behaviour at the European level may be different from and even in contrast to the incentives at the national level. Ernst Haas’ early works on European integration has received criticism for ignoring this fundamental dilemma for political parties.120 The tension between the national and European arenas has been analysed by Mogens Pedersen, who addressed the question how a party can handle intra-party conflicts between the national and European arenas. Pedersen argues that the two different levels constitute two fundamentally different political spheres and that this must be taken into consideration.

As soon as a party decides to run candidates in the EU elections, it has to revise its strategic thinking because the answers that are appropriate within the national party and in domestic politics no longer suffice.121

The different character of the EU-context for political parties compared to the national context has several explanations.122 However, one factor stands out as critical: the ideological heterogeneity of the European-level party families. According to the classical analytical framework of Lipset and Rokkan, most political parties in Western Europe originate as a representative of some definable segment of their home society. Furthermore they develop their ideology and identity according to the interests of that core political base.

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119 Certainly the party must also take into consideration the regional and local level. However, in national politics political parties can be seen as genuinely ‘national actors’ as the main authoritative decision-making is decided by national parliamentary majorities. This national predominance of parties in Western Europe emerged after a gradual transformation from local and regional to national political identities starting in the mid-19th century. See Caramani (2004).

120 See Featherstone (1988) p 11-12. The main argument in Haas is that political actors are persuaded to shift their loyalties towards a new political centre (Haas 1958: 16) and furthermore he concludes that political parties constitute one set of political actors (Haas 1972: 92).

121 Pedersen (1996) p 34.

122 One explanation is the institutional setting with the European Parliament as the main party political arena. Within the European Parliament there are transnational party groups but there is no government opposition structure in the same way as in national parliaments.
Consequently, parties tend to follow the dividing lines of class, religion, ethnicity and region. In the terminology used by Lipset and Rokkan, these dividing lines are called cleavages. To a certain extent, the relatively similar historical processes in Western Europe have laid the foundations for the cross-national party families today. Nevertheless, the analytical framework of Lipset and Rokkan of social cleavages as the basis for political parties was developed with the nation state as the central research object. Thus, the ‘freezing’ of the party systems of Western Europe meant that each country’s party system became institutionalised and the system of cleavages or ‘cleavage structure’ in each country determined the identity of the parties and the nature of the conflicts between them. Subsequently, the cleavage framework is rooted in the nation state and so are parties and their identities. This is the paradox for political parties in relation to the EU and its institutions: transnational party families exist due to some common historical experiences, but these party families are mainly steered by national concerns. In the words of Hanley:

All the TNP [transnational parties] assemble parties from the same family on a transnational basis. These parties owe their identity to a deeply national experience, the cleavage; but they then bring this identity into a transnational arena, the EU. Cleavages and the experience of them cannot be left at home in a cupboard, so to speak; they are part of the fibre of parties.

The tension between the national and European arenas has in EU studies been referred to as ‘two-level games’. The same metaphor may be used to depict a potential conflict between national and international levels of party activity. For individual politicians the tension between the national arena and the European arena may result in contradictory demands or ‘cross-pressure’. Karl Magnus Johansson translates this tension into two types of interrelated dilemmas that national parties face when they seek membership in (or consider staying within) a transnational party family. First, they are

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123 For a more detailed discussion on social cleavages and their meaning, see Knutsen & Scarbrough (1995) and Rõmmele (1999).


125 Johansson (1997) p 58-60. This can be related to Sjöblom’s model for party strategies, which is based on the assumption that parties act in different ‘arenas’. The transnationalisation (or in this case Europeanisation) of politics leads to a shift of arenas and Sjöblom has himself mentioned that such arena shifts may reinforce the problem of congruence between declared and implemented politics. See Sjöblom (1989) p 70-72 via Johansson (1997) p 60.

126 See Blomgren (2003)
confronted with a credibility dilemma, meaning that the policies of the European party might not be in line with those propagated by the party in the domestic arena. Membership in a European party family with policies and a basic programme that is incompatible with the programme and values of the national party could have a negative effect on its cohesion in the internal arena.127 Secondly they are confronted with an ‘autonomy dilemma’. According to Johansson, this means ‘…a conflictual relationship between strengthening the capacity for action on the one hand, and maintaining the freedom of action on the other’.128 This clearly resembles Sjöblom’s analytical framework with its contradiction between maximisation of parliamentary influence and party cohesion.

In parallel to these dilemmas, Johansson identifies two types of motives for national parties that enter a transnational party family: (i) transnational channels for access and influence, and (ii) maximisation of parliamentary influence.129 The first relates to the network of contacts and access to information that membership in a European party family provides. The second motive brings up Sjöblom’s third goal of maximising parliamentary influence, but here it refers to the European arena with the European Parliament.

The European party perspective
Most theoretical studies on transnational party co-operation have departed from the national perspective. The European dimension is certainly integrated into the framework but only as a new potential arena for the national parties. Since this study departs from the European party family perspective, it is reasonable to elaborate on this level also in the theoretical considerations. We can in principle still see the same tension between the logic of expected consequences and the logic of appropriateness as among the national-level political parties. The difference is that it appears in a different institutional and organisational setting, which has implications for the kinds of dilemmas that appear.

On the one hand, there are reasons to believe that the European party level is strictly steered by the logic of expected consequences. This is related to the increased politicisation of the EU-arena in the last 10-15 years. As more policy-areas have been moved (at least partially) to the EU-level and since the European Parliament has been granted increased powers, the need

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for political coordination has increased.\textsuperscript{130} Just like parties in the national context, the aim for the European party is to maximise the parliamentary influence of the party family. This is natural for the party family’s group in the European Parliament. In order to maximise parliamentary influence, there is a clear incentive to include as many national member parties into the party family, especially big (in electoral terms) parties. Sjöblom’s goal of maximising parliamentary influence may, however, be interpreted in a wider aspect in the EU context. Since the 1990s, attempts have been made from the party families to strengthen the links to their various representatives in the European Commission, the Council of Ministers and the European Council. It is reasonable to assume that from the perspective of the European party family, these institutions constitute arenas for possible influence through enhanced coordination before meetings.\textsuperscript{131} In the light of this development, it is reasonable to assume that the party family strives towards having as many governmental parties as possible as members, especially parties with the prime minister position. On the other hand, a European party family must always consider cohesion of the party family. As mentioned above, there is a general problem with national member parties coming from different political-historical contexts. If a member party explicitly goes against the official line of the party family, however, it becomes a challenge to not only the party’s influence but even more to its cohesion.

On the other hand there are reasons to expect that European parties are steered by a logic of appropriateness. Studies of political parties at the European level have often tended to discuss their potential importance in relation to the debate about the democratic deficit of the EU.\textsuperscript{132} Several authors have mentioned the creation of European parties as a necessary condition for the EU to become a democratic political system.\textsuperscript{133} Related to this discussion is a more normative federalist approach that portrays Euro-

\textsuperscript{130} Ladrech (2000). See also Gidlund (1992); Johansson and Raunio (2004); Svåsand (2000).

\textsuperscript{131} Especially the European Council meetings have since the 1990s been preceded by party leader meetings arranged by each party family in order to coordinate the party family and its positions. See Hix and Lord (1997) p 180-183

\textsuperscript{132} For an overview of the debate about the EU democratic deficit, see Føllesdal and Hix (2011) p 132-137.

\textsuperscript{133} The lack of ‘real’ European elections, the weak position of the European Parliament and the national parliaments and a general feeling of distance to the EU as a polity are all democratic weaknesses that in theory could be remedied with the existence of European-level parties. See for example Eriksen and Fossum (2000); Gidlund (1992); Herbowska (2002); Hix (1999): Hix and Lord (1997).
European parties as a part of the ‘emerging European federation’.\textsuperscript{134} The European party organisations themselves have to some degree contributed to shape this image of them. The independent initiatives from the leaders of the European parties mentioned in chapter 3 to push for a party article in the Maastricht treaty is one example.

It is difficult to ignore the fact that the European party organisations have since their birth in the 1970s been surrounded by a cloak of normative connotations. In a time when on the one hand, the EU has been criticised for lack of democracy and when political parties at the domestic level have lost much of their earlier legitimacy, the European party families are convenient carriers of the EU legitimacy burden, no matter if they can carry it or not. Since the European party families are in practice organisations without real political power, they should be labelled as ‘soft actors’ with more symbolic power, connected to ideas and identities, than real influence.\textsuperscript{135} It is therefore reasonable to assume that the logic of appropriateness has had and has a certain influence on their behaviour, not only to preserve party cohesion but also to observe the ‘appropriate behaviour’ according to the unwritten rules and codes of the party family.

In short, we have good reasons to believe that, just like national parties, the European party families are steered by both the logic of expected outcomes and by the logic of appropriateness. Johansson’s credibility dilemma does in fact include both logics implicitly. The main argument is that a national party that joins a European party that does not reflect its programme and values faces a credibility dilemma as its domestic party cohesion may be threatened. The underlying argument is that ideas and identity play a role here as potential trigger of internal party strife. However, although his theoretical framework includes ideological dimensions, they are analysed within a rational choice framework, i.e. they are exclusively seen as ‘constraining factors’.\textsuperscript{136} This study aims at a broader theoretical outlook and includes ideas and identity as a real potential driving force for political parties and not only as a constraint. Thereby Johansson’s credibility dilemma is transformed into a more general tension between influence and ideology.

The discussion above has concluded that European party families face more or less the same dilemmas as national parties. There is however a

\textsuperscript{134} See for example Jansen (2006a); Johansson (1996).

\textsuperscript{135} Some argue that political parties and their ideologies are underestimated as engines behind the European integration process. See for example Goldmann (2003).

\textsuperscript{136} Johansson (1997) p 64.
complicating factor. Political parties at the European level lack the hierarchichal organisational structure that can be found among most national parties. The European-level party organisations consist of different organisational units and sub-units and they furthermore lack a strong leadership.\textsuperscript{137} It must be mentioned that in such a decentralised organisation there may be situations where there is a conflict of interests between these three types of actors, for example, when it comes to the delegation of authority from member parties to the European party leadership. Most research so far indicates that it is the national member parties that constitute the most influential actors within European party organisations.\textsuperscript{138} This becomes even more problematic, however, if we return to the earlier discussion on the heterogeneity among the national member parties. They come from different national contexts, and therefore may differ from each other in specific policy issues and/or more programmatic matters. This problem became even more urgent when the enlargement of the EU towards Central and Eastern Europe drew closer. The question that was raised was whether the cleavages in Western and Eastern European parties were compatible enough to integrate the new parties into the European party families.\textsuperscript{139} The ideological heterogeneity was already great within the existing party families.

In short: there are strong reasons for assuming that the European party families, just like national parties, are steered by the same dilemma between the two logics of expected consequences and appropriateness. They are, however, more complex political actors due to their decentralised organisation and it is therefore more difficult to predict their behaviour. How they deal with the tension between influence and ideas remains an empirical question that may vary between different party families or in different situations. This question will be addressed in the subsequent analysis.

**Conclusion: two logics of action**

The point of departure of this thesis is that political parties constantly must navigate between two forces that set the conditions for their behaviour: the

\textsuperscript{137} Indeed, parties on the national level do also consist of several suborganisations and parallel units. Germany is a good example where the political parties have adapted to the federal structure of the German republic with strong regional organisations. Nevertheless, most national parties have a leadership with considerable resources and power to control the party’s policy and strategy.

\textsuperscript{138} See for example Pridham (1982) p 323. See also Hanley (2008); Hix and Lord (1997); Bardi (1994).

\textsuperscript{139} See for example Delsoldato (2002).
logic of expected consequences and the logic of appropriateness. Except for Downs’ model, a great deal of the theoretical works on political parties tend to include ingredients from both logics. However, this has been done implicitly, i.e. without explicit references to the tension between these two logics of behaviour.

The aim here is to use the two competing logics as a tool in order to increase the understanding of the driving forces behind political parties and their behaviour. It is not assumed that parties are influenced by only one of these logics. Just like earlier party researchers like Sjöblom and Johansson, the point of departure in this study is that both logics influence political parties, but the aim here is to apply them explicitly in order to illuminate how parties deal with these dilemmas in concrete situations. Furthermore, although earlier studies have used ingredients from both logics, it has often been done as a criticism against and/or as an attempt to modify the rational choice model. This means that the ideological or the identity factor has been treated in a rather narrow manner, either as purely ‘party cohesion’ (Sjöblom, 1968) or as ‘constraining factors’ for rational actors (Johansson, 1997). Departing from the conception of ideas and identity within the framework of the logic of appropriateness, this study will consider ideas as both a driving force and a constraint for party behaviour. In the subsequent analysis, the terms ‘strategy’ and ‘adaptation’ will be used occasionally to describe party behaviour. When these terms are used, it does not mean that the party acts without any ideological influence at all. Instead it is assumed that the party acts on the basis of rationality, i.e. in terms of end-means and makes choices within constraints, for example party cohesion. This refers to Johansson’s narrower credibility dilemma described above.

As discussed above the European party organisations are more complex than national parties, both in the sheer number of sub-units and in the potential conflicts between these sub-units. However, we assume that the main dilemmas between influence and ideas are the same, but the way in which they are handled within the party families may differ from the traditional national party organisations. Exactly how they handle these dilemmas remains as mentioned an empirical question that will be dealt with in this study.

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140 The same argument, that ideology may be seen as a driving force especially for political parties at the European level, has been expressed by Goldmann (2003).
2.3 Logics of party adaptation: Structural level

The section above dealt with the question of how party behaviour may be interpreted from an actor perspective. However, this approach is too narrow to comprehend the broad implications of this study. In the following section a wider analytical framework is therefore presented. Here I will depart from two alternative (and potentially overlapping) images of how we can understand the process of expanding the European party families eastwards after 1989. The first departs from the realist view that political parties are mostly concerned with controlling their environment in order to preserve their privileged position. The second image takes a more optimistic view and elaborates on possible democratic functions performed by the European party families in the framework of this study.

The realist image: defending the West European cartel party

The argument in the following section is that political parties are first and foremost concerned about securing the survival and influence of their own organisation. This focus on the survival rather than ideas has evolved over time as the parties have become institutionalised. This can be linked to a third strand of institutionalism (apart from rational choice institutionalism and normative institutionalism that were dealt with in the previous section) that focuses on the process over time rather than on certain actors and their decisions. This is the school of historical institutionalism. This perspective has been placed between the rational choice and the normative versions of institutionalism. The focus is put on the effect institutions may have over time i.e. how they may constrain or influence the actors who created them, i.e. this perspective argues for persistence and path-dependency.  

As pointed out by Paul Pierson, there are two unifying themes in this literature: first it is historical as it recognizes that political development must be understood as a process that unfolds over time and secondly it is institutional as it underlines the fact that many of the implications of these processes are embedded in institutions. It challenges the rational choice claim that institutions are created by conscious individuals for a certain purpose and that the actors can re-design or in the worst case remove them if they no longer fulfil the original purpose. But it differs also from normative institutionalism in the sense that it does not stress values and norms in the same way. The historical-institutional perspective argues that the

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141 Peters (2005) p 71
142 Pierson (1998) p 29
143 Koss (2011) p 35
choice of a certain institutional design earlier in history often tends to survive despite changing conditions. One important term related to this is ‘unintended consequences’. Institutions tend to be stable over time and actors tend to stick to them. Another important term to describe this phenomenon is ‘path-dependence’.144

If we turn our attention to political parties, two examples of historical-institutionalist analysis are Lipset and Rokkan’s classic analysis of the cleavages and party systems in Western Europe145 and Panebianco’s study of party organisational development.146 Since we are dealing with European party families, Lipset and Rokkan’s analysis is of interest here. Even if the party organisations at the European level are rather young, they mirror old social and political divisions or cleavages in Western Europe. Lipset and Rokkan observed that the party systems in Western Europe in the 1960s strongly resembled those in the 1920s. Their explanation was that the historical cleavages were translated into mass parties in the first free elections in Western Europe. Once these mass parties were set up along the historical cleavage lines, they tended to remain the same.147 Lipset and Rokkan referred to this as a ‘freezing’ of the party systems and this is a good example of path-dependence in party behaviour. Not only the parties but the party systems are institutions which have in themselves a conserving effect. This example of a historical institutional analysis can easily be extended to the three main European party families, i.e. the Christian democrats/conservatives, the social democrats and the liberals, which mirror these classical divisions at the European level.

One expression for a historical-institutional analysis of political parties is the models of how parties have developed over time and organised according to the conditions and demands of each time period. As shown in the first section in this chapter, the European party could be regarded as a prospective new party model. This can be seen against the chain of context-specific ideal types; from the elite party, via the mass-party, catch-all party to the cartel party. A more recognized, and in my view more reasonable, interpretation is that the European party is an extreme version of the

145 See Lipset & Rokkan (1967)
146 See Panebianco (1988)
147 See Lipset & Rokkan (1967). It should be mentioned that the salience of these historical cleavages in today’s parties and party systems in Europe should not be exaggerated. They should rather be seen as historical traces entrenched in the collective memory of the parties. Nevertheless, they play a certain role in crucial moments as they are a part of many parties’ collective self-image.
cartel model with no active participation at all by the citizens. The European parties are in this view an extension of the ‘cartel’ which dominates the national level.

Europarties originated and developed entirely in the course of this last [cartel party] phase and the idea that they might be considered as manifestations of the strategies of [national] cartel parties adapting to a changing institutional environment rather than distinct organizations operating in a different [supranational] political system seems plausible.\textsuperscript{148}

The view on European parties as ‘manifestations’ of the cartel party strategy is shared by David Hanley who depicts the formation of European parties as an active response from national parties to institutional changes.

Our way of approaching the TNP [transnational parties] is much more bottom-up. We see them very much as creations of national parties, put together in (in most cases) a highly functional way […] To use Panebianco’s categories, this is an instance of institutionalised parties seeking to control their environment. (…) As the institutional landscape of the EU evolves, some further changes to the structure and operations of the TNP may become necessary; if so, they will be addressed in their own time by the national parties.\textsuperscript{149}

Hanley’s claim that the European parties are creations of the national cartel parties with the purpose of controlling their environment is a suitable example of path-dependence in party behaviour. The introduction of European party organisations is thus seen as an extension of the national parties’ control over their environment when political authority was transferred to the EU-level. This means that they are set up to control the development and if necessary defend their ‘preferred political setting’. In this preferred setting it must be assumed that a traditional left-right cleavage setting is a condition as it conserves the traditional political lines of conflict and legitimises the dominance of the current major parties. When new cleavages or new issues arrive, new parties often avoid competing on the traditional left-right dimension. However, the main parties regularly demand from new movements that they also compete on traditional political


issues and this in turn forces new issues to be integrated into the traditional left and right concepts.\textsuperscript{150}

If we relate this tendency of the modern cartel party with its assumed European extensions to the eastward enlargement of the European Union, the same argument should be valid: the main party families should act proactively and attempt to enhance control of their environment, i.e. integrate the main political forces from the potential new member states and ensure that they do not compete on other cleavages than the left-right spectrum. However, the potential member parties in Central and Eastern Europe differed in several ways from the parties in Western Europe due to historical experiences.\textsuperscript{151} One example is that nationalism and ethnic issues have constituted strong challenges to the left-right spectrum in several Central and Eastern European countries.\textsuperscript{152} Delsoldato poses an important question related to this: are the developing party system cleavages of Central and Eastern Europe compatible with those in Western Europe?\textsuperscript{153} This is not only a question of a functioning European Parliament, but above all about how the European parties could act proactively to enhance control of their environment. Historical cleavages, research has shown, are difficult to change and it should therefore be a delicate task for the European parties if they intended to ‘force’ their cleavage structure on the new party systems in Central and Eastern Europe.

One further aspect here, which must be considered as it plays a certain role in this puzzle, is the unequal power relation between Western Europe on the one hand and Central and Eastern Europe on the other. This has historically been characterised by an asymmetrical power relation and this accelerated in the 1990s when the new democracies applied for EU-membership. Klaus Goetz makes a distinction between Europeanisation Western-style and Eastern-style. In his view the Eastern-style version is linked to patterns of coercive adaptation, which follows a logic of short term tactical calculations rather than a domestic logic of appropriateness.

\textsuperscript{150} One example is the green parties that started to emerge in the late 1970s. These new parties attempted to market themselves as representing ‘new politics’, which was not related to the left or right. However, over time, as a result of the demands from the traditional parties, most green parties had positioned themselves to the left in most issues. Hix and Lord (1997) p 25-26.

\textsuperscript{151} For a more thorough background of the political history of Central and Eastern Europe, see chapter 3.

\textsuperscript{152} See Berglund et al (2004) ch.2.

Goetz explains this with the hierarchical top-down relationship between the EU and the applicant countries in Central and Eastern Europe. The applicant countries are described as ‘downloading’ of EU institutions and policy but their capacity to ‘upload’ their preferences is in general weak.\(^{154}\) The EU has initiated a number of so-called capacity-building projects in Central and Eastern Europe. Although these are not meant to forcibly push the regimes into a certain direction, they may serve as an instrument of discreet power. As Gary Craig claims, capacity-building ‘is essentially not a neutral technical process; it is about power and ideology and how these are mediated through structure and process’.\(^{155}\)

Some authors have gone one step further and depict the West European relation to Eastern Europe as ‘neo-colonial’ going back to the historical legacy where mostly Germany and Austria had strong influence in Central and Eastern Europe. When it comes to the EU-enlargement, Salvatore Engel di Mauro argues that it has even served as an imperialist strategy of Western neo-liberalism.

This forfeiture of critical reasoning is met with the unabashed support of most intellectuals for the transposition, through enlargement, of the EU-norms (the accession criteria), albeit officially phrased in the most effulgent terms: the “free market” (i.e., capitalism and social inequality), “democracy” (i.e., the liberal variant with minimal citizen representation) and “common rules, standards and policies” (that apply mostly to weaker states - see below – and that are often as EU-directives not implemented at all), deriving as they do from preclusive, self-contained, and/or self-referential sets of liberal ideological premises.\(^{156}\)

Post-colonial theorists focus more on language and its potential to create long-standing images of dominant and inferior. They argue that the creation of an ‘other’ is essential in structural power relations against which an ‘us’ can be created. For Edward Said, it was the ‘orient’ as something mystical and irrational that had to be invented by the West in order to build the self-image of a rational, i.e. superior ‘us’.\(^{157}\) This mechanism has according to some scholars been evident in Western Europe’s image of Central and Eastern Europe. This imaging of the ‘other’ is according to József Böröcz exemplified by the mere term ‘eastern enlargement’.

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\(^{154}\) Goetz (2003) p 2-7
\(^{155}\) Craig (2007) p 354
\(^{156}\) Engel-Di Mauro (2006) p 6
\(^{157}\) See Said (1978)
Even the official term that denotes the process – eastern enlargement – is suggestive. Enlargement implies a process of simple augmentation, reducing a daunting amount of social, cultural, moral and administrative complexity, involving concerted, sustained action by some very powerful European states aiming to redraw the continent’s geo-political order, to a quasi-technical operation. Given that in such idiomatic expressions as Eastern Europe, the term Eastern means either inferior or non-Europe, it is quite plausible to consider, furthermore, that the name “eastern enlargement” ends up as an orientalising tool when applied as the marker of the current re-division of Europe.158

Böröcz argues furthermore that earlier enlargements of the EU in 1995 (Sweden, Finland and Austria) and in 1990 (GDR) have not been referred to as ‘eastern’ despite the fact that they technically expanded the EU eastwards.159 In the same way, Maria Todorova depicts the creation of the Balkans as the ‘other’ for Western Europe. However, she argues that this image differs from that of orientalism in several ways, one of which is that the Balkan self-identity is created as an orient other. Thus it becomes a ‘transitional concept’ as it is not quite non-European, not a final dichotomy.160 There is also an interesting similar dynamic in the rediscovery of the concept of ‘Central Europe’ distinguishing it from ‘Eastern Europe’ and expressing its historical ties with Western Europe.161

When it comes to the focus of this study, political parties, the context is obviously narrower than the perspectives described above. Although, the structural components are the same - European parties as representatives of the ‘West’ and the parties in Central and Eastern Europe as the ‘other’ – the potential for differences between countries as well as between different parties is significant. Moreover, the supposed structural power-relations may be blurred by context-specific traits such as the size and strength of the applicant party. European parties are furthermore ‘soft’ actors compared with the formal EU-institutions as they are organisations without any formal power. Nevertheless, the European party families represented the West in the process towards EU-enlargement with all that it contained regarding power relations. The intention in the empirical study is to reach

158 Böröcz (2001) p 6
159 Böröcz (2001) p 6
160 Todorova (1997) p 15-16
161 The ‘rediscovery’ was mainly a project of Polish, Hungarian and Czech intellectuals in the 1980s. See for example Kundera (1984). A further discussion about the concept of Central Europe and the historical background of the Central and Eastern parts of Europe will follow in chapter 3.
a deeper understanding of how these mechanisms have been at work in this process. I am both interested in the possible ‘neo-colonial’ power relations between the European parties and the potential partners but also whether or not this was an issue for the parties in Central and Eastern Europe themselves.

In short, we have a puzzle with several interrelated factors. On the one hand the European parties should act proactively to maintain the traditional left-right cleavage and on the other we have the new democracies with cleavage structures that differed to some degree from those in Western Europe. Thirdly there is the power relation between them. This puzzle will be discussed in depth and evaluated against the empirical evidence in part III of the thesis.

The optimistic image: democratic functions of political parties

As concluded in the above section, the European parties could be seen as a new extreme version of the cartel-model, or as argued by Hanley, an extension of the national cartel parties. There is a general consensus that they have no possibility to perform any linking function between citizens and the state.\(^{162}\) However, just like the cartel party model, the European party may perform important democratic functions in certain areas.

The main criticism against the cartel party (as a phenomenon, not as a model) is that it goes against the basic idea that the civil society should perform some control over the state apparatus. Instead political parties use the state apparatus to influence the society.\(^{163}\) Moreover, critics argue that this kind of political party is destructive and leads to a slow death of parties. The number of party members in most European countries has gone down during the post-war era and the confidence in political parties has also decreased since they are often viewed as inward-looking, power-oriented bureaucratic organisations.\(^{164}\)

However, this image of the ‘end of parties’ is challenged by Peter Mair, who argues that this image is a misconception. The reason, he argues is that the mass party model has been serving as an ideal model for what a political party should look like. Instead Mair differentiates between three components in the organisation of parties. The first is ‘party in public office’ and refers to the party organisation within the parliament and possibly also government. The second is ‘party on the ground’, i.e. the member organisation and possibly also those who vote for the party. Finally the


\(^{164}\) See for example Bille (1997).
third is ‘party in central office’ and refers to the party leadership and its secretariat. Departing from this categorisation, Mair admits that the parties in general have been weakened when it comes to ‘party on the ground’ but that they in fact have strengthened their position if we depart from the two other aspects.165

In this study, the same idea will be applied on European parties when it comes to their role in the inclusion of new member parties from Central and Eastern Europe. Just as Mair distinguishes some areas where the cartel party still performs important functions, I set out to discuss whether the European party families may have performed important functions in the process of integrating the parties from Central and Eastern Europe.

A framework for traditional party functions in a democracy was developed by V.O. Key in 1964 with three basic functions: parties in the electorate, parties as organisations and parties as government. This may serve as a convenient tool to evaluate possible democratic functions performed by the European party families within the frame of this study (see table 2.2 below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties in the electorate</th>
<th>Parties as organisations</th>
<th>Parties in government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simplify choices for voters</td>
<td>Recruit political leadership and seek governmental office</td>
<td>Create majorities in government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educate citizens</td>
<td>Train political elites</td>
<td>Implement policy objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generate symbols of identification and loyalty</td>
<td>Articulate political interests</td>
<td>Organise the government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobilise people to participate</td>
<td>Aggregate political interests</td>
<td>Organise dissent and opposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ensure responsibility for government actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Control government administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Foster stability in government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It is obvious that most of these functions are not within reach for the European parties in the framework of this study. For a start it is reasonable to exclude the ‘parties in government’ functions since there is a lack of gov-

ernment-opposition structures within the EU. The ‘parties in government’ function is therefore strongly linked to national political parties with no involvement of European parties. Secondly, as concluded in the previous section, European parties have not been able to perform any citizen-state linkage functions. Therefore, it is reasonable to exclude also the ‘parties in the electorate’ aspect. However, the European party families may perform indirect functions within this level by influencing national parties and party systems. These indirect functions are reasonably connected to two of the ideal functions at this level: ‘simplify choices for voters’ and ‘generate symbols of identification and loyalty’.

Thirdly, there is the level that involves the functions that parties perform as political organisations. Here we can exclude the functions ‘articulate political interests’ and ‘aggregate political interests’. Although these are important functions in the chain of representation, these two functions are not relevant in this study, which is related to the expansion process of the European parties. Articulating and aggregating political interests is rather a part of the day-to-day political competition either at the national or the European level. On the other hand there are reasons to include the functions ‘recruit political leadership’ and ‘train political elites’ as possible direct functions performed by the European parties in the process of including new parties from Central and Eastern Europe.

Table 2.3 Possible functions performed by the European party families in the inclusion of new member parties from Central and Eastern Europe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indirect functions: Parties in the electorate</th>
<th>Direct functions: Parties as organisations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simplify choices for voters</td>
<td>Recruit political leadership and seek governmental office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generate symbols of identification and loyalty</td>
<td>Train political elites</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, we can distinguish two types of possible functions performed by the European party families in this study: indirect functions and direct functions (see table 2.3). With direct functions, it is assumed that the European

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166 For a more elaborative discussion about the lack of government-opposition within the EU and its implications for European parties, see Hix and Lord (1997).
167 The functions ‘educate citizens’ and ‘mobilise people to participate’ are excluded as they condition a direct party-citizen link.
party families may have performed important functions for their own purpose in the process of integrating new member parties from Central and Eastern Europe. This means functions that may have had significance for the European party family as a whole and - as a consequence - the European-level party system after the EU enlargements in 2004 and 2007. These possible functions are located in the ‘parties as organisations’ level and refer to the central importance of parties in ‘recruiting’ and ‘educating’ prospective political elites.

The function ‘recruit political leadership and seek governmental office’ refers to the role of parties in supplying the political system with people in political positions. In all classical definitions of a political party a central aspect is that parties seek to control the political power apparatus by nominating candidates to political offices. Some consider it as ‘the core function’ of political parties. Consequently the party government literature emphasizes the role of political parties when it comes to the recruitment and selection of political elites. Many of the internal party sub-groupings, such as the youth-sections, are designed to identify future candidates.

Secondly, the function ‘train political elites’ concerns the educative role of political parties. In most democracies, participation in a party organisation is an important setting for training prospective political elites. This training can be seen as a process of socialisation and learning about central aspects of the democratic process and the norms of democracy but also more specific aspects such as the party principles. In the classic model of party government, this training may continue throughout a long carrier of party activism first with internal party office-holding and then elected positions. This in turn enforces a certain degree of loyalty to the party and its programmatic appeals. Socialisation processes like these are enabled through stable party organisations and thus parties are considered to perform an important function for the democratic system.

With indirect functions there is an explicit assumption that the European party families may have exerted a certain influence on the potential member parties in Central and Eastern Europe. The point of departure is the claim by Diamond (1999) that the existence of stable political parties which support basic democratic procedures is a condition for a successful

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168 Gunther and Diamond (2001) p 7
171 Dalton & Wattenberg (2000) p 7
democratic consolidation process. The Eastward Enlargement of European Parties

When it comes to the post-1989 party systems in Central and Eastern Europe, they were characterised by the fluidity of both parties and voter behaviour. There were also several cases of new radical-nationalist political movements among the new democracies. These two factors were clearly problematic when it comes to the consolidation of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. The question is whether the eastward enlargement of the European party families has contributed to handling these challenges.

The two indirect functions ‘simplify voter choices’ and ‘generate symbols of identification and loyalty’ are both central functions of political parties in a democracy. Both refer to the linkage role of parties in a representative system. The function ‘simplify choices for voters’ refers to the central place of parties in creating a simplified map of the political terrain. Politics is often complex for voters to overview. Most electoral research has demonstrated that voters often find it difficult to make sense of all the issues that confront them at an election. Political parties play an important role in making politics ‘user-friendly’ for citizens. Apart from limiting the number of possible alternatives, political parties take clear and consistent policy positions and thereby offer voters valuable information about specific policy issues. In this sense the party label provides a ‘key informational short-cut’ for many voters.

Secondly, the function ‘generate symbols of identification and loyalty’ is related to the long-term stability of a democracy. In a stable political system, voters need a political anchor and political parties can fulfil this function. It has been argued that loyalty to a political party makes people less receptive to extremist movements and demagogic/populist leaders. It has also been argued in the literature that party loyalty works as a conserving and stabilising force as it creates a continuity of party sympathies and election results.

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172 Diamond argues that anti-democratic parties may exist in a consolidated democracy but only as long as they are marginalised and do not constitute a serious threat to the new democratic order. See Diamond (1999) p 66-68.

173 For a thorough elaboration of political parties and their function as linkage actors, see Widfeldt (1997).


175 For the role of parties as an economising device for voters that are faced with complex political decisions, see Fiorina (1981).

Conclusion: two alternative images
This section has elaborated with two alternative images of how we can understand the process of enlarging the European party families into Central and Eastern Europe after 1989. The ‘realist’ image focuses on the approach of historical institutionalism and the tendency of path-dependency among institutional actors such as political parties. The idea put forward was that the European party families may be characterised as an extension of the cartel party model at the EU-level. Following the logic of the cartel party, the reasonable expectation would be that the European party families used the political vacuum in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989 to secure allied partners in the region. This proactive behaviour would secure the control of the major European party families of the EU-politics also after a possible EU enlargement eastwards.

The ‘optimistic image’ focuses instead on the view that the European party families may have performed important democratic functions when including the new member parties from Central and Eastern Europe. After excluding a number of classical party functions, the conclusion was that the European party families may have contributed with indirect and direct democratic functions in this process. The two indirect functions ‘simplify voter choices’ and ‘generate symbols of loyalty’ are conditioned by the assumption that the European party families may have exerted some influence on the prospective member parties. The assumption here is that they may have contributed to stabilising the emerging party systems in Central and Eastern Europe by their mere existence as role-models. The two direct functions, ‘recruit political leadership and seek governmental office’ and ‘educate political elites’, are seen as particular goals that the European party families may have aimed at for their own purpose in this process. This is related to the needs of the European party families in the prospect of a possible EU-enlargement. In a broader perspective it concerns the stability of the emerging European party system also after an EU enlargement with new countries with a historical past that differs from the traditional West European countries.

Finally it must be mentioned that the structural level, in comparison with the actor level, will be dealt with in a rather broad manner in the analytical chapter. The empirical evidence will not support any clear conclusion and will instead be used to give examples for a discussion about the more general implications of this process. Thus it will take up a more modest proportion of the analytic part of the thesis.
3. The Historical Legacy of Central and Eastern Europe

Central Europe as a family of small nations has its own vision of the world, a vision based on a deep distrust of history. (…) They cannot be separated from European history, they cannot exist outside it; but they represent the wrong side of the story: they are victims and outsiders.

Milan Kundera

If we want to understand how and why the countries and political parties in Central and Eastern Europe differed from those in Western Europe in 1989, we must broaden our gaze and not only focus on the communist era but go back several centuries. As the rather gloomy words by Milan Kundera above conclude, the historic image of Central and Eastern Europe is very much shaped by its perceived backwardness compared with Western Europe. This word ‘backwardness’, regardless of the criticism it has received for reproducing (West) Euro-centric and colonial attitudes, is almost impossible to side-step in the historical literature on Central and Eastern Europe. The basic meaning of the word relates primarily to the slower economic development of the region but has also been used more generally to describe its development. I will not delve too deeply into this debate but merely describe in what way Central and Eastern Europe has been seen as ‘backward’ compared to Western Europe. At the same time, there is always a need to be aware of each country’s unique traits and their historical ties with countries in Western Europe. This is especially important when it comes to the post-1989 situation for political parties.

3.1 The term Central and Eastern Europe

In this thesis I use the term ‘Central and Eastern Europe’ for the countries that are included, i.e. the post-communist countries that became EU-members in 2004 and in 2007. A short comment is however necessary as the labelling of the region has been highly contested. The term ‘Eastern Europe’ is as Berglund et al phrase it, ‘ambiguous and in many ways out-

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177 See Kundera (1984)
178 See Chirot (1989) p 3
179 See for example Maria Todorova who criticises the notion of Ottoman backwardness as a creation ‘…against which a positive self-gratulatory image of the Europeans and the West has been constructed’. Todorova (1997) p 188. See also Böröcz & Kovács eds. (2001); Engel-Di Mauro ed. (2006)
Mirroring the post-Yalta order, the term subsumed different historical regions which came under Soviet domination. This broad and sweeping term moreover denotes a perceived homogeneity in the region which is anything but true. In the late 1980s the term ‘Central Europe’ was launched as a challenge to the Soviet hegemony in the region. The main theme was the existence of a distinct Central European culture different from that of the Soviet Union. But it turned out that also this term was contested and each country interpreted it according to its own image. It becomes even more complicated when several researchers have also used the term ‘East Central Europe’ and even here it is not certain what is meant. As Wandycz notes, it can be interpreted as its ‘heartlands’, (Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary) or ‘the entire area’ (the area between the Baltic, Adriatic, Aegean and Black seas) or ‘some variations thereof’. In the end, the term East-Central Europe was only used to a limited extent, partly due to the fact that its abbreviation ECE coincided with the UN organ Economic Commission for Europe. Thus the term Central and Eastern Europe has finally become the normal way to depict the group of post-communist countries in Europe that in the 1990s were positioned between the EU and the former Soviet republics that today are members of the CIS. Moreover it recognises the historical differences between the mainly Catholic Central European region on the one hand and the Greek Orthodox countries, which I will discuss in more detail below.

### 3.2 The old historical legacy

The history of what we today call Central and Eastern Europe is to a large degree characterised by its position between the Western and Eastern parts of Europe. The East-West partition of Europe started already with the split of the Roman Empire in 395 and continued with the division of Christianity in 1054. The two branches had their bases in Rome and Constantinople.

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181 Berglund, Ekman and Aarebrot (2004) p 2

182 For the afterworld, the most outspoken proponent for the term ‘Central Europe’ was Milan Kundera in his article ‘The Tragedy of Central Europe’, see Kundera (1984).

183 As an example, Hungarians and Czechs generally consider the territory of the former Habsburg and later Austro-Hungarian empire as the historical core of Central Europe compared with a Pole who defines it as the lands between Germany and Russia, thus excluding Germany. Rupnik (1989) p 5-6.


185 CIS stands for ‘Commonwealth of Independent States’. The members of CIS are the countries, which were a part of the Soviet Union except for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Georgia left the organisation in 2008.
respectively and several differences have since emerged gradually between the two. In political terms, Central and Eastern Europe has been depicted as ‘a transitional zone between the Western tradition of division of power and the Eastern tradition of concentration of power’.186 Where the Western part of Europe had the Roman tradition of the rule of law, feudalism and early national awakening, the Eastern part lacked feudal traditions but had instead a strong tradition of clientelism.187 This divide coincides neatly with that between Western and Eastern Christianity. In the medieval age, Central Europe was therefore seen as an integrated part of the West European sphere. However, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Central Europe gradually vanished from the Western sphere.188 When Western Europe experienced a development towards modern capitalism, Central and Eastern Europe held on to and even strengthened feudal institutions with the enforcement of the so-called second serfdom. At the same time the nation-building processes were delayed as the old Polish, Czech (Bohemian) and Hungarian kingdoms were gradually incorporated into three multi-ethnic empires – the Russian, Habsburg and Ottoman - between the 15th and the 18th centuries.189

If we look at the structural conditions, Jiří Musil compares the conditions that made possible a development towards modern industrial societies in Western Europe on the one hand and Central and Eastern Europe on the other and he draws some interesting conclusions.190 First, in Central and Eastern Europe, there was not the same degree of separation between the state and the church as in Western Europe. Second, the bourgeoisie and the middle classes were generally weaker in Eastern Europe.191 Third, in Eastern Europe farmers were usually tied to the aristocracy who more or

186 Berglund, Ekman and Aarebrot (2004) p 14
188 The Swedish historian Kristian Gerner depicts this as a process when the emerging regional power Sweden brought Scandinavia into the West European sphere while Central Europe gradually moved away from it. See Gerner (1997) p 17, see also Wandycz (2001) p 4 for the same argument.
189 Some researchers discuss this process in Wallerstein’s terms of ‘core and periphery’. Departing from colonial theory, they argue that Central and Eastern Europe was drawn into the international economy as semi-periphery or periphery and with Western Europe as the core. Wandycz (2001)
190 Musil bases his conditions on the ‘conditions of existence’ of agrarian societies formulated by Ernst Gellner. See Gellner (1988). For a focused historical analysis of the economic backwardness of Central and Eastern Europe see Brenner (1989).
191 One exception is Austria-Hungary which was shaken by the 1848 liberal revolution.
less decided on their living standards. This communitarian society together with weak cities and the strong aristocracy shaped a strongly hierarchical and paternalistic culture with small possibilities of upward mobility from the status of burgher to that of an aristocrat.\textsuperscript{192} Fourth, resources were more limited. Forced to maintain strong armies within weak economies, the state bought the loyalty of the aristocracy by giving them a free hand in exploiting the peasants. Finally, as mentioned above the development of nation states was considerably later compared to Western Europe.\textsuperscript{193}

In spite of the basic historical similarities within Central and Eastern Europe compared with Western Europe, it must be emphasised again that the historical legacy differs within the region. Here we can basically differentiate between three groups of Central and Eastern European countries. First, we have the countries of Central Europe: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia. They share the imperial heritage from the Habsburg and German empires that in the nineteenth century had most of the characteristics of a modern ‘Rechtsstaat’.\textsuperscript{194} These countries have also been a part of the West in the main historical religious divide between Western and Eastern Christianity dividing Europe. Moreover, they have had the geographical advantage of sharing borders with countries in Western Europe, with everything that entails in terms of trade and economic cooperation. It is therefore not surprising that these countries were the most modernised and industrialised countries during the Soviet era. Secondly, there are the countries of South Eastern Europe, where Eastern Orthodox Christianity is the main religion. In this study, Romania and Bulgaria represent this group of countries. With a shared heritage as parts of the Ottoman Empire these countries remained relatively isolated from Western Europe, preserved communitarian systems and lacked private ownership for much longer. Unlike the countries in Central Europe, these countries had also not experienced anything like a modern Rechtsstaat mostly as a result of their Ottoman heritage.\textsuperscript{195}

Thirdly, we have the Baltic countries, which due to their northward position are characterised by their place at the cross-roads between German, Scandinavian, Polish and Russian culture. The Baltic states differ however somewhat from each other, with Lithuania’s historical heritage of independence compared with Estonia and Latvia with no pre-20\textsuperscript{th} century tradi-

\textsuperscript{192} The relative openness of the Austrian nobility was still less than that of for example the English nobility.

\textsuperscript{193} Musil (2000) p 172-175.

\textsuperscript{194} Berglund, Ekman and Aarebrot (2004) p 15-16

tion of national independence. The latter have instead been ruled by the Teutonic Order, Denmark and Sweden, and after Russia’s take-over in the early eighteenth century by aristocratic Germans, agents of the Russian Tsar. These conditions gave today’s Estonia and Latvia a more Western cultural tradition than Lithuania. Moreover, this also had the consequence that Estonia and Latvia are predominantly Protestant, while Catholicism is the dominant religion in Lithuania.\(^{196}\)

### 3.3 Independence and democratic experience

During the nineteenth century, there was a wave of national awakening in Europe. This was also the case among peoples in Central and Eastern Europe who were incorporated in the Habsburg, Russian and Ottoman empires. The idealistic ideas from Western Europe of freedom, liberty and nation had a very special meaning in this region where the dreaming and longing for national independence had a special priority. Poles, Hungarians, Czechs and others became increasingly aware of their unique national character through their language, traditions and above all a stronger consciousness of their historical past. Literature strengthened the national self-confidence by encouraging perceptions of distant glory, a time when the country was strong and independent.\(^{197}\)

The national awakening was followed by a period of modernisation and partly also industrialisation. After three uprisings in not yet independent Poland between the 1790s and the 1860s, an energetic project of nation-building took form with the aim ‘...to industrialise and educate the population, to incorporate the peasantry into the body of the nation.’\(^{198}\) With new iron, coal and textile industries, Poland emerged as one of the largest industrial centres in the Russian empire. After Hungary’s revolution in 1848 (also suppressed) a compromise was reached with the Habsburg dynasty in 1867 which gave Hungary autonomy. After this, Hungary achieved an agricultural revolution becoming the breadbasket of the empire and also started industrialising. It is rather ironic that the Czech lands, which remained relatively quiet politically, became the only industrialised part of the region with a modern middle class. In spite of all attempts at modernisation in the nineteenth century, Central and Eastern Europe could never

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196 The identification of the Baltic states as a separate cluster of Central and Eastern Europe could of course be questioned. Lithuania with its Catholic tradition and its old historical ties with Poland, could as well be seen as a Central European country.


198 Berend (2005) p 404
catch up with Western Europe which was more urban and had higher income levels. The main failure, however, lay in the lack of national independence. A growing dissatisfaction with the situation led to the rejection of Western values (i.e. of modernisation)\(^{199}\) and the region became a hotbed for revolts. Extremist ideas both Left and Right began to arise.

The peace treaty of Trianon after the First World War was the end of the old Russian and Habsburg empires that had dominated Central and Eastern Europe.\(^{200}\) In the newly independent states there was indeed an initial optimism and intense debates on democracy, rule of law and distribution of wealth. However, as Berglund, Ekman and Aarebrot note ‘[t]he emphasis was more frequently than not on the survival of state and nation in what was felt to be a hostile environment. The odds were, in that sense, tilted against the survival of the new democracies, and by the end of the inter-war era Czechoslovakia was the only democratic survivor.’\(^{201}\) The main problem was that independence did not solve the problem of state and nation-building. More or less all new borders were disputed and there was widespread irredentism. Poland, which had almost miraculously re-emerged as a sovereign state after 129 years of partition, had border disputes with all its neighbours. Hungary, which lost two thirds of its territory in the peace treaty and with a third of its population suddenly placed in neighbouring Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia, was dominated by revanchist feelings from the first day of independence. More or less all borders in the Balkans were also disputed.\(^{202}\)

The new independent countries also had to deal with large ethnic minorities. The challenge of ethnic struggles in the previous empires was thus not solved and this was a constant source of nationalism. For example in Czechoslovakia, the core Czech population constituted less than half of the total population, and if we count on the (somewhat artificial) Czechoslovak population it added up to two thirds. Three million Germans lived in the Sudetenland, more than 700,000 Hungarians livid in South-Slovakia and around 600,000 Ukrainian-speaking farmers lived in the eastern part of the country. In Poland, only two thirds of the population were ethnic Poles and in Romania it was about three quarters. Even in the most ethnic

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\(^{199}\) Some Slavophile populists made backwardness a virtue and blamed the materialistic West European societies for the situation. Instead of industrialisation they wanted an egalitarian society based on village communities. Berend (2005) p 406

\(^{200}\) The Ottoman empire had gradually been pushed back in South-East Europe before the First World War.


homogenous countries like Hungary, Bulgaria and the Baltic states the majority population were only 80-90 per cent of the total population. It should also be mentioned that all countries in the region had significant German minorities and all except for Estonia and Bulgaria had substantial Jewish minorities.

The large ethnic minorities combined with an aggressive attitude of national assimilation made up a political map where nationalism was the dominant issue in inter-war Central and Eastern Europe. According to Kristian Gerner, conflicts which have a socio-economic cause have often been interpreted in ethnic terms in Central and Eastern Europe. For example when peasants in the Habsburg province Galicia revolted against the landowners in 1846 it was later interpreted as Ukrainians revolting against Poles, who in turn revolted against the Habsburgs. What is interesting is that socio-economic, religious but also centre-periphery conflicts have often followed the ethnic divide in the region. For example in the 1846 rebellion in Galicia, Poles were landowners and Ukrainians were peasants. Moreover, a religious divide was present as the Poles were Catholics and the Ukrainians were Orthodox. When it comes to the centre-periphery divide there were two different levels. First, there was the already mentioned divide between ethnic minorities and the core majority population. Secondly there was the urban-rural divide, which was much more distinct in Central and Eastern Europe than in Western Europe. Cities in Central and Eastern Europe represented modernity; capitalism, democracy and all that was related with Western Europe while the countryside was socially and economically backward. Also the urban-rural divide followed a religious and ethnic line as the cities were dominated by Protestants (many of whom were Germans) since the sixteenth century and during the nineteenth century there was a large input of secularised Jews to metropolises such as Vienna and Budapest.

The dominance of nationalist issues had a strong effect on party formation in the newly independent countries where ethnicity became the defining cleavage. The result of so-called ‘parallel party systems’, i.e. each ethnic group had its own social democratic party, agrarian party, liberal party etc. This also paved the way for a multitude of parties in each count-

204 The Jewish minorities constituted a significant share of the new independent states. Of Poland’s population around ten per cent were Jewish; of Hungary’s 6.5 per cent; of Lithuania’s 7 per cent and of Slovakia’s, Romania’s and Latvia’s, 3-5 per cent.
205 Gerner (1997) p 90, 215-216
try. For example in Czechoslovakia there were 15 parties throughout the inter-war era and in 1926 in Poland there were 26 Polish parties and 33 different minority parties. Another example is Latvia, which had separate party systems for Latvians, Germans, Russians, Poles and Jews.

The democratic experiment in Central and Eastern Europe failed after only a few years. Aggressive nationalism, focus on state survival and extremely fragmented party systems became too much for the new inexperienced democratic regimes (see table 3.1).

Table 3.1. The collapse of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Strongman</th>
<th>Authoritarian orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Konstantin Päts</td>
<td>Centrist, corporatist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Kārlis Ulmanis</td>
<td>Centrist, corporatist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Antanas Smetona</td>
<td>Corporatist, semi-fascist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Józef Piłsudski</td>
<td>Initially left-oriented; then rightist and nationalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Józef Tiso</td>
<td>Corporatist, modelled on Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1938</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clerico-Fascist, German puppet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Miklós Horthy</td>
<td>Reactionary, semi-authoritarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>King Alexander</td>
<td>Royal coup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>King Ferdinand</td>
<td>Royal coup, fascist-leaning military junta</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alexandru Averescu</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>King Boris</td>
<td>Royal coup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Berglund, Ekman and Aarebrot (2004) p 26. This table is slightly adjusted as the short regimes of Béla Kun and Ferenc Szálasi in Hungary are not included.

Moreover the societies were dominated by a large class of militaries and bureaucrats with anti-democratic ideas which further tilted the regimes towards authoritarian rule. One by one the democratic regimes fell to different variations of strongman rule. Apart from the problem of authoritarian regimes that focused most on border disputes or controlling or excluding ethnic minorities, there was the gradually increasing German and Russian/Soviet irredentism respectively which put the new countries in a difficult situation.
3.4 Post-war developments

Shortly after the Second World War there was a new window of opportunity for democratisation in Central and Eastern Europe. However, this process was closely monitored by the sole remaining super-power in the region: the Soviet Union. Only a few years after the end of the war, the communist parties were in power in each country. Apart from the devastating effects of the war in terms of human suffering, it also brought some consequences that partly changed the socio-political map in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The border changes that followed the war were drastic and the new regimes opted for large-scale ethnic cleansing, involving tens of millions of refugees of mostly German, Polish and Russian nationality. Poland’s eastern border was moved westwards but its western border was in turn moved westwards into what had recently been Germany. As a result, one and a half million Poles were forced to move westwards into the new Poland and nearly four million Germans had to move westwards into Germany proper. Over all there was a mass deportation of more than ten million Germans from their traditional settlements in among other places Czechoslovakia (2.9 million), Hungary (200,000), Romania (50,000), Yugoslavia (250,000) and in former Eastern Prussia, today’s Kaliningrad (1.95 million). These forced population-transfers combined with the mass-killings of Jews during the Second World War resulted in a new demographic landscape where the German and Jewish minorities almost disappeared from the region. The Jewish and German populations had before the Second World War played an important role in Central and Eastern Europe partly because they constituted a substantial part of the weak middle class and partly because they had brought West European ideas to the region. Thus, two groups that had woven especially Central Europe together with Western Europe basically disappeared from the region after the Second World War. The new states that emerged had thus a much higher degree of ethnic homogeneity than before the war.

The dramatic border changes and the population transfers paved the way for identity politics. There was also a revival of the religious-secular dimension and the urban-rural issue. Despite the dramatic political changes, the social structure of the region had not changed much since the First World War. Except for Czechoslovakia, which was one of the leading industrial nations in the inter-war era, Central and Eastern Europe remained primarily agrarian and rural with only small pockets of industrialisation.

206 These figures might have been even higher. See Berglund & Aarebrot (1997) p 32; Berglund, Ekman and Aarebrot (2004) p 33.
The left-right dimension on the other hand continued to be weak mostly due to a weak working class and entrepreneurial middle class in the region. But one important dimension in the immediate post-war Central and Eastern Europe was the fascist/anti-fascist divide. Nazi collaborators were hunted down and eliminated through war-crime trials, summary executions or even lynchings. The early Soviet-formula for the new so-called popular democracies in Central and Eastern Europe was broad ‘anti-fascist coalitions’ with participants from the national fronts that had been a part of the underground resistance movements during the war.\textsuperscript{208} Even if the communist parties were generally small and insignificant they played a major role in the early anti-fascist coalitions as they were backed by Moscow. With a combination of threats, electoral manipulation and tactical cooperation the communists grabbed power in country after country. Potential competitors were put aside one by one. Bideleux and Jeffries summarise this process as follows:

The discredited former rulers were summarily exiled, imprisoned or executed for their misdeeds. The middle classes, deprived of property and economic opportunities, were rapidly reduced to poverty and impotence. In view of their shared Marxist heritage and working class following, the socialist parties often felt obliged to play along with communist party policies, salamitactics (picking off opponents slice by slice), rent-a-mob demonstrations and the intimidation or liquidation of opponents, until their active or passive complicity in communist crimes or foul play made it difficult for them to resist absorption into forcibly merged communist-led parties and regimes in 1947-48. The peasants however could neither be crushed like the middle class nor cowed and absorbed like the socialists. Hence the communists initially conciliated the peasant parties and ‘neutralized’ the peasantry by backing and helping to implement radical peasantist land reforms, while surreptitiously strengthening their grip on key state institutions (especially the state security apparatus) behind the scenes.\textsuperscript{209}

If we look at the political parties during this short era of relative political pluralism, the weak middle class and working class versus the agrarian sector becomes clear. In Hungary, the agrarian Smallholders’ Party received 58 per cent of the vote in the 1945 elections compared with the communists’ modest 17 per cent. In Poland, Stanisław Mikołajczyk’s Peas-

\textsuperscript{208} Berglund, Ekman and Aarebrot (2004) p 35-36
\textsuperscript{209} Bideleux & Jeffries (1998) p 527
ant Party\textsuperscript{210} secured a 32 per cent in the 1946 referendum against the abolition of the senate and resisted all attempts for an electoral alliance with the communists and the social democrats in the upcoming elections in 1947. Also Romania and Bulgaria had strong agrarian parties, but just like in Poland and Hungary the communists made sure that power was reached within two-three years. The only difference was that the process was quicker and had more Soviet interference. The exception here is Czechoslovakia. As the only industrialised country in the region, it had both strong communist and social democratic parties. The communists got 38 per cent in the 1946 elections and together with the social democrats, they had a majority. The country was ruled by a national front with five parties excluding the agrarian. After an aggressive purge of ‘potential enemies’, the conservatives, the Catholic People’s Party and the Slovak Democratic Party simply chose to leave the coalition before the 1948 elections.\textsuperscript{211}

### 3.5 Communist modernisation and various paths to democratisation

#### Radical Modernisation

Once the communist parties had attained power, the countries in Central and Eastern Europe embarked on a radical programme of modernisation of an intensity hardly experienced before. This was clearly inspired by the Soviet industrialisation programme in the 1920s and 1930s. The agricultural sector was collectivised and modernised; the means of production were socialised and several big-scale industrial projects were initiated throughout the region. This rapid reform programme had long-term consequences for the social structure of the societies. In 1945 a majority of the populations in Central and Eastern Europe lived in the countryside. Most towns had remained small and had served as market places for the surrounding countryside. Fifteen years after, however, industry and workers had taken over as the main sector in several countries. In 1960, the non-agricultural households made up 74 per cent in Czechoslovakia, 61 per cent in Hungary, 56 per cent in Poland, 46 per cent in Bulgaria and 34 per cent in Romania.\textsuperscript{212} In parallel with this rapid demographic change, a number of indicators illustrate the modernisation process: illiteracy was

\textsuperscript{210} Mikołajczyk had been the prime minister of the Polish exile-ministry in London during the war. His popularity was clearly greater than the communist leaders when he led the returning ‘London-Poles’ and this explains the fact that he dared to challenge the communists. Fearing for his life, Mikołajczyk finally left Poland in October 1947. See Rothschild & Wingfield (2000) p 80-83.

\textsuperscript{211} Berglund & Aarebrot (1997) p 54-64

\textsuperscript{212} Bideleux & Jeffries (2000) p 530
sharply reduced, the average education level rose sharply and so did the industrial output. But this also changed the socio-economic structure to the disadvantage of the previous challengers to communism. The traditional constituencies of the middle class and the agrarian parties were eradicated at the same time as the traditional working-class and urban constituencies were strengthened.213

Although the Soviet dominance and leading role was obvious during the first years, it was soon clear that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe developed their own versions of the Marxist-Leninist ideology; both compared with the Soviet Union and compared with each other. There were already in the early post-war stage some features that positioned the ‘popular democracies’ aside from the Soviet model of socialism. These were basically the multiparty systems, the patriotic or national fronts and the traditional parliamentary institutions. In practice however these special institutional features played no bigger role than that of a ‘democratic façade’. The patriotic fronts, which originally consisted of the resistance movements against Nazi occupation, came to function as broad umbrella organisations including political parties, trade unions and women’s movements and became dominated by the communist party members. The so-called multi-party system came to include only those parties that pledged their loyalty to the ruling communist party. Finally, the parliamentary institutions that existed on the surface lost their function in a political system which lacked competitive elections and a parliament which seldom convened.214 Yet, at the same time the great political and economic transformation demanded strong governmental presence and strong and efficient state machinery. Therefore, state-building became one of the top-priorities for the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe.215

Different paths towards democracy
When, further down, we will discuss the political parties and party systems in post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe, the type of transition from communism is important. The transition from communist dictatorship to democracy is important as it is in this phase that the new parties are formed. The first parties often create the agenda which in turn structures the voters in different issues.

The most problematic countries for the Soviet Union were those in Central Europe and among those Poland was the most difficult case. It was in

213 Berglund, Ekman and Aarebrot (2004) p 37
215 Berglund, Ekman and Aarebrot (2004) p 40
Poland that the protests started that would later initiate the wave in which the communist parties lost control in country after country. One important reason is the fact that Poland was the only country in Central and Eastern Europe where the communist party had not reached a power monopoly. The Catholic Church had a strong influence in the Polish society and constituted an alternative power base. The country had also managed to protect private property for smaller farms. Finally Poland had a strong tradition of opposing foreign powers and state socialism.\textsuperscript{216} When protests broke out time after time in 1956, 1968 and 1976, the protesters consisted of intellectuals, students, farmers and workers and they openly expressed their support for the Catholic Church. But it was not until a wave of strikes in 1980 that the communist regime was shaken. This was the time when the organisation Solidarity was formed as a protest against low wages and poor working conditions. Soon the organisation changed from a trade union to become a broad national front against the communist party and Soviet rule and included not only workers but also intellectuals and farmers. In 1981, martial law was enforced and Solidarity was outlawed and thereby forced into an underground movement. However in the mid-1980s, the Communist party realised that they had to speak with the opposition if they wanted the stalemate to be solved. Martial law was ended, censorship was eased and political prisoners were released. Pressured by Gorbachev’s reform policy, the Polish leader Jaruzelski finally accepted talks with the still illegal Solidarity movement leading to the legalisation of Solidarity and that free elections (with some conditions) would be held. These so-called round table talks became a model for the other Central European countries’ transition.\textsuperscript{217}

Hungary’s road away from communist rule was less bumpy than that of Poland. After the uprising in 1956, a brutal regime was imposed in Hungary with a neo-Stalinist character. Yet in the early 1960s, a new strategy was initiated by the regime which aimed at social consensus through a liberalisation of the economy. This led to a more consumer-based society with a relatively strong middle-class. Despite high living standards compared with the neighbouring countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the economic downturn in the 1980s led to a growing dissatisfaction with the regime policies. Encouraged by the Polish demonstrations in 1981, the Hungarian opposition became increasingly active. At the same time there was a reform-oriented wing within the Communist party that gradually stepped

\textsuperscript{216} Ágh (1998) p 28

forward. In 1987, a certain degree of multiparty system was tolerated and began to take shape. At the same time, the reform-oriented wing in the regime tried to split the opposition between the nationalistic and the liberal wing. In 1987, the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) was established resembling the Solidarity movement in Poland as it was a broad umbrella organisation gathering all oppositional forces. The difference was that MDF did not have the same link to the workers as Solidarity had. In 1989 finally, Hungary initiated the same kind of round-table talks as in Poland.

Czechoslovakia, which had traditionally been less hostile towards Russia and Socialism than Poland, held a lower profile. In fact, the Czechoslovak Communist party was even more rigid that that of the Soviet Union. For several years after Stalin’s death and protests in Poland and Hungary in 1956, the dogmatism of the Czechoslovak regime endured. However in the 1960s there was an increasing criticism against the rigid Stalinist leadership especially from more reformist persons within the party. This lead to the so-called Prague Spring in 1968, which in fact did not question socialism or the Communist party itself, but rather was against the brutal behaviour of the regime during the ‘two black decades’. After the brutal crushing of the Prague Spring, Czechoslovakia was governed by strong neo-Stalinist regimes which had full control and did not allow any opposition. Not even the events in Poland and Hungary in the summer of 1989 affected the hard-line Czechoslovak leadership. Although the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November did shake the regime, it stubbornly rejected dialogue with the opposition and unleashed harsh police brutality against the Prague street demonstrators as late as mid-November. After a series of mass demonstrations, the Communist party finally capitulated unconditionally. The party Civic Forum with the respected dissident Václav Havel as leader and in Slovakia, Public Against Violence became the new umbrella organisations and the political slogan that was used was ‘civil society in power’ pointing towards a road between east and west based on morality and rationality. The goal was a political regime that was not too institutionalised and closer to the citizens.218

Unlike the Central European countries, Romania and Bulgaria can be seen the most faithful allies of Moscow in Central and Eastern Europe during the Cold War era. There was in fact no organised anti-system movement in Romania and Bulgaria until the tensions became stronger in 1989. If there were any tensions, they took place within the ruling communist parties. The fact that Romania and Bulgaria were two of the most repressive regimes was obviously a factor but the two countries’ legacy of

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being parts of the Ottoman Empire with its clientelistic and feudal traditions is also of importance. Both countries developed a form of socialism which combined Marxist-Leninist ideology with strong focus on the leader and his network. In Bulgaria, Todor Zhivkov ruled from 1961 until 1989 and in Romania Nicolae Ceaușescu was in power from 1965 until December 1989 when he was arrested and executed. Zhivkov’s Bulgaria has been depicted as nearly a feudal system with a regional and local network of party barons with the regime’s power visible at all levels in society. The regime was even actively involved in international traffic with drugs and arms. In Romania, Ceaușescu’s regime was built on the same line, but in fact went one step further. It has been described in the literature as a sultanistic system where the leader treats his country as if it was his personal fiefdom which was controlled by a small network of his relatives or friends of the family.

The breakdown of the communist system in the two countries was, however, divergent. In Bulgaria, the collapse of the regime started from within the party in the form of a palace coup. In Romania the rising discontent with the economic problems in the 1980s was finally expressed in mass demonstrations in 1989 which turned into a short civil war where Ceaușescu was finally arrested and executed. Behind the scenes, however, a rival within the party, Ion Iliescu, had staged a coup d’état and prepared to take over the party apparatus but transformed into the new National Salvation Front.

3.6 Political parties in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989

In this final section I will briefly discuss how the historical legacy may play a role in post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe. Thereafter I will briefly present the development of political parties and party systems in the region and discuss the conditions for the three European party families in 1989 regarding their plans to expand.

The third try for democracy

The first thing that must be mentioned is that in 1989, when the countries of Central and Eastern Europe made a third attempt for democracy, the structural prospects for democracy were clearly better than before. First, the countries had experience from independence and state-building from

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219 Zhivkov became formal head of state in 1971.
220 Berglund & Aarebrot (1997) p 89-90
221 Rothschild & Wingfield (2000) p 216
222 Berglund & Aarebrot (1997) p 91
the inter-war era (and partly from the years of communism); secondly, the previous problem of ethnic minorities during the inter-war era was gone and so was the dilemma with ethnically based party systems; thirdly the intense modernisation process during the communist era created more urbanised and industrialised societies with a well-educated middle-class. Another favourable factor for democracy was the new focus on Western Europe and the United States with deep-rooted democratic traditions. According to Berglund and Aarebrot this has been one of the most important factors for some countries in Central and Eastern Europe:

In 1989-90 the emphasis in Eastern Europe was on democracy and on cooperation with the West which was seen as the only safeguard against a revival of Soviet imperial ambitions. This West European and Atlantic orientation was not only the gut reaction of recently liberated states, marked by the anti-communist backlash of the early 1990s, but the considered opinion of nations most of which have since experienced government by reform-minded communists as well as by right-wing forces. The East European commitment to the European Community and to NATO is in fact one of the most important factors, perhaps the single most important factor, accounting for the continued allegiance to the democratic format in countries with a turbulent and clientelistic past, like Albania and Romania.223

As Berglund and Aarebrot note after this conclusion, there is continuity in Central and Eastern Europe when it comes to the politics during the twentieth century; that is the permanent balancing act between the current international hegemony and the domestic need for territorial consolidation. If we go back further in history we can see that the hegemony was represented by the empires of Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottomans; in the inter-war era it was initially British and French architects that dominated and from 1933 to 1945 the region became an arena of open competition between Germany and the Soviet Union and finally in the Cold War era, the Soviet Union was undoubtedly the dominant power in the region. Today Berglund and Aarebrot argue, the new hegemony is that of the West.224 All this clearly points to the fact that the conditions were perfect for the European party families to find partners and expand eastwards in 1989 and during the 1990s. The countries were modernised, they had a developed state machinery, more ethnically homogeneous than before and many held the West as a clear role-model. There are, however, at least two factors that complicate the picture: unstable party systems and different dimensions of conflict.

223 Berglund & Aarebrot (1997) p 156-157
224 Berglund & Aarebrot (1997) p 157
The instability of party systems

The first factor is the instability of the post-1989 party systems in Central and Eastern Europe. Although this is to some degree natural in newly democratised societies, this case is marked by its communist past. As noted by Offe, the transition process in Central and Eastern Europe can be seen as a ‘triple transition’ which involves not just democratisation but also a complete economic transformation and in some cases state-building. These steps mirror three crucial stages of process which according to Offe ‘were mastered over a centuries-long sequence (from the national state to capitalism, and then to democracy) in the case of the ‘normal’ West European countries’.

One interesting consequence of this rapid and (compared to Western Europe) delayed democratisation is that the incorporation, mobilisation and activation of the citizens did not take place in a gradual process of democratisation. These stages had already been taken by the previous non-democratic communist regimes. The result was thus a very open electorate with no historical and organisational ties to the new parties that emerged. The newly emerging political parties were at the same time, generally top-down organisations with weak links to the civil society. This is generally referred to as the lack of cleavage crystallisation when Central and Eastern Europe is compared with Western Europe. In short it means that Lipset and Rokkan’s notion of the ‘freezing’ of historical cleavages into institutionalised stable party systems in Western Europe in the 1920s did not take place in Central and Eastern Europe to the same extent. Furthermore the new parties in Central and Eastern Europe were less likely to be constrained by organisational loyalties which led to a number of party splits and party mergers, especially in the early years. The public confidence in political parties has also in general been low in post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe. This trend of low trust in parties continued throughout the 1990s.

Competing dimensions of conflict

Once we have concluded that the parties and party systems in post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe were unstable and were less constrained by social cleavages than in the traditional West European example, the issue then is what cleavages (even if weak) dominate politics. According to Judy

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225 Offe (1992) p 14
226 See Lipset & Rokkan (1967)
227 Mair (1997) p 180-187
228 Linde (2004) 144-146
Batt there is an interesting paradox in the revolutions of 1989, which simultane-ously expressed aspirations to recover national independence and to join in the West European process of political, economic and military integration which weaken the key features of sovereignty. This should remind us of the historical legacy of weak independence of the countries in the region and the potential for identity-politics. Moreover, the West European example of one dominating socio-economic cleavage where the other cleavages, such as the urban/rural and religious/secular, are subsumed into a left-right spectrum based on the economic dimension, is not directly applicable on Central and Eastern Europe. As Karasimeonov notes:

Some cleavages are still only emerging, some are bound to disappear, and some will appear in the future, determined by the process of transformation of society. Conflicts in non-consolidated post-communist societies differ substantially from the classical four-dimensional cleavage structure analysed by Lipset and Rokkan (1967). Political parties find themselves at the initial mobilization phase and have to establish their identities and links with the electorate. This process is fluid, because parties need time to implement their policies and test them in several rounds of elections until a certain stability of party-voter relationship establishes itself.\(^\text{229}\)

Let us look briefly at the dimensions of conflict in post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe. At the initial stage the conflict between the old regime and the opposition movements dominated the scene, with the broad umbrella movements’ mobilisation against the regime. Soon however, these broad movements fell apart creating a plethora of parties especially to the right. If we start with the Czech Republic, which emerged after the Czechoslovak split in 1993, it is the only country in the region that from the early stage developed a party system which resembles the typical West European party system. After the split of Civil Forum in 1990-1992 it was clear that the socio-economic issues became the dominant dimension in Czech politics. There was to a certain degree an urban-rural cleavage but it could not compete with the economic Left-Right dimension. One important reason is the fact that the Czech Republic is the only post-communist country where the social democratic party is not a reformed communist party.\(^\text{230}\)

In Hungary and Poland there was after the democratisation a strong cultural divide that competed with the socio-economic. This cultural dimension included the issue of the nation and traditional values versus cosmopolitanism and liberal values and went straight through the previous united anti-communist opposition. This dimension subsumed the urban/rural and

\(^{229}\) Karasimeonov (2004) p 417

religious/secular divides into a national/cosmopolitan cleavage with a clear reflection of the nation-based dominance of politics in the inter-war era.\textsuperscript{231} After 1989, there was also some confusion when it comes to who is ‘Left’ and who is ‘Right’. In Poland and Hungary, the privatisations started already before 1989 and this created a class of entrepreneurs in the 1980s. But in the 1990s these entrepreneurs turned against the liberalisations as they were exposed to competition. Thus we have a relatively strong group of entrepreneurs that look back on the communist era with nostalgia. Moreover many old members of the communist ‘nomenklatura’ managed to transfer their political power into economic and became the winners in the privatisations. To add a further confusing element, those who were conservative, i.e. wanted to preserve the old system were ‘left’ and those who wanted radical change were ‘right’. The legacy of nationalism and anti-Semitism also played a role in the left-right confusion.\textsuperscript{232} This was a recurrent feature also in several Central and Eastern European countries in the early stage after 1989.\textsuperscript{233}

The weak socio-economic dimension was found also in post-1989 Romania and Bulgaria. But in these two countries the old-system vs. anti-system cleavage was stronger and more lasting. Another difference is that it was the old regime-based parties that represented the national dimension in the nation/cosmopolitan divide. In Bulgaria this played along with a generational and urban rural divide creating a cleavage between the mostly urban young class who preferred an open economy directed towards the West and the older strata mostly living in the countryside looking back to the safer time with the old regime.\textsuperscript{234} Romania, which went through a

\textsuperscript{231} Ágh (1998) p 51-52 and 77. The dominance of the cultural dimension rather than the economic was especially the case in Hungary where the liberal SZDSZ joined the successor party MSZP in a government in 1994.

\textsuperscript{232} One example is a demonstration arranged by Solidarity in Poland for higher state subsidies. It was held after an 18-day long strike at the old company Ursus. The company had deteriorated since 1990 when the country was opened up to foreign competition. But during the seemingly left-wing demonstration, the slogan ‘Ursus is ours, Israel yours’ and flags with the Star of David were burned. Orenstein (1995) p 28-30

\textsuperscript{233} For example in the 1990 electoral campaign in Hungary, several intellectuals associated with the conservative MDF engaged in anti-Semitic verbal attacks on the liberal SZDSZ without any move from the MDF to distance itself from this. This faction of MDF, which later on left the party, argued that the country’s economic problems were caused by a ‘Communist-Jewish-Liberal-International conspiracy’. Rothschild & Wingfield (2000) p 278

\textsuperscript{234} Karasimeonov (2004) p 420-431
much more violent phase in the regime-change, was probably the country in this study which was the least prepared for a democratic change in 1989. The fall of the Ceauşescu regime was as mentioned replaced by his crown prince Ion Iliescu who skilfully kept power through using his access to the old power structures. Compared with Bulgaria the opposition in Romania was more fragmented and could therefore not compete with the old ruling guard in the same way. The main divide in Romanian politics in the 1990s remained that of nation vs. cosmopolitanism. This became increasingly evident in 1992, when the rhetoric of Iliescu’s National Salvation Front became increasingly nationalist and it initiated co-operation with three smaller nationalist parties.\(^{235}\)

The three Baltic states have a somewhat different point of departure than the other countries in the study, since they were incorporated into the Soviet Union after the Second World War. Thus, they did not reach national independence until 1991. The main dimension of conflict in Estonia and Latvia during the 1990s has been the identity or nation-based cleavage.\(^{236}\) During the Soviet era, large numbers of Russians moved into what is today Estonia and Latvia and when the two countries became independent Estonia and Latvia had a core population of only 62 per cent and 53 per cent respectively.\(^{237}\) In Latvia however, an emerging socio-economic cleavage has taken shape in the form of strong anti-elitist groupings.\(^{238}\) In Lithuania on the other hand, the ethnic issue was not as dominant as it only had a Russian minority of eight per cent and a Polish minority of seven per cent. Instead there is a divide between ‘modernists’ and ‘traditionalists’. This subsumes other divides such as the urban/rural, religious/secular and the generational. The modernists are young, urban, educated and cosmopolitan while the traditionalists could be both anti-communists and Soviet-style traditionalists, both sharing a moralist approach and scepticism against liberal values.\(^{239}\)

Lastly we have two countries with a very short history of independence: Slovenia and Slovakia. Slovenia became independent from Yugoslavia in 1991 and Slovakia became independent when Czechoslovakia (with the Czechs as the core nation) was split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993. Slovenia was one of the most developed parts of Yugoslavia in

\(^{237}\) Berglund & Aarebrot (1997) p 161
\(^{238}\) Smith-Sivertsen (2004) p 111-114
terms of economy and it has done well after independence in 1991. The main cleavage around which the Slovene parties cluster is the historical, or how they view the old regime. On one side of this highly ideological cleavage we find the anti-communists who emphasise the totalitarian character of the communist system and seek for at least symbolic recognition of its awfulness. In some cases there have even been calls for the exclusion of former communists from the policy process. On the other side we have those who prefer to deal with the past with discretion and favour an easy adaptation of the former system to the new.240

Slovakia was, unlike its Czech counterpart, predominantly Catholic and more agrarian. It also had a considerable Hungarian minority within its borders. Between 1989 and 1993, when the federation was ended, Slovak politics was to a large degree dominated by an emerging split within the Public Against Violence party between the core that was pro-market and pro-federation and Vladimír Mečiar’s new party Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HDZS) which was less pro-market and pro-independence. As a country with a weak tradition of independence, Slovakia (more than its Czech, Polish and Hungarian neighbours) lacked institutionalised cleavages, and politics during the 1990s became more polarised around the controversial Mečiar and his authoritarian style. This may be viewed as an nationalist/authoritarian divide where the reformed Communist Party of the Democratic Left (SDL) formed a coalition with the moderate centre-right alliance Slovak Democratic Coalition and the Hungarian minority party in 1998.241

4. European Party Families: A Background

European parties are central actors in this thesis but the general knowledge is low even among political scientists about what European parties are and how they work. This chapter will firstly describe the evolution of the European parties, how they are built up and what role they play. After this, follows a brief presentation of the three party families in this study focusing on how they have handled the challenges and opportunities related to the institutionalisation of European party-co-operation.

4.1 Historical background

The development of European transnational party organisations has taken place through several steps, starting with the traditional party internationals, through the formation of party groupings in the European Parliament to full-scale European parties. Each step has been taken within an interplay between rationalist institutional incentives and identity-building. This created structures of both constraints and opportunities for each party which are crucial to understand the integration of the new parties from Central and Eastern Europe.

The first party internationals

The main inspiration to form transnational parties at the European level came from the party internationals. Among the three party families investigated in this thesis, it was clearly the socialist parties that were the pioneers in international party organisation. The main challenge for these party internationals was to balance the national and international level and handle different factions within the international. As will be recalled further down, this is still a difficult task for the European party families.

The first international was created in 1864 and was called International Working Men’s Association (IWMA). This was a loose organisation that gathered delegates from a wide range of socialist groupings and trade unions. It should be mentioned that the IWMA was formed before the rise of recognisable mass parties. This was also reflected in its organisation: membership of its executive was granted on the basis of competence and not national quotas. Instead of being an international of national parties, it brought together the leftist elites and provided them with a possibility to discuss the common goals and the tactics and organisation to achieve them. The IWMA was short-lived and soon fell apart, mostly because of internal constraints and opportunities for each party which are crucial to understand the integration of the new parties from Central and Eastern Europe.

242 Haupt (1986) p 84
tensions between its centralist and anarchist wings. Even so, it had demonstrated that it was possible to organise and coordinate organisations from a political family on a transnational basis. As David Hanley put it, the IWMA ‘marked an innovation’ and it had ‘identified possible common work across national boundaries and also revealed some of the problems involved in meeting such a challenge.’ Even if the organisation was short-lived and full of internal conflicts, it was important as the first transnational party co-operation.

The Second International or the Socialist International (SI) was founded in 1889. This was clearly a more stringent organisation than its predecessor. A joint congress was held every third year and a bureau was set up to coordinate the organisation. The bureau developed some consistency over time and it became a forum for interaction and socialisation and shortly before the outbreak of the first World War it even took some political initiatives. In 1905, the SI became even more institutionalised when it created a full-time secretariat in 1905. This further strengthened the continuity of the organisation.

In 1914, the Second International collapsed mostly as a result of the break-out of the First World War. However, a part of the explanation could also be found in the organisational structure. The main organisational principle was the equality between the member parties. This could be seen in the bureau, which contained two delegates per country regardless of the size of the country or the party. This could obviously not mirror the discrepancy in real influence between for example the German SPD on the one hand and some smaller parties on the other. In this sense, it was not more centralised than its loose predecessor IWMA. Considering the fierce conflicts between different factions within the SI, it was therefore not surprising that it finally collapsed.

Yet the Second International was a clearer case where parties used the international forum to increase influence. We must not forget that socialist parties in pre-1914 Europe were far from power despite their growing

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243 The centralist faction within the IWMA was led by Marx and the anarchist wing was led by Bakunin. See Wrynn (1976) p 1-4.
244 Hanley (2008) p 32
245 The bureau met twice per year and gradually it attained the role of coordinating the organisation. The most important task was to prepare the debates of the SI.
246 The internal battle often circled around the question of whether or not to use the general strike. The main ideological conflict within the SI was between those who argued for a revolution like Lenin and those who preferred a more gradual reformist strategy like the British Labour Party.
strength. This meant that they were unable to exert significant influence in their respective countries. There were several occasions where socialist parties used the International to coordinate their strategies. The SI-debates also helped national parties intellectually to have a more clear focus on the burning issues of the day. Finally, the SI-membership brought certain practical benefits. On several occasions the SI encouraged their member parties to mobilise supporters on the same day across Europe, mostly on peace-issues. According to Haupt, ‘the SI believed itself capable of mobilising an army of 5 million organised workers in the active struggle for peace’.

After the First World War, a new International was set up in 1919. The character of this Third International, or rather Communist International (Comintern), must be understood against the experiences from the failed SI. The previous organisation was seen as too weak and factionalised in order to be effective. Moreover, the goals of the SI had been too reformist and if revolutionary positions were taken, they were more rhetorical than real. The new Comintern was instead a transnational party organisation with a centralisation of power that is still unprecedented.

The explanation for the high centralisation of power in the Comintern can be found in the strong ideology (or worldview) of Leninism that guided the party organisation from the outset. This consisted of mainly two pillars. First, Leninism was an analysis of imperialism. Capitalism was seen as an imperialist ideology and phenomenon, which exploited the underdeveloped parts of the world. At the same time, Leninists saw capitalism as highly unstable, constantly driven to expand its markets in the search for new profits. As the resources are limited, this would lead to clashes between competing companies, just as between competing imperialist coun-

247 Between 1906 and 1910, socialist parliamentarians from the member countries met under the auspices of the SI several times in order to coordinate their work on for example the shortening of working days, anti-war advocacy and the demand for arbitration of international disputes.

248 Haupt (1972) p 11

249 There was also a non-communist socialist international association set up after the First World War In February 1919, the ‘International Socialist Commission’ (ISC) was set up after a meeting in Berne by parties that aimed at resurrecting the Second International. The parties that did not want to be a part of the ISC or the Comintern founded the ‘International Working Union of Socialist Parties’ (IWUSP) in 1921. In 1923 the ISC and the IWUSP merged into the ‘Labour and Socialist International’ (LSI). However, after only 17 years the LSI was dissolved in 1940 with the rise of national socialism and the outbreak of the Second World War. See Lamb & Docherty (2006) p 77, 177-197; Wrynn (1976) p 32-46.
tries. Thus, such a world-system had a weak link and the inherent contradictions of capitalism could be played out with the class struggle. This is where the second pillar of the Leninist ideology comes in: the revolutionary party. It was believed that the oppressed classes would not be capable of organising themselves for the revolutionary struggle and therefore a new type of party was needed. In contrast to the social democratic parties, this new type of party would be genuinely revolutionary as it sought to destroy the bourgeois state by force. This in turn demanded a strong disciplined party organisation, which would be led by professional revolutionaries, equipped with a scientific (i.e. Marxist) understanding of history and society. Moreover the party would be vertically organised according to the principle of ‘democratic centralism’.250

This kind of party had no use for democracy as it was conventionally understood, since it was merely seen as a representative of the bourgeois society. Consequently, it combined electoral activities with sabotage, sedition etc.251 As mentioned above, the transnational character of the Comintern is still unprecedented. The main explanation behind this is the unique political context of Europe in 1919. A number of revolutions took place and most were brutally crushed. The only revolution that succeeded was the Soviet experiment and this turned it into an attractive role-model for disappointed socialists throughout Europe. The strong position of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union within the Comintern became even stronger with the Leninist ideology and the principle of democratic centralism. The Soviet dominance was gradually strengthened within the Comintern.252

**From internationals to European party federations**

After the Second World War, the lessons from the earlier experiences of party internationals were rather negative. On the one hand there was the experience of an inefficient SI with a weak leadership that had a merely coordinating role. On the other hand there was the Comintern with its highly effective organisation but totally incompatible with democratic politics. Departing from these experiences, the prospects for new party interna-

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250 Democratic centralism was the generally accepted principle within the Comintern as well as within the communist parties on the national level. It basically means that once agreement has been reached in a certain issue, absolute obedience is expected in implementing the party line.

251 Hanley (2008) p 37

252 Over time, the Soviet Communist Party increasingly preferred weak member parties of the Executive Committee in the Comintern. Thus, strength in domestic politics became a barrier to membership of the Executive Committee. Haupt (1986) p 91.
tionals were weak. However, the context of post-war reconstruction revived the internationalist ideas and this gave new impetus for initiating transnational party co-operation.

The Liberal International was founded in 1947 and the Socialist International recreated itself in 1951. For the Christian democratic family this was a slower process. The tradition of contacts being more personal rather than party based was stronger in this party family. A Christian Democrat organisation called Nouvelles Equipes Internationales was formed in 1949 but it was not until 1969 that a Christian Democrat International was formed.253

The idea to organise parties across national borders was thus not new when the European Community began to take shape in the early 1950s. Furthermore, it was the European participants that were most active and influential in the internationals. It was after all in Europe that political parties played the most important role in democratic politics. The first embryo for party organisations at the European level came with the Paris Treaty in 1952, more commonly known as the Coal and Steel Union. The six countries which entered the treaty had set up joint institutions to run the co-operation; the High Authority, the Court and the General Assembly. The Assembly had a more symbolic role than the other two institutions. It was set up by delegates from each country’s parliament and had the purpose of being a forum for discussions between the countries’ politicians and exercising an advisory role. It was in the General Assembly that the first transnational groupings were formed; the Christian Democrats, the Socialists and the Liberals.254

The formation of these transnational groups mirrored the optimism and enthusiasm at the time for European co-operation. This optimistic climate could also be seen on the intellectual scene. Early theorists like Ernst Haas argued that political parties were potential ‘carriers’ of European integration. He also suggested that political parties would come under pressure to adapt to the European political arena for competitive reasons, regardless of whether they were sceptical or enthusiastic about integration. The fact that it was only the Christian democrats, social democrats and liberals that formed transnational groupings reflected at the same time a rather crude political climate. The memory of the Second World War and also the ongoing cold war helped to cement these three as the dominating political forces in Europe. Communist and extreme right parties were excluded from this

254 Fitzmaurice (1975) p 19-20; Gidlund (1992) p 89-91
assembly in the early stage. Contrary to these early optimistic predictions however, the development of party activities at the European level was slow.

It was not until the mid-1970s that the European party networks institutionalised outside the European Parliament (former General Assembly). It was the three original party groups that formed so-called party federations: in 1974, the ‘Confederation of the Socialist Parties of the EC’ and in 1976 ‘European People’s Party: Federation of Christian Democratic Parties in the EC’ and ‘Federation of Liberal and Democratic Parties’. The formation of these was directly related to the decision by the EC summit in The Hague in December 1969 to hold direct elections to the EP. Institutionalized cooperation between the parties also outside the EP was seen as a way of coordinating the efforts before the first direct elections.\(^{255}\) There was considerable optimism concerning the future of the party federations. Just like in the 1950s, both politicians and intellectuals openly predicted that these new party structures would launch a new democratic phase in the European integration process. However, these optimistic predictions collapsed already in the first direct EP elections. The joint party manifestos made before the elections were lofty and the election campaigns were fought within the member states. The party federations had no clearly defined role beyond establishing joint manifestos. Moreover, the party groups in the EP had their own financial and political resources to do their work independently of the party federations.

**Steps towards ‘European parties’**

A new phase of party activity started in the negotiations for the Treaty of the European Union (the Maastricht Treaty). The party leaders of the Christian democratic party federation EPP met two days before the Council meeting and agreed to support a timetable for the Economic Monetary Union (EMU). The British Conservative government had already stated that it would oppose such a proposal but the majority voting in the Council meeting showed that the strategy of EPP was successful and the British lost the vote. The British prime minister admitted later that the EPP meeting was underestimated by her advisors.\(^{256}\)

Copying the EPP leaders’ strategy, the socialist and liberal party federations also started to arrange their party leader meetings to coincide with the agenda of the Council meetings. These meant that the party federations now had a role to play as a coordinating centre before EU summits to form

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\(^{255}\) Jansen (2006a) p 14-15

\(^{256}\) Johansson (1997) p 109
common strategies. However, there is a clear difference between the Christian democrats and the social democrats on the one hand and the liberals on the other. According to Hix and Lord, the Christian democrats and the social democrats have demonstrated the strongest quantitative and qualitative development in terms of coordinating their party leaders’ meetings before the meetings of the European Council 1990-1995. This is clearly connected to the fact that these two party families held two thirds of the representatives in the European Council while the liberals only had one prime minister during the period.257

During the negotiations before the Treaty of the European Union (Maastricht Treaty) there was active lobbying from the party federations to include an article about parties at the European level, especially from the EPP. The leaders of the three party federations at the time sent a joint letter to the presidents of the three main EU institutions: the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission. The letter presented a detailed proposal of a party clause to be included in the new treaty.258

When the Treaty of the European Union was finally adopted in the Maastricht Council in December 1991, it contained the following article:

Political parties at the European level are important as a factor for the integration within the Union. They contribute to forming a European awareness and to expressing the political will of the citizens of the Union.259

This was the first step towards a regulation of party activities at the EU-level. Shortly after the Maastricht treaty, the three party federations changed their names and statutes and started to call themselves ‘parties’ instead of party federations. In November 1992, the Confederation of Socialist parties became the ‘Party of European Socialists’ (PES) and in December 1993, the Federation of Liberal Democrat and Reform Parties became the ‘European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party’ (ELDR). The European People’s Party (EPP) already called itself a party but changed its statutes in 1993 and thereby had a more permanent organisation. There


258 The initiative from the three leaders was not a coincidence. Since 1989, the secretary generals of the three party federations had begun meeting from time to time in order to discuss common challenges and opportunities. The result of these discussions was to bring the party leaders together in order to discuss the development of European parties. See Jansen (2006b) p 49-50.

was a response also from other party families. The green parties established a party federation in 1993 and the European Free Alliance of regionalist parties adopted new articles in 1995 and began calling itself a ‘party at the European level’.  

The party article in itself had no more than a symbolic effect. It merely recognized that European parties are important, while legally their role was unclear and weak. It had become a practice to finance the European party federations through their party groups in the European Parliament. This meant that the party federations indirectly were supported by the EU budget and this meant a risk that the EU would indirectly finance national parties of which some may be extreme right. This sensitive situation brought the discussion further towards a regulation of parties at the European level. A party statute was discussed before the Nice treaty 2000 but the question of donations could not be solved. It was not until 2007 that a regulation of political parties at the European level came into force.

4.2 Organisational structure

As described in chapter 1, there has been some disagreement among political scientists on whether European parties should be termed political parties at all. The main reason is that there is no obvious power centre within these organisations. Instead they consist of a number of interconnected sub-units. However, there are some organisational units that structure the European-level party organisation.

The three components of a European party

The European-level party organisation consists, roughly speaking, of three broad components: the national member parties; the party group in the European Parliament and finally the European party (see figure 4.1).
Figure 4.1 The three main components of the European party organisation

These three components may be compared to the three components of a national political party: the party leadership, the party group in the national parliament and the local party sections. Within the traditional national party organisation the local party sections and the parliamentary group are naturally seen as subordinated to the party leadership.

However within the European-level party organisation, it is the other way around. The national parties constitute together the very basis for the European party organisation. Through individual membership fees and above all state funding, the political parties at the national level are financially the strongest and most independent actors within the European party organisation. The most important economic asset for the European parties has been membership fees from the national parties. In addition to financial dominance, it is the national parties that control the agenda setting and the list of candidates in the European elections. This means that national issues dominate the elections and that you vote for the national party rather than the European. This helps to preserve the fact that citizens are only familiar with their own national parties. Moreover, there is no strong rivalry between the European parties to the same extent as on the national level. Except for the fact that the European parties lack control over the EP-elections, the institutional structure of the EU entails no incentives for party co-operation. The executive of the EU, i.e. the European Commission and the European Council (and the Council of Ministers), consists of or is appointed by the national governments. This means that the central institu-
tions of the EU are steered by national rather than party political concerns.\textsuperscript{263}

The role of the national parties in the general EU-arena is also strong if the party is in government. This reflects the strong role of governments within the EU. The party leader of the government party is in most cases also the prime minister. This means that he/she also attends the European Council. If there is a coalition government with several parties, the other party leaders usually get senior ministerial positions and thus sit in the Council of Ministers. Finally, commissionaires are formally appointed by the governments of the member states in which party leaders play a significant role. The paradoxical situation with the position of the European-level party leaderships is summarised by Hix and Lord: ‘In sum, there is an extremely ‘low partyness’ of the EU system.’\textsuperscript{264}

The only formal party structure that has existed within the institutions of the EU is the organisation of transnational party groups in the European Parliament. These were created already in the 1950s when the EP was established. Since the first direct elections to the EP, the groups have been strengthened through significant financial and secretarial resources directly from the EU budget. Each party group has a detailed statute of rules of procedures which all MEPs in the group must follow or risk expulsion from the group. It also has a leadership structure with a president (or chairman) and several vice presidents; an executive bureau and a number of working groups. Finally each party group has a secretariat with supporting staff comparable to the administrative support to the party fractions in national parliaments. Compared to the European party leadership, the party group in the EP

The organisational units of the European party
The most outspoken argument for establishing parties at the European level in the 1970s was to strengthen the democratic legitimacy of the EU, but internally, a strong incentive was to coordinate the forces within the

\textsuperscript{263} Hanley (2008) p 49-50. See also Sandström (2003) p 149-151. The European Parliament has certainly influence, especially through the increased usage of the co-decision procedure (today the ordinary procedure). Paradoxically, however, the co-decision procedure has at the same time hampered the potential for partisan politics in the European Parliament. The dynamics around the co-decision process is to a large degree steered by the negotiations between the Parliament and the Council (conciliation). These negotiations take place behind closed doors and moreover require that the Parliament to adopt an agreed institutional perspective against the Council. See Warleigh (2003) p 78-79.

\textsuperscript{264} Hix and Lord (1997) p 214. For a thorough presentation of how the European-level party organisations are weak vis-à-vis the two other components, see p 204-213.
same party family more effectively. Firstly this meant strengthening the link between the national parties and the party group in the EP and secondly it meant building a coordination structure between the different national parties. This demands a ‘permanent presence’ through different organisational means.265

As mentioned above, the European party is built up in a way that is similar to a national party. The highest decision making organ is the Congress. The EPP and PES have their congresses every second year and the ELDR hold their congress every year. This organ decides the party’s statutes, political programme and electoral platforms. Another task is to elect or re-elect the party president. The members of the European party’s Congress are delegates from each national member party. The number of votes for each delegate is proportional according to the size of the country and the last election result. The so-called permanent presence, however, demands more than a party congress which meets every second or third year.

In table 4.1 below the main internal bodies of the European parties are listed. There is first of all an Executive Committee, which normally meet 2-4 times per year. The Executive Committee is responsible for the strategic decisions between the party congresses. This also includes the decision to accept new parties into the organisation, either as observers or as members. It is comprised of delegates from the national parties (usually the international secretaries) and the EP-group. Second, each European party has a presidency or leadership, which coordinates and implements the main policies of the party. This is comprised of the party president (chair), the party treasurer and several Vice-presidents who are usually senior personalities in the national parties. Thirdly, each of the three European parties in this study has a secretariat in Brussels, which assists the other bodies with administrative support and the necessary infrastructure. This means to place at the party’s disposal offices for the staff, meeting-rooms, a functioning internal network for computers, copying machines, envelopes etcetera.266

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265 For a further discussion on the level of organisational integration of the European parties, see Diez (1997) on the green party co-operation. See also Sandström (2003) for a similar analysis of the liberal party family.

266 Jansen (2006b) p 48-49
Table 4.1: The organisational structure of the European party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Main task</th>
<th>Frequency of meetings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Party Congress** | National delegates, MEPs, commissioners, affiliated associations, associated members and observers/invited guests | Elects party president, decides on the party statutes and party programmes | EPP: Every 3rd year  
PES: Every 2 ½ year  
ELDR: Every year |
| **Executive Committee** | International Secretaries from the national parties and MEPs | Decides on resolutions, budget and admission of new members | EPP: 4 times/year  
PES: 5 times/year  
ELDR: 2 times/year |
| **Presidency** | Party president, vice presidents, treasurer, EP group-leader and secr. General | Provide guidance to the party and approval of formal documents | Several times per year |
| **Party leaders’ meeting** | National party leaders, prime ministers and commissioners | Coordination before EU summits and approve central party documents | Before each EU-summit |
| **Party secretariat** | Secr. general and administrative staff | Support the other organs of the party | Everyday work |

Note: The table is adapted from Johansson & Raunio (2004) p 13 and is complemented with information from the party homepages. Note that the names of the internal bodies and the number and type of the participants vary to some degree between the parties.

The fourth part of the ‘permanent presence’ is also the youngest: the party leaders’ meeting. Starting in the 1970s as informal meetings, the party leaders’ meetings (or summits) were institutionalized in the early 1990s in EPP, PES and ELDR statutes as the supreme internal decision-making organ. One example is that election manifestos and action programmes must be approved by the party leaders’ meeting before being presented at the European party’s congress. A second role of the party leaders’ meeting is as a coordinator of party officials holding executive offices at the European level. They bring together prime ministers and commissioners from the same European party who can discuss both short and long-term agendas of EU-issues.\(^{267}\)

\(^{267}\) For a thorough overview of how the party leaders’ meetings gradually became institutionalised from the 1970s and 1980s to the intensified stage of the 1990s, see Hix & Lord (1997) p 183-194.
4.3 The structure of the EU party system
As mentioned above, the status of European-level political parties within the EU-political system is weak. Yet, this does not mean that political parties do not play a role at all. After all, the EU is led by party politicians. The representatives within the main EU-institutions like the European Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament are all recruited from political parties.\footnote{This fact is mentioned by Hix & Lord (1997) on p 1. It is however rather ironic as they finalise their book with the conclusion that the political parties within the EU-system have a relatively weak impact, see p 214.} Therefore, it is necessary to briefly present the shape of the EU party system\footnote{The term ‘European party system’ has been debated. Some, like Jansen (2006b), have no difficulty with this term while others, like Mair (2000), are critical due to the low level of competition within the EP. I have taken a more pragmatic view on this issue. I do not use the term with the same ideological energy as Jansen but merely as a tool for understanding the party landscape in the EU.}, i.e. the main party families, their relative strengths and issues.

Dimensions of conflict
To begin with, the structure of the EU party system is built up by the political parties from the EU member states. Just as the EU itself is a synthesis of the national member states, the EU party system is a blend of the various historical experiences of the participating national political parties. This is where the term party families comes in. The traditional party families can be said to represent the historical divides or cleavages that over time have been laid upon each other in each country in Western Europe. Although there are country differences, Lipset and Rokkan presented a widely accepted scheme for the historical determinants of political organisation in Western Europe and thus also the main party families that have sprung out of these.\footnote{See Lipset and Rokkan (1967) p 1-2, 47. For a more updated discussion on the implications of Lipset and Rokkan’s work, see Karvonen and Kuhnle ed. (2001).}

As illustrated in table 4.2, the political cleavages in European politics are the result of a series of ‘critical junctures’ throughout the history of Western Europe.\footnote{For a further elaboration on the concept of cleavages, see Knutsen & Scarbrough (1995) and Römmele (1999) p 4-7.} Thus, the party families in Europe mirror a complex matrix of cross-cutting cleavages. Firstly, the Reformation and Counter-Reformation created a division between the interests of the state and the church and as a consequence between the religious and secular groupings that were associated with these institutions. Secondly, the formation of the
modern nation states in Europe gave rise to a cleavage between centre and periphery. Thirdly, the French Revolution with the ideas of democracy and equality produced a divide between the authoritarian interests from ‘ancien régime’ and the emerging middle classes. The fourth and fifth cleavages between urban and landed interests and between owners and workers were the result of the agricultural and industrial revolutions in Europe during the 19th century.272

Table 4.2 The historical party families in Europe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical juncture</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Cleavage</th>
<th>Party family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reformation</td>
<td>16th and 17th centuries</td>
<td>Church v. state</td>
<td>Christian democrats v. conservatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Integration</td>
<td>17th and 18th centuries</td>
<td>Centre v. periphery</td>
<td>Regionalists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Revolution</td>
<td>1789 and later</td>
<td>Authority v. liberty</td>
<td>Liberals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Revolution</td>
<td>19th century</td>
<td>Urban v. rural</td>
<td>Agrarians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Revolution</td>
<td>19th century</td>
<td>Owner v. worker</td>
<td>Social democrats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INTRODUCTION OF UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Cleavage</th>
<th>Party family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russian Revolution</td>
<td>1917 and later</td>
<td>Democratic v. revolutionary left</td>
<td>Radical left (communists)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fascist Dictatorship</td>
<td>1920s and 1930s</td>
<td>Democratic v. revolutionary right</td>
<td>Extreme right (fascists)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-industrial society</td>
<td>1960s and 1970s</td>
<td>Materialists v. post-materialists</td>
<td>Greens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European integration</td>
<td>1980s and 1990s</td>
<td>EU-integration v. national sovereignty</td>
<td>EU-sceptics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adjusted from Hix & Lord (1997) p 24. Observe that this is a revised table compared to the original version in Lipset & Rokkan (1967) p 47.

As the precursors of modern political parties gradually emerged in the latter half of the nineteenth century, they mobilised around these cleavages. With the introduction of universal suffrage, mass political parties solidified the links between these political movements and the segments of society that they sought to represent. This strong link between modern political

parties and historical divisions produced party systems throughout Western Europe that became quite stable in terms of number of parties and structuring conflicts. This is what Lipset and Rokkan referred to as ‘frozen party systems’ as they observed that the party systems of the 1960s reflected ‘with few significant exceptions the cleavage structures of the 1920s’.273 These cleavage structures were not however equally influential over the party systems. The most decisive cleavage arrived with the mobilisation of the working class in the late nineteenth century, i.e. the owner-worker cleavage.274 This became the structuring divide in the left-right political spectrum that has become the main spatial tool for positioning parties. The fact that it was the owner-worker conflict that became most influential also mirrors the structure of the party systems that emerged after full suffrage: one big social democratic party on the left (often flanked by a small communist party) and several parties to the right that owe their identities to the older cleavages.

Table 4.3 below displays the European parties that were recognised by the EU for funding in 2012. The long list of parties should not be seen as an indicator that the EU-party system is totally chaotic. On the contrary, there are pretty clear dimensions of conflict and in reality only three or four party families dominate EU-politics. The reason behind this is connected to the historical legacy of the cleavages mentioned above with a dominating left-right divide according to the traditional cleavages. Moreover, the three traditional party families – Christian democrats, social democrats and liberals – are older as organisations and more institutionalised than the other parties.

273 Lipset & Rokkan (1967) p 50
274 This cleavage is today broadly viewed as the socio-economic divide and is still considered to be the main structuring force behind the left-right political spectrum. See Bobbio (1994) p 95-101; Hix & Lord (1997) p 25.
Table 4.3 The political parties at the European level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Ideology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European People’s Party</td>
<td>EPP</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Christian democratic/Conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party of European Socialists</td>
<td>PES</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Social democratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party</td>
<td>ELDR</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Christian Political Movement</td>
<td>ECPM</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Social conservative, Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Green Party</td>
<td>EGP</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Free Alliance</td>
<td>EFA</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Regionalists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party of the European Left</td>
<td>PEL</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Socialism, Communism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Democratic Party</td>
<td>EDP</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Centrist, pro-EU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUDemocrats – Alliance for a Europe of Democracies</td>
<td>EUD</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>EU-sceptic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance of European National Movements</td>
<td>AENM</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Nationalist, EU-scepticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Alliance for Freedom</td>
<td>EAF</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Nationalist, EU-scepticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists</td>
<td>AECR</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Conservative, EU-sceptic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement for a Europe of Liberties and Democracy</td>
<td>MELD</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>National conservative, EU-sceptic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: these are the political parties that were recognised by the European Parliament for grants 2004-2012. Two parties that were recognised in 2004 later failed to meet recognition: Alliance of Independent Democrats in Europe and Alliance for a Europe of Nations.


The political movements that are based on the junctures after universal suffrage have attempted to challenge the dominance of the traditional party families and therefore also the traditional left-right spectrum. However, the dominance of the left-right ‘map’ has prevailed and the new movements
have eventually found themselves somewhere within this spectrum. 275 For example, the environmentalist movements originally refrained from positioning themselves in the traditional continuum as they wanted to present the environmental problem as an issue beyond the traditional conflicts. Yet, after some time, green parties were generally considered to belong to the left. 276 One important reason is that the main political parties typically demand that new movements also compete on the ‘ordinary’ political issues and this forces new issues to be integrated into the traditional left-right continuum.

Consequently, most issues and alternative movements in Europe have been sucked into the traditional left-right dimension. However, there is one cleavage within EU-politics that the traditional parties have not been able to squeeze into the left-right spectrum. This is the conflict between those who support EU-integration and those who are steadfastly opposed. The main reason according to Hix and Lord (1997) is that the integration-sovereignty cleavage ‘inherently undermines the coherence of the main party families’. 277 Traditionally, the historical party families identify themselves according to domestic conflicts mostly on social and economic policy. However, in EU-politics the main political conflicts are more determined by national and cultural issues rather than by party attachment. Subsequently, whereas parties from different EU member states within the same political family may have similar views in domestic issues related to the left-right spectrum, they are likely to have diverse views on European integration.

In short, the structure of the EU-party system is dominated by two irreconcilable dimensions (see figure 4.2). Firstly, the left-right dimension gathers the overlapping historical cleavages into a broad continuum mostly based on socio-economic issues. Secondly, the integration-sovereignty dimension is a divide about the European integration process that is derived from deep historical, cultural and national traditions.

275 See Oscarsson (1999) p 10
276 One example is Germany where the Greens became a part of the centre-left governing coalition government with SPD. Moreover, in Sweden the Green Party was an active supporting party to the social democratic minority government together with the Left Party 2002-2006.
277 Hix & Lord (1997) p 26
The Eastward Enlargement of European Parties

Figure 4.2 The two-dimensional EU-party space

Note: This figure is adapted from Hix & Lord (1997) p 50, which based the party positions on expert surveys. The positioning of the party families within this figure is not exact but merely displayed to illustrate the party spectrum.

Party politics within the EU is structured by these two dimensions, but as mentioned, the main party families prefer to compete on the left-right dimension. This is in order to minimise the internal tensions between the member parties within the party family.

The dominating party families

The logical follow-up question to the argument above is: which are the ‘main’ party families and to what degree do they control politics within the EU-system? In the earlier section on the historical background of the party families it was obvious that there are three main party families within the EU party system: the Christian democrats, the social democrats and the liberals. These three party families were the earliest to develop institutionalised links between their European-level organisation and their group in the European Parliament. Moreover they were the only party families to form extra-parliamentary party federations in the 1970s before the first direct EP-elections. Finally, these three party families are definitely most institutionalised when it comes to integrating leading politicians from EU-institutions other than the European Parliament into their party structures. Members of the EU Commission and the European Council (and Council
of Ministers) that are social democrats are also involved in the PES Bureau and party leaders’ meetings. The same goes for the Christian democratic and liberal party families. Consequently, when it comes to the level of institutionalisation and organisational strength, these three have been and are still the most advanced party families within the EU.

If we instead focus on the political strength and influence, the same pattern emerges. The party families’ representation in the European Parliament (EP) from the first direct elections in 1979 to the last elections in 2009 is displayed in table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Party strength in the EP 1979-2004 as percentage of seats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EPP</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PES</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELDR</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greens</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical left</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sovereignists</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regionalists</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The mandates of the EPP in 1979, 1984 and 1989 exclude the conservatives since they had no institutionalised co-operation at that time. The figures of the regionalists in the table refer only to those who sat with the Greens or earlier with the Rainbow group. Thus the figures in this table may not equal to 100 per cent in each mandate period.

Source: Adapted from Hanley (2008) p 43.

The table above illustrates that there are two clearly dominant party families in the EP: the Christian democratic EPP and the social democratic PES. In each mandate period since 1979, they have together constituted more than 50 per cent of the seats. Except for the two big party families, the

278 These three party families also have their own party secretariat with full-time employed staff located in Brussels.

279 The dominance of the Christian democratic and social democratic party families has also been seen as the main reason for why these two have shown the strongest group cohesion in the voting behaviour in the EP. As they constitute the two biggest groups there is more at stake for them at a vote. See Hanley (2008) p 44-45; Hix & Lord (1997) p 143-144.
The liberal ELDR stands out as the main party family in the European Parliament. Since 1989, it has been the third largest group. Moreover, in 2002 the ELDR got the prestigious post as the President of the European Parliament when Pat Cox was appointed. The rest of the party families have had a rather patchy character of their representation in the EP. The radical left has experienced a negative trend after the relatively good results in 1979 and 1984 and even if the greens have managed to establish themselves in the EP and formed a joint group with the regionalists, they have not been able to reach above 10 per cent. The ‘sovereignist’ party family or the EU-sceptics have grown into a relatively big force but at the same time they are split into several groups.

If we also include the influence of the party families at the national level, we can see the same pattern. Table 4.5 below displays the mean strength of each party family within the 15 countries that were members of the EU in 1995. In this table the conservative parties are portrayed as an independent party family but since the conservatives and the Christian democrats initiated an alliance in the EP in the early 1990s, they should be seen as one single party family in the framework of this thesis. Thus, in this table we can again see two big party families: the social democrats (30.1) and the Christian democrats/conservatives (34.8), followed by the liberals (11.1).

If we take one step further and look into the degree of party family representation within the main EU institutions except for the EP the same pattern is confirmed. Table 4.6 displays the representation of the party families in the European Commission, the European Council, and the Council of Ministers in 2005 and 2010. Also here we can see a clear dominance of the Christian democratic/conservative and social democratic party families. As these institutions reflect the national governments within the EU, the dominance of the two party families is even clearer. In table 4.6, it is also evident that the liberal party family stands out clearly as the strongest of the other party families. In the EU-Commission, the liberal commissioners even outnumbered the PES in 2005 and 2010.

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280 The relationship between the conservative and Christian democratic party families will be further discussed in chapter 5.
Table 4.5 Mean electoral strength of the European party families 1990-1994

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party family</th>
<th>Average strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social democrats</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian democrats</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatives</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberals</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical left</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far right</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greens</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regionalists</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-sceptics</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This table is adapted from Hix & Lord (1997) p 52. The score is built on the national elections between 1990 and 1994 and the 1994 EP-elections. Moreover the score is calculated by weighing the individual party scores according to the size of the EU member state.

Table 4.6 Party family representation in the EU institutions in 2005 and 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party family</th>
<th>EU Commission</th>
<th>Council of Ministers</th>
<th>European Council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Commissioners</td>
<td>Voting strength under QMV</td>
<td>Number of heads of government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hix & Høyland (2011) p 142
In sum, there are three party families that stand out as the most institutionalised and influential in the EU: the Christian democratic EPP, the social democratic PES and the liberal ELDR. This is also the background to the selection of these three party families as the units of analysis for this thesis. In 1989-1990 when the communist regimes collapsed throughout Central and Eastern Europe, these three party families were the only ones that had reached a certain level of institutionalisation. This combined with the fact that they have been the three most influential party families, which is illustrated above, makes the selection of them as cases for this study even more logical.

4.4 The three main party families: A short background

Before entering the empirical part of the thesis, it is necessary to give a background of each of these three party families. Below follows a short presentation of the main driving forces and dilemmas related to the institutionalisation of the European-level party structures within each of the three party families.

EPP: the Christian democrats

It is in a way natural to start with the Christian democratic party family, as it has been the main driving force behind European integration and a forerunner in building European-level party structures. However, its leading role does not imply that it has been free from difficult situations and dilemmas. On the contrary, European Christian democracy has constantly struggled with its complicated relation to its historical identity and this is closely related to a second more strategic dilemma: the relationship with the conservative parties.

Modern Christian democracy emerged as the leading political force in Western Europe after the Second World War. In contrast to the liberal and conservative parties, the Christian democrats had resisted the fascist and the national-socialist parties before and during the war. This gave them a certain legitimacy and public support. Christian democrats believed that the nationalist conflicts in Europe had disguised a deeper past, based on a shared European civilisation of common religious and moral values. France, Germany and Italy became the important countries in the reconciliation process of Western Europe and it was Christian democrats who took

281 The fear of communism and Soviet dominance in the emerging Cold War also drew support from the United States to the Christian democrats in Western Europe. Their enthusiasm for transnational European co-operation strengthened the American support as this was believed to increase the security of Western Europe.
the lead. Robert Schuman from the French Mouvement Républicain Populaire (MRP), Konrad Adenauer from the German Christliche Demokratische Union (CDU) and Alcide De Gasperi from the Italian Christiana Democrazia (CD) formed a bond of mutual understanding that provided an early idea that cross-national feelings of ideological common good could break the national divisions.\textsuperscript{282} It was therefore no coincidence that the six countries that entered into the Coal and Steel Union in 1953 were dominated by Christian democratic parties.

The first step in shaping a transnational Christian democratic organisation after the war was taken with the formation of Nouvelles Equipes Internationales (NEI) in 1947. This was a rather anonymous organisation, which lasted only to 1965, but it at the same time it reveals the dilemmas that confronted European Christian democracy. Firstly, the rather curious name\textsuperscript{283} (meaning ‘New International Teams’) exposed a dilemma, which would continue to haunt the organisation of European Christian democracy. The dilemma was that some parties wanted to be associated with the NEI and actually desired to be Christian democrats, but did not wish to be called that. Especially in France, the term ‘Christian democratic’ was used only with the greatest restraint. It was feared that the term could lead to misunderstandings that it referred to something clerical, or a political wing of some religious authority. This is a reminder of Christian democratic parties’ tense relation to religion and to their historical legacy as ‘parties of religious defence’.\textsuperscript{284} A second characteristic of European Christian democracy, exposed in the NEI is the importance of personal networks. The NEI was in fact not really a union of parties. It was also open for individuals or groups of individuals who had joined the national teams. Among those were several French and Belgian politicians who joined as individuals after their parties’ refusal to become members. Also Great Britain was represented by individuals from both Labour and the Conservative Party.\textsuperscript{285}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{282} Hix & Lord (1997) p 11
\item \textsuperscript{283} The name ‘Nouvelles Equipes Internationales’ was chosen on the request of the Belgian and French parties which preferred to avoid the epithet ‘Christian democrat’. See Jansen (2006a) p 43-44
\item \textsuperscript{284} Christian democracy has its ideological roots in a reaction against the enlightenment ideas of secularism and rationality. When the secular forces attempted to weaken the Catholic influence by removing its schools, Catholics formed defence leagues to defend their influence on the education system as a whole. But on the other hand, the early formation of Catholic political parties took place against the wishes of the official Church hierarchy as it threatened its monopoly on Catholic political activity; see Hanley (2008) p 85-86.
\item \textsuperscript{285} Jansen (2006a) p 44
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
The anonymous NEI had a crisis in the 1960s, mainly because there was a lack of interest from the member parties, some of which communicated anyway as government holders. Finally in 1965, the NEI was dissolved and replaced by the new organisation European Union of Christian Democrats (EUCD). As the name implies, this was in line with Konrad Adenauer’s call for a clearer Christian democratic profile and it formulated common guidelines for Christian democratic policy. The new EUCD was more systematic and dense as an organisation than NEI and it also had an outspoken goal:

To develop a permanent, close cooperation between Christian Democratic [sic] parties in Europe, leading to a common policy of creating a federated Europe.

The EUCD wanted to include all Christian democratic parties in the democratic countries in Europe. At the same time, the aim was to develop a common ‘doctrine’ which included a vision of a federal Europe. This ambition to become both broad and deep has a built-in duplicity and perhaps even contradiction.

The double ambition of being both broad and deep became a problem in the 1970s with the creation of the European People’s Party (EPP) in 1976 and the later formation of European Democrat Union (EDU) in 1978. The main issue was whether the Christian democratic and conservative parties should merge into one political family. This was on the one hand an ideological dilemma but at the same time a strategic advantage. The main ideological concern was related to the view on European integration: where Christian democrats were in general more pro-integration conservative parties tended to be less enthusiastic. Moreover the two political families differed from each other in more general issues where Christian democrats were more to the left in economic issues and more to the right when it came to socio-political concerns. At the same time, these two political forces shared some basic ideological traits. Especially the respect for the individual, the view on the Christian tradition and a pragmatic view on society united the two forces. The strategic dimension was clearly in favour of a merging of the two families. Where Christian democratic parties were strong, e.g. in Germany and Austria, conservative parties were weak or

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287 EUCD statutes 1971, via Jansen (2006a) p 73
288 Especially when it comes to abortion and divorce there is a difference between the conservative and Christian democratic parties. See Hix (1997) p 29-30; Jansen (2006a) p 81-83.
non-existent. The same can be said about Great Britain and Scandinavia but reversed. A fusion of the two party families would secure strong representation of both in all EU member states.

The ‘conservative dilemma’ became evident shortly before the formation of EPP. The main disagreement was about the name of the organisation. This was a sensitive issue since the name signals the party’s ideology, profile and above all its political alignment. Some argued for a more open name, while others preferred a name that mirrored the Christian democratic identity of the party. It was finally decided not to invite the conservative parties and to take the name European People’s Party. This was a compromise as it avoided ‘Christian Democracy’ but at the same time ‘People’s Party’ was something that many Christian democratic oriented parties had used. Two years after, in 1978, there was an attempt to form a joint centre-right platform with the launching of the European Democrat Union (EDU) in April 1978. The main engineers behind this initiative were the British Tories and the German CDU but despite heavy lobbying, the majority of the Christian democratic parties distanced themselves from the EDU. The negative reaction of the Christian democratic parties furthermore left the conservative parties in a rather hollow organisation. The EDU continued to exist but without any political significance. It was therefore a rather weakened Christian democracy that entered the 1980s. The failed attempt to build a common ground with the conservatives had divided and weakened the party family.

PES: the social democrats
Organised transnational co-operation between social democratic parties in Western Europe came gradually and followed the external stimuli of the development of the European Community. But it was within the Socialist International (SI) (which reconvened in 1951) that the first initiatives

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289 Not including the conservatives would not only mean a lack of representation in Great Britain and Denmark but also in future expansions to Greece, Spain or the Nordic countries. See Johansson (1997) p 22.

290 Arbøl (1986) p 61, Jansen (2006a) p 71-72. To furthermore satisfy those who wanted a strong Christian democratic profile in the name, a sub-title was added: ‘Federation of the Christian Democratic parties of the European Community’. This was on the other hand seldom used and soon forgotten.

291 Instead, the German CDU was accused of political bigamy and there was increased tension between the CDU and those Christian democratic parties that opposed the alliance with the conservatives, mainly the Belgian, Dutch, Italian and Irish parties.
came.292 When the Schuman Plan for a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was discussed in the early 1950s, the SI had appointed a study group which involved the social democratic parties of the six countries concerned. It was therefore easy to set up a social democratic group in the new assembly of the Coal and Steel Union. It had a bureau and a secretariat, which was chaired by the French Parti Socialiste (PS) leader.

On issues outside the Coal and Steel Community, it was the SI that continued to maintain the links between the parties and coordinated them through for example the Council of Europe Assembly. In relation to the discussion of creating the European Economic Community, the Dutch Labour Party pushed for a closer co-operation of the parties outside the ECSC-assembly.293 The result was a ‘permanent liaison committee’ with the aim of working out common positions on the new European institutions. The Dutch Labour Party continued this push for more transnational coordination in the coming 30 years.294

One important stimulus for a development of the European party was the decision taken at the 1969 summit to hold direct elections to the European Parliament. This was a decision that pushed the SI to replace the Liaison Bureau with the Confederation of the Socialist Parties in the European Community in 1974. One of the main controversies within the social democratic party family has concerned the question of what status should be given to the European party level. Before the entrance of the British Labour Party and the Danish Social Democrats, as the EC enlarged in 1973, it was mostly a question of ‘how much’ power should be delegated. After the enlargement, the social democratic party family had two new rather eurosceptical members that resisted almost every step towards more power to the European party-level. The Dutch PvdA has, as mentioned, been one of the most pro-integrationist forces within the family. In 1979, the Dutch secretary general for the Confederation told the international secretaries of the member parties prior to the leaders’ summit that:

The Confederation has reached a crucial moment. Parties are finally called upon to make their choice, whether they want a federation with some political power or just a European Socialist post box office.295

292 The Socialist International reconvened for the first time after World War II in 1951.
293 This discussion took place at the first the party congress of the social democratic parties in the member states of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1957.
295 Hix & Lesse (2002) p 33
At the same time, research had found that the impact of the direct elections on the development of European parties was minimal. Thus the enthusiasm faded and the PES was up until 1989 the party family that followed rather than led the push for European integration.

The fall of the Berlin Wall meant in many ways a new era and a crisis for social democracy. Market liberalism had been the dominating discourse in Western Europe during the 1980s and the collapse of the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe was regarded by many as the final victory of market liberalism against socialism. As the Italian politician Achille Occhetto phrased it, the fall of ‘real socialism’ would ‘...speed up the on-going processes of redefinition.’296 It was therefore a rather cautious social democracy that started to build contacts in Central and Eastern Europe with like-minded parties. These were mainly the historical social democratic parties that to a great extent needed assistance and advice from their western sister parties.

ELDR: the liberals

The European liberal party family has its roots mainly in the Liberal International founded in 1947 in Oxford.297 In the early stage, most of its member parties came from Western Europe and it was a rather small gathering compared with the Socialist International. Moreover, it must be regarded as a loose grouping since it mirrored the whole range of liberal positions. The first manifesto of the organisation reflected the political heterogeneity of the organisation and could not serve as a platform for common activities. Instead it served as useful forum where liberal politicians could meet and exchange experiences. Yet the narrow group of members from Western Europe meant that the Liberal International directed a lot of its focus on the European integration process in the early years. It was for example within the Liberal International that the idea of direct elections to the General Assembly, i.e. the precursor to the European Parliament, was born in the late 1960s. This idea was quickly subsumed by the other party families.298

In 1952 the ‘Mouvement Libéral pour l’Europé Unie’ (MLEU) was founded with the purpose of concentrating the liberal activities on Europe-

296 Quoted from Fischer (1997) p 260
297 The original name of the organisation was Liberal World Union but eventually it was renamed as the ‘Liberal International’. Other important actors were Le Mouvement Libéral pour l’Europé Unie (MLEU) and the standing conference for liberal leaders that convened regularly.
298 Sandström (2003) p 82-83
an integration issues. The MLEU was also independent from the Liberal International. From 1961, membership of this organisation was restricted to parties and politicians from EC member states only. In 1972, the MLEU was incorporated into the Liberal International as a regional organisation. By then, the Liberal International had started to promote closer links amongst liberal parties from the EC member states. One important result was the standing conference for liberal leaders that met regularly to exchange experiences and discuss common activities. The main initiators of this process were the liberal party leaders, who since 1964 had regular informal meetings.299

Finally, in 1972 the Liberal International decided to establish a European-based organisation. The idea was that this organisation could legitimise the liberal group in the European Parliament and also coordinate liberal party activities before the coming direct elections to the European Parliament.300 However, it would take four years until the first congress could take place in Stuttgart in March 1976. One reason for the delay was that the preparation of statutes for the new organisation took much more time than expected as there was disagreement on how the new organisation should be structured. However, another more important reason was that they wrestled with the question of which parties should be invited to the first congress.

By 1972, the LI could anticipate direct elections to the EP and prepare accordingly by forming an EC-wide organisation of liberal parties. Some hesitation was evident, however, as to the nature of the new federation; this reflects some of the underlying ambiguities of liberalism, which have attended the movement practically since it began. Should it be restricted to the classical type of continental liberal party (strong on individual and market reforms, but less so on social issues), or should it include more progressive forces, who often preferred titles such as ‘democrat’?301

As David Hanley phrases it there were (and are) ‘underlying ambiguities’ in the concept of liberalism. Some liberal parties were seen as being closely affiliated to social democratic parties while others are characterised as close to Christian democratic or conservative parties. The reason behind

299 Hrbek (1988) p 455-456. The leader conference gathered leaders such as the prime minister of Luxemburg Gaston Thorn, who was also president of the Liberal International; Walter Scheel, leader of the FDP and Germany’s foreign minister; Jean Rey, former President of the European Commission and Giovanni Malgodi, leader of the Italian PLI.


301 Hanley (2008) p 118
this is found in the development of liberalism and liberal parties over time. The first liberal parties arose in the 19th century in parallel to an emerging middle-class, which demanded greater personal and economic freedom. Individual freedom and resistance to all kinds of state intervention became therefore the foundations of liberal ideas. The left-right divide among liberal parties is, according to Gordon Smith, related to the choices that liberal parties had to make in a later stage when the role of the state changed and especially when the welfare state emerged. Some liberal parties have adapted to and in many cases contributed to collective policies for social welfare, while others have stuck to the traditional liberal ideals. This gave rise to the distinction between ‘social-liberal’ or ‘radical-liberal’ parties, seen as more to the left and ‘market-liberal’ parties, which are seen as being more to the right.302

Thus, it was clear that the parties that prepared the European liberal congress faced a dilemma. Should they invite a broad range of liberal parties or limit the party federation to the market-liberal parties, which constituted the majority of liberal parties within the EC? Since liberal parties are generally small, a strategically desirable path would be to broaden the membership criteria, especially on ideology, in order to invite as many parties as possible. This would enable the liberals to obtain more influence in competition with the other European families and access to certain positions in for example the European Parliament. On the other hand, broader membership criteria did not only increase the ideological heterogeneity, but it also risked to repelling potential members.

The proposed name of the new organisation, ‘Federation of European Liberal and Democratic Parties’ (ELD) suggests that the broad strategy was chosen. By adding ‘democratic’ in the name, some parties, which in one way or another found the term ‘liberal’ problematic – for example two French parties - could join. However, the broad strategy became immediately problematic as five of the fourteen invited parties decided to stay outside. The French Left-Radical Movement declined membership as a protest against the invitation of the French right-wing liberal Republican Party. Also the British liberals felt uncomfortable being in the same party family as the French Republican Party as it had links to the British Conservative Party. The left-wing liberals in the Dutch D66 decided not to join as they were in opposition domestically to the right-wing liberal VVD. These tensions indicate the dilemma for liberal transnational party co-

operation; it is on the one hand based on a broad ideological spectrum but includes many small parties with strong ideological principles.

These differences exposed a typical dilemma for the liberal transnational party co-operation. The left-right spectrum among the member parties is broad compared with the EPP and the PES, sometimes between two liberal parties in the same country. They are positioned from a left-position close to the social democrats to a position closer to the conservatives or Christian democrats. This combined with the fact that liberal parties are often rather small, means that there are constant possibilities of coalitions both to the left and to the right. Naturally this creates internal tensions within the liberal family.\textsuperscript{303} Another problem with the generally small size of the member parties was that the entrance of a larger party may have great influence on the organisation. One example is when the Portuguese Partido Social Democratico (PSD) entered the ELD in 1986 after the Mediterranean enlargement. Since PSD was bigger in terms of electoral strength than any other member party, it quickly became a dominating force within the ELD. One consequence was that the term ‘reform’ was added to the party name; thus the new abbreviation ELDR.\textsuperscript{304}

Despite the ambitious aims of achieving political cohesion as a basis for joint activities, the 1980s was a decade of lack of interest from the national member parties and also internal divisions within the ELDR. It was above all, the centre-left oriented British Liberal Democrats that found themselves in a minority position against a majority often led by the German FDP. This concerned both economy-related issues and security policy.\textsuperscript{305} The generally low interest in the ELDR from the national parties was mainly seen in the low attendance of the Executive Committee meetings. The high degree of non-attendance can partly be explained in financial terms, as the generally small liberal parties did not have the same resources as the PES or

\textsuperscript{303} Sandström (2003) p 142-143, 150.

\textsuperscript{304} The initial enthusiasm among the other ELDR member parties faded considerably when it became increasingly clear that the Portuguese PSD had plans to leave the ELDR for the stronger EPP, which it finally did in 1996. See Hanley (2006) p 119.

\textsuperscript{305} The British Liberal Democrats had at the time entered an alliance with the social democrats and thereby opposed the policies of Margret Thatcher’s government. Thus they voted against a clause in the ELDR platform of the coming EP-elections in 1984 demanding strict stability in economic policy. For the same domestic reasons they opposed the dual-track decision of NATO and the deployment of missiles to Britain. The same issues came up at the ELDR Congress in 1985, where the British liberals favoured unilateral disarmament while the Italian PLI preferred an ‘Atlantic’ policy. See Hrbek (1988) p 462-463.
EPP member parties had.\textsuperscript{306} The party leader meetings seem to have suffered from the same low status and attendance compared with the same organ within the Christian democrats and the social democrats.\textsuperscript{307} One explanation for this lack of interest in the European-level meetings is related to the fact that liberal parties are in general relatively small and seldom hold the prime minister position. It is in this sense logical that the incentive to participate is low when the possibility of influence is limited.

In relation to the EU enlargement into Sweden, Finland and Austria, the ELDR sought contact with potential member parties already when the countries hinted that they were interested in joining the EU. When the three countries became members in 1995, the new liberal member parties had been involved in the ELDR network for a couple of years, although as observers.\textsuperscript{308} This strategy of early contacts simplified the process of inclusion and as we will see in this chapter it was used also with the potential members in Central and Eastern Europe.

\textsuperscript{306} One example is the Danish Social Liberal Party (Det Radikale Venstre), which only attended half of the ELDR Executive Committee meetings in the early 1990s due to financial reasons. Bille & Christoffersen (1996) p 26. Another general reason for the low attendance was the high number of members in the Executive Committee with 30-40 members.

\textsuperscript{307} The ELD Secretariat has also been weaker than that of the social democrats or the Christian democrats as the smaller liberal member parties cannot contribute as much financially to the European party federation.

\textsuperscript{308} Sandström (2003) p 85.
Part II: Three cases of party enlargement
5. The European Christian Democratic Family

5.1 The actors of the EPP network

Before going into the process of enlarging the Christian democratic party family eastwards, I will briefly present the main actors that were active in this process. This is necessary in order to get an overview of the multiplicity of actors within the Christian democratic family. Here I will also include the conservative actors, as they would later on become associated with the EPP.

The Christian democratic parties at the national level in Western Europe were the key actors in the early process of building contacts with new likeminded parties in Central and Eastern Europe. They had the financial resources and the staff for travelling around and building contacts. But in parallel with them, there were Christian democratic foundations, several parallel transnational party organisations and their sub-organisations. It was indeed a quite complicated network of actors that were active in this process. It is therefore reasonable to provide an overview of them before going into the process of integrating parties from Central and Eastern Europe into the family (see Table 5.1).

When it comes to the European level organisations, it must first be mentioned that the institutional link between EDU and the Christian democratic EPP and EUCD was not only about technical co-operation in the EP. The EDU did in fact contain some prominent members of the EPP such as the German CDU/CSU and the Austrian ÖVP. This further ensured that the two party families kept close informal contact. Another transnational party organisation, which was especially active in the early stage after 1989, was the Central European Union for Christian Democrats (CEUCD). This organisation was created in the 1950s and included Christian democrats from Central Europe who had gone into exile. They continued to represent the legitimacy and historical continuity of the parties, which were forbidden in their home countries. The youth organisations did not play a direct role but could serve as a platform for informal meetings. This concerns the relation between the EPP and the EDU as well as the relations with younger politicians from Central and Eastern Europe.

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309 Jansen (2006a) p 170

310 One example is the EPP secretary general Klaus Welle, who was earlier the president of EDU’s youth organisation DEMYC. As president for the conservative youth, Welle was in Hungary during the political changes in 1989 and built up important political links. Later on, Klaus Welle became secretary general for the EUCD and EPP. Interview with Klaus Welle, Brussels 27 August 2007.
Table 5.1 Christian democratic actors active in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global level</th>
<th>o Christian Democrat International (CDI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| European Level | o European People’s Party (EPP)  
|              | o European Union of Christian Democrats (EUCD)  
|              | o European Democrat Union (EDU)  
|              | o Central European Union of Christian Democrats (CEUCD)  
|              | o EPP-group in the European Parliament  
|              | o European Young Christian Democrats (EYCD)  
|              | o Democratic Youth Community of Europe (DEMYC)  |
| National level | o Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP)  
| (most important actors) | o Belgian/Flanders’ Christian Democrats (CVP)  
|              | o British Conservative Party  
|              | o Dutch Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA)  
|              | o German Christian Democratic Union (CDU)  
|              | o German Christian Social Union (CSU)  
|              | o Italian Christian Democratic Party (DC)  |
| Christian Democratic Foundations | o Konrad Adenauer Foundation (German)  
|              | o ÖVP Political Academy (Austrian)  
|              | o Eduardo Frei Foundation (Dutch)  
|              | o CDA Research Institute (Dutch)  
|              | o CESPES Institute (Belgian)  
|              | o Alcide De Gasperi Foundation (Italian)  |
| Other Foundations | o Jarl Hjalmarson Foundation (Swedish, conservative)  
|              | o Westminster Foundation for Democracy (British, non-partisan)  
|              | o National Democratic Institute (American, non-partisan)  |

The foundations and institutes assisted the West European parties in organising seminars, courses and meetings for Christian democrats from both parts of Europe making it possible for them to get to know each other and debate different topics. Especially the German and Dutch foundations were active in building contacts and initiating conferences or seminars. There was also some division of labour between the foundations due to different historical relationships with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe,
for example the Swedish Jarl Hjarlmarson Foundation focused almost ex-
clusively on the Baltic region.311

5.2 The first phase: Identifying partners
The official goals of the Christian democratic family were initially linked to
the general Western efforts of supporting democracy and democratic de-
velopment in Central and Eastern Europe.312 For the EPP and EUCD, this
support of democratic development was early linked to providing support
to Christian democratic or likeminded parties in the region. Internal party
documents demonstrate that this was the main focus in the early stage.
This meant both ‘moral political support and practical material support’.313
The first step in providing this support was to build up a network of con-
tacts and this was the main priority in the early stage.314 The long-term aim
was furthermore to enlarge the EUCD into a pan-European Christian dem-
ocratic family of parties. The EUCD soon also became the central actor
when it comes to coordinating the West European Christian democratic
parties in building up contacts in Central and Eastern Europe.

For the Christian democratic family, the fall of the Berlin Wall was
clearly a ‘window of opportunity’. Now, the EPP saw its chance to become
the dominant European political force. In retrospect, this opportunity was
not unrealistic. Socialism was discredited in Central and Eastern Europe
after the years of communist dictatorship and there was also a weak liberal
tradition in the region. Moreover, the earlier problem of how to deal with
the conservative parties appeared less threatening. In June 1989, the British
Tories applied for allied membership of the EPP-group in the European
Parliament. Although the EPP rejected this application, it was agreed that
the two groups would co-operate more closely and systematically togeth-
er.315 Nevertheless, the question of an alliance with the conservatives was
still open and there was still a situation of potential competition for part-
ners in Central and Eastern Europe between the two families.

311 EDU Yearbook 1989-91
312 These were generally expressed in resolutions, speeches and conferences. See for
example Resolution 1 from the EUCD 8th Congress 1989.
313 EPP/EUCD Workplan 1990, proposal by the secretary general.
314 Bilateral party relations were seen as very important in this process of support to
‘...developing an infrastructure of Christian democratic parties.’ Resolution of the
EPP Congress in Dublin 1990.
315 The alliance in the EP between conservatives and Christian democrats was finally
signed in 1992. For a detailed background of the alliance, see Johansson (1997)
p 78-98.
Unclear and fluid party landscape  
The main challenge for the EPP and EUCD in the early stage was the unclear and fluid party landscape that was starting to take form in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Firstly, it must be mentioned that this was a region that was relatively unknown to many. After forty years of separation of Western and Eastern Europe by the ‘Iron Curtain’, detailed knowledge of these countries’ history and political culture before Soviet dominance was limited. Moreover, the new situation was relatively open with many new parties and groupings taking form. On top of this came the lack of coordination. The parties and foundations from Western Europe were unaware of their respective travel routes and sometimes made the same trips and gathered the same information about the new parties. The lack of coordination was to some degree intentional. According to the EPP and EUCD secretary general at the time, there was a certain ‘egoism’ among the national parties, who had their own agendas and wanted to be visible as the donors or the ones who supported certain parties.\footnote{Interview with Thomas Jansen, 14 June 2007.}

The second challenge for the EPP and EUCD was the insight that the centre-right party spectrum contained several potential member parties. (see table 5.2) At first sight, finding sister parties in Central and Eastern Europe was relatively easy compared with the situation for the social democrats. The potential member parties were not discredited in the same way as the former communist parties that aspired to become affiliated to European social democracy. However, the broad umbrella movements, which overthrew the communist regimes, consisted of a plethora of different liberal, Christian democrat, agrarian, nationalist and conservative parties or movements. Eventually, these broad movements split up\footnote{The most problematic case was Poland as the umbrella organisation Solidarity had totally disintegrated. The difficulty for the EUCD to get an overview of the Polish centre-right was made worse as a number of party splits and mergers came as a result of not only ideology but also personal rifts. See Ágh (1998) p 39-42; Markowski (2006) p 20 and Millard (2003) p 28-29.} and in country after country, the EPP confronted a confused and overpopulated centre-right.\footnote{Both Christian democratic parties that had colluded with the communists in power and newly founded organisations sent membership applications to the EUCD and CDI. Delsoldato (2002) p 277} Indeed, there was in the EPP a certain envy of the social democrats as they only had to deal with (ideally) one party in each country.\footnote{Interview with Antonio López Istúriz, 18 February 2009. The respondent hastened to add that also the socialists have many divisions internally.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Bulgarian Agrarian People’s Union ‘Nikola Petkov’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bulgarian Christian Democratic Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
<td>Czechoslovak People’s Party (mainly Czech)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Democratic Party (Czech)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Democratic Movement (Slovak)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Christian Democratic Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Democratic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Hungarian Democratic Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Democratic People’s Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent Smallholders’ Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>Christian Democratic Union of Lithuania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Democratic Party of Lithuania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Christian Democratic Party of Labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural Solidarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Centre Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Democratic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian National Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Christian Democrat National Peasant’s Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Democratic Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>Slovene Christian Democrats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slovenian Peasant Union</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These are only the parties that were included in the EUCD overviews of likeminded parties in the region. Note that some of these parties do not exist anymore.


However there was some variation between the countries, which invites some comparison. The main focus in the initial stage was on Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Poland, with its strong Catholic heritage, would at first sight offer good conditions for the EPP to find likeminded parties. However, it turned out to be the most complicated. The main reason was that Poland experienced an extremely scattered party landscape after the split-up of Solidarity in 1989-1990.\(^{320}\) Compared to Poland, the situation in Hungary could be described as the ‘ideal case’ from the EPP perspective.

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The chairman of the main conservative party, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, József Antall, was a strong and respected authority with a Catholic background. After the successful 1990 elections he united the centre-right political family by building a coalition government with the Independent Smallholders’ Party and the Christian Democratic People’s Party.\(^{321}\) Thus, the EPP had found a strong and stable partner in the Hungarian centre-right; strong, stable and easily identified.

In the Czechoslovak case the initial phase of identifying partners was somewhat delayed. First of all, the question of whether the federation would divide or not created a general uncertainty on what the future party system would look like.\(^{322}\) Secondly the rapid transition had made the umbrella organisations (Civic Forum in the Czech case and Public Against Violence in Slovakia) stronger than its Polish and Hungarian counterparts.\(^{323}\) The ‘wait and see’ strategy of the West European party families took therefore a bit longer in the Czechoslovak case.\(^{324}\) However, at a relatively early stage, the two republics of the federation developed fairly independent party systems. In the Czech case, the EPP soon found a stable partner in the Christian Democratic Union (KDU), which was founded with the German CDU as the explicit role-model.\(^{325}\) Slovakia, which was traditionally more Catholic than its Czech counterpart, offered better possibilities for strong Christian democratic parties. However, it was the left-wing nationalist/populist Movement for a Democratic Slovakia under Vladimír Mečiar that became the dominating political force in the early years. Nevertheless, the EPP found a stable partner in the Christian Democratic Movement.\(^{326}\)

**EUCD as a ‘waiting room’**

The West European Christian democrats had both clear aims and strategy from the beginning. This is seen partly at the organisational level and partly on the ground. As will be shown, the first laid the foundations for the second.

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\(^{322}\) At the federal level, there was for example the ‘Christian Democrat Federal Coalition’. See Novák (2003) p 37.


\(^{324}\) Pridham (2001) p 189.

\(^{325}\) In 1992 it merged with the former bloc-party the Czechoslovak People’s Party.

\(^{326}\) KDH was granted EUCD membership already in 1990, the year it was founded. See Jansen & van Hecke (2011) p 76.
At the organisational level, it was decided that the merging of the EUCD into the EPP should wait. They realised that it was now an advantage to have two complementing organisations. The intention was that the EUCD, as a more loose and open organisation, could deal with the emerging Christian democratic parties without taking the same political risk as the more prestigious EPP. Moreover, there was a convenient division of labour here with the EPP focusing on the parties from countries inside the EU while the EUCD could concentrate on non-EU countries. This division of labour meant that the EUCD had a new reason for existing. In the words of the EPP leader Wilfried Martens:

EUCD could serve as a waiting room and training school for parties in those countries destined to later join the European Union. In anticipation, the EUCD offered an intermediate forum where they had a chance to assemble and meet; at the same time, the EPP avoided all pressure to expand quickly with parties that did not yet meet its standards.

The strategy on the ground was to approach the emerging party systems carefully and slowly build up contacts. The very first contacts were initiated already in 1988 in Poland and Hungary, and in 1989-90 in Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, the Baltic region and Yugoslavia. In this early stage, the exiles from mainly Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia played an important role. Many of the journeys, study visits and fact-finding missions to Central and Eastern Europe were accompanied by exiles, or their grown-up children, who knew the language and still had some contacts in their original country. In this way, the exiled politicians functioned as door openers in both ways; for the West European parties who sought potential partners and for the newly emerged parties that sought a suitable European partner. As mentioned earlier, the exiled politicians had grouped together and formed the Central European Union of Christian Democrats (CEUCD). In March 1990, the CEUCD organised a conference in Budapest and decided to revive the organisation in order to promote their parties. As exile parties, these had the advantage of already being members of the CDI.

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327 Interview with Klaus Welle, 27 August 2007.
329 One example is Konrad Siniewicz from Poland, who accompanied the EPP/EUCD secretary general to his first mission in Poland. Interview with Thomas Jansen, 14 June 2007.
and many of them were quickly accepted into the EUCD after 1989. However, it was soon clear that the CEUCD lacked the means to play a decisive role and in 1992, it was decided to dissolve the organisation. Nevertheless, returning exiled politicians played a role in the early years. One reason is that they were seen as clean and not involved in the political intrigues during and after the transition.

To deal with the initial acute problem of coordination and lack of knowledge of the new political terrain, the EPP and EUCD formed a joint ‘Working group for Central and Eastern Europe’ in October 1989 with the following tasks:

1. **Inventory of the parties:** party name and description of the profile of the party.
2. **Exchange of experiences:** the West European parties report to the working group about their contacts and experiences of parties and personalities.
3. **Planning activities:** gather information about the different projects from the Western Christian democratic parties.
4. **Coordinate the support:** material support (copying-machines for example) and arranging courses and seminars.
5. **Information centre:** not only for Western Christian democratic parties but also for the Christian Democratic International.

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330 Already in 1990 some argued that the EUCD should be careful not to let in the new parties too quickly as many of them were admitted to the CDI too easily through the CEUCD. See *Letter from Helmut Kohl to Wilfried Martens, leader of the EPP, 5 June 1990.*

331 The CEUCD lacked both the organisation and ideas and furthermore the leaders were mostly older men. Moreover, the new Christian democratic parties were not interested in getting caught in a regional Central European party federation and taking orders from those who had returned from exile. They wanted to belong to the EUCD, which enabled them to access direct co-operation with the West European parties and the EPP in particular.

332 One example is the former ice-hockey player Peter Šťastný, who returned to independent Slovakia and was received as a hero. Šťastný himself believes that it was the fact that he was politically inexperienced that made him so popular, combined with the need for heroes in a new country like Slovakia. Interview with Peter Šťastný, Brussels 9 December 2008. Another noteworthy example is Valdas Adamkus who became president of Lithuania in 1998. Adamkus had spent more than 40 years in Germany and the United States as an exile. When he came back, he did not belong to any political party.

The plan was to build up an information centre in the working group, from which an overview could be gathered partly of the activities and partly of the potential partners in Central and Eastern Europe. This made it possible for the EUCD to handle both the lack of coordination and the lack of knowledge of the party terrain in Central and Eastern Europe. The information was systematically compiled and sent out to all member parties from the EUCD secretariat in Brussels in the form of continuously updated ‘übersichts’ (overviews). A key player in the gathering of this information was the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation. As it had offices in more or less all the capitals in Central and Eastern Europe, it functioned as the most important source from which the working group gathered information.334 These overviews contained brief information about each party’s historical background, ideological character, coalition partners335 of the Christian democratic parties in Central and Eastern Europe and of updated calendars of coming activities.336

One important part of getting to know not only the parties but also the main personalities within them was joint conferences. In 1990, several large gatherings were arranged especially for the theme ‘Central and Eastern Europe’. These conferences played an important role as they offered a chance for personal meetings in a more informal way. Personal meetings were seen as extra important in the early stage. The two parts of Europe had been more or less isolated from each other for at least four decades. Therefore, apart from exchanging ideas and experiences these conferences were also a chance to challenge prejudices and stereotypes.337 Internal EPP or EUCD conferences were used to link together parties from Central and Eastern Europe with West European parties.

334 Interview with Thomas Jansen, 14 June 2007.
336 See for example Terminkalender 1993, no 2, 7 and 8. The chairman of the working group and the secretary general of EUCD at the time (that had this position in EPP as well) seemed to have played a key role in this effort of coordination and of understanding the party terrain in Central and Eastern Europe.
337 Interview with Antonio López Istúriz, 18 February 2009.
Table 5.3 Conferences organised for Central and East European Christian democratic parties in 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Organiser</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vienna</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>ÖVP</td>
<td>The first conference where all Christian democratic parties from both Western and Eastern Europe were invited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budapest</td>
<td>March</td>
<td>CEUCD</td>
<td>The first congress for representatives of Christian democratic oriented parties in Central and Eastern Europe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budapest</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>CDI</td>
<td>A conference for Christian democratic party leaders and for heads of government and ministers from all over the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxemburg</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>EPP-group</td>
<td>The newly elected Christian democratic MPs from Central and Eastern Europe met with MPs and MEPs from Western Europe.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Jahresbericht über Entwicklung und Tätigkeit der EUCD 1990.

Already in the EUCD congress in November in 1989, several Christian democratic politicians from Poland, Hungary, Estonia and Lithuania were present and insisted on the importance of support from West European Christian democrats in this early stage.338 Another important occasion in the early stage that demonstrated the importance of building personal contacts and even friendships with likeminded politicians in Central and Eastern Europe was the decision to hold the Congress of the Christian Democratic International in Budapest in June 1990. The special atmosphere that surrounded this meeting is described in EPP-leader Wilfried Martens’ autobiography in the following way:

I remember this as a real political highlight. After the fall of the Berlin Wall new democratic governments were being elected throughout Central Europe. Many eyes were drawn with hope to the leaders that were present. The atmosphere was at times one of elation. After the official dinner Helmut Kohl insisted that his colleagues, led by József Antall [party leader of the

338 These were Władysław Siła-Nowicki, leader of Party of Labour; from Hungary Alexander Karcsay, spokesperson in foreign relations for the Hungarian Christian Democratic People’s Party; from Estonia Karin Jaani, as a representative for the Christian Democratic Union of Estonia and from Lithuania Adolfas Venzkus. Info Der EVP-Fraktion in Europäischen Parlament, no. 4: ‘EUCD-Kongress begrüßt Reformen in Mittel- und Osteuropa’. 
Hungarian Democratic Forum], walk over the chain bridge from Pest to Buda to a famous restaurant to taste his revered salami. We enjoyed this until late at night whilst strengthening our friendship. Unfortunately, this kind of political bonding was seldom repeated.\(^{339}\)

One cannot avoid observing the importance of personal relations and personal contact networks within the Christian democratic family. Already in the Nouvelle Equipes Internationales, there was an alternative channel for individual politicians to become affiliated and also in the EUCD there was openness to prominent politicians within the EUCD bodies\(^{340}\). All this contributed to improved internal communications but above all to a strengthening of personal bonds between prominent national politicians. Even if the EPP and EUCD were organisations without ‘hard power’ they played an important role as a forum for extending the Christian democratic network of contacts to Central and Eastern Europe. Lojze Peterle, former party leader for Slovene Christian Democrats argues that these close personal contacts are very useful.

> What I like best is that the EPP seems to be very, well, personal. People really know each other and can talk informally. Difficulties seem to get sorted out before they become problems, I suppose in conversations like this. That has been the advantage to us being in the EUCD these past few years. We have had friends, and been able to help each other.\(^{341}\)

An occasion which may serve as an endpoint for the first stage of contact building was the EUCD congress in Warsaw in June 1992. When 14 parties from Central and Eastern Europe took part as observers the atmosphere was described as both solemn and joyful.\(^{342}\) Shortly after, in early 1993, the first representatives from post-communist countries were also elected to the EUCD presidency.\(^{343}\) In hindsight, one could argue that the time- and energy consuming experiment with the EPP and the EUCD as parallel organisations was worth the trouble. In the words of David Hanley:


\(^{340}\) The EUCD included not only representatives of national parties or national parliamentary groups. It also included those who held positions in the European Parliament and in the Assembly of the Council of Europe. See Jansen (2006a) p 56.


\(^{343}\) These were Lojze Peterle from Slovenia and László Surján from Hungary. Jansen (2006a) p 173.
The EPP’s role of co-ordination is enhanced by its position within the wider EUCD, into which it fits like the proverbial Russian doll. This flexible structure enables a wider grouping of parties to be kept in the CD [Christian democratic] fold, with the prospect of graduating eventually to the inner sanctum of the EPP.\footnote{Hanley (1994) p 195. Brackets added.}

The parallel organisations provided a certain flexibility, which allowed them to gather Christian democracy in Central and Eastern Europe under one umbrella and at the same time serve as a ‘buffer-zone’ to the EPP.

**The Eastern perspective: Need for contacts and support**

The main goal for the Christian democratic or centre-right parties in Central and Eastern Europe was generally to establish a stable relation with the European party family as soon as possible. The long-term goal was membership of the party family. This wish was expressed already at the EUCD Congress in November 1989 by guests from Poland and Hungary.\footnote{DPA 8 November 1989 ‘Europäische Christdemokraten für deutsche Wiedervereinigung’; Info der EVP Fraktion in der EP November 1989 ‘EUCD-kongress begrüsst Reformen in Mittel- und Osteuropa’.} What is interesting here is that most centre-right parties in Central and Eastern Europe established relationships with both the EUCD and the conservative EDU. Especially in the early stage, it was necessary for Central and East European parties to be present everywhere and to get as many international contacts as possible. Many of them even expressed the opinion that it was irrational to have these two separate organisations at all.\footnote{Interview with Thomas Jansen, 14 June 2007.}

The motives for seeking a link with the EUCD or the EDU were related to two interlinked needs: recognition and support. Recognition from a party international meant that the parties were given a kind of ‘stamp of approval’,\footnote{Interview with Antonio López Istúriz, 18 February 2009. According to the respondent, the concept of Europe had such a positive connotation that this was something that many parties wanted to be associated with. To be associated with the Christian democrats, who represented the most influential political family in the European Union, strengthened the party’s prestige even further.} and support was needed due to the general inexperience of the new parties. The specific needs depended on the character of the party. The general non-communist party landscape in Central and Eastern Europe was divided into three sub-categories: ‘historical parties’ (they had existed before the communist dictatorship began), ‘bloc parties’ (they were satellite
parties348 of the communist party) or thirdly ‘newly founded parties’. These different party-types were confronted with different problems. The newly founded parties needed much practical support due to lack of resources, organisation and experience. Also the historical parties needed practical support. Even if some of the old leadership of the historical parties still lived, they were at this point men from the older generation without experience in politics. Women in leading positions in Christian democratic parties in this region were extremely rare. When it came to the former bloc parties, they were in most need of recognition. These parties were often still associated with the old regime and they needed legitimacy above all. Recognition from the sister parties in Western Europe could help to build that legitimacy.349

In the initial stage, the need for support and recognition was combined with a certain time-pressure.350 The first free elections in 1990 were called only a few months after the fall of the communist regimes. Surviving the first elections was very important for these parties as the result of these might determine their very existence. According to Thomas Jansen, secretary general at the time for the EUCD and EPP, it was rather survival than development that was at stake:

For them the most important was of course not so much to develop an ideology or specific policy. For them the important thing was to exist, and to exist also after the first or the next election.351

There was thus a need for help among the Christian democratic parties in Central and Eastern Europe before (and after) the first elections. What kind of help then was asked for and what could the Western Christian democratic parties provide? At the EUCD Congress in 1989, the leaders of the EUCD spoke enthusiastically about the changes in Central and Eastern Europe and assured the new Christian democratic parties in the region ‘solidarity and support’.352 But it was soon clear that there were different

348 Some bloc-parties had been created by the communists while other had their roots in the pre-communist period but were forced to become satellites to the communist party after 1947-48.

349 Interview with Klaus Welle, 27 August 2007 and with Antonio López Istúriz, 18 February 2009.


351 Interview with Thomas Jansen, 14 June 2007.

352 EUCD Congress 1989, Resolution 1: Beziehungen zu den Ländern Mittel- und Osteuropas. See also DPA 6 November 1989.
interpretations of the meaning of ‘solidarity and support’. According to the secretary general of the EUCD and EPP, many parties expected and requested financial support, which on the other hand was difficult to arrange.\textsuperscript{353}

Apart from providing the new parties with some technical infrastructure (like copying machines and other office equipment) the main support was instead to recognise the parties and provide them with some advice and training.\textsuperscript{354} Apart from party-to-party support, transnational party contacts also presented new opportunities for politicians in the Soviet Union and in Yugoslavia who were aiming for independence. In this thesis this applies for the Baltic States and for Slovenia. Transnational party links could offer an alternative channel to prominent political leaders when the door was closed for conventional diplomacy and thereby serve as an important door-opener to high-level politicians in Western Europe.\textsuperscript{355} This opportunity was one significant aspect in the process towards independence. It is essential here to underline the importance of personal contacts rather than party-to-party contacts. In the case of Slovenia, the Slovene Christian Democrats’ early affiliation to the EDU and EUCD opened up new possibilities for the party leader and then prime minister of the not yet independent country, Lojze Peterle.

This link was very important. We were not recognised as an independent state and I didn’t have the possibility to join the prime ministers of other countries in different things but as a leader of a party, which was member of these two international, I had the chance to appear on the same level on the so called summits of both organisations. So I had the chance to be together with Kohl, Andreotti, John Major, Jacques Chirac and so on, and also to speak with the European parliamentarians on different occasions so this was very important...to have the chance to appear from time to time...to make friends.\textsuperscript{356}

One example of how these informal contacts could produce political results was that Lojze Peterle as prime minister of the Slovenian Federal Republic was granted an official audience with the Prime Minister of Belgium

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{353} Interview with Thomas Jansen, 14 June 2007. In 1990, representatives from Poland and Romania appeared at one EPP Political Bureau meeting to request ‘immediate material support’. Niederschrift der Sitzung des Politischen Bureaus der EVP, Brussels 10 May 1990.

\textsuperscript{354} Interview with Klaus Welle, 27 August 2007 and with Thomas Jansen, 14 June 2007.

\textsuperscript{355} Interview with Vytautas Landsbergis, 4 December 2008.

\textsuperscript{356} Interview with Alojs Peterle, 9 September 2009.
\end{footnotesize}
Wilfried Martens (who was also the EPP President at the time) before Slovenia declared independence on 25 June 1991.\(^{357}\) It is also interesting to note that the left parties in Slovenia wanted to keep the Christian democratic leader as prime minister for some time due to his ‘good reputation and good relation with the European Christian democrats as the prevailing political force’.\(^{358}\) This is one example of ‘party diplomatic strategy’ as a way for political parties (especially in smaller countries) to secure national interests.\(^{359}\) As the party leader put it, he could have applied for a formal meeting with Chancellor Helmut Kohl but this would have taken months. The possibility to attend party summits was a kind of a short-track in this sense. Moreover, in the Slovenian case the international contacts of the Christian democrats were of special importance since the social democratic parties were initially not recognised by the Socialist International or the West European social democratic parties.

5.3 The second phase: Evaluation and education
When the first step of identifying possible partners and the first ad-hoc support had been provided, the EPP and the EUCD entered a second and in many ways more complicated phase of strengthening the link and evaluating the applicant parties.

The challenge of a scattered centre-right
The main problem for the EPP after the initial phase of identifying parties was the continued instability of the centre-right spectrum among the political parties in Central and Eastern Europe. In this second phase of evaluating the potential partners, the EPP and EUCD were confronted with basically three interrelated challenges: growing rivalry between the applicant parties; increasing nationalism among some potential partners and small confessional Christian democratic parties. Now follows a more detailed presentation of each of them.

The initial situation with more than one potential partner in each country was not a problem in itself. The EPP already had experience with several members from each country with for example the German CDU and CSU and the Belgian CVP and CSP. The challenge lay in the continued uncertainty of the party infrastructure in several countries. The exceptional case here was Poland. At first sight, Poland with its Catholic heritage would be the best case for the EPP but it turned out to be the most compli-

\(^{357}\) Martens (2006) p 207

\(^{358}\) Interview with Alojs Peterle, 9 September 2009.

\(^{359}\) See Jerneck (1990)
The background was the split-up of Solidarity in 1989-90, which resulted in a swarm of parties and groupings that continued to split and merge for several years. The situation was almost impossible to overview and the secretary general of the EPP and EUCD at the time had the following comment on this:

It was a very exciting moment and very interesting talks we had there. But the difficulty with the so-called Christian democrats or those who had interest to join the Christian group, was that they were not able to come together. I mean we always told them: ‘Listen, we cannot have 16 or 6 or 12 parties. You are all nice people with good ideas and you are very much engaged, but we must find a way to come together’.

The fluid Polish party landscape was further complicated by the repeated attempts by some personalities to monopolise the contacts with the EPP and EUCD. In the end, no Polish group became an official or formal member of the EUCD. Even if the Polish case was exceptional, it was clear as time went by that the same problem existed in several countries. Especially in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the post-independence party systems were characterised by recurrent splits and mergers. It was in fact a general problem within the centre-right spectrum in most Central and East European countries as it shifted in different forms of electoral coalitions. These were often arranged so as to secure parliamentary representation but often split up afterwards.

The main reason behind the instability of the centre-right was the increased tensions between the various parties and groupings that took over

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360 In the 1991 elections to the Polish Sejm, the number of political parties competing for representation was 111, out of which 29 got mandates. See Jasiewicz (2006) p 34-36; Millard (2003) p 28-31.

361 Interview with Thomas Jansen, 14 June 2007.

362 This was according to the EPP/EUCD secretary general at the time a typical behaviour of specifically one central figure within the Polish Christian democracy, Jarosław Kaczyński who continuously tried to monopolise the contacts with EPP and EUCD. The phrase was ‘us or no one’ attempting to isolate all other potential parties. Interview with Thomas Jansen, 14 June 2007. According to the respondent these attempts of monopolising the relations could not be accepted by the EUCD or the EPP.

363 One example is Latvia, where the parties on the centre-right formed two coalitions before the elections in 1995: the first was between the National Independence Movement and the Green Party and the second between the Farmers’ Union and the Christian Democrat Union. Both coalitions ceased to exist before the National Independence Movement formed a coalition with the national-conservative Pro Patria in 1998.
from the former communists. The break-up of the broad umbrella movements disclosed a plethora of ideologies and political leanings such as social-liberal, conservative, Christian democratic, nationalist and agrarian. The initial period of government revealed mainly two divides within this rainbow coalition: one related to socio-economic distributional issues and one cultural divide, which was related to the view on religion and the nation. The first divide was in most cases related to the speed of privatisation in the economic transition. Here, the neo-liberal parties argued for a swift privatisation process while the more cautious side preferred a more gradual process hoping to avoid a painful social crisis with mass unemployment. The cultural divide separated parties into one liberal-cosmopolitan camp and an authoritarian-conservative. Except for traditional cultural-ethical issues such as abortion and divorce, this divide was parallel to the socio-economic where the authoritarian-conservative camp argued for a slower transition and against too aggressive foreign investment.

In many cases the EPP had several potential partners from each country that were positioned on either side of the two divides. In some cases they often suffered from party splits as a result of this divide. Except for the general confusion and competition, the element of nationalism within many of the potential member parties was a great concern for the EPP. In 1991-93 there were increased nationalist tendencies in many parts of Central and Eastern Europe. In some cases, representatives of potential EPP partners made nationalist, xenophobic and sometimes anti-Semitic statements. This caused concern within the EPP and the EUCD. The most problematic issue was where to draw the line against parties with nationalist leanings. In some situations the nationalist statements came from individuals with little party backing and sometimes from party leaders or other prominent representatives.

The third dilemma that confronted the EPP was that many of the applicant parties had a strong Christian-confessional profile. At first sight this would not seem to be a problem, but as mentioned in chapter four, the history of Christian democracy in Western Europe is clearly marked by a tension between those who wanted to keep close ties with clerical institutions, mainly the Catholic Church, and those who preferred to keep a clear distance. Eventually, the broad non-confessional parties became the most successful in Western Europe, and therefore the renaissance of religion in

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politics was a delicate issue. This dilemma was furthermore complicated by the fact that many of these religious parties had a narrower voter-base. Some of them were rural or even regional in character which made it difficult for them to represent the whole country.

The problem from the EPP perspective was that parties, which had a ‘C’ or better the ‘K’ in their name; ‘C’ for Christian democrat or ‘K’ for ‘katolisch’; were normally single digit. They were small parties and they were not very representative of society as a whole and they had difficulties to claim to be people's parties. Sometimes...let’s say they were very religious parties so to a certain extent it was a confrontation with our own past.366

The EPP confronted several parties, which were complicated to evaluate. One example is the Czech Republic with the Christian Democratic Union/Czechoslovak People’s Party (KDU-CSL). This was a party that was mainly limited to Catholics in Moravia (the eastern part of the country) and thus it can be seen as both a regional party and a confessional party.367 It lacked real representation in Bohemia and among Protestants or non-believers. This dilemma with small and narrow confessional Christian democratic parties came up in several countries where the EUCD found partners like Slovakia, Hungary, Lithuania, and Bulgaria. In most cases this was problem was not like the nationalist dilemma. This was more related to the strategic issue of EPP-representation in the country and was thus more linked to securing influence in an enlarged Europe.

An illustrative example where all three dilemmas presented above (a divided centre-right, nationalism and small Christian democratic parties) played a role, is the development in Hungary. The initial situation was good from the EPP-perspective. Jozsef Antall, the chairman of the main conservative party, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, was a strong and respected authority with a Catholic background. After the successful 1990 elections, he united the centre-right political family by building a coalition government with the Independent Smallholders’ Party and with the Christian Democratic People’s Party.368 Thus, even if the EUCD accepted all three parties as members, it had found an ideal partner in Hungary: strong, stable and easily identified. However, this ideal situation did not last for

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366 Interview with Klaus Welle, 27 August 2007.
367 The Czech party system was rather shaky at times during the term 1992-1996. However, it was mostly within the political left that splits and breakouts could be seen. The pro-market conservative Civic Democratic Party (ODS) emerged as the most stable and well-organised political force on the centre-right. On the left, the social democratic ČSSD emerged as the strongest force. Ágh (1998) p 141-142.
long. The coalition became increasingly divided and one of the main issues was the privatisation of the assets that had been expropriated by the communists. Here, the agrarian Smallholders’ Party argued for a return of the assets to the pre-communist era owners while the Democratic Forum held a more moderate position.\footnote{Another issue concerned the new constitution. Without informing its coalition partners, the Hungarian Democratic Forum made a pact with the second largest party, the liberal Alliance of Free Democrats, which were in opposition. See Tamas (1999) p 31-33.} In 1992, the Smallholders’ Party left the government and formed a right-wing opposition. Also the dominating Hungarian Democratic Forum became increasingly divided between a nationalist-radical wing and the ruling moderate conservative wing. In 1993 the nationalist-radical wing broke away and formed the Hungarian Party for Life and Justice with a strong nationalist and anti-Semitic profile.\footnote{Pittaway (2003) p 65-66.}

The results of the 1994 elections indicated some new paths in Hungarian politics. The centre-right parties lost and they were weakened and divided. For the EUCD, this situation was highly problematic as they had accepted all three parties as member in the initial phase. Now it was stuck with three relatively small parties, with very strained relations. On top of this came the nationalist and populist elements. The most problematic case was the Smallholders’ Party and its chairman.

It was quite clear from a certain moment that the leader of the party, Mr Torgyan was a very strong figure but he was also a populist and a nationalist. So their position was not any more in agreement or in the same track as the thinking and policy of the EPP. But also as a result of his character, he was a very strong, even dictatorial figure and at a certain moment he lost all his deputies [in the Hungarian parliament].\footnote{Interview with Thomas Jansen, Brussels 14 June 2007. Brackets added.}

Eventually the EUCD finally decided to expel the party in 1992. Shortly after, similar problems appeared with the Christian Democratic People’s Party. After the 1994 elections, the party had recurrent internal crises and some of its groupings flirted with the extreme-right Hungarian Justice and Life Party. After several meetings and negotiations it was obvious that the
situation was no longer manageable and the EUCD decided to suspend the Hungarian Christian democrats in 1997.\footnote{In March 1997, delegates made a visit to Hungary with the purpose to sort out the situation. After negotiations with the leadership of the Hungarian Christian democrats, a certain agreement was made. They promised not to contact or cooperate with the extreme right party and to initiate talks with the Hungarian Democratic Forum and the Alliance of Young Democrats (Fidesz) for an electoral coalition. After only one month both parts of the agreement were broken. Therefore, the EUCD council ‘recognized the fact that KDNP had, by its actions and inactions expelled itself.’ EPP/EUCD Yearbook 1997.}

**Conditionality, flexibility and education**

As demonstrated above, the second phase of evaluating the potential member parties was in practice a complicated process. Many of the possible partners were inexperienced and their ideological profile ranged from deep traditional Christianity via conservatism and market liberalism to radical nationalism. On top of this came the general situation with a scattered and divided centre-right with several potential partners, often in fierce competition with each other. The question was how to handle this situation. The Hungarian lesson taught the EPP and EUCD to be more careful and above all realise that it would take time to integrate the new parties into the ‘political culture’ that was the norm in Western Europe in general and in the EPP in particular. The concrete strategy of the EPP to deal with this seems to have been working on three parallel tracks: Conditionality, flexibility and education

**Conditionality: Membership criteria and internal divisions**

In the evaluation process, the West European Christian democrats were confronted with some difficult dilemmas. How tough should the EUCD be on membership? In one sense, the EUCD continued to exist because it was a more open and inclusive organisation than the EPP. But on the other hand it was clear that once the parties were in the EUCD, it would be difficult to deny entry into the EPP later on. Therefore it was evident that there had to be some criteria for membership. The question was then what kind of criteria. Was it more important that the applicant party had a suitable ideological profile or was party size and organisational strength the crucial matter? Where should the EUCD draw the line on acceptable behaviour when it came to extreme statements from party leaders? Apart from these dilemmas, there were also pressures from different Western parties that certain applicant parties should be admitted sooner than others. Consider-
ing this, it was a delicate task for the EUCD to evaluate the membership applications.

I remember very well we had often discussions about the profile and the importance of one or the other party, which was judged in a very different way from different parties. There was always a tendency of some people within the EPP or in the EUCD to privilege the parties which at that time had an immediate chance or possibility to become a governmental party. Smaller parties which had a more distinct Christian democratic ideology or tradition were not considered as being worthwhile to give a chance. And others saw it the other way. There were those who said ‘no we must privilege the traditional parties even if they are small’ and others had the other idea and well, like always in this situations one compromised on saying ‘well we must have both people on board.’

Most of these internal disagreements were revealed in the discussions within the ‘Working Group for Central and Eastern Europe’. It was mostly the German Christian democrats who were interested in the stronger parties that had aspirations to form a government. It was enough if the party in question was interested in joining the family. The question whether they had any tradition as Christian democrats mattered less. This was something that could be ‘developed later on’. The group that was mainly interested in getting on board the parties with a clear Christian democratic tradition consisted mainly of parties from Belgium, Luxemburg, the Netherlands and Italy.

Nevertheless, the normal procedure was to invite several parties from each country in order to satisfy both groupings within the EPP. Soon it was obvious however, that the pressures from various Western parties were too difficult to handle. Their arguments could be strategic, historical-sentimental, personal, or tactical. Whatever reason, they could seldom serve any general agreement and therefore the working group had to define criteria for membership, which were included in the new EUCD constitution.

- that they operate in countries which have a system based on liberty, democracy and the rule of law

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373 Interview with Thomas Jansen, 14 June 2007.
374 An additional factor, which complicated the situation further, was that there were sometimes divisions within the German CDU on what parties that the EUCD should accept. This often meant that the secretary general (who was German) found himself in rather difficult situations.
375 EUCD Constitution 1992, article 3c. The EUCD Constitution was recognized in 1992 and came into force in 1993. This new framework of rules was established as a direct adaptation of the EUCD to the new situation.
that they have taken part in free elections and are represented in parliament
that they accept the ‘Manifesto of European Christian Democrats’, the
‘Political Manifesto of the World Union of Christian Democrats’ and this
constitution

These criteria may look rather hollow at first sight but they could serve as a
kind of ‘first filter’ for the EUCD working group in the evaluation process. The first criterion was certainly a kind of safety measure in case they
got applications from parties that were corrupt or authoritarian. The second
criterion can be seen as an attempt from the EUCD to sort out all those small newly started groupings without any real political importance.
This could perhaps also work as an indirect push for parties to come together and form larger parties or alliances. Finally the third demand to accept the general Christian democratic manifesto could serve as a safety barrier against obscure Christian or nationalist parties. In case the party was not primarily Christian democrat, this criterion might also have had an indirect influence on the party’s ideological identity. Even if these interna
tional manifestos are often very broad in their ideological stance, this
could have had some psychological effect.

Apart from these three criteria, there was also another possibility in the
constitutional framework that the EUCD could use. If there were applications from several competing parties, the EUCD council could make membership conditional on the formation of a ‘national equipe’.376 This meant that the applicants had to develop a co-operation and consultation structure to ensure that they would have joint representatives in the EUCD. This possibility can be linked to an EU-conditionality perspective as there was in theory a possibility of a forced unification of the Christian democratic parties and, as a consequence, a partial stabilisation of the party system in the applicant country. However, according to the secretary general of the EPP/EUCD at the time, this clause was only used as an encouragement, never as a condition. Instead it was about repeated visits, talks and discussions where EUCD representatives urged the parties to find a common platform.377 Generally, this encouragement was unsuccessful and the Polish example is typical. After encouragement from the EPP, there was one attempt to bring the Polish Christian democratic parties together.378

376 EUCD Constitution, article 3d.
377 Interview with Thomas Jansen, Brussels 14 June 2007. According to the respondent, these attempts were normally not very successful.
before the EUCD congress in Warsaw in June 1992, several Polish parties had formed a joint grouping called the ‘Christian Democratic Congress’. Now they could apply for EUCD membership according to EUCD condition to have a ‘national equipe’. But there were not really many who believed that this would hold for long and it fell apart only a few weeks after the conference.\(^{379}\) This points towards a power-relation between the EPP and EUCD on the one hand and the potential member parties on the other that is not as straightforward as it may appear. The EUCD with its rather light political weight was certainly not in a position to give orders but was at the same time a future potential channel into the more powerful EPP.

*The strategy on the ground: Flexibility, discretion and personal contacts*

The membership criteria served a certain purpose. On the one hand they helped the EUCD council to distinguish the proper partners in the region and on the other the criteria had a potential influence on the applicant parties to tone down possible nationalist or populist tendencies or possibly enter into broad centre-right coalitions. But the question was how to deal with the problems more concretely on the ground. The most acute problem for the EPP was the fluid character of the centre-right spectrum. On the one hand, the EPP were certainly interested in having a long-term partner in each country but on the other hand it was almost impossible to get an overview of the potential partners in several countries. The EPP’s solution to this dilemma was to use a more open strategy, to shift focus from parties to key politicians.

Contacts needed to be organised but they couldn’t really be formalised. So what we did was instead of being fixed upon one party we were looking at the political space. And we were saying ‘This is our political space and the organisations which are in this political space for us are fine. We know that they might not continue for a very long time but the people who are in there and the programmes which are there will continue although under a different brand name.’ We knew at the time that even though we made the membership decisions, we were rather making adhesion for people and ideas than for organisations that would anyway transform.\(^{380}\)

The decision to focus on the political space rather than certain parties reveals the flexibility of the Christian democratic party tradition. When the plea for a Christian democratic ‘equipe’ in each country did not work, the remaining alternative was to wait and see. By informally keeping the link with and supporting certain personalities, the EPP did not risk getting in-

\(^{379}\) Interview with Thomas Jansen, 14 June 2007.

\(^{380}\) Interview with Klaus Welle, 27 August 2007.
involved in the internal centre-right rivalry but could still keep the strategic link to the main centre-right parties. Again, we can see the advantage of having a strong network of personal contacts. In the early stage, it helped the EPP to include a broad range of parties and in this second stage it enabled the EPP to apply a ‘wait and see’ strategy without risking losing the main partners.

The second acute problem that had to be dealt with was the increasing nationalism among some potential member parties. For the EPP and EUCD, moderate nationalism was not a problem per se. As a political force within the conservative spectrum, a certain acceptance of patriotism or national pride was necessary if they were to have any partners at all. Yet once it turned anti-European or openly xenophobic, the EPP reacted with decisiveness, however discreet. This balance between understanding and conditionality is evident in the prologue to the EUCD Constitution in 1992.

Periods of profound change also generate imponderable issues, dangers and potential for conflict. (…) The most dangerous response to the fall of communism is a misplaced nationalist ideology. The feeling of patriotism and belonging to a specific community is inherent to the existence of any human being and thus entirely legitimate. Nationalism can no longer be acceptable, however, when it becomes absolute and denies other values and responsibilities such as loyalty to the democratic state and the rights of minorities.381

The combination of understanding and denunciation can also be seen in the handling of concrete situations. The modus operandi in the EPP in such situations was always based on bilateral talks. In this way possible misunderstandings could be sorted out and certain personalities would be informed if their behaviour was ‘disturbing’.382 This indicates a strategy that combines discretion with conditionality.

One illustrative example is how the EPP handled the nationalist and populist tendencies in the early 1990s in the Slovakian part of Czechoslovakia. The party leader of the Christian Democratic Movement383 had made several nationalist statements directed against the Hungarian minori-

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381 EPP Basic Programme 1992, prologue by Wilfried Martens. This was followed by preparations for more resolutions against racism and xenophobia from both the EPP and EUCD in 1993.
382 Interview with Thomas Jansen, 14 June 2007.
383 The party leader for the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), Ján Čarnogurský, was also prime minister of the Slovak Federal Republic at the time.
ty. This caused great concern in the EPP, as this party had been included in the EUCD already in 1990. 384

The EUCD measures were discreet but at the same time straightforward. The first was to have direct informal talks with the politicians who were accused of this. 385 The next step was to organise a conference in Slovakia on the issue of minority rights in November 1991. This was an opportunity for several parties in Central and Eastern Europe, including the ethnic minority parties, to participate in the discussion. In the resulting declaration from the conference, the EUCD declared that respect for minority rights is non-negotiable and that it would establish a research centre on national minorities in Vienna. This was followed up by another conference on national minorities in Bratislava in June 1993. 386 In a third step, the EPP and EUCD published more resolutions against racism and xenophobia 1993. 387 This example illustrates the working method of the EPP when it comes to handling sensitive issues: on the one hand no harsh public statements against any particular persons or parties, but instead discrete talks, and on the other hand concrete measures against nationalist tendencies, with conferences and clear anti-nationalist statements in resolutions.

**Educating a new political elite**

In parallel with setting up membership criteria for the EUCD, the West European Christian democrats began to systematise and institutionalise their support for and education of their sister parties in Central and Eastern Europe. The work-plan for more coordination from November 1989 started to pay off with more coordinated and systematic support. This consisted mostly of party-to-party visits, electoral campaign training and seminars and courses arranged by the foundations. In the early stage, the German foundations were the most active. The Konrad Adenauer Founda-

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385 In the above example, it was the EPP/EUCD secretary general and the chairman of the EUCD Working Group for Central and Eastern Europe that had discussions with Mr. Čarnogurský during a meeting in Budapest. Letter from EPP chairman Wilfried Martens to Helmut Kohl, 22 October 1991.


387 One general resolution on the development in Europe and the world in which an anti-nationalist clause was inbuilt (Entwurf einer Resolution Gemainsame Sitzung: Rat the EUCD/Vorstand EPP, 14 January 1993), and one focusing only on anti-nationalism (Entwurf: Der Vorstand der EVP, 9 September 1993).
tion and the Hanns Seidel Foundation opened representation offices in several countries. These offices served as information centres for both the West European parties and for the EPP and EUCD. In a later stage other foundations became more active in Central and Eastern Europe, e.g. the Dutch Eduardo Frei Foundation, the French Robert Schuman Foundation and the Swedish Council for Democracy and Development.388

One important step in the institutionalisation of the support was the setting up of a new study centre. In October 1991, the EUCD founded the ‘Christian Democratic Academy for Central and Eastern Europe’, based in Budapest.389 The background was the idea that it was not enough with bilateral party contacts, study visits and ad hoc seminars. A joint strategy was necessary considering the lack of political experience among the sister parties in the region. Although there was an older generation (partly reorganised in the CEUCD) that had experience of democratic conditions, they often tended to reflect on Christian democratic ideas from the inter-war era. The younger generation had no experience at all of democracy or of Christian democracy.

Consequently there was a general conviction in the EPP and EUCD leadership that the new politicians, mainly the younger generation, had to be educated in modern Christian democratic ideas and policy. In parallel, it was also seen as necessary to develop their personal skills as organisers, leaders of political and civil organisations to make them able to ‘...act successful [sic] as Christian democratic politicians in their countries.’390 One central topic was the increasing nationalism and ethnic hatred in the region. As mentioned above, the EPP was seriously concerned over several potential partners in this sense. In parallel to the bilateral meetings and anti-racist resolutions, the EPP could now work more systematically to influence the younger Christian democrats in the region. The party leader of the Christian Democratic People’s Party in Hungary at the time, László Surján argues that Christian democratic parties after 1989 through these courses would ‘...get acquainted with the ideas of Christian Democracy [sic] in details but at the same time (…) avoid the ideas of the great danger of future building: the extremist nationalism that turns nations against one another.’391 By learning traditional Christian democratic philosophy together with participants from several countries in the region, the politicians

388 Interview with Thomas Jansen, 14 June 2007 and with Klaus Welle, 27 August 2007.
389 Jansen & van Hecke (2011) p 68
in Central and Eastern Europe were, if not forced, at least ‘educated’ to distance themselves from nationalist ideas.

Between 1991 and 1995, the Christian Democratic Academy in Budapest arranged 45 courses for all in all 995 young participants from 14 countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Apart from basic education about Christian democratic ideas and policy there was also a broad focus on the institutions of democracy, their roles and how they function together, about different fields of politics, how to organise a political party and how to finance it, how to deal with media i.e. a basic political education for new inexperienced politicians. Table 5.5 below displays the distribution of nationalities among the participants in 1991 and 1995. It is notable that Romania contributed with the largest share of participants both years. The Romanian National Peasants’ Party – Christian Democrat (PNŢ-CD) was not big but turned out to be one of the most well organised parties in Romania. It played a central role in organising the coalition Democratic Convention, that won the 1996 elections as the first non-successor party.

Table 5.4 Participation by country in the seminars at the Christian Democrat Academy in Budapest in 1991 and 1995 respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>1995</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
<td>19 %</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Czech Republic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Slovakia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>15 %</td>
<td>10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>8 %</td>
<td>10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>27 %</td>
<td>22 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>11 %</td>
<td>23 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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392 Von der Bank & Szabó ed. (2006) p 31
393 Van Velzen (2006) p 10. László Surján was one of the founders of the Christian Democratic Academy.
In 1995 the Christian Democratic Academy in Budapest was replaced by the ‘Robert Schuman Institute for Developing Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe’. The Schuman Institute, still based in Budapest, continued the courses and seminars of the Christian Democrat Academy and the goals were the same: to provide political education to ‘gifted young people’ and support the strengthening of democracy.\(^{394}\) The ambitions seem however to have been somewhat higher after 1995. The Schuman Institute focused on two parallel tracks: courses for potential young leaders and international conferences for high-ranking politicians. The course topics varied depending on the participants but may be roughly divided into three groups: Firstly, courses that focused on providing general knowledge on constitutional and political science issues, secondly, courses providing a more detailed knowledge in certain policy areas and thirdly, training seminars that focus on the role as a politician or as a public person, e.g. rhetoric, media, diplomatic protocol etc.\(^{395}\)

For the subsequent comparison with the social democrat and liberal party families, it may be noted that the issue of gender equality seems to have been given a rather low priority. In the institute’s own publication, there is no sign of any courses or seminars with explicit gender themes. One conference arranged in 2001 focused on gender equality with the theme ‘Women in Professional Life: Between Aspirations and Reality’. This was organised together with the Women’s Association of the EPP. However, this was only one out of 16 conferences during the period 1998-2002.\(^{396}\)

One natural side-effect of these training-seminars was that the participants had the chance to get know each other. This was, according to one of the former participants from Bulgaria, an important step in creating ‘a family of values’:

> When throughout these 15 years enthusiastic people were sitting in the pleasant Budapest evenings and enjoying a nice and friendly conversation, no one realized that these people would be the future presidents, prime ministers, members of national and European parliaments. The Institute provided much more than training and knowledge. When you put together people who share the same values and ideas they inevitably become close friends.

\(^{394}\) Article 2 of the 1989 statutes of the Robert Schuman Foundation. See also Jansen & van Hecke (2011) p 68.

\(^{395}\) Von der Bank & Szabó (2006) p 43-46

\(^{396}\) There was also a clear male dominance among the participants. Especially in the first five years with more than 70 per cent men in four of these years. Notable also is that the board of the Schuman Institute in Budapest did not contain one single woman. See Von der Bank & Szabó (2006) p 39, 65, 105-111.
That is how the Robert Schuman Institute created a family of values in Central and Eastern Europe, a circle of friendship which goes beyond politics and lasts longer than the few days of a seminar. Nowadays most of the active center-right politicians in Central and Eastern Europe have some form of connection and relationship to the Institute and that in itself is an achievement that will have impact on politics in the region for many years to come.\textsuperscript{397}

The idea of this great educational project was evidently to foster a new generation of centre-right politicians in Central and Eastern Europe into the norms, values and behavioural code of the Christian democrats in Western Europe. Even if the courses and seminars were ‘workshop- and dialogue oriented’, the planning, setup and teaching of the courses and seminars were performed by Christian democrats from West European parties or foundations. By focusing on the younger politicians, who were seen as especially ‘receptive and sensitive’ and who often took over political positions in their parties or in governments later on\textsuperscript{398}, the possibilities to influence the new Christian democratic parties were pretty good. If we depart from the participants’ perspective it was likewise a possibility for them to take a further step in their political career.\textsuperscript{399} There was in this sense a clear convergence of interests. Considering this, it is not too farfetched to claim that the West European Christian democrats were deeply involved in the creation of or even the architects behind the formation of a new centre-right political elite in Central and Eastern Europe.

5.4 The third phase: Incorporation

In the mid-1990s, there were clear signs that the EU would enlarge to Central and Eastern Europe. This in turn provided a powerful impetus for the EPP to open up for the potential new parties in Central and Eastern Europe. As will be shown in this section, the opening up of the EPP was in many ways a solution to the earlier problems. But at the same time this also involved a number of worries and dilemmas. As the EPP opened up, there was a question mark about the existence of the EUCD and the EDU.

\textsuperscript{397} Iontchev (2006) p 28. Roumen Iontchev was previously active in the Christian Democratic Academy and former participant and speaker in courses of the Robert Schuman Institute. He later became international secretary of the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (BZNS).

\textsuperscript{398} Von der Bank & Szabó (2006) p 16-17

\textsuperscript{399} See for example Pietkevičs (2006); Teeäär (2006); Didžgalvienė (2006).
The phasing out of the EUCD

The signals about an eastern enlargement of the EU also meant the revival of the idea of merging the EUCD into the EPP. It became increasingly evident that it was too expensive and time-consuming to have these two parallel organisations. The signs of a coming EU-enlargement eastwards also contributed to the idea as the EUCD-members from Central and Eastern Europe would then become de facto EPP-members. So an integration of the EUCD into the EPP was something all agreed was natural. At the same time there were worries within the EPP about letting in the Central and Eastern European parties too quickly. At an EPP summit in 1995, the leadership was ‘…clearly told by some prominent EPP member parties to slow down the process and be more careful…not to exaggerate.’ On the other hand, there were others who argued that the EUCD should be integrated into the EPP as soon as possible.

The person who became the architect of the integration of the EUCD into the EPP was the new EPP secretary general Klaus Welle. He had a difficult task in balancing the two opposing views within the EPP. In May 1995, he presented a plan for the EPP Political Bureau. This plan included a change in the statutes to have a three-phase process for membership.

1. Parties from non-EU countries can apply and get the status as observers
2. Parties from countries which are negotiating on EU-membership can apply for and get the status as associate members
3. When the home-country of the party has become an EU-member, they can apply for and get the status as full members

What was proposed was to implant some more control stations than before through these three steps. This also bought time for the EPP in the subsequent evaluation process. In retrospect, the three-phase plan also meant a certain relief for the EPP in the evaluation process. The possible status of potential member parties now clearly depended on the formal proceedings of the EU enlargement process. At the EUCD summit in Luxemburg in July 1996, a timetable was agreed upon. The aim was to finally integrate the EUCD into the EPP at the end of 1998. This was clearly a victory for those

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400 Interview with Klaus Welle, 27 August 2007.
401 For example Helmut Kohl pressured for a quick integration of the EUCD into the EPP. EVP News no. 57, June 1996; Union in Deutschland, 6 June 1996; Martens (2006) p 190.
402 Klaus Welle was only 30 years old when he became secretary general for the EPP in October 1994. Pressmitteilung, Bonn 20 October 1994.
403 EPP/EUCD Yearbook 1995
who had argued for a quick integration of the EUCD into the EPP. As a kind of insurance to those who preferred a longer transition period, the EPP secretary general and the chairman of the working group for Central and Eastern Europe put forward a number of criteria that the applicant parties had to fulfil.

1. The party must have had at least 10% of the vote in the last parliamentary elections and at least 5% in the two last elections with representation in Parliament.
2. In the last two years there must have been no party split.
3. There must be no remnants of unpaid membership fees to the EUCD.
4. The party’s representatives in the Council of Europe, WEU, and Committee of the Regions etc. must be members of the EPP groups there.
5. The party must endorse European integration through the federal model.
6. The party program must be based on a personalistic human ideal (the human within the freedom-responsibility spectrum).
7. The party must acknowledge and support the principle of subsidiarity.

Now, a new phase of evaluation began as EPP-membership applications came from the EUCD member parties. This evaluation process was not as complicated as in the early 1990s. Most parties that applied had already been evaluated when they applied for EUCD membership. Nevertheless, the applications had to be evaluated and it was done carefully, now also with the help of the new criteria.

These criteria were definitely tougher than the earlier ones and just like the three-phase plan for membership, they simplified the evaluation process. The first three criteria are clearly a signal that the EPP preferred established parties with a stable electoral base and continuity in the party organisation. Noteworthy is the second criterion of having no splits in the last two years. This was clearly a signal that membership of the EPP also involved certain expectations of party stability. Since the planned merger of the EUCD into the EPP was set for 1998, the potential member parties

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404 Interview with Klaus Welle, 27 August 2007.
405 EVP News no 67 August 1996
406 In a first stage, the EPP special working group ‘Central and Eastern Europe’ prepared the evaluation process together with the EUCD, the Robert Schuman Institute and the foundations. Thereafter the membership applications were examined by the EPP Political Bureau, which also asked the working group for advice. Thereafter an ‘application report’ was prepared by the working group, followed by a recommendation. Finally, the report was presented to the EPP Political Bureau, which held a final vote on the application. See Jansen & van Hecke (2011) p 70.
knew from this moment that they had to avoid any party splits for two years if they wanted to be accepted as EPP members. 407 Criteria 4-7 are noteworthy as they enforce both organisational and ideological loyalty. The fourth criterion of being a member of the EPP group in the EU-related institutions reminds one of the EDU seen as a potential competitor to the EPP and will be discussed further in next section. Criteria 5-7 were mainly about ensuring ideological loyalty to the party family. Considering the fact that quite a few of the potential applicant parties were national conservative rather than Christian democratic, these three criteria were certainly important for the EPP. They ensured that the new member parties had at least formally complied with the main Christian democratic and pro EU-integration positions.

Nevertheless, the most outstanding criteria are the first two on size and stability. At first sight, these criteria were exceptionally tough. If applied on existing EPP member parties, this would surely mean that several parties would be rejected. However, according to the EPP secretary general at the time, they were not as tough as it may have looked.

The thing with the criteria was that they looked tough but weren’t though. For the existing member parties, it was an insurance because they looked tough. But when I went through my member parties I saw that it wasn’t a problem for them. The criteria about not having a split became important because the parties really got fed up with all splitting up. It gave some basic guarantee, but those guarantees were not excessive and therefore could be accepted by the parties in Central and Eastern Europe.408

It is noteworthy that the purpose of these criteria was not only to prevent future instability within the EPP but also to satisfy both the ‘worried group’ within the EPP and the applying parties. The demands were, as Welle noted, apparently tough but were already in balance with what the potential member parties could fulfil. Finally, after several rounds back and forth, the EUCD was integrated into the EPP in November 1998. The EUCD member parties from Central and Eastern Europe could now apply for observer status or associate membership of the EPP, depending on their home country’s position in the EU accession negotiations.


408 Interview with Klaus Welle, 27 August 2007.
The merging of the EDU into the EPP

Despite the successful plans to integrate the EUCD, many of the new EPP partners from Central and Eastern Europe were rather small and not very influential. In the biggest country in the region, Poland, the EUCD did not have any partner at all. A potential solution to this problem lay in the conservative EDU, which had gathered many of the larger centre-right parties under its banner. In this sense, the EDU was important to the EPP and came to play an important part in ‘…ensuring that potential allies or member parties in practically all of the future EU states were brought into the EPP-family.’ The EDU was eventually de facto integrated into the EPP in 2002. The bumpy road to this end will be discussed further here as it illuminates the dilemmas as well as the opportunities that faced both the conservative and Christian democratic party families.

Let us first compare with the situation in the early 1990s when the British conservatives had applied for membership of the EPP group in the European Parliament. The strategic dilemma of the EPP is well described in a letter from the British conservatives where they threaten to form their own group in the European Parliament with the conservative parties from the future Scandinavian member states and from Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, they added that a future division between conservative and Christian Democratic parties would strengthen the socialists. Thus, for the Christian democrats in the EPP, there were two interlinked strategic dilemmas at stake. Firstly, the nearest EU-enlargement to the EFTA-countries would mean a strengthening of the conservative family within the EU, which was a potential competitor to the EPP. Secondly, as the British conservatives pointed out, the main winner of a continued divide within the centre-right would be the socialists, who would have a stronger influence in the European Parliament. According to Karl Magnus Johansson, the main motive for the EPP’s final decision to accept the British conservatives in the party group was the possibility of maximising parliamentary influence and thereby outweighing the socialists.

When it comes to Central and Eastern Europe after 1989, the relation between the EPP and the EDU was a bit complicated. On the one hand the

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410 Jansen (2006a) p 197.
411 Letter, 28 February 1991 from Christopher Prout, chairman of the European Democratic Group in the European Parliament to Wilfried Martens, leader of the EPP.
412 Johansson (1997) p 152-153. It was mainly the German CDU and above all its leader Helmut Kohl who pushed for this argument.
conditions seemed promising for closer co-operation. The alliance in the European Parliament from 1992 (which was confirmed in 1994) pointed to a rapprochement between the two party families. The situation on the ground also indicated that the two organisations were in fact parts of the same family. Most parties that linked up with the EDU also became members of the EUCD (see table 5.4) and as mentioned earlier many of the parties in Central and Eastern Europe did not understand why there had to be two organisations representing more or less the same Christian-conservative grouping.413

413 This was confirmed in interviews with Vytautas Landsbergis, 4 December 2008 and with Thomas Jansen, 14 June 2007.
Table 5.5 Parties affiliated to the EUCD and the EDU in 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>EUCD</th>
<th>EDU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Bulgarian Agrarian National Union</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Democratic Centre</td>
<td>Observer</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Democratic Union</td>
<td>Observer</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Union of Democratic Forces</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Civic Democratic Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Democratic Party</td>
<td>Observer</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People’s Party</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civic Democratic Alliance</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Pro Patria Union</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Hungarian Democratic Forum</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Democratic People’s Party</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent Smallholders’ Party</td>
<td>Observer</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Christian Democratic Union</td>
<td>Observer</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>Homeland Union – Lithuanian Conservatives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Democratic Party of Lithuania</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Centre Alliance</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freedom Union</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Observer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Christian Democratic National Peasants’ Party</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democratic Alliance of Hungarians</td>
<td>Observer</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hungarian Christian Democratic Party</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>Christian Democratic Movement</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democratic Movement of Hungarians</td>
<td>Observer</td>
<td>Observer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>Slovene Christian Democrats</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


However, despite the obvious overlap in ideology and member parties, the two organisations tended to regard each other as competitors rather than allies. Initially, the openness of the new party terrain in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe even heightened the competitive situation. According to Thomas Jansen, the main reason for this was differences in organisational culture. Unlike the EUCD, there was no institutional relationship between the EDU and the EPP. Even if several EDU parties were
at the same time members of the EPP, the two organisations regarded each other as competitors representing different organisational principles.

While the EDU followed the principles of co-operation and diplomacy, the EPP stood for democracy and federalism. It is fair to say that those EPP parties, which had always rejected participation in the EDU also tended to make an ideology of the democratic-federalist principle. By contrast, EDU parties which would have found membership of the EPP difficult or even intolerable tended to make an ideology of diplomacy and cooperation.414

During the first years, this competitive situation seemed to be most problematic for the EPP. It was soon clear that the dominant parties within the conservative/Christian democratic space in Central and Eastern Europe were national-conservative rather than Christian democratic parties.415 After the first free elections, the position of prime minister was mostly held by broadly conservative parties that were exclusively linked to the EDU (like the Civic Democratic Party in the Czech Republic, and the Centre Alliance in Poland) or linked to both the EDU and EUCD (like the Hungarian Democratic Forum in Hungary or Pro Patria Union in Estonia). This tendency is clearly illustrated in table 5.5 below, which displays the centre-right parties in Central and Eastern Europe in the second and third free elections.

414 Jansen (2006a) p 194. Also the former EDU secretary general Alexis Wintoniak saw organisational differences between the EDU and EPP, however he phrases it differently. Wintoniak argues instead that while the EDU was based on strictly hierarchical co-operation with all decision making powers deriving from the party leaders, the EPP was much more dominated by its group in the European Parliament. See Wintoniak (2006) p 174-175.

Table 5.5 Election results among centre-right parties in the second and third free elections in Central and Eastern Europe as percentage of seats.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>2nd free elections</th>
<th>3rd free elections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Union of Democratic Forces</td>
<td>45.8 %</td>
<td>28.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1991, 1994)</td>
<td>Bulgarian Agrarian National Union</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Civic Democratic Party/Christian Democratic Party/</td>
<td>38.0 %</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1992, 1996)</td>
<td>Christian Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People’s Party</td>
<td>7.5 %</td>
<td>9.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civic Democratic Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>34.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Pro Patria/ National Independence Party</td>
<td>7.9 %</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1995, 1999)</td>
<td>Pro Patria Union</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Hungarian Democratic Forum</td>
<td>9.8 %</td>
<td>4.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1991, 1994)</td>
<td>Christian Democratic People’s Party</td>
<td>5.7 %</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent Smallholders’ Party</td>
<td>6.7 %</td>
<td>12.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>For Fatherland and Freedom</td>
<td>14.0 %</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1995, 1998)</td>
<td>Farmers’ Union/Christian Democratic Union</td>
<td>8.0 %</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For Fatherland and Freedom/National Independence Movement</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People’s Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>Sajūdis</td>
<td>19.9 %</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Homeland Union</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>51.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Democratic Union</td>
<td>16.1 %</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1993, 1996)</td>
<td>Polish Peasants’ Party</td>
<td>28.7 %</td>
<td>5.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freedom Union</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Catholic Electoral Action</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>43.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Democratic Convention of Romania</td>
<td>35.6 %</td>
<td>Failed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1996, 2000)</td>
<td>Democratic Union of Hungarians</td>
<td>7.3 %</td>
<td>7.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>Democratic Union</td>
<td>10.0 %</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1994, 1998)</td>
<td>Christian Democratic Movement</td>
<td>11.3 %</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Movement for a Democratic Slovakia</td>
<td>40.7 %</td>
<td>28.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hungarian Coalition</td>
<td>11.3 %</td>
<td>10.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slovak Democratic Coalition</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>Christian Democrats</td>
<td>11.1 %</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1996, 2000)</td>
<td>People’s Party</td>
<td>21.1 %</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People’s Party/ Christian Democrats</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Slovenia – Christian People’s Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8.9 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When table 5.5 and 5.4 are compared we can see two things. Firstly genuine Christian democratic parties performed rather poorly compared with the more broad conservative parties. Secondly, in some countries where the EPP had small or no partners, the EDU had stronger partner parties. This meant that a possible merger between the EDU and EPP would solve some of the problems experienced by the EPP with lack of representation in parts of Central and Eastern Europe.

But there was a clear turning point in 1997, when the EPP enforced its new statutes and initiated the process of integrating the EUCD. The new statutes allowed parties from countries outside the EU to apply as observers or associate members. Several EDU members from Central and Eastern Europe took the chance to apply to the EPP. This included the Civic Democratic Alliance from the Czech Republic and the Agrarian National People’s Union from Bulgaria. In 1998, they were joined by the Freedom Union from Poland, which joined as an EPP associate member.416 Membership in the EPP would give them greater influence, especially against the background of the increasing importance of the European Parliament in the EU decision-making process. It is noteworthy that they joined the EPP even though at the outset it was difficult for some of them to accept all the points in the EPP programme, coming from the Christian democratic tradition and the pro-European ideas.

The same year as EDU members from Central and Eastern Europe ‘voted with their feet’ and joined the EPP, the EDU chairman Alois Mock retired. The Austrian politician had been a charismatic leader for the EDU since its foundation in 1978. Especially in a thin organisation like the EDU417, Mock’s retirement meant a considerable loss of energy and intellectual dynamism. At the same time important parties like the German CDU and CSU and the Spanish Partido Popular - which had earlier been enthusiastic about party co-operation within the EDU network - started to complain more and more loudly about the waste of time and energy on holding a multiplicity of meetings, and the high financial costs of maintaining two parallel organisations like the EPP and EDU.418 For many parties,

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416 See the EPP/EUCD Yearbook 1997 and 1998. For an overview of the formal integration of the parties in Central and Eastern Europe into the EPP, see table 5.6.

417 Unlike the EPP, the EDU secretariat was always small. It has been described as a ‘clearinghouse’ rather than headquarters. See Wintoniak (2006) p 175. Moreover in 1996, the EDU secretary general Andreas Khol stepped down. He had had this post since the foundation of the EDU in 1978. See Khol, Tobisson and Wintoniak (1998) p 114-115.

the EDU’s usefulness had essentially evaporated. The situation was now increasingly like that of the EUCD, which in 1998 (as described above) was completely integrated into the EPP. For many pragmatists in the EPP, the elegant fusion of the EUCD into the EPP was a good example and the obvious way to solve the problem.

Against this background, the EDU took the initiative of sorting out its relationship to the EPP. At its party leaders’ meeting in April 1994 in Salzburg it adopted the declaration ‘Towards the Majority’ where it called for a new start, allowing the EDU and EPP to merge in a gradual fusion. However, despite positive reactions from many prominent Christian democrats, the proposal was rejected by the EPP Political Bureau. The main reason was that the EPP Basic Programme from 1992 had not been made a precondition for the proposed merger.\(^{419}\) After some further attempts failed in 1999, the possibilities of a fusion were now exhausted. In 2000 it was decided to have a joint secretariat in Brussels with a common budget. Two years after, when the last EDU secretary general resigned, the EDU was de facto dissolved.\(^{420}\)

The process towards an integration of the EDU into the EPP demonstrates the confidence of the EPP as the influential political actor in EU-politics. At the same time, it illustrates how political concerns shifted as a possible EU-enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe drew nearer. More and more parties from Central and Eastern Europe put ideology aside and applied for EPP membership. The EPP was most likely aware of its momentum vis-à-vis the EDU and could say no to a merger if it was not on the EPP-terms. Unlike the situation in 1992 (where the British conservatives threatened to form their own group with likeminded parties from future EU-members), the EDU had no weapon this time. Thus suddenly, the EPP found itself in the comfortable situation where its previous problems were solved. The small and narrow Christian democratic partners were now complemented by more urban and secular forces (see table 5.6 below).

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\(^{420}\) Another event which marked the end of the EDU as a distinct entity was when the last EDU chairman Sauli Niinistö was made honorary president of the EPP at the EPP Congress in Estoril in October 2002.
### Table 5.6 EPP member parties from Central and Eastern Europe: from observer status via associate member to ordinary member 1997-2007.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agrarian National People’s Union</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democratic Party of Bulgaria</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People’s Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democratic Citizens’ Alliance</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freedom Union</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Fatherland Union (Pro Patria)</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Res Publica</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Hungarian Democratic Forum</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Democratic People’s Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent Smallholders Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fidesz-MPSZ</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>People’s Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Era Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Homeland Union</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Civic Platform</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Polish People’s Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Democratic Liberal Party</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democratic Union of Hungarians</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>Christian Democratic Movement</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Party of the Hungarian Coalition</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slovak Democratic and Christian Union</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>Slovenian Democratic Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Slovenia – Christian People’s Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slovenian People’s Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Defunct.  b Left the EPP

Starting with Poland, the EPP had now a stable partner in the Freedom Union and later on the Civic Platform\(^{421}\), both of which had been in government. Only a couple of years earlier the Christian democratic EPP/EUCD lacked any partner at all in Poland, the biggest and most important of the potential EU-members in Central and Eastern Europe. In the Czech Republic, things also improved for the EPP. This earlier problem for the EPP was a narrow representation in the country. The Christian Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People’s Party (KDU-ČSL) was a stable party and loyal member of the EUCD but with a narrow religious and regional base\(^{422}\) (it was limited to Catholics in Moravia, the eastern more rural part of the country). From the EPP perspective this was problematic as it was questionable if the KDU-ČSL could really represent the country. Thus when the EDU-affiliated Civic Democratic Alliance joined in 1997 followed by Freedom Union in 1998, the EPP had a more whole-covering representation in the country. The liberal-conservative Freedom Union complemented KDU-ČSL both geographically and structurally.\(^{423}\) A remaining problem was the dominating Czech Civic Democratic Party, which remained more close to the British conservatives and refrained from joining the EPP.

Lithuania was the third problematic country of the EPP, as it lacked a strong partner there. The small Lithuanian Christian democratic party had been linked to the EUCD since 1993 but the stronger national-conservative Homeland Union was instead linked to the EDU. Despite the dismantling of the EDU it was not until 2003 that the Homeland Union joined the EPP. The main reason was the EPP membership criterion to belong to the EPP-groups in all EU institutions. The Homeland Union belonged to the conservative group in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and to be accepted into the EPP they had to change group. For the party leader of the Homeland Union this became a delicate issue.

\(^{421}\) Parts of the leadership of the Freedom Union’s conservative right wing decided to join the new social conservative party Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska). Civic Platform was granted EPP associated member status in 2003.

\(^{422}\) KDU-ČSL was/is limited to Catholics in Moravia, the eastern more rural part of the country.

\(^{423}\) Interview with Klaus Welle, 27 August 2007.
For me it looked not very honest being proposed that it was better to jump to another fraction when we worked well especially with British conservatives and other conservatives. I tried to insist ‘What is the case? Why are we forced to leave our friends to be with other friends when both are friends?’

The Hungarian case is rather special. As mentioned earlier the three centre-right parties in Hungary were weakened and divided after the 1994 elections. The new dominant centre-right party was Fidesz, which was initially a radical liberal party but gradually took over the traditional liberal-conservative field. Fidesz won the 1998 elections and formed a government in coalition with the Hungarian Democratic Forum and the Smallholders’ party. It was now clearly in the interest of the EPP to include Fidesz as the strongest centre-right party in Hungary. However, the situation was rather strange, as Fidesz was an associated member of the European Liberal party family ELDR at the time. On the other hand it was quite obvious that it had moved into the centre-right field and had become more conservative. Especially its policies in state control over the media and its family policies when in government pointed to a cultural conservative party profile. Therefore, the EPP approached Fidesz to demonstrate that it was welcome to join.

Already during the time when they were still associated with the liberals, I proposed to Wilfried Martens [EPP president] to invite Orbán [Fidesz party leader] to the summit of the EPP, even though he was still a member of the liberal party and had a function in the liberals. Viktor Orbán accepted and this contributed very much to Fidesz realising that they were not a liberal party but a broad centre-right people’s party.

In 2000, Fidesz became an associate member of the EPP. The change was probably on its way but the active demonstration from the EPP that Fidesz was welcome probably had an impact. Fidesz was also not difficult to convince. For them, the main goals related to liberalism were achieved with the introduction of democracy, market economy and human rights in Hungary. It was now time for them to move on and the size of the EPP was

424 Interview with Vytautas Landsbergis, 4 December 2008. The Homeland Union eventually left the EDU group in the Council of Europe and went to the EPP. The decision was easier as several Russian delegates were accepted in the EDU group. This was too much for the ‘anti-Russian’ Lithuanian party whose party identity is strongly connected with resistance against Russian dominance in Lithuania.

425 For a detailed description of Fidesz’s transformation from a radical liberal youth party to a conservative party, see Lanczi (2005), especially p 32.

certainly a contributing factor.\textsuperscript{427} Fidesz’s move over to the EPP from the ELDR furthermore strengthens the notion of an increasing importance of political ‘necessities’ over ideology as the EU-enlargement was closing in.

Another perhaps even more notable example of how strategic considerations took over when EU-enlargement came nearer was the Romanian case. It concerned the Democratic Party, which applied for EPP membership in 2005 (two years before Romania’s formal entry into the EU) after being a member of the Socialist International and the European socialist party family for some years.\textsuperscript{428} This meant that apart from the two smaller existing member parties, the EPP had now a stronger centre-right party within its Romanian group. In Slovakia there was even a membership application in 2002 from the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia under the controversial leader Vladimir Mečiar. The party had in earlier times been clearly EU-sceptical and nationalist-populist in its rhetoric and therefore it changed its name by adding the prefix ‘People’s Party’ hoping this would improve the possibilities to be accepted. This time however, the application was turned down. Memories of EU-scepticism and nationalist rhetoric and the fact that there were already two EPP members from Slovakia (who also made reservations against the application) contributed to the EPP’s decision.\textsuperscript{429}

### 5.5 Concluding remarks: Size attracts size

The EPP faced different challenges and consequently enforced different strategies in each of the three phases described above. The main challenge in the early stage was the uncertain party terrain in Central and Eastern Europe, especially among centre-right parties. The problem for the EPP was thus how to identify partners in this uncertain context. The strategy to deal with this dilemma was to keep the less formal EUCD, giving it the new task of identifying and getting to know possible partners in Central and Eastern Europe. This division of labour enabled the EPP to include new parties from Central and Eastern Europe (through the EUCD) much quicker than the PES and ELDR.

However, this rapid inclusion of new parties into the EUCD involved new problems, which led a certain ‘identity-backlash’ and a much more cautious EPP during the second phase of evaluating the potential member parties. The

\textsuperscript{427} Interview with Levente Benkö, 9 December 2008.

\textsuperscript{428} See Voinea (2006)

\textsuperscript{429} See Frydrych (2002). The two existing EPP members from Slovakia were the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) and the Hungarian Coalition (MKDM). Their permission was necessary for the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia to be accepted.
main dilemma for the EPP after the initial identification of partners was the continued division among the centre-right parties. First, it was soon clear that the traditional Christian democratic parties in Central and Eastern Europe were often small and more fundamentalist in religious matters than the pragmatic EPP. Secondly, the increasing rivalry between the various centre-right parties resulted in a number of party splits and increasing nationalism or even anti-Semitism in some of them. In the face of this, the EPP and EUCD implanted some criteria for membership of the EUCD as a filter against too small and obscure parties. Parallel to this it initiated an educational project of the younger Christian democratic generation in the region, strengthening both the ideological affinity and the organisational competence. When it comes to the various party splits, the EPP strategy was to shift focus from parties to key politicians. This enabled them to keep the strategic contacts without getting too involved in the conflicts. In a way, the EPP played a waiting game. While slowing down the process with membership criteria and tougher evaluation, it worked hard to support and educate the younger generation of Christian democrats in the region.

As there were signs in the mid-1990s that the EU would enlarge eastwards, a gradual shift can be seen from identity and programmatic concerns to a behaviour focusing more on securing influence. This concerns both the EPP and its potential member parties. The main challenge was how to solve the problem with having several organisations at the European level centre right, i.e. the EPP, EUCD and EDU. But as soon as the EPP changed its statutes and opened up for observer status, the development almost seemed to follow an automatic reflex as party after party joined the EPP even though they reluctantly had to accept the Christian democratic programme. The closer a possible EU-enlargement came, the more parties from the EDU joined the EPP. The Hungarian and Romanian example also illustrates that political necessity tended to take over. In the Hungarian case, Fidesz left the ELDR for the bigger EPP and in the Romanian case, the Democratic Party left the PES for the EPP as there was already a strong Romanian party in the PES.

To summarise, the EPP strategy in Central and Eastern Europe before EU-enlargement was a constant tension between two of the four goals described in Sjöblom’s model of party goals: on the one hand party cohesion and on the other maximisation of parliamentary influence. The EPP succeeded, however, to a great extent in solving these dilemmas due to its ability to find compromises and its organisational culture with a tolerance for organisational pluralism combined with strong personal networks. We can see here some signs of historical path-dependency regarding the Christian democratic behaviour before earlier EU-enlargements with a great tolerance for new member parties.
6. The European Social Democratic Family

Before starting this chapter, I would like to observer the reader on the data of this chapter. Access to party documents related to the Party of European Socialists (PES) has been scarce, compared with that of the European People’s Party and the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party. On the other hand, the number of interviews with key individuals in this process is higher in this chapter and this compensates to a certain degree. I have interviewed 14 individuals who have been more or less involved in the process of integrating the parties from Central and Eastern Europe into the European social democratic party family.

6.1 The actors of the PES network

There was a range of different actors involved in building contacts with social democratic forces in Central and Eastern Europe. These operated at more or less all levels of politics. See table 6.1 below.

Unlike the Christian democratic parties, the social democratic parties have a strong global organisation in the Socialist International (SI). This was the main formal organisation to which the parties from Central and Eastern Europe could apply for membership in the early phase. At the European level there were several parallel actors that played different roles in different phases in the process of integrating parties from Central and Eastern Europe. Firstly there was the Party of European Socialists (PES), which before 1992 was entitled the Confederation of Social Democratic Parties in Europe. During the early phase it was not very active and acted mostly as a coordinating mechanism. Secondly, the socialist party group in the European Parliament acted rather independently since it had its own financial means to organise activities. It became increasingly involved in the late 1990s when EU-enlargement was drawing nearer. Thirdly there was the Socialist Group in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which was not related to the EU but is a pan-European organisation working for general issues such as human rights. Fourth, there was the European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity, created in 1993. This was not a formal actor like

430 During my visits in 2008-2009, the PES had no structured archive. The party documents were stored in boxes in a storage room outside Brussels, some boxes with sorted documents some not. Although I was given access to this room, the possibility of systematic document study was limited.

431 Note that this can be compared with the different arenas of party co-operation, which is illustrated in figure 2.1.

432 Interview with Jan Marinus Wiersma, 17 February 2009; Interview with Christian Vigenin, 3 December 2008.
those described above but a coordinating forum including both the social democratic foundations and the affiliated national parties.\textsuperscript{433}

Table 6.1 The social democratic network of actors that were engaged in the activities in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global level</th>
<th>Socialist International (SI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European Level</td>
<td>Party of European Socialists (PES)\textsuperscript{434}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social democratic group in the European Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social democratic group in the Council of Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National level</td>
<td>German Social Democratic Party (SPD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(most important actors)</td>
<td>British Labour Party (Labour)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dutch Labour Party (PvdA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>French Socialist Party (PS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Austrian Social Democratic Party (SPÖ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Swedish Social Democratic Party (SAP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finnish Social Democratic Party (SDP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local level</td>
<td>Exchange programmes\textsuperscript{435}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social democratic foundations (only the most active)</td>
<td>Friedrich Ebert Foundation (German)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Westminster Foundation (British)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alfred Mozer Foundation (Dutch)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karl Renner Institute (Austrian)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Olof Palme International Centre (Swedish)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the national level were the social democratic parties in Western Europe. The Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA), the British Labour Party and the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) were the most active parties in the early stage.\textsuperscript{436} To some extent these parties acted in their own interest to build strategic links in Central

\textsuperscript{433} Interview with Bo Toresson, 21 September 2009.

\textsuperscript{434} Before 1992, it was called Confederation of Social Democratic Parties in Europe.


\textsuperscript{436} This is mainly illustrated in the parties that were most active in the early meetings of the working group ‘The Future of the European Community and Europe in the Light of Developments in Central and Eastern Europe’. See for example Draft Minutes 8 May 1990, 5 June 1990 and 11 July 1990.
and Eastern Europe. The foundations played an important role when it came to building a broad network of contacts. Especially the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation was important as it had offices in more or less all capitals in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Their network of contacts and knowledge of the local political terrain was of great importance especially in the early stage.

This network of actors may seem complicated and difficult to overview but the complexity should not be exaggerated. Firstly, the politicians active at the European level were also anchored in their respective social democratic party at the national level. Secondly, the number of people engaged in the process of building contacts eastwards was quite small. What on the other hand was a potential problem in the early stage was the strong position of the SI. I will return to this further down.

6.2 The first phase: Identifying partners

The Western perspective: an impossible dilemma?

At the outset, the concrete task was to map out the potential partners in each country and become more familiar with the new party landscape. Compared to the Christian democrats or the liberals, it was not very complicated: the potential partners were either the successor parties to the former ruling communist parties or secondly the social democratic parties with historical roots in the inter-war period or even earlier (see table 6.2 below).

Most of the historical social democratic parties in Central and Eastern Europe were founded during the same era as those in Western Europe, in the 1890s. But even so, their historical record is rather gloomy. Their leaders and sympathisers suffered much from Nazi oppression during the Second World War. After 1945, things looked better and they became politically active again. Actually all countries in Central and Eastern Europe had a social democratic party in 1945-47, of a very variable strength.437 But this period did not last long. The communist parties took over in each country in 1947-48. Some social democratic leaders and sympathisers went into exile; some were forced or persuaded to join the communist party.438

437 In Czechoslovakia, the Social Democratic Party ČSSD was also the governing party together with Czechoslovak Communist Party after the elections in 1946. See Dowling (2002) p 80-84; Rothschild & Wingfield (2000) p 91.

**Table 6.2 Parties in Central and Eastern Europe aspiring for social democracy in the early 1990s.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Historical Social Democratic Party</th>
<th>Communist Successor Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Bulgarian Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>Bulgarian Socialist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech - Republic</td>
<td>Czech Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>Czech and Moravian Communist party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Estonian Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>Estonian Democratic Labour Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Hungarian Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>Hungarian Socialist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Latvian Social Democratic Workers’ Party</td>
<td>Latvian Socialist party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>The Lithuanian Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>The Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>-Union of Labour</td>
<td>Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>-Romanian Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>-Democratic Social Party of Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>Social Democratic Party of Slovakia</td>
<td>Party of the Democratic Left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>Slovenian Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>The United List of Social Democrats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The Latvian Social Democratic Worker’s Party became later the Latvian Social Democratic Union. Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland became later the main party in the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD).


The common denominator for the communist successor parties is their background as ruling parties during the communist era. More precisely they can be defined as ‘…those parties which were the primary successors to the former governing party in the communist regime.’

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439 Bozóki & Ishiyama (2002) p 3
had been sometimes violently oppressed.\textsuperscript{440} By 1989, these reformist wings had got the upper hand within many of the communist parties. In many cases, a party congress decided to dissolve the party, adopt a new programme and party name and elected a new reformist leadership.\textsuperscript{441}

However, instead of following the example of the Christian democrats, and quickly coordinating the efforts and mapping out potential partners, the social democrats were rather passive. In the first important months after 1989, there was no systematic coordination at all, which resulted in inefficiency, slow progress and duplication of work. Each party and foundation arranged their own trips and built their own network.\textsuperscript{442}

One explanation for this initial passivity is that the Socialist International (SI) had its main focus on other parts of the world at the time. It was deeply engaged in democratisation programmes in Latin America and in South Africa.\textsuperscript{443} A possible further explanation for this lack of interest in Europe was that the SI secretary general, Luis Ayala, was from Chile.\textsuperscript{444} Here it becomes evident that the strong global level and relatively weak European level of the social democratic party family hampered the efforts to identify possible partners in Central and Eastern Europe. Compared to the EPP, the Confederation for Social Democratic Parties in Europe was not very institutionalised and furthermore the social democrats had no equivalent to the Christian Democratic EUCD that could focus exclusively on Central and Eastern Europe. Even if a working group was set up by the West European parties,\textsuperscript{445} its authority was clearly limited by the SI working group for the same area. When attempts at coordination were made, there was still confusion about what the SI should do and what the Euro-

\textsuperscript{440} The most familiar examples are the short reformist government in Hungary in 1956 and the so-called Prague Spring in 1968.

\textsuperscript{441} Pridham (2001) p 189

\textsuperscript{442} Interview with Bo Toresson, 21 September 2009; Interview with Jan Marinus Wiersma, 17 February 2009.

\textsuperscript{443} Interview with Bo Toresson, 21 September 2009. See also Pridham (2001).

\textsuperscript{444} Interview with Conny Fredriksson, 30 August 2010.

\textsuperscript{445} In May 1990 the precursor to the PES formed a working group called the Confederation Working Group ‘The Future of the European Community in the Light of Developments in Central and Eastern Europe’. See proposed remit, 10 June 1990.
pean-level working group should do. All this slowed down or complicated all attempts to put up a joint strategy in Central and Eastern Europe. A second explanation for the early passivity was a general disagreement on how to engage in the process of building strategic links with potential partner parties.

I remember we were rather timid at first and there was no agreed strategy. There were basically two schools of thought. Firstly there was, if you like, the German school of thought. ‘Let’s get in there, let’s get them involved, let’s start working with them. Let’s bring them into the socialist family and everything will be fine. And we’ll convert them from within.’ Secondly there was the British school of thought which was much more cynical. ‘We’re not sure about these people. Let’s start to build contacts, let’s have conferences with them and some training. But let’s keep them at arm’s length until they have proven themselves’.

This disagreement on how to approach the potential partners mirrors in a way the lack of organisational strength within the social democratic party family in Western Europe. Many parties worked hard to build up contacts in Central and Eastern Europe but there was a general lack of coordination and a joint strategy.

Eventually, the decision was to support the social democratic parties in Central and Eastern Europe before the first free elections. This meant the social democratic parties which either had the historical past from the time before communist take-over or the newly-founded parties which had no connections to the communist parties. The main explanation was certainly a strong suspicion against the communist successor parties. The his-

446 Already at the first meeting of the working group, it was strongly underlined that it ‘...should act in concert with the SI and reflect its policies’ and that it was ‘...extremely important’ to coordinate the activities with the SI and not to overlap with the SI ad hoc working group. Draft Minutes 5 June 1990, the Confederation Working Group ‘The Future of the European Community and Europe in the Light of the Developments in Central and Eastern Europe’. See paragraph 1.

447 Interview with Nick Sigler, 5 December 2008. This argument was confirmed in interviews with Bo Toresson and Jan-Marinus Wiersma.

448 It was the German SPD, Dutch PvDA, Austrian SPÖ and British Labour Party that were successful in building up bilateral contacts. In the end, it was the German SPD that was the most important actor in supporting and influencing possible partners in Central and Eastern Europe and above all the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation. This was confirmed in several interviews, for example with Christian Vigenin (Bulgaria), Victor Boştinaru (Romania) and Justas Paleckis (Lithuania).

449 This was confirmed in several interviews, among others with Jan-Marinus Wiersma, Bo Toresson, Nick Sigler and Ingvar Carlsson.
historical rivalry between social democracy and communism is visible here. There were still bitter memories of how the communists treated social democrats in Central and Eastern Europe in 1947-48. The Swedish party leader in the early 1990s, Ingvar Carlsson, was chairman of the Swedish Young Social Democrats in the 1960s and travelled much in Europe to represent the Socialist Youth International:

We were always fighting with the Communist Youth International and there was a rigid division between east and west, between democracy and dictatorship. And this battle formed me naturally, that they were our political enemies. Friendly relations for our part with Eastern Europe were unthinkable. Concerning the former communist parties in the early 1990s, I think we had good reasons to wait and see. After the wall came down, many opportunists switched sides. Partly, it felt wrong ideologically and partly it could be a burden for us if it turned out that they had not really changed.450

What we can notice here is a sort of psychological barrier, restraining social democrats from approaching the successor parties. For several leading social democrats in Western Europe, who were formed as politicians during the Cold War, the negative image of communism was part of their ideological identity. Combined with the historical suspicion against communism, there was at the same time a great sense of loyalty towards the historical social democratic parties. It was clearly expected of West European social democrats to support their ideological sister parties, especially after so many years in exile.

Yet the decision to support the historical social democrats was not only based on identity and suspicion against communists. There was in fact a conviction that the changes in Central and Eastern Europe had positive implications for social democracy in general and had paved the way for strong social democratic parties in the region. The argument was that the communist era had modernised the society and the economy to a certain extent which created opportunities for social democratic parties. The whole idea was that social democracy in post-communist countries would follow and repeat the West European model.

450 Interview with Ingvar Carlsson, 18 September 2009. The quote is translated from Swedish. The same experience was expressed in the interview with Bo Toresson, 21 September 2009.
The member parties from the Socialist International (SI) not only felt a moral responsibility and solidarity towards traditional social democrats but also expected them to reap the benefits of regime change. The emergence of democratic socialism [...] was expected as the most appropriate, and natural, outcome of the transition from a command economy and communist party dictatorship. Such developments would also mean the final victory of social democracy over communism.\footnote{Dauderstädt et al (1999) p 10. For the same reasoning, see Waller et al (1994) and Lindström (1991).}

It is noteworthy that West European social democrats expected that the fall of the Berlin Wall would lead to the ‘final victory of social democracy over communism.’ It was as though the centre-right parties did not exist as competitors and that the whole region was rather a battlefield between social democracy and communism. However, this initial optimism was soon replaced by the rather painful insight that the historical social democratic parties might be the wrong partners. The results from the first free elections illustrate this situation (see table 6.3 below). The historical social democratic parties had in general poor results with either weak or no representation in parliament. This was a great disappointment for the West European parties.\footnote{Draft Minutes 5 June 1990, the Confederation Working Group ‘The Future of the European Community and Europe in the Light of the Developments in Central and Eastern Europe’. The international secretaries of the PES member parties were present. Also confirmed in interviews with Bo Toresson, Jan-Marinus Wiersma, Nick Sigler and Ingvar Carlsson.} The successor parties on the other hand managed to get seats in each country even if the result was generally poor.

Of the ten countries included in this study, only five contained social democratic parties that managed to get parliamentary seats won after the first free elections. Furthermore, the number of seats was in general small; the Czech Social Democratic party got 6.5 per cent, the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party 6.4 per cent, the Slovenian Social Democratic Party 4.4 per cent and the Polish Union of Labour 0.9 per cent. The outstanding example is the Estonian Moderates who managed to win 11.9 per cent but it should be mentioned that they had formed an alliance with the agrarian Rural Centre. Furthermore, in the three countries where the historical social democrats managed to get parliamentary seats – Poland, Lithuania and Slovenia – the successor parties got at least three times as many.\footnote{It should be mentioned that in the Polish case there was also one historical social democratic party – the Polish Socialist Party – that failed to get representation in the first elections.} This
combined with the failure to get seats at all in Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Romania and Slovakia illustrated the total failure of the historical social democratic parties.

Table 6.3 Elections results for successor parties and social democratic parties in the first free elections after 1989 (successor parties marked with *).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Percentage (seats)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>*Bulgarian Socialist Party</td>
<td>52.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1990)</td>
<td>Bulgarian Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>No seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Czech Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>No seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Czech Social Democratic Party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1990)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Moderates</td>
<td>11.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1992)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>*Hungarian Socialist Party</td>
<td>8.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1990)</td>
<td>Hungarian Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>No seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latvian Socialist party</td>
<td>7.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Latvian Social Democratic Workers’ Party</td>
<td>No seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1993)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>*The Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party</td>
<td>22.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1990)</td>
<td>The Lithuanian Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>6.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>*Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland</td>
<td>13.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1991)</td>
<td>Union of Labour</td>
<td>0.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Polish Socialist Party</td>
<td>No seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>*Democratic Social Party of Romania</td>
<td>34.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1990)</td>
<td>*Democratic Party</td>
<td>12.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Romanian Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>No seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>No seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>*Party of the Democratic Left Social Democratic</td>
<td>19.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1992)</td>
<td>Party of Slovakia</td>
<td>No seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>*The United List of Social Democrats</td>
<td>15.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1992)</td>
<td>Slovenian Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>4.4 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland became later the main party in the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD). The Moderates in Estonia was an alliance between the Estonian Social Democratic Party and the Rural Centre.
Source: Berglund, Ekman and Aarebrot eds. (2004)

This led to the painful insight among the West European social democrats that their initial plan to support the historical parties was nothing less than a serious miscalculation. The early passivity and the lack of a clear joint strategy contributed most likely to the situation where decisions were more
steered by hopes than by facts. A closer scrutiny would reveal that the historical parties (with exception of the Czech case) were in general too inexperienced and lacked useful networks to be successful. But there was also another factor at work; the general attitude in Central and Eastern Europe towards anything that was related to the old regime was loaded with negative connotations. As the Swedish party leader for the social democrats at the time describes it:

We made a miscalculation. We thought that social democracy had great possibilities in Eastern Europe, but it turned out that all, red flags, the international, workers’ songs...were contaminated. Even the term ‘social democrat’ had very bad connotations. All terms containing ‘social’ were negative. We were forced to realise that we had a rather weak support for the social democratic parties. We were a bit surprised and got more defensive.454

In hindsight it is clear that West European social democrats underestimated the unique conditions of transition from state socialism to democratic socialism, where social democracy had to be ‘invented’. Yet at the same time, it is difficult to put aside the fact that they faced a very difficult dilemma. Even if they had been as efficient and dedicated as the Christian democrats in mapping out possible partners, it is not certain that they would have chosen differently. The historical social democratic parties were after all sister parties which had been forced into exile and which had got a seat in the SI since. Not to recognise and support them would clearly break the code of ‘appropriate behaviour’.

The hope that social democracy would take over from the communists was thus crushed quite soon. People in general saw social democrats as ‘Left’ and therefore somehow connected to the old system. Moreover the historical social democratic parties repeatedly showed signs of incompetence and lack of compromise. The communist successor parties on the other hand were professional, had resources, contacts and competent staff. Their problem was on the other hand their historical record which I will return to further down.

The Eastern perspective: initial ambitions and difficulties
The conditions for the historical social democratic parties and the communist successor parties after 1989 was characterised by competition and tensions. This was natural in a way since they to a large degree competed

454 Interview with Ingvar Carlsson, 18 September 2009. The quote is translated from Swedish.
for the same voters. Let us now look at the initial ambitions and difficulties of each party family.

The historical social democratic parties confronted several challenges in the early stage. These depended both on historical-structural and current factors. Firstly, the historical conditions that laid the ground for social democracy in 19th century Western Europe did not exist in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989. The electorate was not structured along historical cleavages and above all; class was not as dominant a marker as it was historically in Western Europe. Combined with a general distaste for the word ‘socialism’ in post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe, this was a heavy burden for the historical social democratic parties in the early phase. Yet the main difficulty for the historical social democratic parties was internal. Their leaders had in most cases spent many years abroad. They had gone into exile in 1947-48 and as a gesture of good manners their parties were recognised by the SI. For almost forty years these parties participated in different SI-meetings and congresses arranged by the West European parties. Even if the Western parties sympathised with the exile parties, they often viewed them as more or less cut off from reality. The exile parties were also problematic in many ways in the eyes of the Western European parties. Here is an excerpt from a report presented to the PES working group for Central and Eastern Europe in 1990:

For almost four decades these parties presented a somewhat sad sight at SI Councils and Congresses of Western European parties. The leaders inevitably aged and where younger people appeared they were mainly their sons and daughters born in exile. They were inevitably out of touch and seemed to be buoyed by false hopes. Suddenly the hopes have been realised but the existence of exile groups has in some cases been a complicating factor. There have been feuds between different exile groups, or between them and those who stayed at home, or among the latter – between the older generation who had suffered during 40 years of oppression and a younger generation who had not had this experience and were impatient for a new start.

Apart from the lack of experience and resources, the exile parties had indeed many problems of their own. Their short history after 1989 was characterised by small discussion circles and personal conflicts which often led to splits. But most striking was their special character as reborn orthodox social democrats, with little perception of how the world had changed.

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455 Interview with Bo Toresson, 21 September 2009.
When they woke up, they were mostly old and frustrated and claimed the old ‘pre-Godesberg’ ideology and style, which meant strong belief in the party’s old historical documents. One example is when the revived Social Democratic Party in Hungary had its inaugural meeting in January 1989. The party leader declared that the Manifesto of Principles of 1903 and the electoral programme of 1945 were valid and guiding documents. Ironically, this kind of orthodox social democracy based on class and Marxist socialism was rather close to the unreformed communists. They shared a heritage of a common leftist vision and pro-Soviet attitudes. If we go back in time, they had the same opponents in 1945-47 who defended the position of Churches and rejected the nationalisation of capital. The common ideological heritage contributed to the weak presence of historical social democratic parties in opposition movements, which were positioned more to the right in economic terms.

The successful cases are exceptions but still deserve some attention here. The Czech Social Democratic Party was clearly most similar to the West European model. It had a strong organisation with experience in government in the inter-war period and also in the short period 1945-48. Another factor behind its success was that the Czech successor party, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia kept its orthodox communist profile and did not compete for membership in the SI or PES. The other three cases are Slovenia, Estonia and Lithuania. The Moderates in Estonia was in fact the most successful social democratic party in the first free elections in Central and Eastern Europe with 11.9 per cent. Just like in the Czech Republic, there was no real communist successor party in Estonia and the terrain was open to the left. The generally weak historical tradition of social democracy in Central and Eastern Europe was otherwise a source of east-west misunderstandings. One example was the Social Democratic Party of Slovenia, which had an outspoken neo-liberal and sometimes nationalist approach. When the foreign secretary of the British Labour

457 The Godesberg Programme (ratified in the German city Bad Godesberg) from 1959 was notable because it was the first social democratic document that forswore all Marxist ideas.

458 The Hungarian social democratic party turned increasingly chaotic with internal rifts that eventually might even have reached a criminal dimension. The SI sent a fact finding group in 1991, which recommended suspension of the party from the SI. The final decision was to downgrade the party to observer status. Márkus (1998) p 46-47.


460 Interview with Bo Toresson, 21 September 2009.
Party visited the party in Slovenia, he noticed that the party leader had a big picture of Margaret Thatcher in his office. Finally this party left the Socialist International in 2000. Eventually it changed its name to Slovenian Democratic Party (keeping the acronym SDS) and became associated to the EPP in 2003. Nevertheless, apart from these cases above, most of the historical parties faced a difficult strategic situation. They were inexperienced and lacked resources. They also lacked political allies as they had distanced themselves from the successor parties out of principle and also from the right-wing opposition movements due to their orthodox social democratic identity.

If we on the other hand focus on the successor parties, the situation was reversed. They were well organised, they had mostly managed to keep the experienced people who knew how to run a party organisation and they had kept some of the important networks both concerning economic interests and the media. The main difficulty was their reputation as parties with an unacceptable history and that their face-lift in party name and programme was not enough. The successor parties were eager to join the SI at the earliest opportunity, as they considered membership a proof of their social-democratic identity. This was what they needed in order to get the ‘stamp of approval’. But the Western parties were clearly sceptical. But as mentioned, the SI and the PES refrained from granting them any status. Even if they claimed to be reformed, both the right-wing parties and the historical social democratic parties were suspicious.

The historical parties’ main advantage lay in the good relations with the Western parties. But the expectations of support, especially financial, from the SI or the individual social democratic parties were sometimes too optimistic. The main support that the Western parties could provide was recognition and thereby international legitimacy. This illustrates a curious strategic situation. Where the historical social democratic parties were weak, i.e. experience, domestic contacts, resources, the successor parties

461 Interview with Nick Sigler, 5 December 2008. The Social Democrats of Slovenia eventually changed its name to the Slovenian Democratic Party and in 2000 it left the SI and joined the EPP.

462 See for example Ishiyama (2000)


464 There were occasional cases where material support was provided. For example the Bulgarian historical social democrats received material support from the Spanish, Swedish and Austrian parties. Note for the attention of Jean Pierre Cot, 5 February 1991.
were strong. Where on the other hand the successor parties were weak, i.e. moral credibility, the social democratic parties were stronger. The historical social democratic parties were probably aware of the fact that their main possibility was to monopolise the link with the Western parties and they had got recognition as either observers or full members of the SI at a relative stage. Moreover in July 1990 they formed the ‘Confederation of Social Democratic Parties in Central and Eastern Europe’ and immediately sent the statutes and the resolutions to the SI with the request to bring up the issue at the upcoming SI-meeting.\textsuperscript{465} The intention behind this letter was most likely to tie the SI even tighter to the historical parties. Moreover, they often tried to convince the West European social democrats not to speak with the former communists at all, sometimes with a very uncompromising attitude.\textsuperscript{466} One example, which indicates that the anti-communism of the social democrats was strategic rather than emotional, is from Hungary. The social democratic party had rather good relations with the ruling communist party but after the first free elections they changed their position quickly:

At that time the social democratic party had been very open towards us but after the first free election they changed their position. This was very hard for us really, because they changed their behaviour very sharply. They praised us two years ago. They highly appreciated our participation in the negotiated Hungarian revolution. But afterwards they were very reserved towards us.\textsuperscript{467}

Many of the former communist parties viewed themselves as completely reformed, for example the Hungarian Socialist Party which derived from the reform-oriented wing of the old communist party. Not to be recognised and to be still suspected of having no democratic credibility was of course a hard blow to them as it was for the other successor parties. In fact, the communist party in Hungary was one of the most reform-oriented parties before 1989. There was even a situation when it was seen as too reformist by the West European politicians. When it initiated a reform process in the mid-1980s, the West European parties were afraid that this would provoke

\textsuperscript{465} Letter 8 July 1990 to the secretary general of SI, Luis Ayala from the party leader of the Hungarian Social Democratic party Anna Petrasovits. The letter contains the founding documents of the Confederation of Social Democratic Parties in Central and Eastern Europe and a pledge that the SI should bring up this issue during the next SI meeting in October 1990.

\textsuperscript{466} This experience was expressed by several respondents, for example Bo Toresson and Conny Fredriksson.

\textsuperscript{467} Interview with Csaba Tabajdi, 9 September 2009.
the Soviet Union and even lead to a replay of Budapest 1956 or Prague 1968. Therefore they encouraged the Hungarian Communist Party to slow down the reform process.

At the beginning this was a very typical West European behaviour. I remember very well. In 1988, I was responsible for a multiparty meeting in Budapest mainly with West European social democrats, also with some Christian democrats, mainly German. At that time they tried to persuade us to have a less rapid reform process in Hungary as this could threaten the success of Gorbachev, his position was very fragile. And really we took this into consideration because for us the defeat of Gorbachev might have been disastrous. But we kept our strong reformist style. We were even more reformist than our Western partners preferred. But they forgot! After two years, they still did not recognise us. Before they said that we were too reformist and afterwards we were not authentic social democrats in their eyes.468

The Hungarian successor party certainly felt betrayed when they were not recognised by the West European social democrats. In their eyes, they led Hungary away from Soviet communism into modernisation and democracy.469 At the same time, it is necessary to understand the dilemma of the West European social democrats and the SI. Recognising the Hungarian successor party would also mean a betrayal of the historical social democratic party. This situation illustrates how political parties when facing certain dilemmas act in a contradictory way. In 1988 there was still a real risk that the Soviet Union would intervene if the countries in Central and Eastern Europe leaned too much to the West and reformed their governments too much away from the main principles of communist ideas.

It could also happen that the social democratic party used their membership in the SI to isolate the successor party. This was the case in Lithuania. The politician quoted below left the successor party and joined instead the social democratic party:

In the post-communist party [Democratic Labour Party of Lithuania] I was dealing with international relations. I was very interested in bringing our party closer to social democratic parties in other countries because our party had announced that we would follow the social democratic way. Our aim and task was to join the Socialist International and the PES but the social democratic party blocked our efforts. As you know it is impossible to join if

468 Interview with Csaba Tabajdi, 9 September 2009.
469 The Hungarian Socialist Party’s reformist style with a relatively moderate version of communist rule in the 1980s has been seen as an important factor for its resurgence in the 1994 elections. See Ágh (1995) p 492-493.
one party is blocking the application. When I had joined the Social Demo-
cratic Party, I continued to attend many party congresses and it was easier
because they were members.470

This is one example of how the social democratic parties attempted to
block the successor parties by using their position in the SI. However, de-
spite all these attempts it was obvious that the historical social democratic
parties were not as successful as expected in Western Europe. It was a con-
fused and rather defensive West European social democracy that had to
reflect on what to do next. Should they continue to support the social
democratic parties or should they face the new situation and invite the
successor parties?

6.3 The second phase: Evaluation and education
Once it was clear that the historical parties were more or less out of the
game in most countries in Central and Eastern Europe there was a change
in the strategic terrain.

The West European social democrats had to change strategy but at the
same time they were confronted with a dilemma. On the one hand they
had to invite the successor parties if the party family was to have any part-
tners at all that played a role in Central and Eastern Europe, but on the
other hand this brought a risk. There was still uncertainty whether the
successor parties had really changed or if they really wanted to change.
More or less all former communist parties changed name shortly after the
changes in 1989. The sudden collective name change became symbolic of
how quickly these parties were prepared to completely change in a new
era. The only exception is the Czech Republic, where the party changed its
name to the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia and kept its or-
thodox communist profile (see table 6.4).471

471 See Linek & Mansfeldová (2006) p 24
### Table 6.4 Successor parties in the early 1990s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Old name</th>
<th>New name</th>
<th>Character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Bulgarian Communist party</td>
<td>Bulgarian Socialist Party</td>
<td>Nationalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Communist Party of the CSSR</td>
<td>Communist party of Bohemia and Moravia</td>
<td>Communist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Estonian Communist Party</td>
<td>Estonian Democratic Labour Party</td>
<td>Moderniser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Hungarian Socialist Worker’s Party</td>
<td>-Hungarian Socialist Party</td>
<td>Moderniser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Hungarian Socialist Worker’s Party</td>
<td>Communist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Communist Party of Latvia</td>
<td>-Latvian Democratic Labour Party</td>
<td>Moderniser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Latvian Socialist Party</td>
<td>Communist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>Communist Party of Lithuania</td>
<td>Democratic Labour Party of Lithuania</td>
<td>Moderniser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Polish United Worker’s Party</td>
<td>Social Democracy of the Polish Republic</td>
<td>Moderniser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Romanian Communist Party</td>
<td>-Romanian Party for Social Democracy</td>
<td>Nationalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Democratic Party</td>
<td>Moderniser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>Communist Party of the CSSR</td>
<td>Party of the Democratic Left</td>
<td>Moderniser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>League of Communists of Slovenia</td>
<td>Party of Democratic Revival</td>
<td>Moderniser</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The labels used to depict the different character of the successor parties are generated from Bózoki (1997) and Dauderstädt et al (1999).


In most cases the communist party organisation was completely dissolved. In Latvia, for example, the communist party was banned in 1991 and the result was two successor parties: the unreformed Latvian Socialist Party set up in 1994 and the Democratic Labour Party of Latvia, which aimed to become social democratic.\(^{472}\) Also in Hungary there were two successor

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\(^{472}\) In 1995, the Democratic Labour Party of Latvia changed its name to the Latvian Social Democratic Party. Pilic (2007) p 14
parties although only one became significant. In Romania, the communist party was overthrown in the upheavals in 1989 and the National Salvation Front was set up containing most of the old leadership. This split into two opposing groupings, one more conservative, which formed the Party of Social Democracy in Romania and one more reform-oriented, which formed the Democratic Party. However, a change was not enough to be recognised. For the West European social democrats the main concern was how to discern the parties that had the potential to change. As illustrated in table 6.3, there was already at an early stage a certain divide between ‘modernising’ successor parties in Central Europe and the ‘nationalist’ successor parties in South-East Europe. Nevertheless, the modernising parties that were more open and Western-oriented were not unproblematic for the West European social democrats either. Even if the successor parties in for example Poland and Hungary really had changed or showed great will to change, these parties were in many people’s eyes identical with the old communist party and therefore a potential burden. So what we can see here is a dilemma between influence and democratic credibility. This dilemma demanded a new strategy.

The formation of the European Forum
The solution to the successor-party dilemma was a compromise; to get to know and possibly later invite the successor parties and at the same time keep them at arm’s length. A new organisation called the European Forum

473 When the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party was dissolved, its reform wing formed the Hungarian Socialist Party. In parallel a communist party was set up representing the orthodox wing of the old party but it failed to play a role in Hungarian politics. See Köröseny (1998) p 34
475 The division between nationalist formations and westernising social-democratic parties was primarily rooted in the centuries-old distinction between Eastern Europe proper, with its particular features of economic under-development, culture and politics (continuing a Byzantine legacy) and Central Europe with is structural mix of West and East European elements. See Dauderstädt (1999) p 87
476 ‘Influence’ can here be seen in two ways. Firstly, by having a strong partner in a certain country the party family ensures that its programme and prestige is being defended there. Secondly, a possible EU-enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe would naturally imply a certain imperative to have partners in each member state. This maximises the party family’s influence not only in the European Parliament but also in the Council of Ministers and possibly also in the European Council.
for Democracy and Solidarity\footnote{The European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity is still an existing organisation but today it has its main focus on the countries in the Western Balkans and the post-Soviet countries outside the EU. In order not to complicate the language usage I will refer to it in the past tense.} (henceforth called ‘European Forum’) was formed on 1 January 1993. The purpose was to work more systematically to establish a close network of contacts with parties, organisations and individuals in Central and Eastern Europe who share social democratic values.\footnote{Eatwell et al (1995) see Preface.} By using a formally separate body, the West European parties took a smaller risk and could therefore use this arena to build contacts with the successor parties. The purpose was to use the European Forum as an informal meeting place, which also permitted a certain degree of flexibility.\footnote{Evaluation Document 14 May 1996: ‘The European Forum from the View of the Foundations’.} It is not too far-fetched to assume that the West European social democrats had watched the Christian democratic dual organisation with the EPP and EUCD. As described in chapter 5, the division of labour with the EPP as the serious political actor within the EU-institutions and the EUCD as the more informal organisation enabled them to include a broad range of parties without taking political risks to the same degree. In any case, the European Forum filled the same function.

The European Forum was formally an independent foundation consisting of a board and a steering committee. It started with very small resources with only one full-time employee, the secretary general, who got a room in the offices of the Socialist group in the European Parliament.\footnote{Eventually it also established offices in Stockholm, Amsterdam and Budapest. Hix & Lesse (2002) p 78.} The Steering Committee had representatives from the most active parties in the EU and EFTA countries, one from the socialist group in the European Parliament and one from the PES.\footnote{Confirmed in Minutes from European Forum Steering Committee meetings. The first took place 29 January 1993. The representatives in the Steering Committee came from Austria (SPÖ), Germany (SPD), Sweden (SAP), the Netherlands (PvDA), United Kingdom (Labour), Italy (PDS) and Greece (PASOK).} The chairman of the steering committee was Heinz Fischer, at the time the Speaker of the Austrian Parliament. The new organisation had basically two tasks. The first was to coordinate and implement a new fresh start of building up a broad network of contacts with likeminded parties in Central and Eastern Europe. This naturally also involved an element of evaluation to see whether they qualified for a partnership with PES. The second purpose was to offer practical support
and education to the potential partners. This is to some degree interlinked with the evaluative element as will be demonstrated further down. Now follows a discussion of the challenges the European Forum faced in each task and how they handled this.

**Building up a new wider contact network**
The first task of the European Forum was to work systematically with building up a network of contacts with likeminded parties and organisations in Central and Eastern Europe. This included contacts with both the historical social democratic parties and with the reformed communist parties. Already at its second steering committee meeting, it was decided that the European Forum would have the function of a coordination centre for the West European social democratic activities in Central and Eastern Europe.\(^{482}\) It is noteworthy that the EPP organised the same coordinating function within the EUCD in October 1989. The social democrats were however not only two and a half years after the EPP in systematic coordination of the activities in Central and Eastern Europe. They also had to deal with the fact that starting a totally new organisation like the European Forum would mean that it would take some time to get started.

This was the first challenge for the European Forum; as a new organisation it had nothing. The first stage was mainly about raising money from different foundations. When the main activities started in building up a contact network, it was moreover a problem that the new secretary general had little experience of Central and Eastern Europe.\(^{483}\) On top of this came the fact that the party landscape in Central and Eastern Europe was still fluid in 1993. The first secretary general of European Forum:

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\(^{482}\) It was decided that the office of the European Forum should regularly (monthly) produce summaries of reports received. The summaries would then be distributed to the SI, PES, the group in the European Parliament and to other West European member parties. Draft Minutes, Steering Committee meeting of the European Forum, 2 March in Brussels.

\(^{483}\) The first secretary general of European Forum was Bo Toresson, previously secretary general for the Swedish Social Democratic Party.
It was like starting from scratch. We did not know the terrain very well. I often arranged seminars where we invited parties from Slovenia, Hungary, Poland etc. But when I was about to prepare the next activity I called the party; switchboard closed, fax closed, the party is closed down. One had to start from the basics; book rooms, make sure that the correct equipment was there, discuss the programme etc. This was very basic political groundwork, just like in the old days with the Social Democratic Youth League in Sweden.484

The work to build a broad contact network with individuals and potential sister parties in Central and Eastern Europe was slow and sometimes difficult. As the respondent phrases it, they had to start from scratch and perform very basic political groundwork. As will be demonstrated throughout this section, the main strategy here was patience and perseverance, often combined with creativity. The contacts in Central and Eastern Europe were built up with great help from the European Forum chairman Heinz Fischer and his staff, that had connections. Moreover, as the European Forum secretariat was based in the offices of the PES group in the European Parliament, the PES-officials with Central and Eastern Europe as their field of work also contributed with contacts.

The plan to broaden the network to include also communist successor parties was not unproblematic. The German SPD had earlier invested a lot of energy and prestige in the historical parties. Now it was reluctant to abandon the idea of building up these parties again, despite all signs indicating that they were ‘...mostly confused, weak, fragmented and aggressive’485 and would surely not play a role in the future. This slowed down the process of broadening the contacts to include also the successor parties.486 Furthermore, the historical social democratic parties were clearly unhappy with the new policy. It was not unusual that there were fiercely upset reactions to the European Forum meetings with successor parties. One example was a fact-finding mission to Bulgaria in 1993.

484 Interview with Bo Toresson, 21 September 2009. The quote is translated from Swedish.
486 Especially since the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation was the most valuable source of contacts and information to use in fact finding missions.
I got into a really fierce quarrel when I came to Sofia. I met there the chairman of the Social Democratic Party. His name was Peter Dertliev and he had lived in exile and was almost 80 years old. He turned completely furious when I wanted to meet reformed communists. He called the foreign secretary of the SPD in Bonn right away, who calls me and says that it is ‘inappropriate that I meet successor parties’. To this I just answered ‘yes’, then I went and had meetings with them anyway. This was after all the whole idea...that we should also build contacts with the reformed communists.487

Thus, the initial lack of unity within the PES on how to approach the parties in Central and Eastern Europe seemed to continue. Even after the creation of the European Forum, with the new open approach, the German SPD still defended the old strategy. This is an illustrative example of the organisational weakness within the PES. Furthermore it demonstrates the strong sense of loyalty of the German party towards parties which it had most likely promised support.

Departing from the successor parties’ perspective on the other hand, there was a strong need for international recognition. They came out from the second elections with stronger confidence. With the exception of the Czech Republic and Estonia, the general trend was that the reformed communist parties were the only significant political force on the left. But at the same time, the comeback of the successor parties to power in country after country awoke strong and sometimes fierce criticism and fear among their political opponents. The claim was that they had only changed on the surface and that they were still communist and authoritarian in their behaviour. Thus it became important for the reformed communist parties to show that they had international recognition from the West European Social Democrats.488

One example is the Hungarian Socialist Party after the 1994 elections. When it was clear that they could claim absolute majority in the parliament, they still chose to form a coalition government with the liberal party Alliance of Free Democrats.489 The background was strong accusations from the right-wing parties that once the Hungarian Socialist Party was

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487 Interview with Bo Toresson, 29 September 2009. The quote is translated from Swedish.
488 This was confirmed in interviews with the West European social democrats active in the European Forum, for example Bo Toresson, Lena Hjelm-Wallen and Nick Sigler.
489 The inclusion of the liberal Free Democrats with their credentials of anti-communist dissent and pro-market and pro-Western stance, was ideally suited to improve the incoming government’s legitimacy at home and international credibility. Tóka (2004) p 306-307.
back in power, they would show their true communist and authoritarian face. In this situation, international recognition was critical for the Hungarian Socialist Party.

It was very important for us because it was a recognition that we were a real authentic social democratic party. For us, this was a key issue, since the right-wing opposition accused us all the time of not being real social democrats. Even the SPD has been accused of being communist. This is typical behaviour from the right-wing parties. But for our voters...for our credibility it was crucial. Even if we had absolute majority, we chose to have a coalition. The international recognition was important for us.490

Thus the strategy of the European Forum to broaden the contacts was constantly encouraged by successor parties, which did everything in their power to demonstrate their loyalty.

After some time, it paid off to have a coordinating organisation like the European Forum. Gradually a stable network of contacts was established and since this was a rather informal organisation, relations with certain individuals was more important than formal party relations, this was almost necessary due to the instability of the party systems in Central and Eastern Europe.491 After one or two years, the socialist group in the European Parliament, the SI and the West European social democratic parties were regularly updated on potential sister parties in Central and Eastern Europe through the work of the European Forum.492

**Party capacity building: tactical and strategic support**

The party support from the West European social democratic parties was double-sided and mirrors the dilemma they faced with the successor parties. They wanted strong partners in the region but they were not sure about the seriousness of the successor parties. On the one hand it consisted of tactical training and on the other hand education in more soft issues such as party ideology, internal party democracy and gender equality.493 The strategy was, as mentioned, to use the European Forum to build contacts with a very broad range of actors. Once the parties were identified

490 Interview with Csaba Tabajdi, 9 September 2009.
491 Interview with Conny Fredriksson, 30 August 2010.
492 The European Forum also updated the West European social democratic parties with a calendar of future events. This was mainly done through regular updates in the form of a newsletter and of country-updates. These were compiled by the British Labour Party with financial support from the Westminster Foundation.
493 Interview with Bo Krogvig, 25 August 2010; interview with Conny Fredriksson, 30 August 2010.
and included in the network, the next step was to learn more about and possibly to support these parties. It was important to build personal relationships in order to get to know the possible new partners. This was in order to sort out what kind of support the party needed but even more important; what kind of party culture there was concerning internal democracy. To map out the character of the parties and the main personalities within them worked as a kind of first filter, as these parties would knock on the door to the SI and at a later stage might be a part of the European Parliament.\footnote{Interview with Lena Hjelm-Wallén, 9 April 2009; interview with Bo Toresson, 21 September 2009.} It was crucial for the Western parties that party support was combined with certain conditions. The strategy was therefore to help with one hand and to influence or even foster the parties to be ‘good social democrats’ with the other.

With some rare exceptions, direct financial assistance was not an option even if it was badly needed in many cases. The main support was instead given in different forms of training with the aim of building party capacity. This kind of support was organised by the foundations and was provided through training-sessions. The main purpose was to strengthen the long-term organisational structure of the parties.\footnote{The most active foundations in the party capacity training were the Dutch Alfred Mozer Foundation, the Austrian Karl Renner Institute, the Swedish Olof Palme Centre and the British Westminster Foundation. European Forum Activities 1996.} The normal procedure was to organise these training-sessions before elections. Bo Krogvig was one of those who worked with the training sessions in Central and Eastern Europe. According to Krogvig, the most effective training is held short shortly before elections:

> When you educate in party capacity building, the best time to start is before an election. Then everyone has a task and there is an enormous concentration and strong positive energy. So what happened was that they called us and said ‘we have an election in a year and we are in need of some help’. Then it was not about help to put up election posters but how to build a campaign organisation, how to think when planning and building a strategy. This also meant training in building up a party organisation in order to create both stability and strength in a party and its organisation in the whole country; a party which has been woken up after 40 years of sleeping.\footnote{Interview with Bo Krogvig, 25 August 2010. The quote is translated from Swedish. This particular quote is about a training session in the Czech Republic.}
The pre-election assistance had two aspects. The first and most systematic way was the above-mentioned party capacity training, organised by the foundations coordinated by the European Forum. The second way was that each social democratic party in Western Europe sent out people to support potential partner parties during the election campaigns, partly as a symbolic demonstration of support and partly as advisors.  

A second track was to increase the parties’ ability to communicate electronically. This project was called ‘Networking for Democracy’ and was organised by the European Forum. Courses in electronic communication through computers were arranged regularly from 1997. The training-sessions were held in Prague and the normal procedure was that each participating party sent two participants who were mostly of a younger age. This was linked to a more long-term strategy of the European Forum to educate a younger generation of social democrats in Central and Eastern Europe. One important part of the ‘Networking for Democracy’ project was that they created email-lists of all course participants, who could keep contact with each other later on. This meant that it also created a new network of young social democrats from different countries in the region. This is clearly similar to the Christian Democratic Robert Schuman Centre in Budapest, which also led to new networks or even friendship between young politicians from Central and Eastern Europe. 

A third more long-term strategic track in the support was to work in favour of a reconciliation process between the historical parties and the successor parties. A merger (or at least reconciliation) between the historical parties and the successor would solve a great deal of the early dilemma of the West European social democrats. For the PES it would mean an end to the endless quarrels with the historical parties on the possible recognition of the reformed communists. Moreover, it would move the successor parties further away from the authoritarian heritage and through this become more acceptable for the PES. In some cases the encouragement of mergers was linked to electoral performance. This was especially important where there was a general tendency for internal divisions and splits, which severely reduced the possibilities of strong election results. In several countries,
the situation was highly problematic with a number of party splits, some merely inside the parliamentary grouping and some in the party proper. In this context, it was sometimes difficult for the PES to distinguish successor parties from historical parties. One example is the troublesome situation in Latvia where several parties called themselves social democrats. The Swedish social democrats were frequently involved in advising the Latvian sister parties, but the situation was difficult both due to the Soviet heritage and the internal divisions.

At one point there were five parties calling themselves social democrats and therefore we had to visit them both bilaterally and through the PES and the European Forum. We spoke with all parties. Our message was: ‘Unite! Or else you cannot win any elections and you will not have any representation in the parliament. Secondly, we cannot accept that you are so many parties and fight each other when you share the same values.’

At one point the PES even threatened to instead invite their competitors – the Russian speakers’ party on the centre-left, if they did not come to an agreement with each other. This illustrates the frustration often felt in the European Forum seeing sister parties fighting each other. Nevertheless, it was soon clear to the Western parties that this kinds of encouragement had to be made with a long-term focus. It was apparently obvious that a merger could not be forced within a few months but rather encouraged in the coming years. This was done in a rather discreet way by encouraging positive actors within the parties. When it came to the successor parties, it could be done by supporting a more pragmatic or ‘liberal’ faction of the reformed communist parties.

Educate ‘good social democrats’

‘I guess we were always a bit too optimistic in our quest to make decent social democrats out of them.’

(Secretary general of European Forum)

Apart from improving party capacity, a large part of the support was about encouraging and educating the potential partners to become ‘good’

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502 Interview with Lena-Hjelm Wallén, 9 April 2009. The quote is translated from Swedish.


504 Interview with Christian Vigenin, 3 December 2008.

505 Interview with Conny Fredriksson, 30 August 2010.
social democrats. This was a gradual process in small steps, and therefore frustrating from time to time for the Western parties. Yet this was perhaps the most important effort of the West European social democrats. In a first step, the participating parties had to accept the SI programme of principles. They also had to sign up to some basic documents of the PES including the electoral manifestos. The second step was the much more time-consuming process of meeting and getting to know each party and arranging courses and seminars. In this work they focused on three areas; democratic values, welfare policy and gender equality.

Democratic values
It was from the very start a cautious Western social democracy which invited the former communist parties. The first step of signing up to the SI programme of principles and to the PES manifestos was mostly the easiest part. However, the critical questions were still there. How strong was the authoritarian heritage? Were they honestly prepared to change? The only way to find out was to meet the representatives from these parties frequently and in different ways. The purpose was consequently then to invite these parties to different activities but also visit them and thereby get to know them. As the former chairman of the European Forum describes the situation:

We started to get to know them, and get to know them means inviting them to meetings, seminars and similar events, but also to visit them. Just to see the party headquarters is important when evaluating how well a party functions. So we also went out to them and tried to understand how their parties work and what kind of support they needed. Because for us it was important to get in as soon as possible and make these parties work properly when it comes to internal democracy. That was a very important part for us, apart from the political dimension so to speak.

Here we can see a clear role (self-appointed or not) as mentors or even teachers. The method was simple. Through arranging visits and conferences they gradually got to know the participating parties from Central and Eastern Europe and their values and behaviour concerning democracy. After that it was a matter of education and direct discussions on the mater-

506 The epithet ‘good’ is obviously not crystal clear in its meaning and clearly a product of the social democratic parties in Western Europe.
507 Interview with Jan Marinus Wiersma, 17 February 2009.
509 Interview with Lena Hjelm-Wallén, 9 April 2009. The quote is translated from Swedish.
The education was built on courses and seminars. The courses dealt with social democratic ideology and democracy and these were mostly arranged by the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Swedish Olof Palme Centre. The seminars covered a broad range of issues like party democracy, organisational structure, human rights and minorities. One challenge was that many of the successor parties were seen as stuck in the old way of thinking from the communist era. According to a former secretary general of the European Forum, this also meant a totally different view of democracy and political work than that of traditional social democracy.

They had a strange view of what democracy is. And this is in my view a common sickness of communists. They refuse to do the work themselves so to speak and have no understanding that democracy has to evolve through one’s own work. Instead they lived in the illusion that once you’re in power, everything comes to you without any effort. But the most striking thing for me was their inability to be self-critical. The only party that in my opinion could manage this was the Czech.

The Western hesitations about some parties were often related to the degree of involvement in the previous regime. One example is Latvia, where the Swedish social democrats were very active. The party chairman Juris Bojārs was a former KGB-agent and his son became later the mayor of Riga. These signs of Soviet-style nepotism and the KGB-background ‘…felt really uncomfortable’ for the Swedish social democrats.

The question was how the member parties of the PES and European Forum should confront this challenge. The main strategy was not to quickly enforce a new democratic ideal, nor to present a ready-made model. The European Forum was careful to avoid what they call the ‘American mistake’ of knowing exactly how to introduce democracy without knowing the history and the detailed political terrain very well. The strategy was instead to work slowly and systematically and above all to focus on the younger politicians.

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510 Interview with Nick Crook, 5 December 2008.
511 Interview with Conny Fredriksson, 30 August 2010. The quote is translated from Swedish.
512 Interview with Lena-Hjelm Wallén, 9 April 2009.
513 Interview with Bo Toresson, 21 September 2009. The same argument was put forward by the former East-West coordinator of the liberal ELDR. Interview with Lex Corijn, 21 August 2007.
Miloš Zeman told me once in a very brutal way: ‘You should know that it is a waste of time to work with people older than 40, because they are contaminated with communism. Imagine a guy or woman who is 40 years old. They have been working since around 1980 and the only chance of getting a decent job was to be a member of the Communist Party. Before that they had gone to university, filled with communism. Their parents did at best say something critical at home but they also had to be loyal to the system.’ This was constantly ringing in my ears because it was true. Therefore as soon as we had a chance we tried to find younger persons to involve. This became our working method: seminars, seminars and courses, courses.\footnote{Author’s translation}

The working method was thus to approach the parties not as ‘colonial masters’ who knew everything but instead inviting them to a number of seminars and courses where dialogue and critical discussion was a self-evident part. However, a problem with this working method was that it went totally against the authoritarian Soviet tradition. According to this, each politician was expected to listen, stay silent and ask no questions. The initial courses and seminars of the European Forum were therefore often embarrassingly silent. One rather creative tactic of the European Forum was to use the following ‘trick’: one co-worker of the European Forum organiser was, before the session took place, encouraged to pose critical questions after the lecture, and once this was done, the others dared to discuss or even question the lecturer.\footnote{Confirmed in interviews with Conny Fredriksson and with Bo Toresson, 21 September 2009.} This is a thought-provoking example of the day-to-day work of the European Forum to change attitudes among the successor parties and moreover a small but essential part of the democratisation process.

\textbf{Welfare policy}

An important track of the European Forum was the welfare state theme, where the European Forum created the \textit{Forum Economic Programme Group}.\footnote{This consisted of well-known economists such as John Eatwell, Michael Ellman and Mats Karlsson.} The aim was to contribute to the economic transition process towards ‘social market economy’ in Central and Eastern Europe. The strong market-oriented discourse in the early 1990s made the ‘shock-therapy’ programmes possible. This meant radical changes with a stop for price-regulation, stop for public financial support to companies, privatisa-

\footnote{Interview with Bo Toresson, 21 September 2009.}

\footnote{Confirmed in interviews with Conny Fredriksson and with Bo Toresson, 21 September 2009.}
tions and tough budget measures to fight inflation rather than unemployment etc. The effects were soon visible in the form of a dramatic decline in living standards, high unemployment and harsh reforms.\textsuperscript{517} In many cases the ill-prepared bureaucracies of the former dictatorships could not manage the quick deregulation and this led to serious organised crime with smuggling as main income.

The Forum Economic Programme Group worked through publications and seminars for a more gradual reform towards a social market economy. It can truly be described as a social democratic think tank for Central and Eastern Europe. It consisted of a network of left-wing economists and politicians and the mission was to present ways in which the countries in Central and Eastern Europe could gradually move towards a social market economy. Apart from arranging courses and seminars it published three books on the economic transformation of Central and Eastern Europe. The first was published in 1995, the second in 1997 and the third in 2000.\textsuperscript{518} These books were/are partly an academic project but are also (and more importantly) a kind of handbooks for the social democrats in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

The main message of the Programme Group was/is that social market economy is not only desirable but also a rational and efficient economic model. In the third book \textit{Hard Budget, Soft States} (2000) this is described as follows:


The countries of Central and Eastern Europe are in the midst of the second phase of transformation. The first phase involved eliminating shortages and queues and dismantling the state-owned bureaucratically-regulated economy. (...) Now those countries must determine the character of their market economy. (...) The initial neglect of social issues derived not just from the paramount objective of creating a basic market economy and facing up to harsh budget constraints, but also from the neo-liberal bias of much outside advice, and importantly, the unwillingness of many ‘first-generation’ democratic leaders to discuss social issues at all. The common view was that there is no such thing as a social market economy. They need to learn that a well worked-out social policy is not a cost to the economy but an investment. Experience shows that equity and public investment in human development create better and stronger economies.519

This is a good example of the educative purpose of these books. The authors spell it out quite clearly: ‘they need to learn’ that social democratic welfare states are not only morally preferable but also the rationally superior model. In parallel with the educative element, this book was surely also an attempt to offer the social democratic model as a reasonable alternative to the neo-liberal ideology, which had dominated since 1989. In some contexts, it became obvious that there was a certain east-west cultural gap due to the heritage from the communist system. Some parties, mainly from the post-soviet countries had a rather peculiar view on the social democratic policy on taxes: to keep them as low as possible and in this way be generous towards all citizens. According to a representative of the European Forum, this view ‘...emanates from the Soviet viewpoint that it should be possible to arrange money in other ways; that the state can provide gifts to the people somehow.’520 These kinds of problems relating to a difference of political culture and heritage came up from time to time and as mentioned, it was mainly in countries which earlier belonged to the Soviet Union.

It should be mentioned that an important incentive for the Central and Eastern European parties was the legacy of social democratic success in some West European countries. They were eager to learn how certain social democratic parties had become successful and to draw experiences from this. This was certainly related to winning elections but also about

520 Interview with Lena Hjelm-Wallén, 9 April 2009. The quote is translated from Swedish.
contributing with an alternative model on how to manage the economy, the model of a social market economy.  

**Human rights and gender equality**

Apart from internal party democracy, the issue of human rights and gender equality was prioritised. Compared to the EPP, the European Forum seemed to have put relatively little effort into the issue of traditional ethnic minorities. The most pressing issue here was instead the situation of the Roma-people. The European Forum was clear in this case: Here they demanded more than rhetoric.

> We pushed for the issue of human rights. The European Forum arranged several meetings and seminars about the Roma people in for example Hungary and the Czech Republic and many people there found it odd, especially in Romania. Then it was not only about seminars but we also went out and met with the Roma people. Democracy and human rights are not only about nice rhetoric, it is also about reality. This is what we tried to teach all the time.

It is especially interesting here that the European Forum did not only arrange meetings on the issue but also went out to visit the Roma villages. This was a clear signal to the partners in the region that the Western parties were serious about this issue. The Roma issue was/is also connected to the more general issue of poverty and a future model of a social market economy, which as mentioned above was an important part in the PES/European Forum educational project.

If the issue of human rights was prioritised by the European Forum, this was even more the case with gender equality. The tough economic reforms in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989 led to a collapse of the social security systems such as child-care and elderly care combined with high unemployment for women. For many women who lost their jobs, this

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521 Interview with Nick Sigler, 5 December 2008. Also confirmed in interviews with Christian Vigenin, 3 December 2008 and with Conny Fredriksson, 30 August 2010.

522 Since 1989, several reports have concluded that the Roma people have been discriminated against in more or less all Central and Eastern European countries when it comes to the labour market, education and housing. See Ringold (2000) ch. 2-3. See also Rothschild & Wingfield (2000) p 288-289; Drucker (1997) p 22-23. For a detailed presentation of both Roma discrimination and gender equality during the transition, see Emigh & Szelényi eds. (2001).

523 Interview with Lena Hjelm-Wallén, 9 April 2009. The quote is translated from Swedish.

524 Emigh, Fodor & Szelényi (2001); Sieminska (1993); Tarkowska (2001).
meant in the best case a return to the housewife model and in the worst case prostitution and trafficking. This change took place in societies where women used to work full-time and participate in politics. But during the communist regime, differences between the sexes were taboo. The propaganda showed instead the picture of working women and women in political positions. But gender inequality had been there also during the communist dictatorship, it had only been hidden. The forced silence could be broken when the communist system collapsed and the conservative gender attitudes (which had remained the same) came out in the open.\footnote{Toresson (1995) p 77-83. See also Fong & Paull (1993); Ciechocinska (1993)}

The representation of women in politics was clearly weaker than before 1989 and this was also the case with some social democratic parties in the region. From the perspective of the European Forum and the West European social democratic parties, this was seen as a serious problem for gender equality but also for internal party democracy:

> When it came to internal party democracy we looked at their party statutes and how to involve more women and young people in the parties. One Czech cabinet was appointed without one single woman...in cases like this there was no reason to be very diplomatic. Instead we were quite frank with them and told them that this was unacceptable. But at the same time we showed them how we had dealt with this issue in the Western parties.\footnote{Interview with Lena Hjelm-Wallén, 9 April 2009. The quote is translated from Swedish.} 

The European Forum’s strategy was to work actively and assist in building up a consciousness of women’s rights and gender equality among the potential partner parties in Central and Eastern Europe. A so-called ‘CEE Network for Gender Issues’ was initiated in 1994 and a small secretariat in Slovenia was set up with a team of 3-4 women, sponsored by the European Forum and its partner foundations.\footnote{The decision to initiate systematic activities on the situation of women came in June 1993. Draft Minutes, Steering Committee meeting of European Forum, 8 June 1993.} The activities consisted mostly in organising workshops and conferences in the whole region of Central and Eastern Europe, and it was done on a voluntary basis. But the work of this gender network was often a ‘struggle against the wind’.

> This was about ideology. We wanted to make women conscious about their own position, to build a political consciousness. The women in the gender network... worked frantically and we helped them to do courses and investigations about trafficking. But it was very heavy work. In the culture of Catholic Lithuania and Poland etc., women were mostly suppressed. There...
were exceptionally few women in politics. The European Forum’s women’s group got much attention in Eastern Europe, but many did not like what they did.\textsuperscript{528}

The efforts to strengthen the consciousness on gender equality in the parties were thus met with scepticism but at the same time the parties had to swallow this if they were to be accepted as ‘good social democrats’. Therefore there was not a conflict on this issue at all. Here there was a difference between the historical social democrats and the successor parties. The latter were generally desperate about getting acceptance and they were in line to be admitted to the SI. According to a former European Forum official, some had purely opportunistic reasons and others had a genuine interest.\textsuperscript{529}

To conclude, the efforts to raise the consciousness about gender equality met with difficulties, mostly in the form of a silent lack of interest. But as mentioned above, the incentive for acceptance was stronger and the price was relatively low, i.e. to accept formal recognition of gender equality and to some degree increase the representation of women within the party.

6.4 The third phase: Incorporation

The third phase of incorporating the new parties into the PES was a two-sided experience. On the one hand, it was clear that a majority of the applicant parties in Central and Eastern Europe were becoming more stable and credible as partners. At the same time, the east-west relations intensified and changed character due to the increased expectations of a pending EU-enlargement.

Consolidation and differentiation

Already in 1995, six parties from Central and Eastern Europe were accepted as observers in the PES. Among them were two historical social democratic parties, from the Czech and Slovak Republics, and four successor parties from Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and Slovenia. In a second wave, in 1997-98, two Romanian parties and three Baltic parties were granted observer status.\textsuperscript{530} Thus the formal process of incorporation was initiated. At the same time, the efforts of the European Forum started to produce results. In 1997-98, the PES had a fairly good overview of the potential partners. The training sessions in party capacity and internal democracy also seemed to pay off. Several applicant parties had gone through a consolida-

\textsuperscript{528} Interview with Bo Toresson, 21 September 2009. The quote is translated from Swedish.

\textsuperscript{529} Interview with Conny Fredriksson, 30 August 2010.

\textsuperscript{530} Hix & Lesse (2002) p 77-78.
tion process and matured as potential partners to the PES. This was also demonstrated in the election results throughout the 1990s which indicate a certain stability and continuity of the party organisations (see table 6.5).

**Table 6.5 Election results for parties aiming at social democracy in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th elections as percentage of seats (successor parties marked with *).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>2nd free elections</th>
<th>3rd free elections</th>
<th>4th free elections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>*Bulgarian Socialist Party</td>
<td>52.1 %</td>
<td>25.0 %</td>
<td>20.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Czech Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>8.0 %</td>
<td>30.5 %</td>
<td>37.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Moderates</td>
<td>5.9 %</td>
<td>16.8 %</td>
<td>5.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>*Hungarian Socialist Party</td>
<td>54.1 %</td>
<td>34.7 %</td>
<td>46.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>*Democratic Labour Party of Latvia</td>
<td>No seats</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>*Democratic Labour Party of Latvia</td>
<td>51.8 %</td>
<td>8.5 %</td>
<td>18.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1992, 1996, 2000)</td>
<td>Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>5.7 %</td>
<td>8.5 %</td>
<td>13.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>*Democratic Left Alliance</td>
<td>37.2 %</td>
<td>35.7 %</td>
<td>43.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1993, 1997, 2001)</td>
<td>Union of Labour</td>
<td>8.9 %</td>
<td>No seats</td>
<td>3.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>*Democratic Social Party</td>
<td>34.3 %</td>
<td>26.5 %</td>
<td>42.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1992, 1996, 2000)</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.6 %</td>
<td>12.5 %</td>
<td>9.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Democratic Party</td>
<td>2.9 %</td>
<td>2.6 %</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Democratic Party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>*Party of the Democratic Left</td>
<td>8.7 %</td>
<td>15.3 %</td>
<td>No seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>*The United List of Social Democrats</td>
<td>15.6 %</td>
<td>10.0 %</td>
<td>12.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1992, 1996, 2000)</td>
<td>Social Democratic Party of Slovenia</td>
<td>4.4 %</td>
<td>16.1 %</td>
<td>15.6 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Results marked with ‘a’ are electoral coalitions.
Source: Berglund, Ekman and Aarebrot eds. (2004)
The election results displayed in table 6.4 undeniably confirms the early signs that the successor parties would be the significant left-wing parties in Central and Eastern Europe. However there were significant country variations. In the second wave of elections, the successor parties reached fairly high scores in Lithuania, Hungary and Poland and became governmental parties. The Democratic Left Alliance in Poland and the Hungarian Socialist Party continued to perform well also in the third and fourth elections, while the Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party fell back under 20 per cent. Also in Romania and Bulgaria, the largely unreformed successor parties performed fairly well although they (as all parties) experienced great variation from 20 to above 50 per cent. In Latvia, Slovakia and Slovenia there were both successor parties and social democratic parties of roughly the same strength competing for the left-wing voters. In these countries, the centre-left was generally weak and divided with no party reaching 20 per cent. The only countries with no significant reformed successor parties were the Czech Republic and Estonia. The Czech ČSSD was clearly the most successful with 30-40 per cent in the 1996 and 1998 elections.

The inclusion of new sister parties as observers spelled a new phase in the process of integration of the parties from Central and Eastern Europe. As observers in the PES council, they had no formal voting rights but they had the right to participate in every discussion as equals. Moreover, this was a chance for them to put their highest possible representative in the PES meetings. At the same time, the Czech and Hungarian parties became members of the European Forum Steering Board in 1997-98. According to Lena Hjelm-Wallén, member of the PES Council and chairperson in the European Forum, this represented a symbolic shift in the relations with the sister parties in Central and Eastern Europe.

531 The Democratic Labour Party of Latvia (successor party) and the Latvian Social Democratic Labour party (historical party) ran on a joint list in the 1995 and the 1998 elections.
In the early 1990s it was pretty clear that the West European countries were on the supporting side, especially concerning Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. But then something happened: they moved from one side of the table to the other in the [European] Forum. From being those who got support from us they contributed in our support to others. Secondly, the new observer status was important for them since they were present at the meetings just like any other member and were treated as such. They also made sure that they had representation on a high level so that they would be listened to. Hungary for example had its foreign minister László Kovács as its representative. This step was really inspirational and mirrored a symbolic change in Europe.532

Thus in 1995-1998 we can see the first seeds of a process in which ‘they’ (parties from Central and Eastern Europe) started to become ‘us’ (European social democrats). However this only concerned some parties and therefore this was also a process of differentiation. From the European Forum perspective it was mainly the ‘parties in Central Europe’ that had reached a certain stage of stability and maturity. According to an internal document from 1998, the European Forum concluded that their role had become more limited there.533 This divided the potential member parties into an A-group (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovenia) and a B-group (Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria). In the first group, there was no longer any need for strategic support programmes except for the period before election campaigns. The activities for the parties in the B-group were still focusing on education and seminars on social democratic ideology and welfare state policies.534

For the participants in the European Forum this differentiation had two implications. Firstly it meant that the new observer parties in the PES contributed actively in the European Forum support programmes for the B-group parties. This applied above all to the Hungarian and Czech (and somewhat later the Polish) parties of the European Forum steering board, which was the unit that coordinated the support programmes. The will to ‘give back’ after years of receiving help was strong. When the Czech party leader wrote to express his party’s wish to join the European Forum steering board he wrote as follows:

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532 Interview with Lena Hjelm-Wallén, 9 April 2009. Brackets added. The quote is translated from Swedish.

533 The support for these parties was from this point limited to election campaigns. Working Plan 1998, 8 January 1998.

534 There was also a ‘C-group’ containing the Western Balkans, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova and Russia.
We have profited a lot from your help in the past. Now I think that the time has come for us to take more [a] active part in the process, not just receive help but also to give it. Our experience and knowledge of the needs can obviously add to [the] preparation of projects for the parties in this part of Europe.535

The active contribution of the new steering board members was a way for the parties to demonstrate their goodwill and loyalty to the party family but also, as the Czech party argues, a possibility to use their post-communist experience and channels with the parties that still received support. The most substantial contribution was their knowledge and personal contacts in their neighbouring countries like Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Their contribution to the programmes directed to the Baltic countries was more limited except for the Polish party with its historical links with Lithuania.536 In a later stage, the Romanian Social Democratic Party and the Bulgarian Socialist Party became increasingly active in the preparation of support programmes to likeminded parties in the Western Balkans. Not only were the Romanian and Bulgarian parties closer culturally but they also had a well-established network of personal contacts in the region.537

The second implication of the consolidation and inclusion of some parties was a certain relief for the European Forum, as it could now focus exclusively on the more problematic cases. One example is the Bulgarian Socialist Party, which was seen as one of the least reformed successor parties. It was one of few in Central and Eastern Europe that did not split up or dissolve the party and therefore the changes came later and more gradually. After the electoral defeat in 1997, international recognition became a key factor for its credibility in the domestic arena. This was furthermore not only about democratic credibility. It would also signal that it had the ability to lead the country successfully. International isolation for a governmental party is disturbing not only for the party itself, but also for the

535 Letter 8 December 1997, to the Steering Committee of the European Forum from the party leader of the Czech ČSSD, Miloš Zeman. Brackets added.

536 Interview with Lena Hjelm Wallén, 9 April 2009. The Polish experience and contacts were also useful in the European Forum support programmes to Ukraine. In 1999, the Polish Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) proposed co-operation between them and the European Forum on supporting self-government in Ukraine. The SLD argued that their knowledge especially about the Western Ukraine could be of good help. In the European Forum this was seen as an ‘interesting experiment’ to work with a new SI-member to promote democracy in a new country. Working Plan for 2000, 21 January 1999.

537 Interview with Victor Boştinaru, 10 December 2008 and with Christian Vigenin, 3 December 2008.
country as a whole. It was above all the reformist social democratic fraction of the party that sought a stronger alignment with the Socialist International and the PES, hoping to modernise the party's profile. The strategy of the European Forum and its various members was therefore not to influence the party directly but instead to discreetly support certain politicians within its reform-wing.

The meetings or seminars that the Western foundations organised in Bulgaria helped us to develop and to make an assessment: are we able to change really? How strong is the reformist wing? Where are the leaders or the main people they should really support? It could not be official really but sometimes it was so that not the party but certain people from the party received invitations to participate in events organised in Europe by the party group of the socialists [in the European Parliament] or by the Socialist International. This was important because this push from the outside helped us to come together and to support the reformist wing of the socialist party which was represented by the current president of the country and he always underlines that these contacts with the European social democratic parties helped him a lot to develop as a politician and he is now the president of the country.

It seems clear that the Western parties, even with discreet gestures, could support the politicians in the reform-wing of the Bulgarian Socialist Party. The strategy to work as much as possible with younger politicians seems to have contributed also to the development and modernisation of the Bulgarian party. This strategy had certainly no effect in the short term but over time, when the younger generation of politicians had ‘grown up and appeared in suits’ as ministers or high-ranking officials, the influence was

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538 According to a national deputy of the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), there was a widespread erroneous perception of socialism in Bulgaria and that membership of the Socialist International would contribute to the ‘…education, maturing of the BSP to what the actual ‘Socialist’ ideal stands for.’ Quote from Pridham (2001) p 191.

539 Interview with Christian Vigenin, 3 December 2008. Brackets added.

540 In the Bulgarian case, the youth section of the party gained international recognition much quicker than the party itself. This meant that the younger people were a part of the international framework somewhat earlier. Several of them have today moved on to leading positions within the party. Interview with Christian Vigenin, 3 December 2008.

541 This expression was used in the interview with Bo Toresson (the first secretary general of the European Forum) referring to the PES Congress in Prague in 2008, which he attended. There he met several high-ranking politicians who he had met or co-operated with during his time in the European Forum. Interview with Bo Toressson, 21 September 2009.
evident. It is noteworthy that the Bulgarian Socialist Party used its own experience when it later on gave advice to sister parties in the Western Balkans. The argument is that by involving the potential member parties in the internal discussions within the PES, they will help them to mature and eventually put them in a better position to modernise their countries. In the words of the previous foreign secretary of the Bulgarian Socialist Party:

This will help them to look better, to be accepted, to be more prepared to lead the countries. Once in power, this should help them to transform their countries and become EU members one day. It’s a long process and I know it’s very theoretical what I say but...it works in practice...it’s my own example.\textsuperscript{542}

Over time, the support of the West European social democrats through the European Forum and the foundations became increasingly adapted to the EU-adaptation of each country. The Romanian example illustrates that this became an important factor in the modernisation of the Romanian Social Democratic Party.

You cannot imagine how important it was for us party workers and ministers to have an informal channel with our partners in the West, where we can inform them about our country and our reforms. But even more important: We have been inside the process of adapting our policies and our everyday values to the values and standards of our political family. Sometimes it was about international acceptance of our policies and sometimes it was not only about adaptation but also a complete transformation.\textsuperscript{543}

The Romanian party had been problematic for the European social democratic family to accept.\textsuperscript{544} Therefore it was extra important for the Romanian party to get international recognition.

**Preparing for EU-enlargement – from education to recruitment**

When it was increasingly clear in 1997-98 that the EU would soon open up for membership negotiations with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, this also had consequences for the PES and its potential member

\textsuperscript{542} Interview with Christian Vigenin, 3 December 2008.

\textsuperscript{543} Interview with Viktor Boștinaru, 10 December 2008.

\textsuperscript{544} The Romanian situation was complicated from the beginning. There were originally three parties aspiring to a social democratic epithet. The historical party gradually faded and at the same time the Democratic Party was a partner for many years until it gradually turned into a more conservative party. The PSD was in the 1990s seen as the nomenclature party and had no contacts with the Western social democrats. But in the 2000s finally the West European parties accepted PSD as a partner. See Grecu (2006) p 210-213.
parties. Firstly it affected the internal organisation of the PES and secondly it changed the way in which the PES approached potential member parties.

The internal organisation of the PES changed gradually from 1997 onwards when it came to recruiting new potential member parties. Earlier, the PES and above all the European Forum had had a relatively high degree of autonomy in building contacts and planning the activities in Central and Eastern Europe. From 1998 and onwards, this changed as the socialist group in the European Parliament became gradually more active. This mirrors a new focus of the PES: from education to recruitment. Moreover, this tendency intensified after 2002 when a timetable was set for the EU enlargement. One reason was the potential competition from the EPP.

There was a clear perspective of EU-membership. These were people who would later be in the European Parliament. Until then we had been very independent in the party, the PES. We could do our own thing. But as soon as EU membership got closer, the socialist group in the European Parliament started to put pressure on us because they wanted to recruit. And the EPP at that time was very aggressive, going into Central and Eastern Europe and just taking anybody. They were literary hoovering up parties in Central and Eastern Europe.

This transfer of the initiative to the party group in the European Parliament demonstrates the weak position of the PES within the social democratic party network. It had its secretariat in the offices of the socialist group in the European Parliament and it was constantly dependent on financial contributions from the national parties. Therefore it worked under constant pressure from the socialist group as well as the main social democratic parties like the German SPD or the British Labour Party. Moreover, the PES had no control over its membership like the EPP. They were only allowed to accept parties that had first become a member of the Socialist International.

The early divide between the two schools of thought appeared here again. First the optimistic ‘German school’ of taking in many parties and secondly the more reserved ‘British school’ which was more cautious in taking in new parties with a dubious reputation. In the new situation of a

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545 The EU accession negotiations took place in two waves. The first started in the spring of 1998 with Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Cyprus. The second wave of accession negotiations began in February 2000 and included Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and Malta.

546 Interview with Nick Crook, 5 December 2008.

547 See PES Statutes 2009, article 8.1.
possible enlargement, it is clear that the German school had the initiative. The German SPD was actively pushing the PES to accept new parties and the PES started to accept these demands. One illustrative example is the Slovakian party Smer.548 Many social democratic parties in Western Europe were sceptical towards this new party as it was generally seen as too populist.

So for example about Smer: in the PES it was really only the German social democrats that supported them. Everyone else was very sceptical. But the socialist group in the European Parliament, again led by an SPD-member was in favour and they virtually bullied the PES to take SMER into membership. I remember some quite nasty meetings with Robert Ficu [party leader of SMER] but whatever we think about him he’s now prime minister and he’s got 40-45 per cent support in the opinion polls, so he can’t really be kicked out of the socialist group.549

This is clearly an example of how ‘necessity’ took over from ideological concerns when EU-enlargement was closing in. The same logic also steered individual social democratic parties in Western Europe in the search for new strategic partners. Here, party contacts became increasingly interlinked with international diplomacy and this was especially the case for governmental parties. One example is how the British Labour Party suddenly changed its position towards the Party of Social Democracy in Romania (PSD). The British party had been a staunch opponent to accepting the Romanian successor party into the Socialist International. They regarded the PSD as largely unreformed, corrupt and not very social democratic from an ideological point of view. But when the PSD won the elections in 2000 and got the prime minister post, the Labour Party leadership, which was equivalent to the British government, prioritised British geopolitical interests before ideology.

It became a practicality issue. Nastase [party leader of the PSD] became the prime minister and Blair wanted good relations. Therefore they would be accepted as members of the Socialist International. When it became a geopolitical issue it wasn’t about ideology, it was about...we needed friends. And I think there was a desire on the part of all political parties that ‘we needed partners’, and you had to start somewhere.550

548 The formal name of the party is Direction – Social Democracy. Smer is Slovakian for ‘direction’.
549 Interview with Nick Crook, 5 December 2008. Brackets added. Smer was suspended from the PES in 2006 after it had formed a government coalition together with the far-right Slovak National Party.
Just like the previous example about Smer, this example clearly demonstrates that influence maximisation became the dominant logic when EU-enlargement was approaching. Party size and the question whether the party was in government or not had now become the crucial issues rather than ideology.

The fact that EU-enlargement was closing in did also change the nature of the relations to the applicant parties. The power relation between the two became increasingly outspoken and resembled to some degree the EU-conditionality during the enlargement negotiations. The difference was that the West European social democrats had less formal bargaining power. Nevertheless they had a certain bargaining position as their acceptance was crucial for international recognition of the party. According to one of the leading persons within the PES, this future membership in the PES party group was a tacit end goal and this provided the PES politicians with at least some bargaining power:

**Respondent:** Well, we had meetings with them and conversations about the welfare state and gender equality. And then there was no need to be diplomatic but to tell them clearly what we expected from them and also show them how we had done it. How we tackled these issues before in Western Europe.

**Interviewer (author):** So in what way did you try to convince them? Did you have a stick or was it purely about persuasion?

**Respondent:** Oh yes, there was a stick. I can say that the stick was that they would become EU-members and they would be elected into the European Parliament. This would also require that they choose party group and furthermore that they had to be accepted in a party group. The party groups have statutes that the applicants must live up to.\(^551\)

The power dimension becomes even clearer if we look at the countries, which were seen as more problematic from the PES viewpoint. There were even situations where the PES had the bargaining position to make direct demands in exchange for a relationship. One example is the situation shortly before the Romanian elections in the year 2000. In 1998-99, the mainly unreformed successor party in Romania, the Iliescu-led Party of Social Democracy\(^552\) (formerly the Democratic National Salvation Front)

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\(^{551}\) Quote from interview with Lena Hjelm-Wallén, 9 April 2009. The quote is translated from Swedish.

\(^{552}\) Formerly the Iliescu-led Democratic National Salvation Front, which was the more authoritarian of the two factions within the National Salvation Front. In 1992, it changed name to Party of Social Democracy in Romania.
aimed at transforming itself into a social democratic party. This also meant that they were eager to get recognition from the European social democratic family. The PES therefore had a strong bargaining position if they were to accept the party.

Sometimes we were very direct. I remember one situation in Thessaloniki in 1999, where we arranged a conference. Iliescu showed up and we had a meeting in his hotel-room and there we made a deal. I offered him a working relationship with the Socialist Group in the party. It was just before the elections in Romania and it was already clear that they would win big. I said ‘If you win the elections, we have three conditions (or expectations, you never use the word conditions); firstly prepare the country for NATO and EU membership, secondly involve others if you get majority in the elections and thirdly we expect you to have a proper minority policy.’ Iliescu accepted it and in fact they did all of this. It was this kind of influence we had these days.  

If we compare with the process of educating the parties described in phase two, we can conclude that the asymmetrical power-relation is the same but here it is more direct. An illustrative example is how a prominent PES official described the experience of working with the Latvian centre-left parties shortly before the EU enlargement as a kind of preschool situation: ‘This was the kind of child-raising that we were forced to do from time to time.’ This statement clearly illustrates the asymmetric east-west power-relation in this process. Yet, at the same time, party size mattered. The example of the Slovakian Smer suggests a reversed power relation. The PES needed at least one strong partner in each country to maximise its influence in the European Parliament. If that party was problematic for other reasons, it mattered less as long as it was strong and influential.

**Increasing adaptation among applicant parties**

Also among the parties in Central and Eastern Europe, there were indications of an increasing logic of necessity as possible EU-membership drew nearer. As illustrated in the last example with Romania, there was a general tendency starting somewhere in 1999-2001 of stabilisation and adaptation. As mentioned earlier, twelve parties became observers in the PES in 1995-1997. Moreover these parties were ‘upgraded’ to the status of associate members by the PES Congress in March 1999 (see table 6.6 below). After that, no new parties from Central and Eastern Europe were brought

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553 Interview with Jan-Marinus Wiersma, 17 February 2009.

554 Interview with Lena-Hjelm-Wallén, 9 April 2009. The quote is translated from Swedish.
in for a while. The reason was the wish of the PES to have a pause to allow for more ‘observation-time’. The PES Council also made it clear that the granting of full member status would not be handled collectively. Instead, each party would be evaluated individually.555

This was a clear signal to the applicant parties. The PES needed a breathing-pause to consolidate. Moreover it signalled that an upgrade to full PES membership demanded more than merely EU-membership for the home-country. It was now time for the applicant parties to demonstrate their seriousness and if necessary adapt to the expectations of the PES. These expectations had been known by the applicant parties for many years. This included a modernisation of the parties in terms of internal democracy, ethnic minority policies and gender equality. But perhaps the most important expectation was a development towards a more united left: reconciliation between the successor parties and the historical parties and if possible a merger between them.

555 It was also decided that there would be no automatic upgrade to full member status once their countries were accepted as EU-members. Hix & Lesse (2002) p 80-81.


Table 6.6 Gradual incorporation of parties from Central and Eastern Europe into the PES 1995-2007. Successor parties marked with *.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Party name</th>
<th>Observer Status</th>
<th>Associate member</th>
<th>Full member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Bulgarian Socialist Party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderates</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Hungarian Socialist Party</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Democratic Labour Party of Latvia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvian Social Democratic Worker’s Party</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Democratic Labour Party</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Democratic Left Alliance</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union of Labour</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanian Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Party of Social Democracy in Romania</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Democratic Party</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>to EPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Party of the Democratic Left</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Democratic Party of Slovakia</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction – Social Democracy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*The United List of Social Democrats</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Defunct or merged with other parties

Source: Hix & Urs (2002), in addition e-mail correspondence with each party secretariat.

From 1999 and onwards, things started to happen that step by step demonstrated that the applicant parties were ready to adapt to the PES expectations. In Poland the electoral coalition Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) merged into a political party with the same name. The main party in this merger was the successor party Social Democracy in the Republic of
Poland. Two years afterwards, the SLD formed an electoral coalition with the historical party Union of Labour.\textsuperscript{556} Thus, from 1999 there was a strong and stable centre-left force in Poland and as from 2001 there were clear signs of reconciliation between the historical party and the successor parties (see table 6.7).

Table 6.7: Mergers between successor parties and historical social democratic parties 1999-2005 (successor parties marked with *).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Merger</th>
<th>New party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>-*Latvian Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Latvian Social Democratic Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Latvian Social Democratic Worker’s Party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>-*Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Lithuanian Social Democratic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Social Democratic Party of Lithuania</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>-*Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Democratic Left Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Union of Labour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>-*Romanian Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Social Democratic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-*Party of Social Democracy in Romania</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>-*Party of the Democratic Left</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Smer – Social Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Social Democratic Party of Slovakia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Direction (Smer)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The Polish Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) had been a working electoral alliance since the 1991 elections.

In Romania the Party of Social Democracy (PDSR) had for long been regarded by the PES as one of the least reformed successor parties. The party had attempted to achieve membership in the Socialist International since 1992 without success. However in the preparations before the 2000 elections, it proclaimed that it was a ‘European, social democratic party, com-

\textsuperscript{556} This electoral coalition won the Polish elections in September 2001 and formed a joint government.
mitted to joining the European Union and NATO’.\textsuperscript{557} International recognition was increasingly important for the PDSR and as demonstrated in the quote above, PES was relatively straightforward in its expectations. After the elections, the PDSR avoided a coalition with the previous alliance partner, the nationalist Party for a Greater Romania as it would clearly harm the reputation of the party at the European level. Instead it built an electoral coalition (the Social Democratic Pole of Romania) with two smaller parties, one of which was the historical SocialDemocratic Party (PSDR), shortly before the elections in November 2000. After the successful elections and the formation of a coalition government, the PDSR merged with the smaller historical party. This enabled the new Social Democratic Party (in practice a continuation of Iliescu’s party) to be accepted into the Socialist International and the PES. Given the weakness of the historical social democrats, the chief goal of Iliescu was not to increase his electoral strength but to obtain the quality label of membership in the Socialist International, to which the historical party already belonged.\textsuperscript{558} Consequently the PES expectations from the PDSR were more or less fulfilled. It had (at least on the surface) become a more modern social democratic party and merged with the historical party. The Romanian centre-left scene was now significantly easier to handle for the PES.

Also in Lithuania, there was a merging process between the successor party the Democratic Labour Party (LDDP) and the historical party Social Democratic Party (LSPD). Compared to the weak Romanian historical party, the social democrats in Lithuania maintained a stable however small representation in the Seimas. The Democratic Labour Party on the other hand went from absolute majority in the Seimas in 1992-1996 to having the same representation as the historical party after 1996. Moreover it was weakened by a number of corruption scandals and of accusations of supporting former KGB-agents.\textsuperscript{559} With the successor party weakened by its communist legacy, it was a fruitful environment for talks with the historical party, which needed to broaden its base. In 1999 negotiations started between the two for an electoral coalition and after the successful elections they decided to merge into one single party. Just like in Romania, the merger served both parties interests well. As Duvold and Jurkynas phrase it

\textsuperscript{557} PDSR Party Platform 2000 via Stevenson Murer (2002) p 379
\textsuperscript{558} Grecu (2006) p 210-218
\textsuperscript{559} No less than 43 corruption scandals had been linked with the LDDP since it became the governmental party in 1992. Harboe Knudsen (2012) p 53.
‘[…] the old Social Democrats got a taste of power, while the old Labour Democrats could whitewash their communist legacy.’

The Romanian and Lithuanian cases are clearly success stories from the PES perspective. The mergers between the successor parties and the historical parties solved a great deal of the influence-credibility dilemma as the potential partners were fewer, stronger, more united and the communist legacy was (at least to some degree) less disturbing. This trend of reconciliation and merging of the historical parties and the successor parties was also seen, as the mentioned, in the Polish case and in Slovakia and Latvia. The trend was consequently a consolidation and stabilisation of the centre-left political map in Central and Eastern Europe. This was certainly a result of domestic developments of party institutionalisation, but it is reasonable to assume that the expectations of the PES also contributed. In the Romanian example this was certainly the case. What we can see here is a process of standardisation of the centre-left in Central and Eastern Europe. This is also visible in the new names of the parties. A short look at table 6.6 demonstrates that more or less all parties had now the epithet ‘social democrat’. Even the Estonian social democrats eventually changed name into the Social Democratic Party (SDE) in 2003. The party had used the name Moderates (Мððdukad) since 1996. One reason was its aversion to using the term ‘social’ or ‘socialist’ in its name. For the Swedish social democrats this name was highly problematic. It resembled their main political enemy in Sweden: the centre-right party Moderaterna (Moderates).

6.4 Concluding remarks: Towards a logic of consequences
In this concluding section I will discuss the PES eastward enlargement departing from the two research questions of the thesis. The first question concerns the problems that confronted the PES in this process and how it dealt with these problems. The second question is related to the driving forces behind the PES chain of decisions during this period. Departing from the logic of appropriateness and the logic of expected consequences, the argument is that political parties tend to find themselves in a conflict between these two logics of behaviour. The question in this context is how

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561 Interview with Lena Hjelm Wallén, 9 April 2009. When it comes to the Swedish centre-right Moderaterna, the formal party name was Moderata Samlingspartiet (roughly translated ‘Moderate Coalition Party’) but the everyday name was and is Moderaterna. Since 2005, the party has a new formal name: Nya Moderaterna (New Moderates).
the PES managed to balance between the need for influence on the one hand and legitimacy on the other.

In the case of the PES, the two research questions are interlinked to some extent. In 1989-1990, the West European social democrats were confronted with a distinct dilemma: should they invite the historical social democratic parties or the former communist parties, or both? It became clear very soon that inviting both would not be accepted by the historical parties, so the PES had to choose. The final choice was to invite the historical social democratic parties despite many signs that they were inexperienced both in terms of organisation and in campaigning. This is a strong argument that the logic of appropriateness steered the behaviour of the PES in the early stage. Many social democrats in Western Europe had been fostered as politicians during the Cold War with the communists as a perceived potential threat.\textsuperscript{562} It was seen as a ‘moral duty’ to recognize the historical parties and support them as their future allies in Central and Eastern Europe. The memories of how social democrats had been treated by the communists in 1947-48 in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland etc. had not disappeared. Moreover, the social democrats who had fled to the west or been jailed were still alive either as active in the exile parties connected to the SI or as central individuals in the (re)formation of new social democratic parties in their home-countries. Thus, the West European social democrats and the PES were clearly steered by moral concerns rather than that of power and influence in the early stage.

However, the choice of recognising the historical parties and isolating the former communists was not only a result of a logic of appropriateness. In general the West European social democrats were quite uncoordinated and passive in the early stage. This could be seen as a consequence of two factors. The first has to do with the strong role of the Socialist International compared to the PES. The fact that the chairman of the Socialist International was/is from Chile lowered the interest for post-communist Europe. Much focus was instead put on supporting democracy in Latin America and in South Africa. Secondly, the member parties in the PES had different views on how to approach the potential new member parties from Central and Eastern Europe. While mainly the German SPD preferred a broad inclusion the British and Scandinavian parties were more cautious. This disagreement led to passivity and above all lack of coordination. The result of this early passivity was a generally weak level of knowledge about the potential member parties. This did most likely cause the West European par-

\textsuperscript{562} See earlier quote from interview with Ingvar Carlsson.
ties to choose the ‘safe’ alternative as they were not yet sure of the former communist parties.

It is therefore reasonable to claim that there were both ideological/emotional and egoistic factors behind the fact that the Western social democratic parties chose not to recognise the former communist parties in the region. Firstly ‘it felt wrong’ from an ideological point of view and this is a clear statement of idealism. Secondly the egoistic factor here is linked to the awareness that relations with the former communists might harm the reputation and credibility of social democracy in Western Europe. In my view, the main reason was a mental blocking in the minds of the European social democrats against the communists.

After the first elections, it was clear to most observers that the historical parties in Central and Eastern Europe would not play a role. The only exceptions were in the Czech Republic, Estonia and to a certain extent Slovenia. In general they reformed communist parties had demonstrated that they had strong and stable party organisations and also a well-established network outside the party. The PES now found itself in a difficult dilemma. If they held on to the historical parties they risked ending up without any sizable partners at all in Central and Eastern Europe. At the same time, recognising and inviting the former communists involved a legitimacy-risk due to the historical legacy of the former communist parties. The dilemma between the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequence became even more clear at this stage. There was a real risk that the social democratic party family would be decimated in a possible future EU-enlargement if they did not recognise the former communist parties. The solution to this dilemma was the creation of a new informal organisation in 1993: the European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity. Through this new network, the social democrats could invite and become familiar with the former communist parties (or ‘reformed communist parties’) without the political risks it involved. The main goal was to encourage a merger between the historical parties and the former communist parties. This would partly solve the problem of hostility between the two and partly make it easier for the PES to overview the party landscape, which in some cases (see for example Latvia) became difficult to handle.

In this sense, the second phase of the PES eastward enlargement can be seen as a skilful balancing between the need to secure influence in an enlarged future EU and a safeguard against any criticism of including the former communists too quickly. Yet there is also another important element in the second phase that supports this strategy of balancing the two contradicting needs. This was the systematic efforts of the West European social democrats to support and educate both historical parties and former
communists from 1993 onwards. This had certainly an element of self-interest; strong partners in Central and Eastern Europe would be necessary for the PES to maintain its position as one of the strongest European party families after a possible EU-enlargement. At the same time, there was a heavy input in exporting the ‘West European model’ of social democracy, including a strong focus on welfare politics, human rights (including ethnic minority rights), and gender equality. If we turn to the former communist parties, there was a general willingness to sign up for virtually anything as long as they were recognised and accepted by the PES as ‘real’ social democrats. For them, this was closely related to their legitimacy at the domestic level.

Turning finally to the third phase of incorporation, the main conclusion is that necessity forced the PES to prioritise the need for influence. In the early 2000s, it was increasingly clear that the main competitor of the PES, the Christian democratic EPP was recruiting aggressively in Central and Eastern Europe. This was naturally related to increasingly open prospects of finalising the EU-membership negotiations with the former communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Confronted with this situation, the behaviour of the PES was increasingly characterised by the logic of consequences, with the main priorities on including (or not rejecting) strong parties. The Iliescu-led Romanian former communist party, which had been isolated by the PES throughout the 1990s, were accepted as a partner when it was clear that they would win convincingly in the 2000 elections. The PES accepted them despite the fact that they had a heavy legacy of authoritarianism and were still connected to corruption affairs. Likewise the radical-populist Smer – Social Democracy in Slovakia was a dilemma for the PES. It had clearly outweighed the traditional social democratic party in electoral support but had strong populist and sometimes xenophobic leanings. The PES handling of these dilemmas demonstrates that it still tried to balance between influence and legitimacy, but with a gradual overweight of influence. Thus, the PSD from Romania was finally accepted, as was the Slovak Smer party. Nevertheless, the hard work by the PES with support and education to its sister parties in the second phase started to pay off in the early 2000s. Several former communist parties were invited into the inner circles of the European Forum and could contribute in the support programmes. Shortly before the EU-enlargement,

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563 In a later stage, the PES demonstrated that they were prepared to sacrifice influence to defend their ideology. In 2006 it suspended Smer from membership due to extreme-nationalist and xenophobic statements. However, after some months it was taken back into the party family again.
there were also signs that the PES’ push for a merger between the former communists and the historical social democrats gave results. Several mergers took place in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

In sum, the PES has moved from being prisoners of historical loyalties in the early stage to becoming skilful brokers between influence and democratic legitimacy. It is clear that the logic of appropriateness steered the PES in the early stage. In the second phase, they found a convenient compromise between the two conflicting logics and in the third phase they were forced to prioritise influence due to the narrow time-frame of the EU-enlargement and competition from the EPP. The case of the PES illustrates not only how parties navigate between influence and legitimacy but also how much effort was put into ‘fostering the former communists into ‘decent social democrats’’. Here we can see elements of both neo-colonialism and democracy-export. Especially when it comes to gender equality it is interesting how the western parties describe the suspicion and grudging acceptance of the potential member parties. Nevertheless, a certain power-asymmetry was in my view unavoidable at this stage as some parties wanted to be included at any cost in the PES. The long-term impact of the PES and its network on the applicant parties regarding internal party democracy, view on welfare, ethnic minorities, gender equality etc. is hardly measurable. Still, it is reasonable to assume that the efforts of the PES and its network of actors did contribute to a more stable centre-left party landscape in Central and Eastern Europe.

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564 See earlier quote from interview with Conny Fredriksson.
7. The European Liberal Family

This chapter is mainly built on ELDR party documents collected at the ‘Archiv des Liberalismus’ at the Friedrich Naumann Foundation Centre outside Cologne, Germany. The reader should however be informed that the access to ELDR documents after 1996 was limited. This is to some degree compensated for by the interview material; I have interviewed the two persons that were responsible for the ELDR east-west relations in the 1990s. Moreover I have interviewed eight persons from Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Slovenia who have in different ways been involved in the co-operation between their parties and the ELDR.

7.1 The actors of the ELDR network

During the period covered in this study, the liberal parties in Western Europe acted within a framework of several different organisational units at different levels (see table 7.1). The importance of the different units of this framework varied depending on the phase in this process.

In 1989-1990, the liberal party network reminded of the social democratic party family. It was the national member parties that were most important within the liberal family. They had the resources and the staff for organising the necessary events. But compared with the Christian democrats and social democrats, the member parties the ELDR were in general smaller and therefore did not have the same resources. The need for coordination was therefore even more apparent in the liberal party family. However, just like the PES in 1989, the European-level organisation was not very institutionalised and lacked a strong leadership. The initial coordinating role was therefore found in the Liberal International, which had been the main engine behind a closer co-operation structure between the parties in Western Europe. From 1991 the ELDR became increasingly institutionalised and thus took a more active role in the party contacts east-

565 The Friedrich Naumann Foundation Centre is situated in Gummersbach 40 km east from Cologne. The party documents consist of meeting protocols, letters and above all annual reports on the contacts with liberal counterparts in Central and Eastern Europe.
For example they decided to open up party membership for observers outside the EU. As will be demonstrated, the ELDR group in the European Parliament also became more active after 1992.

Table 7.1: The ELDR network of actors that were active in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989

| Global level | o Liberal International (LI) |
|             | o Liberal Youth International (IFLRY) |
| European Level | o European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party (ELDR) |
|               | o The liberal group in the European Parliament |
|               | o The liberal group in the Council of Europe |
|               | o Liberal Youth Movement of the European Community (LYMEC) |
| National level (only the most important) | o German Free Democrats (FDP) |
|               | o Danish Venstre (V) |
|               | o British Liberal Democrats (LIB DEM) |
|               | o Dutch People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) |
|               | o Dutch Democrats 66 (D66) |
|               | o Belgian Flemish Liberals and Democrats (VLD) |
|               | o Swedish Liberal People’s Party (FP) |
| Foundations | o Friedrich Naumann Foundation (German) |
|             | o International Democratic Initiative Foundation D66 (Dutch) |
|             | o National Democratic Institute (American, non-partisan) |
|             | o Centre d’Etudes Libéral, Démocratique et Réformateur Européen (Belgian) |

The liberal sub-organisations like the youth organisations IFLRY and LYMEC and the foundations played an important role in building a broad network of contacts as a complement to the formal party organisations.

566 In 1991 the ELDR congress decided to replace the rule of qualified majority with simple majority. The decision in 1993 to transform the liberal party federation into a political party was also followed by institutional changes that further enhanced the ELDR’s capacity to act efficiently. Firstly, the Executive Committee was replaced by the Council. Secondly the ELDR Bureau was created and just like the EPP Presidency this gathered the key European liberal politicians. Thirdly, the party leaders’ meeting was institutionalised and became the central decision-making organ within the ELDR. See ELDR Statutes 1991; Hix & Lord (1997) p 175; Sandström (2003) p 130.

567 ELDR Statutes 1991
The youth organisations became increasingly important in the 1990s when it became a strategy to focus on the younger politicians in Central and Eastern Europe. Among the foundations, the German Friedrich Naumann Foundation stands out as the most important throughout the whole period. It had offices in most capitals in Central and Eastern Europe and became an important coordinating centre for the fact-finding missions of West European liberal parties. After the initial years, the Belgian foundation Centre d’Études Libéral, Démocratique et Réformateur Européen (CELE) became increasingly important as the supporting organisation for courses and seminars for potential partners in Central and Eastern Europe.

7.2 The first phase: Identifying partners
At first sight, the ELDR seemed to have a strong potential in attracting influential partners in Central and Eastern Europe. The fall of the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe has often been alluded to as the historical victory of Western liberalism over Soviet socialism.\textsuperscript{568} Indeed, many liberals in Western Europe felt inspired and strengthened in 1989-1991 by the brave and uncompromising dissidents who had stood up against the communist dictatorship, not with violence but with morality. Liberalism was no longer something boring; it was enthusiasm and the heroes’ struggle for freedom and human dignity. Moreover ‘freedom’ was the symbolic word of the popular anti-regime resistance.

However, the initial euphoria was soon replaced by a more reality-based insight: the quest of finding partners in Central and Eastern Europe would be complicated.\textsuperscript{569} The liberal party family faced several challenges in this process. Apart from the loose meaning of liberalism and the unstable emerging political landscape, there was also a weak historical legacy of liberal parties in Central and Eastern Europe. On top of this came an ideological overlap with the bigger EPP.

Fluid party landscape and confusion about the meaning of liberalism
In 1989-1990, the general liberal party landscape was difficult to overview. The combination of fast changes and the weak tradition of mass party organisations beyond the communist parties led to a fluid situation. The main problem in the early stage was the dominant role of individuals rather than parties. Especially among liberal parties, there were recurrent rivalries between certain personalities, and this made it extra difficult for

\textsuperscript{568} See for example Dahrendorf (2005); Ackerman (1992).

\textsuperscript{569} Interview with Leon Peijnenburg, 14 July 2008.
the West European liberal parties to get an overview. Table 7.2 below confirms the fluid situation. Of the 24 parties that were seen as potential ELDR-partners, only eight existed at the first EU-enlargement eastwards in 2004.

The only country that was relatively easy to handle for the ELDR was Hungary. Already before the elections in 1990, the political landscape was stable and easy to overview. There had been two well-organised liberal parties since 1988; The Alliance of Free Democrats and the Alliance of Young Democrats (Fidesz). In 1989-90 the Hungarian Democratic Forum was also seen as a possible ally. However it was soon clear that it would ally itself with the conservative European Democratic Union and the EPP. The Polish case was probably the most difficult for the ELDR to handle. The historical tradition of liberalism in Poland was still weak but the difficulties in Poland had much to do with the disintegration of Solidarity. The development after the round-table sessions has been described as a ‘nuclear explosion’ with a swarm of parties as a result. The situation for any political party was unstable but the ELDR managed to establish some links; the Liberal Democratic Congress and two smaller parties.

In Czechoslovakia, which de facto had two separate party systems already in 1990, we can look at the Czech case first. The party landscape did not develop until after the first election in 1990, which was clearly won by the umbrella organisation Civic Forum. During 1991, Civic Forum divided into the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) and the Civic Movement (OH). While the ODS relatively early joined the conservative European Democrat Union (EDU), the OH was seen as the possible partner for the ELDR together with three smaller parties. Compared with the Czech counterpart, independence was a much more important issue in Slovakia since the federation had historically been dominated by the Czechs. Before independence in 1993, Slovakian politics was therefore dominated by this issue.

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570 Interview with Lex Corijn, 21 August 2007. One example is the Liberal Democratic Party in the Czech Republic, which suffered from constant quarrels within its leadership in the early stage.

571 Fidesz was a radical liberal and youth party with a 35-year age limit.

572 The description of the disintegration of Solidarity as a nuclear explosion was mentioned in an interview with Lex Corijn, former East-West coordinator for the ELDR. For a more detailed presentation about the weak heritage of liberalism in Poland, see Szacki (1995) p 60-61.

573 Notes, 20 March 1990, Colloquium on Political and Economic Developments in Central and Eastern Europe, Brussels.
Nevertheless, the ELDR member parties identified a number of potential partners, most of them were however small and insignificant.574

Table 7.2: Parties in Central and Eastern Europe, seen as potential partners by the ELDR member parties in 1989-1991.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Existed in 2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Liberal Democratic Union</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Radical Democratic Party</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechoslovakia (Czech parties)</td>
<td>Citizens’ Movement</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civic Democratic Alliance</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal Democratic Party</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechoslovakia (Slovak parties)</td>
<td>Hungarian Civic Party</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coexistence Movement</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent Democrats</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal Democratic Party of Slovakia</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Liberal Democratic Party</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Young Democrats (Fidesz)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alliance of Free Democrats</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hungarian Democratic Forum</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Club of Europe 21</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latvian Liberal Party</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>Liberal Alliance of Lithuania</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal Union</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Liberal Democratic Congress</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democratic Union</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Club of Modern Liberalism</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>National Liberal Party</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>Liberal Democracy of Slovenia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Democrats of Slovenia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The Hungarian Democratic Forum soon became affiliated with the conservative EDU and the Social Democrats of Slovenia with the PES. Fidesz in Hungary left the ELDR for the EPP in 2000.
Source: East-West Vademecum, 2nd July 1991, ELDR.

When it came to Romania and Bulgaria the West European liberal parties had poor knowledge of the political terrain in the early stage. In Romania,

574 For the problematic situation for liberal parties in Slovakia, see Hloušek & Kopeček (2010) p 117-118.
the situation was chaotic after the violent overthrow of Ceaușescu in December 1989. Also in Bulgaria the political scene was difficult to overview. The broad umbrella organisation the Union of Democratic Forces (SDS) dominated in the early stage and it contained some liberal parties that were of interest to the ELDR, for example the Radical Democrats and the smaller Liberal Democratic Union. The situation in the three Baltic states and Slovenia was different as they did not reach national independence until 1991. In the Baltic states the situation was very difficult to overview before independence. The fluidity of the political parties was something that continued also after the first free elections. Potential partners were identified but they soon split or merged with others. The political situation in Slovenia was more stable but difficult to evaluate before independence.

The difficulties of the ELDR member parties to identify possible liberal partners in Central and Eastern Europe can be explained by two interrelated factors: the weak historical legacy of liberalism in the region and the broad meaning of liberalism. The historical conditions for liberal ideas and parties in Central and Eastern Europe have been weak compared to West European countries. With some exceptions in the Czech lands and parts of today’s Poland and Hungary, the historical region was characterized by weak cities, a weak middle-class and instead a strong aristocracy. Liberals in the region have historically not been able to organise but have rather consisted of a few intellectuals with little or no political influence. Another factor which has weakened liberal ideas is the old empires which dominated the region until 1918. These created a political climate in the 19th and the early 20th century where nationalist movements dominated the scene. Liberalism in Central and Eastern Europe thereby became much more intertwined with nationalist ideas. Thus, even if liberalism had existed as an ideology in Central and Eastern Europe since the mid-19th century, it had been constantly overshadowed by its historical twin nationalism. This in

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575 The Union of Democratic Forces was a collection of many different parties from the centre-right to the far left. In 1992, it was a collection of 16 parties. East-West Vade-Mecum, 1 March 1993, p 35; ELDR contacts with Eastern European liberal parties, 13th revised version 1991.

576 A more detailed presentation of the historical background of Central and Eastern Europe is found in chapter 3.
combination with the historically weak urban strata in the region made the liberal tradition generally weak in the region.577

As soon as the West European liberal parties began searching for possible partners in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989, they realised that it would get complicated to identify partner parties. The word liberalism had a very positive connotation, but due to the weak historical presence of liberalism in the region, the word had a rather vague meaning. In the words of a deputy secretary of the ELDR Group in the European Parliament:

Everybody called themselves liberals at the time of the revolutions, so it was not an easy task to identify these parties; and so we made mistakes, so we headed into uncharted waters, we didn’t have fixed points; we didn’t know whether he or she was a liberal, whether the party set up was a true liberal party.578

Another challenges for the Western parties was that the term liberalism was twisted into something else than the original meaning.579 Some parties in Central and Eastern Europe were discarded immediately as it became clear that they were nationalist. An illustrative example is when the Russian Liberal Democratic Party with its ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky was invited to a Congress of the Liberal International in 1990.580 Others parties were contacted but treated with some hesitation like the Romanian National Liberal Party, which was said to have ‘monarchist or nationalist leanings.581 The situation became even more confused when parties that called themselves ‘social democrats’ expressed strong pro-market positions. A quite common misinterpretation of the concept of liberalism (from a West European point of view) in the early stage was that


579 With the original meaning of liberalism, I mean strong focus on human rights, minority rights and a cosmopolitan rather than nation-based world view. With this, I do not want to say that this is the ‘correct’ definition, but merely that this was the view of liberalism that permeated the West European liberals. This was expressed in interviews with the ELDR East-West coordinators Leon Peijnenburg and Lex Corijn.

580 Liberal International Congress, 4-6 October in Espoo: List of participants.

581 Note, 2 March 1990, LI contacts in Central and Eastern Europe.
it was ‘only about making money’ and had nothing to do with human rights or minority rights.\textsuperscript{582} These examples of a too narrow or outright false image of liberalism made the ELDR member parties more hesitant and sceptical towards potential partners. However, this also meant passivity and a delayed effort towards Central and Eastern Europe.

Apart from the broad meaning of liberalism, there was also the challenge of ideological overlap between liberalism and conservatism. One example is a report from a visit to Poland 11-14 December 1989 by the Liberal Peoples Party from Sweden. They warned for a risk that the liberal forces in Poland would be drawn into the conservative party family:

> We strongly argue that an LI fact-finding mission be sent to Poland at the earliest possible date. This is particularly important as it is our impression that the Swedish Conservative Party, on behalf of the IDU [International Democrat Union], is searching for contacts in Poland and might create confusion among people who should naturally be allied to liberals in other European countries. (...)

This report illustrated the vulnerable situation of the liberal parties. The general confusion about the meaning of liberalism and the alternative overlapping ideologies made it possible for those who established the first contacts to also influence the potential partners’ view on appropriate ideology and role models. In this sense, there was even a possibility of overlap with the Christian democrats (EPP). Moreover, the delayed reaction of the ELDR due to the fluid landscape led to a situation where it was constantly one step behind the conservative parties that were organised in the European Democrat Union. One representative from the British Liberal Democrats even stated that ‘We missed the boat with many parties in Central and Eastern Europe.’\textsuperscript{584}

### Coordination and openness

The lack of overview was problematic for the ELDR member parties that had no real framework for whom to link up with. There was an existing network in place through the Liberal Youth International and its activities before 1989.\textsuperscript{585} However, this was difficult to use in the present situation

\textsuperscript{582} Interview with Leon Peijnenburg, 14 July 2008.


\textsuperscript{584} Fax, 17 October 1992 to the ELDR secretariat from the British Liberal Democrat Party.

\textsuperscript{585} Smith (1997) p 69.
of fluid parties. Thus, the ELDR was forced to have a broad outlook for potential partners. According to an internal working document the first contacts were focused on four tracks.586

1. on forces with whom a dialogue already existed (such as political dissidents)
2. on the reinforcement of old liberal movements which existed before communist rule
3. with liberal wings within electoral movements and alliances
4. with breakaway groups from large oppositional blocks.

The situation for the ELDR member parties is similar to a certain degree to that of the EPP with the broad range of potential member parties. However one important difference is that the ELDR lacked a parallel organisational body like the EUCD, which the EPP used as a ‘training school’ for the future partners without taking any political risks. The ELDR and its member parties instead had to make the difficult decision whether or not the party in question could qualify as a member. In the fluid situation where ‘everybody called themselves liberals’ it is not strange that the ELDR became more cautious and passive. In the first two-three months after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the ELDR member parties kept a very toned-down profile.587 This can be compared to the Christian democratic European People’s Party (EPP) that set up an ‘East European working group’ with a high priority already in October 1989.588 Moreover, it should be noted that there was no liberal exile section in Western Europe that could match the Christian democratic special unit for this.589

In this context, it was a difficult task to build up the necessary contacts required for identifying the proper partners in the region. Poor knowledge of the political landscape and a cautious strategy slowed down the work. But there was also a lack of coordination of the various activities of the

587 For example several proposals of activities in Central and Eastern Europe were turned down by the ELDR member parties due to financial reasons. See letter conversation, 13-14 December 1989 between the ELDR secretary general and an English MP.
588 Europa im Blickfeld, no. 11, 30 October 1989.
589 The Central European Union of Christian Democrats (CEUCD) played a certain role in the initial phase, supporting the EPP member parties in their activities in Central and Eastern Europe, especially in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. See chapter 5.
ELDR member parties. The various fact-finding missions by Western liberal actors to Central and Eastern Europe were not aware of each other. This confusion was to a great extent a result of a weak and unclear decision-making apparatus within the liberal family. It was not clear whether the activities should be coordinated by the Liberal International, the ELDR group in the European Parliament or by the ELDR secretariat. In the early stage, the leader of the ELDR group in the European Parliament argued that the ELDR secretariat should coordinate the activities while the ELDR President proposed that the European level Liberal Study Centre (CELE) could be a first information gathering body. Finally in February 1990, a work plan was submitted by the ELDR secretary general. This included firstly an inventory of the liberal organisations in Central and Eastern Europe and secondly a special ELDR executive committee session in Brussels with invited representatives from different liberal organisations from both Western and Eastern Europe. An East-West coordinator was appointed by the ELDR secretariat and a working group was established by the liberal group in the European Parliament with a special focus on east-west relations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warsaw</td>
<td>November 1990</td>
<td>Economic Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budapest</td>
<td>November 1991</td>
<td>Towards Political and Economic Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prague</td>
<td>November 1992</td>
<td>The roots and future of liberalism in Eastern Europe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


590 Interview with Leon Peijnenburg, 14 August 2008.
592 It was also decided that the Liberal International and the ELDR would hold a joint congress of the two organisations where parties from Central and Eastern Europe were invited. ‘Liberal parties: Declaration on the situation in Eastern Europe’. Extract from Agence Europe, 21 February 1990; Central and East European Activities Report, 30 May 1991.
One important part of the initial process of identifying possible partners was to organise forums where parties and politicians from Western and Eastern Europe could meet informally and get to know each other. The most well-attended were the so-called East-West conferences organised by the ELDR three times from 1990 to 1992. These conferences provided some attention to the host party, which could be very important if it was a small party. But what is more interesting here is that they provided the invited parties from Central and Eastern Europe with a chance to meet and exchange experiences with colleagues from both Western and Eastern Europe and build up a network of contacts.

From February-March in 1990, the ELDR member parties aimed at improving the coordination of the activities in Central and Eastern Europe. This was to a large degree connected to the forthcoming elections in some of the countries of interest. The ELDR received a number of letters from parties in Central and Eastern Europe asking for co-operation and assistance. The requested support mostly concerned ‘technical infrastructure’, which one can assume was office equipment like copying-machines and in some cases financial support was requested. But there were also requests for advice in managing a political party and campaigns. There seemed to be a great need for support in general. There was even a proposal from the Polish Liberal Democratic Congress (KLD) that a ‘pool’ should be established so to provide the new liberal parties in Central and Eastern Europe with a minimum of communication means.

The electoral performance of liberal parties in the first elections throughout Central and Eastern Europe is displayed in table 7.5 below. The results were clearly of a mixed character. In three countries - Lithuania, Slovakia and Romania - the liberal parties failed to get any seats at all. In Estonia and Bulgaria, the liberal parties gained seats as parts of greater electoral alliances. The situation in the Czech part of Czechoslovakia mirrors a common problem for liberal parties. In 1991, the broad Civic Forum split into mainly two parties with two different profiles: the social-liberal Civic Movement (OH) and the market-oriented Civic Democratic Party (ODS). The OH, supported by the new President Vaclav Havel, continued

593 It was an outspoken strategy to further coordinate the efforts by information exchange and joint aid-programmes. Note, 15 March 1990, ‘Ways to intensify the dialogue’.

594 Letter, 23 July 1991 to the ELDR from an observer in Poland about the KLD and its need for support. Only two months earlier the party wrote to the ELDR and proposed systematic economic aid to the parties in Central and Eastern Europe. Letter, 27 May 1991 from the KLD to the ELDR East-West coordinator.
the loose forum-like organisational structure while the ODS built its party on a traditional professional structure with a strong leadership. Consequently the ODS, which eventually became attached to the conservative European Democratic Union, became the biggest party in the 1992 Czech elections, while the OH failed to get any seats at all. The loosely organised OH mirrors a certain dilemma for liberal parties: without a strong organisation it is difficult to win elections. 595 The situation in Poland was similar to the Czech. The only parties that performed well, the Democratic Union and the Liberal Democratic Congress (KLD) chose to link up with the conservative EDU instead later on.

Table 7.4: Liberal parties’ election results in the first free elections in Central and Eastern Europe as percentage of seats.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria (1991)</td>
<td>Union of Democratic Forces (coalition)</td>
<td>45.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia (1992)</td>
<td>Liberal Democratic Partya</td>
<td>5.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic (1992)</td>
<td>Civic Democratic Alliance</td>
<td>8.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civic Movement</td>
<td>No seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary (1990)</td>
<td>Alliance of Free Democrats</td>
<td>23.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alliance of Young Democrats</td>
<td>5.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia (1993)</td>
<td>Latvia’s Way</td>
<td>36.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania (1992)</td>
<td>Liberal Union</td>
<td>No seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland (1991)</td>
<td>Liberal Democratic Congress</td>
<td>8.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democratic Union</td>
<td>13.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
<td>0.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Club of Modern Liberalism</td>
<td>No seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania (1992)</td>
<td>National Liberal Party</td>
<td>No seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia (1992)</td>
<td>Hungarian Civic Party</td>
<td>No seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coexistence Movement</td>
<td>No seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent Democrats</td>
<td>No seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia (1990)</td>
<td>Liberal Democracy of Slovenia</td>
<td>16.3 %a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slovenian Democratic Union</td>
<td>12.5 %a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aPart of electoral coalition.

Note: The Union of Democratic Forces consisted of 18 political parties in this election. The liberal party Radical Democrats was one of the strongest parties in the alliance. 596

Source: Berglund, Ekman Aarebrot (2004)

595 Ágh (1998) p 123
Hungary, Latvia and Slovenia stand out as the most successful examples. In Hungary there were two separate liberal parties, which together won considerable support. In Latvia, the party Latvia’s Way, a newly created alliance of different liberal parties, got 36 per cent. In Slovenia the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia became the biggest party with 25 per cent of the seats and also got the prime minister post.

The Eastern perspective: need for support and external legitimacy

The initial insecure situation for political parties in post-communist societies was even truer for new liberal parties in the region. They could either split, be forced to merge with another party or they could just fade away after an unsuccessful election. Apart from the weak historical legacy of liberalism, the liberal parties generally lacked experience, finances, proper office equipment for party work and in some cases they also lacked people in general for campaigning.

As mentioned earlier, there was a clear need for concrete support before the first free elections and above all financial support. However, this was not possible except for some individual initiatives. The main support that could be provided was symbolic (participation at party congresses or other occasions) or educative with advice and knowhow. This was implemented by individual member parties and foundations like the German Friedrich Naumann Foundation or the US-based National Democratic Institute. The main need of the liberal parties in Central and Eastern Europe was, however, not about material support or not even political know-how but external recognition. A link to a European party could provide legitimacy and some recognition which was critical before the first formative elections. The situation was the same for many Christian democratic parties when they linked up with the EPP. As one EPP-official recalled, survival was the prime goal for the newly formed parties. As the chapters on the EPP and PES have demonstrated, international recognition in the early stage symbolised a stamp of approval from the international political family. For the liberal parties, which were often small and mostly without organisational links from the pre-communist era, this external recognition was even more important. It demonstrated that it was not an obscure iso-

597 Latvia’s Way (Latvijas Cels) was a newly created alliance of different liberal parties.

598 Interview with Lex Corijn, 21 August 2007.

599 Attila Ágh suggests even that these parties could only survive domestically if they managed to fit into the West European party systems. Ágh (1998) p 110-111

600 Interview with Thomas Jansen, 14 June 2007.
lated grouping but a serious political force within a European political family:

Especially at that time I think we felt that it was important for a country that desperately needed to join Western structures to show that the political parties have also the ... that they are not just some Hungarian phenomenon without any European background. Accession to ELDR and the Liberal international showed that we are not alone. And this is a political family and the ideology we have is shared by a huge number of European parties and it is a kind of confirmation of our political legitimacy of our raison d’être.\(^{601}\)

This feeling of belonging to a European family was especially important for parties in countries which in 1989-1990 experienced political turmoil. One example is the Romanian National Liberal Party (PNL), which was harassed several times in the early 1990s.\(^{602}\) The link to the ELDR provided more self-confidence in the domestic arena and a feeling of being at home in the liberal family.\(^{603}\) Slovakia was another country with an unstable situation and with openly nationalistic and populist and anti-Hungarian rhetoric in the early 1990s. In this sense, the Hungarian Civic Party’s (MPP) early application for affiliation to the ELDR may reflect a need to belong to an international political family in a time when they felt uncomfortable or even threatened.\(^{604}\) The historical legacy of liberalism was weak and this made the Slovak liberal parties extra dependent on the ELDR member parties not only for external recognition, but also for advice and knowhow. In 1991 the Slovak Liberal Union wrote to the ELDR admitting that ‘Slovakia unlike Bohemia and Moravia has no strong liberal tradition’ and they argued that they needed to ‘...establish contacts with partner liberal parties of long tradition, experience and practices, which can help and advise us.’\(^{605}\)

The credibility and prestige coming from international recognition could also be useful in the competition with the ideological sister party in the domestic arena. In the Hungarian context, there was a rivalry between the two liberal parties; the Alliance of Free Democrats and the Alliance of

\(^{601}\) Interview with Matyas Eörsi, 16 July 2008.

\(^{602}\) For example their party headquarters was attacked several times. Interview with Ramona Manescu, 4 July 2008.

\(^{603}\) Interview with Christian Busoi, 1 July 2009.

\(^{604}\) Application, 15 August 1992 for observership in the ELDR from the Hungarian Civic Party in Slovakia.

\(^{605}\) Letter, February 1991 from the Slovak Liberal Union to the ELDR. The Slovak Liberal Union was an alliance between the Liberal Democratic Party in Slovakia and the Independent Democratic Party.
Young Democrats (Fidesz). Fidesz, which started as a radical youth movement was very quick to apply for membership in the LI and for ELDR observer status. According to a former Fidesz politician, this had a strategic explanation:

For Orbán [party leader for Fidesz] and his friends, I think it was more a strategic issue. It was a rivalry with the Free Democrats and what was important for them was to be first, to make it as fast as possible to become a normal member of the family. And I think Orbán found it important to have international recognition that this is not only a youth movement. It was an obsession that ‘we are just seen as the younger brother of the Free Democrats’ and this obsession was important during this rivalry to show that we have our own links and connections.606

This should be seen against the background that the Alliance of Free Democrats was in general seen as the most respected party, containing well-known intellectuals and other personalities. Fidesz on the other hand consisted of younger and more radical but not as well-known personalities. As the respondent notes, this ‘younger-brother’ relation was important to break for Fidesz.

7.3 The second phase: Evaluation and education

In 1992 several countries had had their first free elections and it was somewhat easier for the ELDR member parties to distinguish the serious potential partners from nationalist or other parties with another view on liberalism than that of the ELDR. Now followed a phase of institutionalising the link to the potential partners through observer membership and educational programmes. At the same time, there were still challenges regarding some countries, as will be shown.

Institutionalising the link

In 1991 at the ELDR Congress in June, it was decided to change the statutes. The change meant that the ELDR introduced two new forms of membership. If the party in question came from a European country that had applied for EU membership, it could apply for affiliate membership. If the party came from a European country that had not (yet) applied for EU membership, it could apply for observer status.607 This change of membership regulations was to a certain extent a symbolic move to demonstrate the ELDR’s commitment to a future EU-enlargement to the former com-

607 Corijn & Krings, eds. (2004) p 146
munist countries. Yet it is likely that it also had to do with recruitment. The ELDR had no separate organisation like the EUCD but it surely saw the advantages. The EUCD offered an informal meeting place, where the EPP members could get to know and ‘evaluate’ potential member parties without taking any serious political risk. At the same time, the ELDR probably lacked resources to create a new organisation like the PES did with the European Forum. The smoothest and cheapest way to ‘lock-in’ potential member parties was to offer them observer status. This would symbolically tie the partner parties tighter to the ELDR and in this way counteract further exits towards the EPP.

At the same time the ELDR made some real progress from 1992 onwards in coordinating its activities in Central and Eastern Europe. An especially important role was given to the newly appointed East-West coordinator in gathering and putting together all the information about the political parties in Eastern Europe in a databank\textsuperscript{608} with brief information and an evaluation of each potential partner-party. Moreover, the East-West coordinator summoned the foreign secretaries of the member parties and the foundations to annual East-West coordinators’ meetings to exchange views on the potential partners and exchange information. The information compiled in the databank was continuously updated and it was available to order for each member party. These meetings were in the early stage arranged in co-operation with and financed by the Liberal Study Centre (CELE)\textsuperscript{609} in Brussels.

In 1993, the ELDR changed its statutes once more and this time the changes were more profound. From now on it referred to itself as a ‘political party at the European level’ and the aims of the ELDR were expanded to include a more detailed organisational aim and a programmatic commitment. There were also organisational changes. The ELDR Executive Committee was replaced by a Council and a Bureau. The Bureau was, like the EPP Presidency, established to bring together the key European-level figures within the party family: the President (party leader), the Vice Presidents, the ELDR group leader in the European Parliament, the secretary general and the treasurer. The Bureau is responsible for the everyday activities of the ELDR. The Council was on the other hand established to gather the national member parties’ delegates. Its main task is to speak for the ELDR between the congresses. In parallel with the two new organs, the party leaders’ meetings became institutionalised and established as an offi-

\textsuperscript{608} These ‘compilations’ were called vademecum, which literally means ‘handbook’ or ‘manual’. A sort of guide to the potential member parties.

\textsuperscript{609} CELE for ‘Centre d’Etudes Libéral Démocratique et Reformateur Européen’.
cial organ within the ELDR. The group of national party leaders had met informally almost every year since the 1970s. With the institutionalisation of the party leaders’ meetings, it confirmed its position as the central decision-making organ within the party family.\textsuperscript{610} There was also a statutory change in 1993, which further confirmed the ELDR as an organisation open to the parties from Central and Eastern Europe. The two membership categories observer and affiliate were now merged together into only one: affiliate member. In the following years up until 1996, the ELDR accepted new members from six countries: Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovenia.\textsuperscript{611}

Against this background it is fair to say that the ELDR rather than the Liberal International had become the leading actor in the liberal activities involving Central and Eastern Europe in 1993.

**Education and socialisation**

From 1992-93, the ELDR had a better overview of the political landscape in Central and Eastern Europe. Through the enforcement of affiliate and observer membership, a range of new parties were also partly included in the family. This also meant they got to know each other better. This indicated that the ELDR and its member parties had to focus less on fact-finding missions and learning about the new parties and could focus more on getting to know and support the sister parties.

The work to support liberal parties in Central and Eastern Europe became increasingly systematic. This concerned both symbolic support in terms of official visits to party congresses etc. and more concrete support in terms of education and advice. The ELDR and its member parties continued to organise ‘East-West conferences’ although on a smaller scale.\textsuperscript{612} The conferences and seminars constituted an arena for socialisation and learning. This goes for the conferences and seminars arranged by the ELDR but perhaps even more the different projects arranged by the foundations. There were some differences among the respondents about which foundation was most important\textsuperscript{613} but most underline the importance of the German Friedrich Naumann foundation. According to a Romanian politician they contributed with the most enduring support over the whole period.


\textsuperscript{611} Corijn & Krings (2004) p 146

\textsuperscript{612} For example one was organised in November 1995 in Riga and another was organised in October 1997 in Bucharest.

\textsuperscript{613} According to one Hungarian respondent, the best help came from the American-based National Democratic Institute (NDI).
The [Friedrich] Naumann foundation was very much present in Romania for many years which helped us a lot by organising events, financing different summer schools, winter schools, trainings or seminars. The support from the Naumann foundation was much more consistent in this regard because they had much more funds available for this kind of projects. They invested a lot in seminars, in workshops, in visits also of liberals in Germany and liberal German leaders to Romania. This was a constant and very significant help.614

The most important contribution of the ELDR and its member parties was, just like the EPP and PES, directed towards the younger generation of politicians in Central and Eastern Europe. The ELDR introduced a programme for internships for young liberals from Central and Eastern Europe. The idea was that the trainee would work with the ELDR family within its different organs for a period of three months. This could give both experience and a network of people for the future. Some of the trainees later on occupied senior administrative posts, like chief of cabinet or ambassador615. Apart from the programme for internships, the activities of the European (LYMEC) and Global (IFLRY) liberal youth organisations also played an important role. By participating in their activities, young people from Central and Eastern Europe could meet young people from the whole world and discuss liberalism, human rights etc. This was also described as an important process of learning by one former youth activist in IFLRY from Romania.616

Continued confusion in some countries
Although, the ELDR member parties had managed to get an overview of the party landscape in Central and Eastern Europe, there was still some fluidity in the party system in several countries.

In Poland, the situation was still fluid after the elections in 1991 and it was still not clear which parties could be seen as liberal. Poland was generally seen as the most difficult case for the ELDR.617 As late as in 1996, it can be read in the ELDR 1996 year book that it ‘...remains extremely difficult to pin-point the liberal entities within the Polish arena. However the Democratic Union today (UD) was and is a mixture of a wide range of ideological approaches’.618 Poland thus remained one of the most difficult cases for the

614 Interview with Christian Busoi, 1 July 2008. Brackets added.
615 ELDR Newsletter, December 1997.
616 Interview with Ramona Mănescu, 4 July 2008.
617 Interview with Leon Peijnenburg, 14 July 2008 and with Lex Corijn, 21 August 2007.
618 Annual Report, 1996, p 61
ELDR. A rather frustrated ELDR-coordinator claims that real liberal parties did not exist at all in Poland but only Catholic or nationalist parties. The Czech Civic Democratic Alliance, which was the main partner for the ELDR in the Czech Republic after 1992, suffered from recurrent internal quarrels between its liberal and conservative wings. These groupings were relatively small but had strong influence as they were the founders of the party. Furthermore, the ELDR and the Liberal International were unintentionally drawn into one of these quarrels when they were accused of choosing sides in the conflict. They were even accused of ‘political neo-colonialism’ and interference in Czech internal affairs. At the same time, the situation for liberal parties in Romania, Slovakia and Lithuania was weakened after the first elections as the parties from these three countries failed to get any seats. Especially in Slovakia, the liberal tradition was frail. Later on the Slovak Democratic Union was established shortly before the elections in 1994. The pressure from the coming elections was a factor behind the strong reliance of the DU on advice from European liberals.

Against this background, it was quite clear that there was still a need for supporting moves from the ELDR member parties. However, although the ELDR had institutionalised a coordination centre, there were still difficulties when it comes to coordinating the efforts in an efficient way. Even after 1990, when the ELDR really put a good deal of energy into activities in Central and Eastern Europe, the troublesome situation remained. One explanation was that the ‘Eastern European Working group’ was based in the party group in the European Parliament and the East-West coordinator was in the ELDR secretariat:

So there was one group that dealt with policy issues, the working group in the EP and one who dealt with politics, led by the East-West coordinator, but this was also developed into ‘Eastern European Working Committee’. This group included all member parties and think tanks with meetings two times per year. But this was also a problem. They got their money from national parties and they do their own strategic calculations. So it was difficult to coordinate. Everybody did their thing.

The weak position of the ELDR secretariat within the party network played a role here. Each time the ELDR wanted to arrange a seminar or a confer-

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619 Interview with Lex Corijn, 21 August 2007.

620 The accusation was above all directed at the president of the Liberal International Otto Graf Lambsdorff and the German FDP. Letter, 3 September 1992 from the LDS Executive Committee to the ELDR. See also Hloušek & Kopeček (2010) p 117.

621 Interview with Lex Corijn, 21 August 2007.
ence it had to ask the EP-group for financing. Another factor, which might further explain the organisational confusion, was the change of East-West coordinator in 1991. A great deal of personal contacts and knowledge was lost and had to be built up again.

**Well-meaning intellectuals or political neo-colonialists?**

We have seen several examples of how the ELDR and the Liberal International reacted rather late and confusedly to the swift changes of 1989. They were more delayed and less focused compared to the EPP. Furthermore the liberal parties in Central and Eastern Europe were/are in most cases small and internally fragmented. Is it the historical heritage that explains the generally weak liberal parties or is distaste for too much organisation simply a typical liberal trait? The first ELDR East-West Coordinator explains this with the ‘anti-culture’ within the liberal tradition: ‘Liberals tend to be the dissidents, morally having much influence but not politically…liberals almost have some pride in not being too organised.’

Was this the reason behind the poor electoral results: distaste for organisation and efficiency? Or was it simply that weak liberal tradition in the region? One might think that it is to some degree unfair that many liberals who were the driving engine in the transition in 1989-1990 became losers in the aftermath.

A Hungarian politician from the Free Democrats has the following comment on this phenomenon:

> Every revolution eats up its own founding fathers. To be an underground dissident requires, I think, totally different characteristics than to be in a political party. I remember in the early 1990s we had 10-15 per cent and not like today’s 5 per cent. Some of those old heroes of the changes were totally unable to function well in a democratic parliament as they were unable to compromise anything they believed was right. But this was needed when they were under opposition…the moral strength.

The same Hungarian politician argues that many of the parties that became affiliated to the EPP are more power-oriented than those of the ELDR:

**Respondent:** I remember Rupel, who is now foreign minister of Slovenia, (he left the liberals and is now in the EPP) told me once about the atmosphere in the EPP: ‘the problem was that although the EPP is much stronger and much more powerful, it is extremely boring.’ (laughter). It’s not worth to be there. I mean, intellectually it’s a disaster.

**Interviewer (author):** Ok, it’s a more pragmatic party perhaps?

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622 Interview with Leon Peijnenburg, 14 July 2008.
623 Interview with Matyas Eörsi, 16 July 2008.
Respondent: Ah, it’s for the power. There’s a big difference within the EPP, primarily how they see Europe but still they are together. And certainly of course you can find diverging opinions within the liberals as well but when it comes to Europe, we are united.\textsuperscript{624}

The quotes above say something about the different characteristics that are expected from a dissident in a repressive system on the one hand and from a politician in ‘normal’ politics on the other. The successful (in numbers) EPP has obviously a stronger culture of pragmatism than the liberals, who tend to at least share mentality with the dissidents. This party culture within the liberal party family points towards a logic of appropriateness as a guiding rule of behaviour.

In contrast to this image of a party culture of intellectualism, it should be mentioned that there was a certain east-west power-relation in this process. This became most visible when the work ‘liberal’ was misused (from the ELDR point of view). In the Annual Report of the ELDR eastern contacts in 1996 the following is written:

In the beginning there was a tendency for some groupings such as the KLD in Poland to try and buy into European Federations. In some exceptional cases the liberal partner turned out to be anything but liberal and associated with strong nationalist and extreme right wing tendencies. (...) Finding a common ground among liberals requires a clear affiliation to the core of liberal ideas in spite of intellectual differences. Sadly, the term liberal has been all too often misused to the detriment of true liberalism. Such has been the case in some of the emerging democracies. Such abuses cannot be allowed to continue.\textsuperscript{625}

There is nothing strange with a political organisation that demands some sort of ideological purity form its members and especially regarding new members of which it knows rather little. But considering the potential power relation between the West European parties and their Central and Eastern European counterparts, this defence of ‘true’ liberalism might as well be seen as an example of neo-colonialism, restoring old power-structures in Europe with Western Europe as the ideal; something that the ‘other’ should try to copy as much as they can. Interestingly, the ELDR has a rather modest tone when it comes to their potential role as ‘coloniser’. For example when it comes to policy advice, they agreed that the most appropriate way is simply to ‘show East and Central European delegates how things are done in the West so that they can draw their own conclu-

\textsuperscript{624} Interview with Matyas Eörsi, 16 July 2008.
\textsuperscript{625} Annual Report, 1996, p 10-11
sions from their observations. They also modestly reflect on their own potential role as ‘idea-exporter:

Doubts were expressed about the idea of “exporting” ideas to East and Central European countries, particularly as our own system is not perfect and an all time [sic] model of democracy does not exist. It was also suggested that western parties should not only look at ways in which they could help their partners in the East, but also at ways in which East and Central European parties could help their western counterparts.

The ELDR even brings up and reflect on situations where it has been accused of political neo-colonialism. This happened during a political turmoil within the Czech liberal party LDS. In the 1996 annual report, the ELDR reflects on this early situation as follows:

The role of liberal International and the ELDR Party was often misunderstood. It was by no means their aim to engage in political neo-colonialism. The collapse of communism made the need for early reaction extremely pressing and this degree of urgency gave rise to caution and the need to uncover deceptive labels.

Even if the ELDR and the West European parties were aware of potential dominance-relations, they were in my view impossible to avoid. Moreover, many of the potential member parties in Central and Eastern Europe did not adapt to the European party family, they were literally born into them. As shown in this section and in the earlier parts, the liberal parties in Central and Eastern Europe came into contact with the ELDR almost simultaneously with their birth. One Romanian respondent even said that ‘We were like school-children in the beginning when they came and had seminars and courses for us.’ I think this quote summarises the situation well.

But at the same time, we can discern country differences also here. The historical heritage probably also plays a part in the self-image. When it comes to the Hungarian parties, support was only needed in the very first stage. When it comes to the Slovak, Romanian and Bulgarian parties the need for support and advice was stronger. The historical differences between ‘Central Europe’ and ‘Eastern Europe’ were sometimes mirrored in the self-image of the liberal politicians. One respondent from Slovenia claimed that liberalism was ‘learned from the books’ among the liberals in South East- and Eastern Europe, while in Central Europe liberal ideas have

626 Annual Report, 1996, p 12
627 Annual Report 1996, p 11
628 Annual Report 1996, p 13
629 Interview with Ramona Manescu, 4 July 2008.
It is noteworthy how ‘Central Europeans’ in this case a Slovene politician is careful in distancing himself from the South-Eastern and Eastern European liberals. By doing this, the image of the ‘other’, the one that must learn, is moved eastwards.

7.4 The third phase: Incorporation
What can be observed in this third and last phase is above all how the ELDR actively steps forward as the main ideological supporter of EU-enlargement. This is closely related to the fairly strong liberal emphasis on the re-uniting of Europe. It is also noteworthy that this consolidated even further the dominance of the logic of appropriateness as the main driving force for the ELDR. This development was mirrored in different ways and can be summarised with three ingredients: more inclusive membership criteria, a stronger involvement of the parliamentary group and a closer, more equal relation with the applicant parties.

New and more inclusive membership criteria
Already in 1995 the ELDR decided to drop the condition of EU-membership for full membership in the ELDR. According to the new rules, all liberal parties that accept the statutes and the main political programme of the ELDR may apply for full membership after two years as an affiliate member. The new rule was most likely an ideological statement in relation to the planned enlargement process to post-communist Europe. The liberal party family stood out as the party family that was most positive to enlargement. At the same time, there might have been a strategic ingredient in this change of statutes. The ELDR was obviously aware of the looming danger of the EPP as a potential alternative for its member parties. Granting the parties access to full membership would reduce the risk of defections.

Thus, gradually the ELDR integrated a relatively large number of political parties from Central and Eastern Europe as full members (see table 7.5 below). The first party to be welcomed was the Alliance of Free Democrats from Hungary in 1996, then in government together with the (former communist) Hungarian Socialist Party. The other ELDR partner in Hungary – Fidesz – had now begun to gradually move away from the liberal fami-

630 Interview with Ivo Vajgl 9 September 2009.
631 Sandström (2003) p 87
ly. As mentioned in chapter 5, it finally left for the EPP in 2000. In 1997-1998, three more parties became full members: the Liberal Union from Lithuania, the Reform Party from Estonia and Liberal Democracy of Slovenia. The Slovenian LDS is noteworthy here as it had had the prime minister post in Slovenia since 1992. In the three subsequent years parties from Romania, Latvia, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Lithuania were given the status as full members. With the inclusion of the Alliance for New Citizens from Slovakia in 2002 and the National Movement Simeon II in Bulgaria in 2003, the ELDR had eleven new member parties from the countries that were about to join the EU.

Fidesz saw the Free Democrats as traitors while aligning themselves with the former oppressors and prioritising power (i.e. minister portfolios) before principles. In parallel Fidesz moved gradually in and occupied the vacuum in the conservative political space after the serious internal battles among the parties there. See Körösényi (1998) p 42-44.
Table 7.5: The gradual inclusion of new members in the ELDR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Affiliate member</th>
<th>Full Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Free Democrats (former OH), Civic Democratic Alliance</td>
<td>1994, -</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Alliance of Free Democrats, Fidesz – MPSZ</td>
<td>1992, 1996</td>
<td>To EPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Latvia’s Way</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>New Union, Liberal Union, Liberal Alliance of Lithuania</td>
<td>-, 1997, -</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Freedom Union</td>
<td>To EDU</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>National Liberal Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>Alliance for New Citizens, Hungarian Civic Party, Democratic Union</td>
<td>-, 1992, To EPP</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>Liberal Democracy of Slovenia</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This meant that contrary to the PES and the EPP, most ELDR-partners from the EU-applicant countries were accepted as ELDR members well before the EU-enlargement. Looking at table 7.5 we can see that shortly before the enlargement in 2004, the ELDR had managed to gather parties from every country except for Poland. The only possible member party from Poland – Freedom Union – joined the conservative EDU instead. The same happened as mentioned in Hungary with Fidesz and in Slovakia with the Hungarian Civic Party. The last-mentioned joined the EPP in 2000 after entering into a coalition with the other Hungarian minority parties in Slovakia.

Nevertheless, the general trend was clearly important steps towards the integration of the new parties. Formally, they now had the right to attend all the ELDR decision-making organs with the same status as the West European parties. This was also important psychologically, as it was now confirmed for the parties in Central and Eastern Europe that they were accepted as equals by the West European parties.
Stronger involvement of the parliamentary group

A clear indication that EU enlargement was slowly closing in was the increased engagement of the ELDR group in the European Parliament in the activities with partner parties in Central and Eastern Europe after 1997-1998. Activities were now often planned and executed in a joint cooperation between the ELDR party and its group in the EP.

From 1996, the liberal group in the EP organised the so-called ‘Outreach Programme’ together with the ELDR party. This was a long-term strategy that included more systematic visits to Central and Eastern Europe in order to nurture the relations with the affiliated parties there and to assist them if there was a need. Moreover, the ELDR efforts to get a fair overview of the political developments in Central and Eastern Europe were complemented by the ELDR group members reporting about inter-parliamentary delegation meetings and by fact-finding missions of the group.633

There were also examples of initiatives that came from and were arranged exclusively by the ELDR group in the European Parliament. One was to replace the programme of internships for young politicians in Central and Eastern Europe by a programme for liberal MPs from Central and Eastern Europe. This initiative from the ELDR-group started in early 1997 and was called the ‘Parliamentary Visitor’s Programme’. The normal procedure was that ten MPs from non-EU countries visited and followed the work in Brussels and in Strasbourg annually in periods of three weeks.634 The basic idea was to ‘familiarize them with European parliamentarism,’ i.e. to offer them the opportunity to observe and learn the formal and informal procedures in the ELDR group as well as in the European Parliament as a whole.635 The first MPs to join this programme came from Estonia, Hungary and Romania. Finally, the liberal party family (mainly through Pat Cox) took the initiative to arrange a programme for observers in the European Parliament. One year before the enlargement, national parliamentarians from Central and Eastern Europe were invited to observe the parliamentary work in the EU. The main idea was that it would increase the understanding of the European Parliament in the applicant countries and prepare the politicians.636

634 The first week was devoted to ELDR group meetings and preparations for the general plenary sessions of the European Parliament. The second week focused on the plenary session in Strasbourg. The third week, finally, focused on providing in-debt knowledge of the work inside the EP committees.
635 ELDR Newsletter, December 1997.
Strengthening the ties with the new member parties

Apart from the more open membership criteria and the increased engagement of the ELDR group in the EP, there was a general boost in the ELDR efforts to deepen the ties with the sister parties in Central and Eastern Europe in this third phase of integration. This process began especially after 2000-2001 and one explanation is centred on certain key individuals within the ELDR.

In 2000, the ELDR got a new secretary general: Lex Corijn. He had earlier been the East-West coordinator in the ELDR for several years. Consequently, the ELDR now had a secretary general with an interest in and deep knowledge about the party landscape in Central and Eastern Europe. It is therefore not too surprising that the ELDR now strengthened its focus on the eastward enlargement of the EU. The ELDR party leader meeting in June 2000 was fully dedicated to ‘reinforce their commitment to enlargement’.\(^\text{637}\) Apart from for inviting the associated party leaders from the parties in Central and Eastern Europe, the ELDR also invited a representative from Poland to strengthen the links with liberals there.\(^\text{638}\) Moreover, in 2002 the ELDR got the prestigious post as the President of the European Parliament. The previous ELDR group-leader Pat Cox was appointed for this and his main priority was a successful EU-enlargement. During the first 18 months of his presidency, he dedicated most of his time to travelling in Central and Eastern Europe to campaign for a positive outcome in the subsequent referendums.\(^\text{639}\) Although he was first and foremost the EP-President, Cox was also an outspoken liberal and this did in my view further strengthen the ELDR’s self-appointed role as the main ideological supporter of EU-enlargement.

In parallel with the new momentum of the ELDR as the ‘driver’ of issues on EU-enlargement, there were a number of formal and informal gestures towards the liberal partners in Central and Eastern Europe. One example is the broadening of the ELDR Congress sessions. Since 1998-1999, the congress has been open also for affiliated parties.\(^\text{640}\) This meant in practice, mostly parties from the eastern candidate countries. In the same way, the ELDR decision to hold the 2001 congress in Ljubljana, Slovenia was a symbolic gesture of the support for the enlargement. This was the first time a European party family arranged its congress in a candidate-country.

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\(^{637}\) In the same year, the ELDR Congress had the theme ‘Enlargement in a historical perspective’. ELDR E-newsletter 18 June 2000.

\(^{638}\) The politician invited from Poland was the liberal Bronislaw Geremek.

\(^{639}\) See Cox (2004) p 46

These kinds of symbolic gestures were coupled with a series of formal and informal meetings with the parties from Central and Eastern Europe mostly with the purpose of discussing the details around the enlargement proceedings.641

In short, especially around 2000-2002, there was a certain momentum within the ELDR with its continuous efforts to strengthen the link to its partners in Central and Eastern Europe. The peak of this boost in self-confidence was probably the EU-summit in Copenhagen led by Denmark’s liberal prime minister Ander Fogh Rasmussen. At that time, the three highest posts within the EU were held by ELDR politicians: the president of the European Parliament (Pat Cox), the president of the European Commission (Romano Prodi) and the prime minister of the country holding the EU-presidency (Fogh Rasmussen).

A patchy liberal party landscape
Contrary to the increasing self-confidence of the ELDR during this phase, the election results of the liberal parties throughout Central and Eastern Europe were rather uneven.

We can start by looking at the election results from the second and third elections. Then we can conclude that the same countries that performed well in the first elections – Hungary, Latvia and Slovenia - continued to be among the strongest liberal parties. Newly formed Estonia’s Reform Party performed well also and was certainly a welcome contribution to the family.642 Otherwise, the results are not very encouraging for the ELDR. In Poland, the biggest country among the post-communist potentially new EU-members, the ELDR was left without any partner. The potential partner Democratic Union merged in 1994 with Liberal Democratic Congress in the Freedom Union (UW), which ended up in the conservative EDU (and therefore later on in the EPP). In the Czech Republic, the parties linked to ELDR performed poorly and shrunk into non-significance, became defunct or merged with other parties.

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641 One example is the ELDR delegation to Latvia and Estonia in July 2001 for informal discussions about the country-reports before the enlargements. Another example is the Conference in April on how the ELDR and its member parties can promote EU-enlargement. ELDR E-newsletter July 2001 and April 2002.

642 The Estonian Reform Party was formed in 1995 after a split from ‘Fatherland Union’ (Pro Patria) and it linked up with the ELDR.
Table 7.6: Elections results of liberal parties in Central and Eastern Europe in the second, third and fourth free elections as percentage of seats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Second free elections</th>
<th>Third free elections</th>
<th>Fourth free elections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria (1994, 1997, 2001)</td>
<td>Movement for Rights and Freedoms National Movement Simeon II</td>
<td>5.42 %</td>
<td>9.0 %&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>8.75 %&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic (1996, 1998, 2002)</td>
<td>Civic Democratic Alliance Free Democrats Czech Democratic Initiative</td>
<td>6.5 % No seats</td>
<td>No seats</td>
<td>No seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia (1995, 1999, 2003)</td>
<td>Estonian Reform Party</td>
<td>18.8 %</td>
<td>17.8 %</td>
<td>18.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary (1994, 1998, 2002)</td>
<td>Alliance of Free Democrats Alliance of Young Democrats (Fidesz)</td>
<td>17.9 % 5.2 %</td>
<td>6.2 % 38.3 %&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.2 % 42.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania (1992, 1996, 2000)</td>
<td>Liberal Union of Lithuania New Union</td>
<td>No seats</td>
<td>0.7 %</td>
<td>23.4 % 19.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania (1992, 1996, 2000)</td>
<td>National Liberal Party</td>
<td>8.8 %&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>37.2 %&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>9.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia (1994, 1998, 2002)</td>
<td>Hungarian Civic Party Alliance for New Citizens Democratic Union</td>
<td>11.3 %&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt; 10.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.3 %&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt; 10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia (1992, 1996, 2000)</td>
<td>Liberal Democracy of Slovenia Democratic Party of Slovenia</td>
<td>24.4 % 6.7 %</td>
<td>28.0 % No seats</td>
<td>37.8 % No seats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Electoral coalitions; <sup>b</sup>Defunct or merged with other parties
Source: Berglund, Ekman and Aarebrot (2004)

In Hungary, which was initially the best country, there was a great setback. As described in chapter 5, Fidesz left the Liberal International and ELDR
and joined the EPP in 2000. This left the ELDR with the smaller Free Democrats as the only member from Hungary. The Czech situation is especially noteworthy to understand the paradoxical situation for liberal parties in the region. The Czech Republic has since the changes in 1989 been regarded as a frontrunner and an example for other countries. It is the only country in Central and Eastern Europe, which held on to a democratic system throughout the inter-war era and it was also the country with the most developed economy.

Thus, the prospects for liberal parties in the ‘most modernised’ country in the region should have been good. However, the main liberal party after the split up of the broad Civic Forum became the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), which was rather neo-liberal or conservative and became quickly attached to the British Conservative Party and thus the EDU. The social liberal splinters from the Civic Forum were rather divided and weak. Nevertheless the Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA) emerged as the most visible social liberal force and became a full member of the ELDR in 2001. The ODA however remained small and divided and had no parliamentary seats after 1998. The party even left the ELDR for the EDU shortly but returned in 2004 as it thought that the European dimension was vital to its revival. According to Hanley, the party sees the ELDR as ‘the only force that can bring together the scattered forces of Czech liberalism into something like a viable national party: the protagonists on the ground seem incapable of doing this.’

The Czech example is noteworthy as it illustrates the difficulties in organising a strong liberal party even in the country with the strongest liberal tradition in the region. The ‘logic of necessity’ of the national liberal parties drove them into the EPP or EDU. Thus the weaker and more intellectually-based parties were the only choice for the ELDR.

7.5 Concluding remarks: Unrewarded for great effort

The headline above mirrors to a large degree the eastward enlargement of the liberal party family. The ELDR has, throughout the whole process made significant progress in developing its party family according to the new post-1989 demands. Moreover, it has stepped forward as the main moral supporter of enlargement, thereby building up strong credibility among the parties in Central and Eastern Europe.

Yet, despite all these efforts, the liberal party family has met with a number of setbacks along the journey. The early phase was obviously characterised by the chaotic condition among the emerging democracies. For the ELDR, however, this was especially difficult as the liberal tradition

\[\text{Hanley (2008) p 130.}\]
was weak in the region and at the same time the term ‘liberalism’ had such a good connotation that a wide range of parties called themselves liberals. Moreover, the potential problem with the EPP as a competitor was there from the start and followed the ELDR like a shadow through the whole eastward expansion process. Except for losing the only potential partner it had in Poland (Democratic Union), also Fidesz from Hungary and the Hungarian Civic Party from Slovakia went to the EPP.

There were nevertheless some difficulties that cannot be blamed on external circumstances, and these were mostly related to organisational issues. The late reaction in 1989-1990 compared to the EPP and the difficulties to coordinate the various actors of the party network also in the second phase, point to a certain anti-organisation culture within the party family. As one of the respondents put it, liberals find a certain pride in being ‘not too organised’. This in turn mirrors to some degree the self-image as a party of free-thinking intellectuals rather than a strategic power-party. Moreover, this self-image was reinforced as liberal parties in Central and Eastern Europe with high electoral and governmental ambitions tended to move away from the ELDR and to the EDU or EPP. The simple explanation for this move from a Hungarian respondent was that the liberal values were important during the democratisation process. But once democracy and human rights were secured, it was time to think about the influence of the party. Then the size of the EPP clearly mattered.

The headline above is nevertheless appropriate, as the ELDR made extensive efforts to integrate and nurture the new partners in Central and Eastern Europe. Already in 1991 the ELDR statutes were revised in order to allow an observer and an affiliate member status. This was done to demonstrate the readiness of the ELDR to welcome and recognise the applicant parties who in turn needed legitimacy and support. This inclusive attitude of the ELDR was further confirmed in 1993 when it removed the observer status and included all applicant parties in the ‘affiliate member’ section. Finally in 1995, the ELDR simply removed the clause which restricted full member status to parties from EU-member states. This meant in fact that the ELDR was clearly more inclusive towards the eastern parties than the Christian democratic EPP or the social democratic PES. Yet it must be mentioned that this energy and enthusiasm of the ELDR seems to have been more driven by ideological conviction than strategic considerations. The measures taken and the party rhetoric confirm this tendency. They indicate a well-meaning party family which is more interested in the

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644 Interview with Leon Peijnenburg. 14 July 2008.
645 Interview with Levente Benkö, 9 December 2008.
success of the democratisation project in Central and Eastern Europe and
the success of the EU project than the success of its own party organis-
tion.646 This is perhaps an eternal dilemma for liberals: the self-image of a
free-thinking intellectual who is more interested in the broad social issues
than the success of his/her own party organisation.

646 This focus on the greater good is frequently mirrored in the anthology Liberal-
The difficult question of the success or lack thereof for the ELDR is rarely touched
upon. The future issues of the European Union after enlargement on the other hand
are discussed with great enthusiasm and the view is that the liberal ideas have im-
portant tasks in this enlarged EU. The only contributor who adds a self-critical
perspective is Guy Verhofstadt while mentioning the liberal paradox, i.e. the fact
that liberal ideas are successful but the parties are small since larger parties have
Part III: Analysis, comparison and conclusions
8. Challenges of Integrating Parties from Post-Communist Regimes

8.1 The main challenges

What were the concrete challenges that faced the European party families when taking in new member parties from a post-communist context? The aim here is to distinguish the general responses from the European party families from those responses that can be seen among only one or two of them. Furthermore the aim is to evaluate what strategies were most successful and why.

The main challenges for the European party families when integrating the parties from Central and Eastern Europe were mainly related to structural factors like historical differences between Western and Eastern Europe and the immediate difficulties that emerge in the political vacuum after a regime collapse. These general conditions gave rise to at least three concrete challenges for the European parties:

- Multiple potential member parties from each country
- Different ideological and organisational profile of the potential member parties
- Inexperienced and unstable potential member parties

The first challenge of several potential member parties from each country is related to the immediate consequences of the communist regime collapse. A specific trait of the post-communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe was the fluid party landscape in the years following the regime collapse. This was a general challenge for all three party families. However this was a far bigger challenge for the Christian democrats (EPP) and the liberals (ELDR) than for the social democrats (PES). In more or less all countries, it was difficult for the EPP and the ELDR to evaluate the early situation and determine which parties they should contact. They received membership applications from a multitude of parties from each country and were not sure how to handle this. The PES on the other hand had in most cases only two alternatives: the historical social democrats or the former communist parties.

A second challenge for the European party families was that many of the potential member parties were inexperienced and also rather unstable and unpredictable. This was not very strange since many of the applicant parties were more or less newly created parties. Even if some of them had

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647 For a discussion about the reasons behind the fluid party landscape in Central and Eastern Europe, see chapter 3.
historical links to the inter-war period the party organisation consisted of relatively inexperienced people. This meant that they did not have the same disciplined party organisation that was taken for granted among the older parties in Western Europe. For the European party families, this made it difficult to evaluate the applicant parties as many of them went through several internal splits and mergers in the years after 1989. Again we can see a difference between the social democratic PES on the one hand and the Christian democratic EPP and the liberal ELDR on the other. Most potential member parties of the EPP and the ELDR were more or less newly formed parties. Many of them went through a number of splits and mergers during the first years after the regime change. This was especially the case in Poland, which became a difficult country for both the Christian democratic and liberal European party families.\(^{648}\) For the social democratic PES, the situation was easier to overview. On the one hand were the inexperienced and somewhat unpredictable historical social democratic parties and on the other were the former communist parties, which were very well-organised and experienced.

The third challenge was that many of the applicant parties had a profile that differed from that of the party family. Although some degree of ideological heterogeneity was generally accepted within the party families, the situation was different in Central and Eastern Europe. This was related to the great number of applicant parties combined with the generally poor knowledge about them. The party family that most likely suffered most from this in the early stage was the liberal ELDR much due to the broad meaning of the concept of liberalism. This made it possible for a range of parties to adopt the liberal label and the general positive connotation of the concept after 1989 spurred this development.\(^{649}\) For the pragmatic Christian-democratic EPP, the situation was rather the other way around. Many of the applicant parties were seen as too religious in their style. Also among the applicant parties to the EPP there were nationalist tendencies. This became extra sensitive for the pro-European EPP as this was often related to an anti-European stance. When it comes to the social democratic PES the situation was a bit special. On the one hand were the historical social

\(^{648}\) The Polish party system was exceptionally chaotic after 1989. When Solidarity split up the party system exploded into a swarm of parties. A good illustration of this is the election in 1991 to the Polish Sejm where 111 political parties competed for representation. Out of these, 29 parties won seats.

\(^{649}\) Some of the applicant parties to the ELDR had a narrow market-liberal approach with little interest in human rights issues and others applicant parties had a straightforward nationalist orientation.
democratic parties that varied in profile. Some of them fitted in well into the West European image of a social democratic profile while a number of them had taken up a rather old-fashioned (pre-Godesberg) Marxist stance. On the other hand were the former communist parties that were eager to become accepted as social democrats and thereby ideologically pragmatic. The problem with the former communist parties was rather about the party organisational culture, which still had traces of the old authoritarian system.

8.2 Responses to the challenges
When it comes to responses, I have differentiated between those that can be seen among all three party families and those that have been exercised by only one or two of them (see Table 8.1).

Table 8.1 Party family responses to the challenges after 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses by all three party families</th>
<th>Responses by some party families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New coordinating bodies</td>
<td>Separate organisation for the applicant parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education programmes</td>
<td>New membership criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on young politicians</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 8.1 there are three types of responses have been identified among all three party families. The first is about internal coordination of efforts. A general challenge for all three party families in the early stage was the lack of overview and information about the prospective member parties. All three party families soon initiated coordinating structures to improve the situation. This was a crucial first step in order to coordinate various fact-finding missions from the West European parties and their results, thereby becoming better acquainted with the numerous applicant parties. The EPP initiated a special working group for Central and Eastern Europe already in October 1989. This had the task of coordinating the activities in Central and Eastern Europe. The PES and the ELDR were clearly slower, but finally in May 1990 both party families took measures to improve the internal coordination for the activities in Central and Eastern Europe. However, it must be said that although the PES and ELDR

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650 The Hungarian social democratic party is a good example. At its inaugural meeting in 1989, it declared that the party programme of principles from 1903 and the election manifesto from 1945 were valid and guiding documents.

651 This was certainly linked to the upcoming first elections in the young democracies where support for preferred parties might need coordination.
installed working groups, these had not the same status as that of the EPP. The reason for this must be found in the different organisational set-up of the party families. The social democrats and the liberals had a strong international, which in various degrees had to be involved somehow in the joint strategy.

The second response that has been identified as common for all three party families is the systematic efforts to educate the prospective member parties. This was perhaps the most important effort as it dealt with several challenges at the same time. Firstly it confronted the challenge of inexperienced and unstable parties. Secondly, this could function as a kind of filter against parties with a doubtful (from the party family point of view) profile.652 A number of courses and seminars were organised by all three party families on broad themes like the democratic institutions and on more specific issues related to the principles and policies of the party family. Also here, the Christian democratic EPP was clearly the most efficient.653 Although the social democratic PES started later, it was very ambitious in its educational projects for prospective member parties. For the PES, the monitoring instrument of the educational part was probably even more important than for the EPP due to the suspicion towards the former communist parties. The liberal ELDR had not the resources to provide the same amount of education as did the EPP and PES, but in relation to its size and resources it certainly made a strong effort with a number of courses and seminars. It must not be forgotten that the political foundations in each party family played an important role in this educative part.

The third and final response that I have identified among all three party families is the tendency to focus on younger persons among the potential member parties. This could be seen in the educational programmes arranged by the party families and their respective foundations. For the PES this was especially important when they decided to invite the former communist parties. Younger people were seen as easier to work with, most likely as they had not been socialised into or ‘contaminated’ by the old communist society.654 Moreover, the younger generation was most likely easier to ‘raise’ or socialise into the preferred style of politicians from the West European point of view. For the ELDR an important part was the

652 As shown in the empirical chapters, a general caution was taken against any signs of nationalism and intolerance against minorities.
653 Already in October 1991 the EPP institutionalised its educating efforts by setting up the ‘Christian Democratic Academy’ in Budapest.
654 The term ‘contaminated’ was mentioned in an interview with Bo Toresson. See chapter 6.
trainee-programme for young liberals from Central and Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{655} Many of these trainees later took up senior positions like cabinet ministers or ambassadors. This seems to have been a general strategy from all three European party families: to slowly build up in the prospective new EU member states a new political elite that was socialised into and loyal towards the West European sister parties that supported them, with the appropriate behaviour expected by these parties.\textsuperscript{656}

As illustrated in Table 8.1 above, two responses have been identified among only one or two of the party families: the existence of a separate organisational sub-unit and the introduction of membership criteria. The existence of a sub-unit within the European party family was only found in the Christian democratic EPP and the social democratic PES. For the EPP there was already a parallel organisation (EUCD) in place that could focus on Central and Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{657} For the PES, however, this took place as late as in 1993 when the ‘European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity’ was formed. By having a specific organisation for Central and Eastern Europe, the party family could enhance the coordination efforts without engaging too much of the ordinary party organisation. Secondly, and more important, this sub-organisation could function as a kind of ‘waiting-room’ for the prospective member parties. With this the European party family bought time in order to evaluate the applicant parties, to educate them and get to know them. Moreover, within this specific sub-unit the atmosphere was less formal, which meant that the participants from both the existing West European member parties and the applicant parties had the chance to get to know each other on a personal level.

The introduction of new membership criteria was only implemented by the Christian democratic EPP. One reason was certainly the complex terrain of potential member parties but this was also the case for the ELDR. The reason for this difference can reasonably be found in the organisation-

\textsuperscript{655} This meant that each trainee spent three months in the different organs of the European party.

\textsuperscript{656} In the case of the EPP, this was an outspoken strategy with the educational programme. The young participants from Central and Eastern Europe would not only learn about democracy and Christian democratic principles (according to the West European perspective) but also to build new friendships across nationalities and create a new network of young Christian democrats in the region.

\textsuperscript{657} The European Union of Christian Democrats (EUCD) was a broader and somewhat looser co-operation structure than the EPP. There was in fact a plan ready to dismount the EUCD in 1989, but due to the events in Central and Eastern Europe it was decided to keep the organisation with the specific focus on the new potential member states.
al culture of the EPP, which was clearly more institutionalised and disciplined than within the ELDR. The bigger size of the EPP is related to this as well. As the biggest party family, it was natural that it expected to attract large applicant parties with governmental aspirations. Furthermore as one of the two biggest party groups in the European Parliament, more was at stake for the EPP. Lastly, unlike the small ELDR, the EPP could afford to have new membership criteria. As the biggest party family they would get applications anyway. Thus in 1992 the EPP enforced new membership criteria for the parallel organisation EUCD: the applicant party must operate in a democratic system, be represented in the parliament and accept the EPP manifesto. In 1996 these were extended to include a series of new criteria of which some were ‘at least 10 per cent in the last elections’, ‘no splits in the last two years’ and that the party ‘must endorse European integration through the federal model’.

Table 8.2 Responses to the challenges of integrating parties in Central and Eastern Europe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Introduce internal coordinating structures</th>
<th>Education programmes for applicant parties</th>
<th>Focus on younger politicians</th>
<th>A separate organisational sub-unit</th>
<th>Introduce new membership criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EPP</td>
<td>Yes (strong)</td>
<td>Yes (strong)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PES</td>
<td>Yes (weak)</td>
<td>Yes (strong)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELDR</td>
<td>Yes (weak)</td>
<td>Yes (weak)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, as shown in Table 8.2, the most active and efficient party family when it comes to responding to the post-1989-challenges was the EPP. It reacted early by introducing a special working group to coordinate the efforts, it initiated the most institutionalised educational programme for the prospective member parties and it had from the outset a parallel organisational unit that specialised in Central and Eastern Europe. The same kind of parallel organisation within the social democratic PES was formed as late as 1993, most likely imitating the successful variant of the EPP. The EPP’s decision to introduce new membership criteria is difficult to evaluate. Most likely they had a psychological effect on the applicant parties and this is especially the case for the criteria of no party splits in the last two years.

Why then did the Christian democratic EPP respond more effectively than the PES and ELDR? As mentioned earlier the EPP had no strong party international like the Socialist International or the Liberal International.
This meant that it could focus entirely on the European arena. An interrelated second factor was that the West European Christian democrats had, since the very creation of the European Community, been stubborn supporters of the European integration project and consequently thereby spent much time and energy to build up strong and well-organised party structures at the European level. It must also be said that there was a certain portion of luck involved for the EPP. The slow and inefficient organisation with both the EPP and the EUCD was just about to be dissolved when the changes started in 1989. Suddenly the inefficient dual organisation became a comparative advantage.658

Yet it is unfair to claim that merely good fortune was behind the successful responses of the EPP. There was (and is) an element of pragmatism and there are strong ties of personal friendships within the organisation. This meant that on top of the genuinely strong and well-disciplined organisation, there was an extra layer of personal networks. This combination of pragmatism and discipline, of organisation and personal networks laid the ground for a flexibility that was critical during the great challenges after 1989. One example is how the EPP dealt with Poland, which was clearly the most difficult country. Being aware of the constant instability of the Polish party system, the EPP leadership changed strategy and focused instead on a small number of key individuals in Polish politics. Keeping a good relation with these individuals made it possible to secure long-term partners in Poland no matter what party form that might take.

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658 The same goes for the situation with the parallel conservative organisation, the EDU. The situation of having two organisations had earlier been seen as unnecessary and counterproductive as they overlapped each other. However, when it came to gathering a broad range of new member parties in Central and Eastern Europe, it became an advantage to have the two separate organisations that each could attract a number of parties.
9. The Actor Perspective: Appropriateness or Consequences?

The main theoretical research question in this thesis is what kind of driving forces that were behind the European party families in their activities in Central and Eastern Europe. The point of departure was found in institutional theory, where two alternative logics of action are seen as important: the ‘logic of expected consequences’ mainly derived from rational choice institutionalism and the ‘logic of appropriateness’ from the approach of normative institutionalism.

Departing from the logic of consequences, the ideal actor is strategic and behaves in a utility maximising way. The actor within the logic of appropriateness approach is on the contrary steered by the rules (written or unwritten) of the appropriate behaviour within each context. Most theoretical works on political parties (except for Downs) have included both elements. Sjöblom for example identifies the tension between parliamentary influence and party cohesion. At the European party-level Johansson identifies a ‘credibility dilemma’ that national parties face when they are about to join a European party family. On the one hand, the party can extend its influence by joining the party family but on the other hand, the ideology and programme of the European party family may not be congruent with that of the national party. However, although most party studies implicitly bring forth the tension between power and ideas, they tend to remain in the rationalist camp and thus see ideologies and identities as constraints to party behaviour. The aim of this study is to broaden the view and see the ideas and identity of political parties as potential driving forces and not only constraints.

The point of departure is thus the tension between power and ideas - illustrated in the two opposing logics of action - as something that all political parties are confronted with and must try to balance. Johansson’s credibility dilemma here is a good example. The European party family may increase its parliamentary influence (note: both in the European Parliament and in the Council of Ministers) by accepting a strong applicant party but may risk losing its credibility (and its internal cohesion) if the party differs too much from the programme and profile of the party family. Likewise, if the party family focuses too strictly on the party profile and programme of the applicant parties, they may risk losing influence if they only accept the smaller/weaker parties.

If we depart from the logic of expected consequences, the party families in this study would have been expected to give priority to the applicant parties, which were (or gave the impression of being) strong in electoral terms and that were in (or had strong chances to reach) government; especially with the prime minister post. This would after a possible EU-
enlargement eastwards strengthen the party family in the European Parliament, which has over the years gradually increased in political importance. Secondly, it would strengthen the party family’s position in the Council of Ministers, where the governments from the member states convene and possibly vote in critical issues. Thirdly, by having more member parties with the prime minister post the party family would considerably strengthen its position in the European Council, where the broad long-terms decisions about the EU are made. If we on the other hand depart from the logical of appropriateness, the expected behaviour from the European party families would be to prioritise party profile and party programme when evaluating possible applicant parties. The historical legacy of the applicant party plays an important role here also as it may play a role for its credibility in the eyes of the European party family.

When it comes to how the three party families have dealt with the tension between influence and credibility, I have identified both some general tendencies and some party specific traits. First I will present the general patterns and thereafter comes a section that focuses on the main differences between the three party families.

9.1 General patterns
As will be shown in the forthcoming section, there are differences between the three party families when it comes to the driving forces of motives for enlarging the party families. Yet some broad common patterns have been identified, which can be seen as the conditions that potentially steer the logic of party behaviour. The main factor behind these common conditions is the external framework of the EU-enlargement plans. If we depart from the three phases that have been identified for the party family expansion - identification, evaluation/education and incorporation – each of them have their own place in the EU-enlargement context.

The first phase (approximately 1989-1992) was generally characterised by the discussion of when and how the countries of Central and Eastern Europe could be prepared for possible future EU-membership.659 This combined with the upcoming first free elections in the region imposed a certain time-pressure on the European party families (and their member parties) as it became urgent to find partner parties in the region and to make sure that these partners – the possible future member parties – were

659 The question of prospective EU-membership for the countries in Central and Eastern Europe was not clear. However, the EU initiated a number of supportive programmes and associative ‘Europe programmes’ in order to prepare the countries for possible future membership.
as successful as possible in the first elections. At the same time there was a lack of information and overview of the emerging party landscape in Central and Eastern Europe.

In contrast, the second phase (approximately 1992-1999) was instead characterised by a slower pace. Even though the EU in 1993 opened the door to membership for the countries in Central and Eastern Europe\(^{660}\), there was no detailed roadmap or timetable. Thus it was clear that a possible EU-enlargement eastwards would take many years. Finally, with the third phase there was again a period of a certain time-pressure. After 1999, the EU decided to initiate formal accession negotiations with all post-communist countries included in this study.\(^{661}\) For the European party families this meant that they had to speed-up their arrangements for integrating the applicant parties into their organisations and decide on the potential party members that they still were not sure about. In order to understand the logic behind the European party families’ motives and driving forces throughout the three phases, it is important to place this process in the general process of EU-enlargement.

Table: 9.1 The adaptive character of the European party organisations throughout the time-span from identification to incorporation of new parties

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party international</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European party</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party group in the European Parliament</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National member parties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.1 illustrates how the changing logic of behaviour over the three phases was enhanced by the adaptive structure of the party family networks. Different actors within the party family network structure were active in different phases. This was a gradual shift from party internation-

\(^{660}\) This was the main result of the Copenhagen summit in June 1993.

\(^{661}\) The initial strategy decided in 1997 was to start membership negotiations with a limited group of five post-communist countries (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Estonia) and Cyprus. After only two years, it was decided at the Helsinki-summit in December 1999 to open accession negotiations with all (twelve) applicant countries, i.e. also with Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and Malta. For an overview of the enlargement chronology, see Baun (2000) p xii-xiii.
als dominating in the first phase, via the European party in the second phase to the third phase where the party group in the European Parliament became more involved. National member parties were especially active in the first and third phase. All actors were to a certain extent involved throughout the whole process. This is rather a general picture of how the mixture of active actors changed over time.

The first phase was to a large degree dominated by the party internationals and the national member parties. The transnational party cooperation was mainly steered by the party internationals as the European-level party organisations were not yet developed. However, the party internationals lacked the resources to coordinate the efforts and see to that the necessary means were taken. Moreover, there were also other parts of the world that needed their attention. Thus, they depended on the contribution of the national member parties. It should be mentioned, however, that this tendency was not entirely similar in all three party families. The Christian democrats had already in 1989 a rather strong European-level party organisation. Thus, even if the CDI played a role, the EPP and EUCD took the leading role rather soon.

The fact that national parties played an important role in the early phase contributed to the general tendency of logic of consequences. The main reason was that several national parties saw the political changes in Central and Eastern Europe as an opportunity to extend their own contacts and partnerships. Especially if the party was in government this was a priority. Transnational party relations can therefore in the very early stage be seen as clear examples of ‘party-diplomacy’. Respondents from all three party families observed some degree of egoism among the national member parties in the early stage. Yet, this party-egoism could as well twist the party behaviour towards a logic of appropriateness. In a situation where the national member parties disagreed on which parties in Central and Eastern Europe should be contacted and/or invited there was a tendency to be cautious. This combined with a lack of information about the new parties and a certain time-pressure contributed to a very cautious behaviour by the party family in order not to lose credibility by including ‘wrong parties’. Thus, the conditions surrounding the first phase involved incentives for both a logic of consequences and appropriateness.

The main actors in the second phase were on the contrary low-key actors, mainly branches of the European party secretariat which were not occupied by day-to-day politics but rather internal party issues. For the ELDR it was the ‘East-West coordinator’ that coordinated the east-west relations. For the PES, it was the European Forum with its secretary general and its steering board. For the EPP it was the EUCD, with its less for-
mal/sharp organisation built on strong friendship networks. Another general important actor in this phase was the political foundations connected to each party family. They played a key role in implementing the education programmes that were planned by the party families. In short, the general context in the second phase - the lack of time-pressure, the low-key character of the actors involved and the lack of decisions with long-term consequences - points towards an atmosphere which was characterised by socialisation and learning processes rather than strategic thinking. This is naturally related to a logic of appropriateness.

Finally, in the third phase the party groups in the European Parliament became more involved. This is only natural as it was now a question of which parties and politicians from Central and Eastern Europe that would be future colleagues of the MEPs. Compared to the actors that dominated in the second phase, the party group had more strategic motives. Just like in national political parties, the parliamentary group tend to think more practically than for example the party leadership. In the framework of this study the general conclusion is the same; the more the party group in the European Parliament became involved, the more focus was directed to party stability and party strength rather than ideological purity. This became even clearer when the strong influential national party delegations within the groups set the tone.\(^{662}\) Also national parties became again important in this third phase. But unlike the early phase, it was the bigger and more influential national parties that stepped forward, thus an even stronger example of party diplomacy.\(^{663}\) The time-pressure became again reality once a time-plan for the EU-enlargement was presented in 2002. Just like in the first phase, there was also time for decisions with long-term consequences, i.e. which parties should be accepted as full members. In short, all factors that shaped the context in the third phase pointed towards a logic of consequences in the behaviour of the European party families.

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\(^{662}\) For example when it came to the controversial Slovakian party Smer, it was basically the German SPD that convinced the rest of the PES group to accept the party, which was in government in Slovakia.

\(^{663}\) One example is when the British Labour Party persuaded the PES to accept the former communist Romanian Social Democratic Party (PSD). The PSD had recently won the elections and for the British Labour Party that was in government, good contacts with the PSD became not only a party strategic issue but also a part of foreign relations.
Table 9.2 Phase-specific patterns common for all three European party families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of information</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical decisions</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-pressure</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status of main actors</td>
<td>High-level</td>
<td>Low-level</td>
<td>High-level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The general patterns for each phase are summarised in table 9.2 above. As mentioned, these patterns were mainly triggered by the formal development of the EU-enlargement negotiations. What we can see in the first phase is a framework that sets the conditions for a logic of consequences with high-level actors involved, a time-pressure and a relatively open ground of opportunities (strengthening the party family) which means decisions which are critical in the long-term. At the same time there was a general lack of information about prospective member parties. This in turn laid the ground for a general cautious behaviour in order not to risk the credibility of the party family and this in turn mirrors a logic of appropriateness. The second phase on the other hand was different in character: no time-pressure and no critical decisions to make. Instead the focus was on the education of and becoming more familiar with the prospective member parties. The main actors involved were as mentioned at the lower level compared to the first phase. All this points to an atmosphere of socialisation and learning rather than strategic behaviour and thus a logic of appropriateness. The third phase finally was framed by circumstances that brought obvious incentives for a strategic behaviour. Again, there were critical decisions to be made and a also a certain time-pressure. Furthermore the main actors were linked to the daily political process and thus more practical and strategic.

These were the main conditions surrounding each phase in the process of enlarging the party families. These were the same for all three party families. Let us now turn to the question of how the party families differ from each other and what may be the possible explanations behind the differences.
9.2 Party family comparison: Diverging patterns

It must be said from the start that in no party family was there an exclusive dominance of either of the two logics mentioned above. Not even within the phases of the whole process could I see a behaviour by any of the party families that reflected exclusively one of the logics. In each phase, all three party families – intentionally or unintentionally – balanced between the need for influence and the need to uphold the credibility of the party family. This complexity was further enhanced by the loose organisation of the European party families. However, in this ‘grey area’ I have identified certain tendencies for each party family. Thus in the following I will present how each party family handled the dilemma between influence and credibility and try to pinpoint the tendency for each party family in each of the three time-periods. This is followed by a section where the diverging logics of the three party families are discussed out of the whole process and here I will put forward three possible explanations for the differences: party culture, party size and historical context.

Phase 1: History becomes a burden for the social democrats and the liberals
During this first phase, there is a difference between the social democratic family on the one hand and the Christian democrats and the liberals on the other. While the social democratic PES was confronted with a clear credibility dilemma and had to make an active choice, the situation for the EPP and ELDR was more complicated.

The PES: a difficult credibility dilemma
As described in chapter 6, the West European social democrats faced a crucial dilemma from the very beginning in 1989. They had to decide whether they should recognise the former communist parties or the historical social democratic parties.  

The historical parties (with some exceptions) were inexperienced, programmatically old-fashioned and had no domestic political allies. The former communist parties had on the contrary a strong party organisation, competent party staff and were especially keen on modernising their programme into a West European social democratic manner. Consequently, departing from a logic of consequences, the PES should have chosen to cooperate with the former communist parties. But as described in chapter six, it was rather a logic of appropriateness that steered the PES in this early stage. Recognising the former communist parties obviously involved a risk

664 Recognising both was not an option due to the hostility of the historical parties towards the former communist parties.
of damaging the credibility of European social democracy. Moreover, there was an emotional aspect to it; the West European social democrats felt a moral responsibility to support the historical social democratic parties. The memories of how the communists had treated social democrats in 1947-48 in for example Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland were still alive. Recognition of the former communists would clearly be regarded as a betrayal by the historical social democrats. One complicating factor here is that many social democrats in Western Europe really believed that it was possible to rebuild the historical parties.\textsuperscript{665} This demonstrates that there was also a certain consequential logic in their decision. However, it is clear that it was mainly the logic of appropriateness that steered the West European social democrats in the early phase. Firstly, there was a calculated risk of losing credibility by inviting the former communists, and secondly there was an emotional aspect where ‘it felt wrong’.\textsuperscript{666}

\textit{The EPP: a comfortable journey}

When it comes to the EPP they did not really face the tension between influence and credibility that is identified by Sjöblom and Johansson. In this sense, the early phase was rather comfortable for the EPP. On the one hand they were very open towards accepting new affiliated parties from Central and Eastern Europe. This pragmatism indicates a logic of expected consequences as it illustrates a party family that prioritise numbers instead of ideological homogeneity. The EPP could afford this openness as it was flanked by two parallel organisations: the EUCD and EDU. The conservative EDU became indirectly linked to the EPP when the British conservatives became affiliated to the EPP group in the European Parliament. This alliance was negotiated and agreed in 1990-1992. One explicit argument for such co-operation was to complement each other rather than to com-

\textsuperscript{665} To some degree this was a result of the poor information about the emerging centre-left party landscape in Central and Eastern Europe. However, the slow awakening of the PES in becoming active towards the new democracies can be explained by the uneasy feeling they had after the 1989 events. They felt ‘rather timid’ and did not know how to react. (Interview Nick Sigler).

\textsuperscript{666} The emotional blocking of inviting the communists was explicitly expressed by the former Swedish prime minister Ingvar Carlsson (see chapter 6). For the Swedish social democrats, communist parties were seen as enemies throughout the whole cold war. It is unreasonable to expect that this uneasy feeling suddenly disappeared in 1989.
pete for partners in Central and Eastern Europe. The fact that the EPP agreed to this alliance despite the ideological differences between the two party families clearly resonates with a strategic behaviour in order to increase the influence both in the short term (in the European Parliament) and in the long term through securing a broad base of affiliated parties in Central and Eastern Europe.

Thus in the early 1990s, the EPP had two parallel organisations that together subsumed a broad range of centre-right parties in Central and Eastern Europe. This convenient solution was comfortable for the EPP, which could secure future partners without taking any political risks. Yet in parallel to this discreetly strategic behaviour there was a genuine enthusiasm among the West European Christian democratic parties in supporting their sister parties in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989-1992, especially before the critical first elections. In the official party documents of the EPP and EUCD, this was also pictured as a support for democratic change in the region as they assisted the opposition parties against the former ruling communist parties.

In short, it is difficult to identify either a logic of appropriateness or a logic of consequences within the EPP in the early phase mainly because they faced no clear credibility dilemma. To support the centre-right oppositional parties was both a support for democracy and a strategic support for allies. Moreover, it was not a problem to include a broad range of parties due to the existence of the parallel organisations to the EPP. Through fortunate historical circumstances (the EUCD had not yet been phased out) and strategic alliances (the alliance with EDU) the EPP could secure a broad base of future member parties without taking any serious political risks. The early phase was indeed comfortable for the EPP in this sense.

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667 This argument was spelled out explicitly by the British Conservative Party when it applied for affiliation to the EPP group in the European parliament. See chapter 5.

668 The fact that the EUCD and EDU complemented each other was recognised by the secretary general of the EUCD and EPP at the time. On the one hand, there was the traditional Christian democratic EUCD and on the other hand the EDU, which was larger and more generous towards accepting different types of parties.

669 The EPP leader Wilfried Martens states (not without some pride) in his autobiography that he was referred to as ‘the traveller for democracy’ during these early years. See Martens (2006).
ELDR: the handicap of a broad ideological label

For the liberal ELDR, the early phase was neither the ‘comfortable journey’ of the EPP nor the unavoidable credibility dilemma of the PES. The most obvious observation concerning the liberal party family is the inability to compete with the EPP for potential member parties. How this may be interpreted in terms of logic of appropriateness or logic of consequences is however not self-evident. Yet I will argue that the logic of appropriateness is the most reasonable tool to understand the behaviour of the ELDR in this early phase. First a brief reminder of the conditions for the liberal party family in 1989-1990 is necessary.

The first six months were characterised by hesitation and passivity. It was not until May 1990 that a working group and a certain ‘East-West coordinator’ were established. Once the liberal party family finally managed to coordinate their efforts, they were confronted with a complicated party landscape. The term ‘liberal’ had generally a positive connotation in Central and Eastern Europe during the changes, but the reverse of the medal was that the broadness of the term enabled almost any party to call itself liberal. Moreover, as mentioned in the historical background in chapter 3, liberalism in Central and Eastern Europe had stronger connotations with nationalism than in Western Europe due to the relatively late national awakening in the region. Thus, for the liberal party family the historical context was ironically a disadvantage despite the general pro-liberal discourse at the time. In addition, the ELDR had no parallel organisations like the EUCD or the EDU. This put it in the same position as the PES, i.e. initiating links with a potential member party involved certain political risks if the party was not known to the ELDR.

All these circumstances together - the slow early reaction, the broad meaning of liberalism and the lack of parallel organisations – put the ELDR far behind the EPP in identifying and initiating contacts with potential partners. The conclusion from this may be that this has nothing to do with the question of logic of appropriateness or logic of consequences. The ELDR could simply not compete with the EPP in terms of resources and efficiency in party organisation. In my view however, a good part of the explanation is found in the weaker party organisation of the ELDR compared to the EPP and this is indirectly related to a logic of appropriateness.

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670 The national awakening in Central and Eastern Europe in the mid-19th century should be seen in the light of multi-ethnic nature of the dominant powers in the region: Prussia, Russia, Austria (Habsburg) and the Ottoman empire. Liberal politicians were leading this national awakening process and therefore liberalism may still today be related to nationalist or patriotic ideas.

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The weaker organisation is in many ways an indirect consequence of the liberal self-image. As one liberal official phrased it, liberals tend to see themselves as free intellectuals rather than politicians and even ‘find some pride in not being too organised’.\(^{671}\)

In this sense I would argue that the weaker party organisation and the passive reaction to the 1989-events mirror this self-image. Furthermore, most of the parties that finally linked up with ELDR in 1989-1990 were small, dominated by intellectuals and focused on the highly educated voters and certain minority groupings. Thus we can see that parties with the same self-image were drawn towards the liberal party family and this in turn strengthened the collective self-image even further.

**Phase 2: A lecture in how to avoid the credibility dilemma**

Throughout this phase, the Christian democrats were confronted with a more problematic reality while the social democrats found a convenient way to discreetly include the former communists. Both party families, though using different strategies, found ways to avoid the credibility dilemma. The liberals however, continued having difficulties with the applicant parties despite an improved organisation.

**PES: creative imitation of the Christian democrats?**

For the social democratic PES, there was a clear break in 1992-1993 when they decided to invite the former communist parties. This implies a radical change to a logic of consequences. The main reason was the disappointing results in the first elections throughout Central and Eastern Europe. With few exceptions, the historical social democrats performed poorly while the successor parties did better. For the PES it was now clear: if they wanted partners in the region with at least some influence, they had to swallow their pride and invite the former communist parties.

However, the leap from a logic of appropriateness a consequential logic should not be exaggerated. The invitation of the successor parties was carefully prepared through the formation of the new semi-official organisation European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity. Although this organisation had a steering board, a budget, statutes etcetera, it was more or less unknown to public media. Moreover, it was dominated by low-profile politicians and the political foundations.

Thus, with the creation of the European Forum the West European social democrats demonstrated that they had learned from the Christian democrats, who escaped the credibility dilemma in the early phase much

\(^{671}\) For the entire quote, see chapter 7.2.
thanks to their flanking organisations that functioned as buffer-zones. With the European Forum, it was possible to invite the successor parties without taking serious political risks. Most of the activities of the European Forum consisted of informal meetings, seminars, conferences and courses, all in the shadow of the public media. Furthermore, inviting the former communist parties to the activities of the European Forum was not automatically a ticket to membership in the PES. On the contrary, this was a possibility for the PES to evaluate the successor parties with no time-pressure or political risk. If we add that the new plan was to encourage cooperation (and possibly a merger) between the historical social democrats and the successor parties it is clear that the PES was attempting to find a balance in the tension between influence and credibility.

Consequently, it must be concluded that the PES managed to escape the credibility dilemma in this second phase; this with the help of creative adaptation and thus finding a compromise between influence and credibility.

**EPP: logic of appropriateness as a tool**

For the EPP and above all its parallel organisation the EUCD, the second phase was much more problematic than the first. The early success in attracting a broad range of centre-right parties turned into a rather troublesome situation.

The EUCD had links to several potential member parties in each country but from around 1992 it was clear that there were domestic conflicts between the centre-right parties and moreover several of these parties had a right-wing populist and nationalist rhetoric. Suddenly the Christian democratic party family was in a similar credibility dilemma as the social democrats in the early phase. The style and rhetoric of some of the potential member parties were clearly not in accordance with the ideals of post-war Christian democracy in Western Europe. Here we can distinguish two types of problematic parties for the EPP and EUCD. First, there were the parties with an outspoken nationalist and sometimes xenophobic rhetoric. Secondly, there was the group of parties that were mainly conservative rather than Christian democrat and slightly nationalist.

There were different opinions within the EUCD on which parties should be offered membership. As concluded in chapter 5, the current secretary general was squeezed between different opinions. The arguments for preferring some parties could be both strategic strength or historical-sentimental and this mirrors the credibility dilemma between influence and
credibility.\textsuperscript{672} The way that the EPP/EUCD chose to handle this dilemma was finally a compromise in order to take both sides into consideration: to put up membership criteria. This meant that the applicant party had to operate in a democratic country; it had to be represented in parliament after taking part in free elections and that it accepted the Christian democratic manifesto.

This solution of the credibility dilemma is interesting in several ways. Firstly it was a clever move since it calmed down the ‘programmatic’ grouping within the EUCD. In practice however, it meant that the EUCD leadership could include all potential parties as long as they fulfilled the criteria. Secondly it reveals an intricate relation between the two logics of action within the Christian democratic party family. By setting up the membership criteria the EPP/EUCD could accept the bigger parties that in fact were conservative or even moderately nationalist\textsuperscript{673} and this in turn points towards a logic of expected consequences. These parties were prioritised since they were big and strong or because they complemented the ‘territory’\textsuperscript{674} of the EPP together with the smaller Christian democratic parties in terms of voter reach. But built into this logic there was a certain although unspoken expectation that the new parties would learn and socialise into the behavioural codes of the party family. Likewise, the small, symbolic gesture of accepting the Christian democratic manifesto could have consequences in the longer-term development. Thus the logic of appropriateness was to some degree a calculated ingredient in the EPP/EUCD long-term plans. It should be mentioned that the asymmetrical east-west power relation was there also in the background, even if it was never expressed explicitly.

\textit{ELDR: Reluctant logic of appropriateness}

The liberal ELDR came out from the troublesome first 2-3 years with a stronger party organisation and more coordinated efforts towards Central and Eastern Europe. As mentioned, the liberal party family lacked a paral-

\textsuperscript{672} As mentioned in chapter 5.3 it was mainly the German Christian democrats that argued for prioritising the bigger parties while another group, mainly consisting of the Italian, Belgian and Dutch parties, wanted to prioritise the smaller but historically the original Christian democratic parties.

\textsuperscript{673} Accepting the Christian democratic manifesto was mainly a symbolic gesture. It did not steer the applicant parties in domestic politics.

\textsuperscript{674} The term ‘territory’ was used by one of the EPP respondents when it came to the main motives for their activities in Central and Eastern Europe. ‘We were rather looking for the territory’ was the crude but honest statement of the EPP official. See chapter 5.4.
le organisation like the EUCD. But it had not the same resources as the social democrats to build up a new organisation so instead it adapted its existing organisation.

In June 1991, the ELDR changed its statutes and opened up for affiliate- and observer status. This was on the one hand a symbolic gesture that the party family was open for new members from Central and Eastern Europe, mirroring a logic of appropriateness. At the same time it can be regarded as an attempt to include new parties from Central and Eastern Europe without taking the political risk of offering them full membership. The next change of statutes in 1993 was more profound. Now the ELDR removed the observer status and kept only the affiliated membership. This further confirmed the willingness to welcome new partners in Central and Eastern Europe. Consequently, although the liberal party family lacked a parallel organisation like the EPP and later the PES, it made significant organisational changes in order to invite potential member parties. This can in my view be indirectly related to the logic of consequences. In order to avoid the risk of having all potential members going to the EPP, it was important to lock them in with membership status even if it was not full membership.

However, difficult problems remained for the ELDR. When it came to the potential member parties, most of them were small and poorly organised. In several countries, the potential liberal partners failed to get seats in parliament. In Poland the party landscape was still fluid and this made it difficult also for the Christian democrats and the social democrats to pinpoint their natural partners. However, for the liberal party family, Poland was extra problematic as the Polish party system was dominated by religion and the nation as important issues. In the view of the ELDR, there were no real liberal parties in Poland and those that claimed to be liberal were in fact Catholic or nationalist parties. Moreover, among the small potential liberal partners in the Czech Republic there was bitter internal fighting in 1992-93, which took a certain amount of valuable time and energy to sort out. Finally the ELDR continued to have difficulties in coordinating the activities in Central and Eastern Europe, partly due to limited resources but also due to the fact that there were not one but two working groups for this issue.

675 The change in the ELDR statutes introduced two new kinds of membership. If a party came from a country that had applied for EU-membership it could apply for affiliated status. If it came from a country that had not yet applied for EU-membership it could apply for observer status.

676 For example in Romania, Slovakia and Lithuania.
Thus, despite some attempts to adapt the party organisation to include new parties from Central and Eastern Europe and lock them into the ELDR party family, the second phase is in many ways a continuation of the first. This is to a large degree a result of the potential partner parties. It was mostly smaller parties that were drawn to the ELDR, many with an intellectual profile. This reinforced the liberal self-image of an intellectual rather than a politician.

**Phase 3: A race towards a logic of consequences**

As mentioned in section 9.2 above, the general tendency in the third phase was an increasing logic of consequences. As EU-membership came closer it became more obvious for the party families that the new parties would soon become partners in the European Parliament. Therefore, it was natural that the West European parties thought more in terms of influence and strength than about ideas.

**EPP: Towards a logic of consequences without disguise**

The Christian democratic party family is probably the most suitable example of the increasing logic of consequences in the third phase. However, as will be shown this tendency was initially embedded in a balance with the logic of appropriateness. In the mid-1990s, all potential members of the EPP from Central and Eastern Europe were attached to its parallel organisations the EUCD and EDU. When it was increasingly clear that the former communist countries would soon initiate EU membership negotiations, it was natural to prepare for a phasing out of the EUCD, which had been kept exclusively for dealing with the parties in Central and Eastern Europe. But when it came to how this process would be handled there was a divide within the EPP. To integrate the EUCD into the EPP meant that the parties from Central and Eastern Europe would automatically become affiliated to the EPP and this was a sensitive issue. Some worried EPP member parties argued that it was still too early to accept the newcomers. One reason for this was that many parties were seen as too nationalist and EU-sceptical and another reason was the continuing tendency of party splits and mergers which mirrored a party landscape in many countries that had not yet institutionalised. The solution to this internal divide was (again) to put forward certain membership criteria. These were clearly tougher than the EUCD criteria from 1992. The new criteria involved firstly very explicit programmatic points that the applicants had to sign up to. In short this meant that they had to sign up for European integration and the Christian democratic ideals that were linked to the Euro-
pean project. Secondly, there were some tough criteria on electoral strength and organisational stability.\footnote{To be accepted they had to ‘endorse European integration through the federal model’, their respective party programme had to be based on a personalistic (sic) human ideal and finally they had to acknowledge and support the principle of subsidiarity. Moreover when it came to the criteria on party stability, the party had to have at least ten per cent in the last parliamentary elections and no party splits in the last two years.}

At first glance, these criteria mirror a compromise between the programmatic concerns (logic of appropriateness) and the concerns of strength and stability (logic of consequences). However, if the situation is closely scrutinised, it was rather a skilful management by the secretary general to ensure that the new parties would be included in the EPP. This was done by arranging criteria that ‘looked tough’\footnote{See quote in chapter 5.4.} while making sure that the applicant parties would pass them. Moreover, the EPP acted quickly in 1997 when some countries in Central and Eastern Europe initiated EU-membership negotiations. The EPP changed its statutes and introduced observer status and affiliated membership. It also lowered the hurdles for membership. Now it was enough if the party had established itself as a national force. In my view, this rapid adaptation was in fact a way for the EPP to lock-in the applicant parties to the Christian democratic party family, in case they had second thoughts. All this points to a logic of consequences in the EPP behaviour, although to some degree dressed in a logic of appropriateness.

When it comes to the situation with the EDU, it was more difficult as it belonged to another (although overlapping) party family: the conservative. A fusion of the EPP and EDU had been discussed for several years but it was difficult to implement due to differences in profile and organisational culture. Interestingly, the EPP was at first sight in a subordinate position since the main governmental centre-right parties in Central and Eastern Europe tended to be conservative rather than Christian democratic. It was finally the parties in Central and Eastern Europe that decided the issue. When the EPP in 1997 introduced the possibility for parties outside the EU to apply for observer status or affiliate membership, most EDU-parties from Central and Eastern Europe chose to apply for EPP-membership. It was clearly a logic of consequences that steered their behaviour; membership in the EPP would give them more influence, especially in view of the increasing importance of the European Parliament within the EU.
Finally, after the initiation of the EU-membership negotiations in 1997-1998 the EPP was quite aggressive in the search for additional member parties in Central and Eastern Europe. In this search, it was quite obvious that size and strength mattered more than party profile. The EPP even accepted three parties from the competing party families the PES and the ELDR. The tendency was that the EPP was very tolerant if it lacked a broad party representation in a country. This extreme pragmatism does in my view confirm the image of the EPP as a party family that aims at finding a balance between appropriateness and consequences but when it really matters, the influence factor is prioritised.

PES: the logic of consequences by necessity
The behaviour of the social democratic party family in the third phase was characterised by both appropriate and consequential logic. Yet it is possible to see development towards a logic of consequences as EU-enlargement came closer.

In 1995, when the process of gradual incorporation of the new parties started with the granting of observer status to six parties, the PES was still comfortably protected behind the ‘front-work’ of the European Forum. Moreover, the European Forum included the parties from observer parties from Hungary and the Czech Republic into the European Forum Steering Board in 1998. This was the start of a new qualitative phase when the PES member parties worked together with the Hungarian and Czech (and somewhat later the Polish) parties on the activities in Central and Eastern Europe. In my view this, together with the inclusion of the new observer parties, resembles some of the elements of the logic of appropriateness. Once they were inside the family with different meetings or activities, they were increasingly viewed as ‘one of us’ by the West European parties. This image-shift was most likely a consequence of the simple fact that they met more often and they met as equals. Even if the observer parties lacked the voting right they could speak at the meetings just like any other party. After the next wave of new observers in 1998, the PES made it clear that

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679 The EPP was actively involved in persuading the biggest Hungarian centre-right party Fidesz to leave the ELDR for the EPP, which it finally did in 2000. In the same year, the EPP accepted the Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS), which had been affiliated to the PES. Moreover, in 2005, the Democratic Party in Romania left the PES to join the EPP.

680 This shift was especially emphasised by the PES vice president and chairperson of the European Forum Lena Hjelm-Wallén who followed this process from within. See chapter 6.3.
no more parties would be included for some time. They were not sure of the seriousness of some applicant parties and needed ‘observation time’. This cautious policy further underlines the fact that the party family was partly steered by a logic of appropriateness.

However, as EU-membership got closer, the PES tended to behave more according to a consequential logic. Parties that had been kept at arm’s length before were accepted, for example the Bulgarian Socialist Party and the Romanian Social Democratic Party. Both had for many years been regarded by the PES as ‘not reformed enough’ or too populist or even nationalist in their rhetoric. However, a common feature of these parties was that they were big, strong and were in government (or had clear chances to reach government). Moreover, shortly after the 2004 enlargement, the controversial Slovakian party Smer was accepted into the PES-group in the European Parliament.

The main reason for this seems to have been increased competition from the EPP. The relationship with the EPP became more restrained already in 1999 when it broke the EPP-PES informal agreement of rotating the European Parliament presidency and initiated a co-operation with the liberals. According to Hix & Lesse the main explanation for the new EPP-policy was that it experienced serious internal divisions after the inclusion of conservative parties. The best response to internal division is a common enemy and the PES was convenient, especially since social democracy had experienced a general up-swing in the second half of the 1990s, taking governmental office in almost every country of the European Union. According to several PES respondents, the EPP was recruiting aggressively in Central and Eastern Europe in the years shortly before the enlargement. It was not stated explicitly, but in my view it is clear that the West European social democrats knew that they had to adapt to the competitive situation. In this sense, their gradual change towards the logic of consequences can be seen as a ‘logic of necessity’.

An illustrative example is Slovakia.: On the one hand there were several small social democratic parties without any real political impact. On the other hand was the SDL, which was formed out of the old communist party. Finally, there was the populist bigger party Smer. The former foreign

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681 The 12 observer parties were automatically upgraded to associate members in 1999.
682 See Hix & Lesse (2002) p 76-77
683 It was mentioned in interviews with Nick Crook, Nick Sigler and Christian Vigenin.
secretary for the British Labour Party summarised why Smer was finally accepted: ‘You know...what choice did we have in the end?’ 684

The ELDR: in the shadow of the EPP

Compared to the Christian democrats and the liberals, the ELDR was not confronted with the same concrete dilemmas in the years up to the 2004- and 2007 enlargements. To a great extent, the development was not in the hands of the ELDR. The development in this third phase for the ELDR was instead a continuation of the tendencies that I described in the previous phases.

The ELDR opened up their organisation for full membership much earlier than the Christian democrats and social democrats. Already in 1995 it was decided to remove EU-membership as a criterion for applying for full membership. According to the new rules all liberal parties that had been affiliated members of the ELDR for two years could apply for full membership. The only condition was that the applicant party accepted the statutes and programmes of the ELDR.

Just like the enforcement of the observer status in 1992, the opening up of the party in 1995 can be interpreted as both a logic of appropriateness and a logic of consequences. It can certainly be interpreted as a symbolic demonstration of the general positive attitude of the liberal party family towards an eastern enlargement of the EU. The self-image as a pro-European force has been important for the liberal party family685 and consequently this opening can be seen as an example of the logic of appropriateness. At the same time, the ELDR was obviously aware of the looming danger of the EPP as a potential alternative for its member parties. Granting the parties access to full membership clearly reduced the risk for defections. In this way it can be interpreted as a strategy with long-term strength and influence as the main priority and thus mirrors the logic of consequences.

But as stated above, the development was not really in the hands of the ELDR but instead it depended on the potential member parties. The trend after the mid-1990s was gloomy in this sense. In Poland, the biggest and most influential country in Central and Eastern Europe, the ELDR had initially several potential member parties. However after merging into a new party, the Democratic Union, the ‘liberal’ forces in Poland aligned

684 Interview with Nick Sigler, 5 December 2008.

685 For representations of the importance of the pro-European image of the liberal party family and its positive view on eastern enlargement, see for example De Clerq (2004) and Cox (2004).
themselves with the conservative EDU in 1994-95. This put the ELDR in a position without any partners in Poland. A couple of years later, the Hungarian party Fidesz left the ELDR and became a member of the EPP. This was certainly related to the gradual change of Fidesz from radical liberal towards a conservative force, but at the same time it reflects the difficult situation for the ELDR. Fidesz began to grow after 1994 and became the dominant ruling centre-right party in 1998. After only a year in government it was moving towards the EPP and finally joined the EPP in 2000. These examples illustrate how the development was rather in the hands of the EPP and the potential ELDR member parties. Poland and Hungary are two examples where the EPP experienced problems. In Poland the main challenge was the fluid party system with a number of Christian democratic potential member parties and with many splits and mergers. In Hungary, the EPP and EUCD/EDU partners became increasingly weakened after 1994 due to strong rivalries. Thus in these two cases where the EPP lacked strong partners, the main liberal parties were drawn away from the ELDR to the EPP.

This tendency reinforced the image of the liberal party family as ‘intellectual’ or idealist rather than a serious political player with ambitions. The liberal parties in Central and Eastern Europe that were big and had strong ambitions tended to end up in the EPP, either through the EUCD or the EDU. Consequently the ELDR found itself in a position where most of the partners in Central and Eastern Europe were small or extremely small, i.e. not in parliament. However, there are examples of strong and successful ELDR partners in Central and Eastern Europe. A striking similarity among these success-cases is that they all come from small countries. The Estonian Reform Party, Latvia’s Way and Liberal Democracy of Slovenia are all parties which gained at least 15 per cent in several consecutive elections. Regarding this correlation between liberalism and country size, it is perhaps not too far-fetched to assume that very small countries (Estonia, Latvia and Slovenia have each less than three million inhabitants) follow a logic of appropriateness rather than a logic of consequences in foreign policy. In short: the liberal party family seemed to be trapped in the logic of appropriateness, no matter what they tried to do about it.

9.3 Conclusions and possible explanatory factors
As mentioned in the first part of this section, no party family have behaved according to only one of the two logics applied in the study. Yet, as shown in the analytic sections above, there are rather clear tendencies in each party family.
The Christian democratic EPP stands out as the party family which demonstrated the strongest tendency towards a logic of consequences throughout the whole period. Although it managed to keep a balance between the need for influence and credibility in the first and second phase, the main strategy was in the end about securing strong partners in each country. In the third phase, the strategy became increasingly straightforward, especially when it accepted three parties directly from the social democratic party family and liberal party family to secure strong representation in each country before the EU-enlargement. The social democratic PES is clearly the party family which has gone through the greatest change during the three phases: from a logic of appropriateness in the first phase to a pretty fine balance between the two logics in phase two after the creation of the European Forum, and finally (pushed by the EPP) somewhat grudgingly they acted more according to a logic of consequences in the third phase shortly before the EU-enlargement.

The liberal ELDR was the most difficult party family to categorise into one or the other logic based on concrete situations. Instead I have attempted to interpret the general behaviour of the ELDR in terms of the two logics. The result is that the ELDR stands out as the only party family in this study that remained mostly characterised by the logic of appropriateness. This is partly due to conscious actions – the liberal party family was clearly driven by values and a genuine will to unite Europe and export democracy and human rights – but mainly it is due to the implicit actions and non-actions. The liberal self-image of a free intellectual rather than a tactical politician constrained the ELDR in the early phase and throughout the whole process the party family was trapped in this logic as it mainly attracted parties with the same profile. In this sense, the difference between the ELDR and the EPP was gradually widened throughout the process as the potential member parties reinforced it through their choice of party family. Most of the bigger liberal parties with ambitions chose to link up with the EPP and the smaller linked up with the ELDR.

The main tendency for each party family is summarised in figure 9.1 below. I want to underline that the purpose of this table is to illustrate tendencies and not describe any exact developments. In the table an additional row is included: ‘balance of both logics’. By including this I want to underline that it is possible for a political party to find a balance between the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequences; it is not necessarily either or.
There may be a multitude of reasons behind the diverging patterns between the three party families, but in my view three factors stand out as the most important: party culture, party size and the historical context.

**Party culture as a possible explanation**

Party culture is here seen as the self-image of the party family, which is represented in the norms and rules (written or unwritten) that steer the organisation’s behaviour in day-to-day politics and when making critical decisions. Each party family has in my view demonstrated a distinct party culture in the framework of this thesis.

The EPP can be seen as the party family with a pragmatic organisational culture. This pragmatism can be seen as a way of handling the recurrent dilemmas between influence and credibility or between influence and internal party coherence. This pragmatism was illustrated before 1989 with having two parallel organisations (the EPP and EUCD) and even a third organisation with both Christian democratic and conservative parties (the EDU). The decision to accept several parties from each country in Central and Eastern Europe as observers in the EUCD, even if some were clearly conservative (some hard-right) confirms this image. Thus, even if the EPP was concerned with the credibility and the unity of the party family, the long-term priority was clearly to secure strong and broad partner parties in each country in Central and Eastern Europe. This became increasingly obvious in the third phase when they actively recruited parties from the social democrats and the liberals.

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686 The pragmatic party culture is also illustrated in how the EPP/EUCD handled problematic situations with the fluid party landscape or with nationalist/populist leaders. Focus on personal relations with key individuals and discreet talks became the recipe instead of public polemic.
Compared with Christian democracy, social democratic party organisations are traditionally characterised by Duverger’s ideal model: the mass party with a strong emphasis on internal party democracy.687 This is naturally connected with a great deal of inflexibility for a party leadership, especially in a context of radical changes like those in 1989-1990. This is also related to a general distaste for internal ideological heterogeneity. These two factors did in my view contribute significantly to the hesitant initial reaction of the west European social democrats after 1989. Moreover, despite the existence of the party internationals, social democracy has in its essence always been national.688 This means that the PES was more controlled by the national member parties than was the EPP. In short, the PES was considerably more constrained and less flexible than the EPP in its quest for finding new members in Central and Eastern Europe.

The party culture of the liberal party family is to a great extent characterised by the self-image of a free intellectual rather than a politician. In organisational terms, it is partly reminiscent of the EPP with a relatively flexible party leadership. But on the other hand, it lacks the organisational strength of the Christian democrats. As mentioned in the empirical chapter and in the analysis there is a certain anti-organisational attitude among liberal parties, which perhaps reflects the anti-authoritarian tradition and the individualism in liberal ideology. When it comes to ideological pragmatism, the European liberal party family has a relatively broad tolerance towards differences between market-liberals and social-liberals. However, the ELDR has more in common with the social democratic parties in terms of drawing a line against populist radical parties. Due to its self-image as mainly a party family of values, it is perhaps even more rigid in these issues. The early situation where several potential member parties ‘turned out to be nationalist’ came up due to lack of information rather than a conscious decision. This was not even seen as a dilemma for the ELDR as these parties were dismissed as soon as it was clear that they were nationalist.689 Thus, the lack of credibility dilemmas for the ELDR might well be interpreted as an indicator that the party family did not even consider including more nationalist-minded parties. In this sense, it points to a rather clear logic of appropriateness within the liberal party family.

688 For a deeper elaboration on social democracy and the internationals, see Lightfoot (2005) p 27-30.
689 See chapter 7.2, which describes the early fluidity of the liberal party landscape in Central and Eastern Europe and the difficult situation for the ELDR to identify ‘true’ liberal parties.
Party size as a possible explanation

If party culture may explain the social democratic tendency to follow the logic of appropriateness in the early phase, party size is probably more apt to explain its gradual change towards the logic of consequences in phase two and three while the liberals continued the path of the logic of appropriateness.

The size of the party family, meant as the size of the party group in the European Parliament and the size of the member parties, may influence the logic of behaviour in two ways. Firstly, for a big party family more is at stake as we can assume that it competes with a rival for political influence. The competition in the frame of this thesis is obviously between the Christian democrats and the social democrats and it concerns who will be the dominant player at the EU-level. On the one hand, this competition concerned the mandates in the European Parliament. The incentive was to find big and stable member parties in Central and Eastern Europe in order to defend or in the best case increase the party family’s influence in the European Parliament. On the other hand there was also an incentive to find member parties that were (or had ambitions to be) in government. This would mean that the party family defended or improved its position in the Council of Ministers. In the case of a coalition government, the party with the prime minister post was obviously preferable as it would also mean another seat for the party family in the European Council.

The second way in which party size may influence the logic of party behaviour is through the national member parties. It is assumed that the same logic applies to the national parties, i.e. that bigger parties tend to follow the logic of consequences. The bigger European party families like the EPP and PES have obviously several big and influential member parties. These may influence the party family towards the logic of consequences in certain issues.

One example is the German CDU, which is said to have much of its domestic success thanks to its ability to include the broad centre-right forces, thus sacrificing some ideological pride for more influence. It has been noted throughout the whole time-frame of this thesis how the CDU has constantly been pushing the EPP and EUCD towards an aggressive strategy in

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690 According to Hix and Lord, the strongest voting discipline in the European Parliament is found in the EPP and PES, the two biggest groupings. See Hix & Lord (1997) p 135, 143-144. Moreover, according to Laver & Hunt (1992) the bulk of the member parties in the EPP and PES are ‘parties most interested in office’ and only a small minority are ‘parties most interested in policy’. See Laver & Hunt (1992) p 56-58 via Hix & Lord (1997) p 147.
Central and Eastern Europe prioritising the bigger parties. One example in the social democratic PES is how the British Labour party under the prime minister Tony Blair, prioritised good links with the upcoming Romanian prime minister, Nastase, and persuaded the PES to accept the Romanian successor party. A second example is when the social democratic party group in the European Parliament, was ‘bullied’ by the German SPD into accepting the controversial Slovakian party Smer as it was both big and a governmental party.

In short, there is generally more at stake for a big party family. Or in other words, they have more to lose and thus the competition becomes more intense. The decision by the PES to invite the successor parties (even if it was under the shadow of the European Forum umbrella) was not enthusiastic. It was rather a reluctant move in order to defend social democratic influence in the region, and in the longer term in the EU.

The historical context as a possible explanation

Finally, it is difficult to ignore the importance of the specific historical circumstances as a possible explanation for the different logics of driving forces that tended to steer the three party families.

The collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe did not occur in a historical vacuum. Since the early 1980s, the political initiative in Western Europe was in the hands of the centre-right or right-wing conservative parties, especially after the economic crisis in the 1970s. Thus when the 1989 events started, the social democracy in Western Europe was already in a defensive position. Secondly, and perhaps even more important is the historical baggage of the former communist parties in Central and Eastern Europe. Even if some of them showed a great will to reform themselves (some even participated in the democratic transition process like in Hungary) it was still seen as going too far to align oneself with former dictators. In my view, this heavy historical legacy, combined with the ideological context with a dominance of liberal ideals made it extremely difficult for the West European social democrats to consider the successor parties as partners.

The Christian democrats and the liberals on the other hand, saw themselves as supporting the oppressed opposition and thus automatically qualifying themselves into the division of ‘good guys’. Furthermore, the parties that the EPP included (through the EUCD), which in the aftermath showed nationalist, populist or xenophobic tendencies were still easier for the out-

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691 The CDU was also an encouraging force behind the fusion with the conservative EDU.
side world to forgive than the former communist parties. These right-wing parties were often newly created parties and a certain resentment after 40 years of communism was perhaps understandable, especially due to a general broad wave of nationalism in Europe in the early 1990s.

In short, although both the social democrats and the Christian democrats faced what Johansson (1997) calls a credibility dilemma, there is a certain difference between the two. While the PES was confronted with the strong dilemma between party influence and party credibility, the dilemma for the EPP was narrower and was more concerned with the unity of the party family than its broad credibility. By inviting the communist successor parties, the social democrats did not only risk the internal party family coherence, but also its credibility in general. The Christian democrats never faced this risk to the same extent due to the factors mentioned above. Instead the EPP faced the somewhat simpler dilemma between party influence and internal party coherence, described by Sjöblom (1968). This meant that they could focus on the internal party compromises, which they handled very skillfully as described in the analysis.

When it comes to the liberal party family, the historical context was a burden rather than enabling its possibilities in Central and Eastern Europe. This is a paradox if we consider the general pro-liberal context in the late 1980s and 1990s. However, if we look at the structural historical conditions in Central and Eastern Europe with weak cities, a weak middle-class and instead a strong aristocracy, it is less surprising. Historically, liberals in Central and Eastern Europe have not been able to organise but have rather consisted of a few intellectuals with little political influence. Moreover, another factor was the old empires in the region that lasted until 1918. The main source of political mobilisation in the 19th and 20th century was nationalist movements that demanded sovereignty and thereby liberalism became intertwined with nationalism and patriotism to a larger degree than in Western Europe. Thus, the weak tradition of liberalism in the region and its historical kinship with nationalism combined with the generally positive connotation of liberalism in 1989 put the ELDR in the uncomfortable situation where a large number of parties that were (in their view) not liberals wanted a partnership. This probably slowed down the ELDR plans of systematic expansion eastwards considerably. Apart from the initial confusion, the general historical weakness of organised liberalism in Central and Eastern Europe also explains to some degree the difficulties for the liberal parties to grow into larger parties and this in turn reinforced the self-image of the ELDR as a family of smaller and more intellectual parties.
10. The Structural Perspective: Two Alternative Images

In the following chapter, the eastward expansion of the European party families will be analysed in a broader perspective. This perspective does not take into account the driving forces and specific decisions by specific actors. Instead it focuses on the process over time within the framework of this thesis. In the theoretical chapter, two opposing images of this process were presented. The realist image claims that the European party families were mainly interested in securing their dominant position also after the EU enlargements in 2004 and 2007. The alternative image focuses instead on the possible democratic contribution of the eastward party enlargement. As demonstrated in the theoretical chapter, each of these two views is based on certain theoretical assumptions of political parties and their dynamics. When it comes to the framework of this thesis, these separate theoretical assumptions lead to different interpretations of the eastward enlargement of the European party families.

I will now present how the empirical findings of this thesis may be interpreted according to these two alternative theoretical frameworks. Thereafter I will discuss to what degree they can be combined to understand the whole dynamic of this process.

10.1 West European neo-colonialism?

The main assumption in this image is that political parties are strategic actors that are mostly concerned about defending their own organisational survival rather than ideas. The main theoretical proposition for this assumption is the model of the cartel party proposed by Katz and Mair (1995). Here the dominant parties penetrate the state apparatus to secure control over their environment.692 The European party families are here seen as extreme expressions of the cartel party at the European level. By creating the European party organisation the national cartel parties ensure continued influence as political authority is transferred to the EU-level. The creation of the European party organisations can therefore be related to the historical institutionalism as they are expressions of path-dependence on the macro-level.

If we apply this theoretical approach on the eastward expansion of the European party families, the interpretation is the same. Thus, we expect them to act proactively and ensure that the emerging cleavages and party systems in Central and Eastern Europe do not differ too much from those in Western Europe. The main challenge for the European party families in

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692 Hereby they ensure financial gains without membership fees and they can also limit party competition by setting up thresholds for new parties.
this context is the fact that Central and Eastern Europe has a history that differs in many ways from that of Western Europe.\textsuperscript{693} This means that other cleavages than the traditional left-right divide were present, such as national and ethnic issues. Related to this image is an assumed unequal power-relation between the West European parties and the parties in Central and Eastern Europe. The general wish in most Central and Eastern European countries to become accepted as a partner and in the longer term be included in Western structures like NATO and the EU was exploited by the European party families to force the applicant parties to adapt. This can be seen against a generally critical approach represented by for example Engel di Mauro (2006) and Todorova (1997) that interpret the relation as an expression of neo-colonialism. The old east-west power-relations through the German and Austrian empires were now revived with the EU as the new hegemonic actor.\textsuperscript{694} The European party families that are the focus in this study can be seen as representatives of the EU in this neo-colonial approach.

In short, there are several factors to consider. Firstly, there is the assumption that the European parties acted proactively in order to control their environment, i.e. lock-in the most influential parties into their party family and ensure that they follow the formal and informal rules. In the greater perspective (if we look at all three party families) this can be seen as a defence of the traditional left-right spectrum and thus the dominance of the main party families. This means a defence of the cartel at the EU-party level. On the other hand, there are historical cleavages/divides in Central and Eastern Europe that differ from the classical West European structure. This spells the question: are the cleavages in Central and Eastern Europe compatible with those in the West? This question is central for the main European party families if they want to defend their privileged position. Thirdly we have another factor which may be the key to understanding the processes at work here: the power-relation between West and East in this context.

\textsuperscript{693} There were also (and are) significant country differences within Central and Eastern Europe when it comes to historical cleavages and divides. See chapter 3.

\textsuperscript{694} This asymmetric power-relation is often described as the EU-conditionality, i.e. the EU’s position to impose a number of conditions on the applicant countries in Central and Eastern Europe for their membership. Moreover, these conditions involved short time-tables which limited the autonomy of the applicant countries when it came to negotiating these conditions.
Some common conditions

There are some commonalities between the three party families in how the east-west power-relations were expressed. Here it must be underlined that we investigate relations between the European party families and the applicant parties.

First, it must be mentioned that the ambitious educational programmes arranged by each party family reflects a general unequal east-west power relation. Certainly the West European parties and foundations demonstrated certain solidarity by spending time and money on courses, seminars, and visits etcetera. According to the interviews they also tried to be as respectful as possible and not push the applicant parties too aggressively in specific issues. Yet even so this points to a clear power-relation. When it comes to the training and party capacity-building programmes, it is not only about knowledge transfer but also about power. In the words of Gary Craig, capacity-building is not a neutral technical process but about ‘power and ideology and how these are mediated through structure and process’. 695

Secondly, there were differences in the historical conditions for influencing the applicant parties. But at the same time all three party families had a good starting point for influencing their eastern partners. Adaptation in the case of the EPP- and ELDR-applicant parties was a relatively smooth process as the historical cleavages and divides in Central and Eastern Europe were not as deep and entrenched in civil society as in Western Europe. Moreover, most of these parties were newly created or recreated. The former communist parties on the other hand were highly sophisticated mass party organisations with strong networks that had been forced upon the society. Yet, as demonstrated in the empirical findings, the former communist parties were extraordinarily eager, almost desperate to be accepted as reformed parties by the European social democrats. Thus, adaptation for their part was also smooth, at least on the surface. Especially in the third phase, i.e. during the years before the EU-enlargement, the unequal power-relation became most visible. This mirrors how the driving forces of both sides (the European party families and the applicant parties) became increasingly characterised by the logic of consequences. This is most evi-

695 Craig (2007) p 354
dent in the case of the Christian democrats and the social democrats that could in some cases impose direct conditions for a partnership.\footnote{The most intriguing example is how the PES conditioned a ‘working relationship’ with the Romanian successor party PSD in 2000. The condition was that the party had to include other parties in government if they got a majority in the upcoming elections. Secondly they had to have a ‘proper minority policy’. Interview with Jan Marinus Wiersma, 17 February 2009. Although these were ‘expectations’ from the PES, I would say that it is a diplomatic term for conditions.}

Finally, it must be mentioned that the unequal power-relation was time-limited. As long as the partners in Central and Eastern Europe had not reached ‘observer status’, ‘affiliated member or ‘full member’, they were in a somewhat subordinated position. Yet, once they had reached a certain stage in the gradual steps towards full membership of the party family their status increased. The reason is partly psychological; it was an indicator that they were accepted by the older member parties, i.e. a certain stamp of approval. Secondly, it was/is extremely rare that a party with a full member status in a European party family has its status removed or downgraded.\footnote{The same logic applies for membership in the party group in the European Parliament. Once a party has become accepted as a member, it is very unusual that it is expelled.} Thus, the most clear representations of West European neo-colonialism (if the term is to be used) in the eastward expansion of the European party families was limited to the period before full membership of the applicant parties and eventually the EU-enlargement.

The long-term influence of the European party families – which had implications for the new member parties also after the EU-enlargement – is in my view more the result of the educational programmes for young politicians in phase two. Many of the new party officials in the new EU-member states (including the new MEPs) were involved in these programmes and were formed as politicians during that time. Many of them had in this sense their political career partly thanks to the contacts and know-how obtained in these courses and seminars. A certain gratitude and loyalty to the European party family is thus not too far-fetched even after the EU-enlargement.

**Diverging patterns of power-relations**

The clearest and most straightforward representation of a neo-colonial relation is in my view the social democratic party family. This should be seen against the historical background of rivalry between social democracy and communism throughout the Cold War. This in turn laid the founda-
tions for a genuine suspicion from the PES about the seriousness of the former communist parties in their declared will to change.

The social democratic educational programmes through the European Forum resemble a one-direction character of policy- and knowledge transfer. One example is the educational programme on welfare. This was implemented in the 1990s when neo-liberal ideas dominated in Europe. As pointed out in chapter six, the European Forum working group on welfare was quite straightforward in their message: social democratic parties in Central and Eastern Europe ‘need to learn’ that welfare states are superior not only morally but also more efficient than neo-liberal economies. The issue of gender equality (and to some degree the Roma-issue) is perhaps even more interesting as the attitude from the applicant parties was reluctant, to say the least. This is probably the most obvious example of West European neo-colonial behaviour, no matter how well-meaning. The former communist parties that desperately needed recognition simply had to accept (or at least refrain from arguing against) the West European conception of what it takes to be a good social democrat. This becomes somewhat ludicrous if we add the fact that gender equality was above all an issue among the Swedish social democrats, who had a dominating position in the European Forum.\(^{698}\) In this sense, it was not only about policy transfer but also ideology-transfer from a specific national party.

If we turn to the Christian democratic EPP, we can see another type of power-relation; more implicit and discreet. Open conflicts are hardly mentioned in the internal party documents and not even in the interviews.\(^{699}\) Yet the power-relation becomes obvious as the EPP and the EUCD arranged new membership criteria in order to specify the conditions for the applicant parties. The potential member parties simply had to adapt to these criteria if they wanted to be accepted. If situations came up with in-

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\(^{698}\) The first and second secretary generals of the European Forum (Bo Toresson and Conny Fredriksson) were Swedish, and they were quite influential in setting the agenda for the organisation in its first seven years. Moreover, the second chairman of the European Forum (Lena Hjelm-Wallén) was also Swedish. The focus on gender equality was also shared by the other Scandinavian social democrats and to some degree by the Dutch, German and Austrian parties, i.e. the leading participants in the European Forum.

\(^{699}\) The only possible example is the tension between the EPP/EUCD and the Kaczyński brothers within the Polish Christian democratic movement. The continuous attempts to monopolise the international relations was seen as inappropriate by the EPP, which eventually distanced itself from the Kaczyński-duo.
appropriate behaviour (for example nationalist/xenophobic statements) from certain leaders, the situation was mostly solved with discreet talks.\footnote{See for example in chapter 5.3 where a Slovak party leader had made xenophobic statements against the Hungarian minority.}

The most impressive representation of the east-west power-relation in the case of the EPP is in my view expressed by the vast educational programme that was arranged for the applicant parties. This entailed a number of courses, seminars and gatherings organised in Budapest first by the Christian Democratic Academy, later renamed the Robert Schumann Institute. This is perhaps one of the most outstanding examples of how a European party family acts proactively in order to control its environment. Organised primarily for younger Christian democrats within the applicant parties, these educational programmes over the years helped to form a new political elite of Christian democrats and conservatives in Central and Eastern Europe loyal to the EPP. Consequently, even if the power-relation was less outspoken in the EPP, it was clearly present and characterised the whole process of integrating the new parties. It must be mentioned however, that this power-relation was in most cases a kind of mutual understanding between the EPP and the applicant parties. For the applicant parties there was in most cases an openness and readiness to adapt and learn from the (usually) more experienced West European parties. For them, the most important thing was to be recognised by the EPP with all the legitimacy that entailed.

When it comes to the east-west power-relations in the case of ELDR there is something of a paradox. On the one hand, as shown in the previous chapter, the liberal ELDR is categorised as the party family which is least power-oriented. But on the other hand, it is the only party family which was accused of ‘political neo-colonialism’.\footnote{This was the case in the Czech Republic in 1992 when a small liberal party LDS accused the ELDR and above all the German FDP of ‘political neo-colonialism’.} This is in my view a consequence of the fact that many liberal parties in Central and Eastern Europe consisted of former dissidents. Moreover they were often small parties based on strong principles rather than power-aspirations. These two factors probably made them more sensitive to outside intervention.

Interestingly, the ELDR is the only party family where I have found a self-critical tone in the internal party documents. In a document from 1996, the ELDR reflects critically on its role as ‘idea-exporter’ to Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover it argues that ‘our own system’ is not perfect and that it should not only find ways for the western parties to help
their eastward partners but also the other way around. Nevertheless, even if the ELDR were aware of the potential unequal power-relations, it was in my view impossible to avoid them. Many of the new liberal parties in Central and Eastern Europe were small and inexperienced and had no earlier liberal tradition to fall back on. They were in this sense open not only for support but they were in a sense ‘born and raised’ with the help of the guidance of the ELDR and the LI. This meant that in some cases, the ELDR could have significant influence over the applicant parties.

Finally, something must be mentioned about the perspective of the parties in Central and Eastern Europe. To be recognised by an established party international and a European party family was of enormous significance in the early critical stage. According to Attila Ágh this recognition could be the difference between life and death for the new parties:

[T]he ECE parties can survive internationally and domestically only if they fit into the West European party systems, into the party internationals. (...) The Western parties provide informal channels for the practical operation of their ECE partners and make official declarations to protect their counterparts, also giving them moral and financial support in electoral campaigns.

This process ended up in what has been called ‘standard-parties’ and ‘non-standard parties’. The non-standard were those parties that were excluded from the main European party families. Against this background it is important to underline that the asymmetric east-west power-relation was almost unavoidable in the light of the historical context. The term ‘Europe’ (which was basically seen as Western Europe at the time) had such strong positive implications in Central and Eastern Europe throughout the 1990s, that a great deal of the power-relation was self-enforcing from both sides.

10.2 Performing democratic party functions?

An alternative view to the image of Western neo-colonialism is that the European party families have fulfilled important functions throughout the gradual process of integrating the new parties. The assumption here is that the party families have played a double role: firstly, prepare the EU-
political system for the new member states and secondly to contribute (in-
directly) to the democratisation process in Central and Eastern Europe
after 1989.

As spelled out in the theoretical section, the main assumption is that al-
though the cartel party has lost much of its earlier links to the civil society it
still fulfils important functions for the democratic machinery. Departing
from this assumption, I want to discuss whether the European party organ-
isations have fulfilled classical party functions in their quest to enlarge
eastwards after 1989 and thereby contributed indirectly to the democratic
consolidation process in Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, I want to
evaluate to what degree the European party families fulfilled certain func-
tions for their own specific purpose; i.e. to prepare the party family for the
future EU-enlargement. For this exercise I have departed from the classical
party functions model by V.O. Key developed by Dalton and Wattenberg
(2000). Here it is assumed that political parties fulfil important functions
in three arenas: parties in the electorate, parties as organisations and par-
ties in government. This model in turn was adapted to fit this study.

The resulting framework was that the European party families – in their
eastward enlargement process – may have fulfilled direct functions and
indirect functions (see table 2.3). The direct functions are related to ‘parties
as organisations’. The main assumption here is that the activities of the
European party families in the process of eastward enlargement were in
preparation for the upcoming EU-enlargement. Thereby it is assumed that
they fulfilled two traditional party functions: (i) recruiting political leader-
ship and seeking governmental office, and (ii) training political elites. The
indirect functions are on the other hand connected to ‘parties in the elector-
ate’ and here it is assumed that the European party families have con-
tributed to two distinct functions: simplifying choices for voters and gener-
ating symbols of identification and loyalty. However, as will be demon-
strated below, these functions took other forms in this process than in the
traditional national context.

Direct functions: preparing the party family for expansion
The point of departure in this section is that the political parties at the EU-
level play an important role for both the legitimacy and functioning of the
EU-political system. As mentioned in chapter 2, the European party fami-

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706 As described in chapter 2, Peter Mair has pointed out that the modern political
party may have weakened its position ‘on the ground’ but has instead strengthened
its position when it comes to his two other pillars: ‘parties as organisations’ and
‘parties in government’.
lies can be seen as networks, which link together the national level to the European level, as well as different EU-institutions into a common whole, thereby turning the complicated EU-system into a political arena. Thus, they have a certain ‘democratising effect’ on the EU-system, even if it is limited.

In this perspective, the prospective eastward enlargement of the EU, with a range of newly democratised member states with other historical experiences involved certain risks when it comes to the stability of the party system at the EU-level. This issue is obviously related to the cartel party discussion where it is assumed that the European party families acted proactively to ensure that the new parties and party systems were not too incompatible with those within the existing EU-member states. Yet departing from the more optimistic image, the same chain of events can be seen as important functions performed by the European party families: recruitment and education of the new political elites in the applicant countries. This ensured a certain stability and continuity of the EU-party system also after an enlargement.

**Recruit political leadership and seek governmental office**

The function ‘recruit political leadership and seek governmental office’, is basically referred to as the important role of parties in the recruitment and selection of prospective political elites. In a traditional national setting, the youth-sections often have the most active role here. It is mostly within the youth-sections that the future party candidates for governmental office are identified.  

However, when it comes to the post-1989 European context the main task of recruitment was designated to the European level party organisation. Certainly, there was a network of sub-units that were active in the process, the group in the European Parliament, the national member parties, the foundations etc. but the European-level party organisation had a certain coordinating role in each party family. This was done in different ways by the three party families included in this study. Within the Christian democrats and the conservatives, the main organ for recruiting future member parties was the EUCD and EDU.  

The social democratic PES formed a new organisation for this specific purpose: the European Fo-

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708 Although the EUCD and the EDU belonged to two distinct party families, there was a certain sense of implicit understanding between the two. As described in chapter 5, the two finally merged in the early 2000s.
The main strategy within the liberal ELDR was to gather the international secretaries from each national member party into a working group led by an East-West coordinator.

Consequently, throughout this process of enlarging the European party families eastwards, they fulfilled at the same time an important function of ‘recruiting new political leadership’ to the existing party system at the European level. Moreover, this recruitment involved a certain competition between the three party families. A general trait can be found among all three party families: they all strived for representation in all countries in a future enlarged EU. This was to some degree about securing influence in the European Parliament, but above all it was a question of legitimacy. A European party family with member parties from only some countries can obviously not claim to represent ‘Europeans’ in the same way as a party family which covers all or almost all member states. Another trait, mainly found in the EPP and the PES, was the goal of having at least one big member party from each country in Central and Eastern Europe. This can be seen against the background that the European party families function as coordinating structures for pursuing the preferred policies at the EU-level as a whole. Apart from the party group in the EP, this also involves the European Council, the Council of Ministers and the European Commission. For influence in these institutions, the European party families need member parties in government and thus the competitive situation between EPP and PES in the third phase.

Train political elites
This function is generally connected to the importance of party organisations as a training-ground for prospective political elites. This does not only involve practical skills in terms of political know-how and campaigning expertise. It is also viewed as a socialisation and learning process about democratic norms and the main ideological base of the party. Over time, this process of socialisation is also seen as an important base for party loyalty and thus also for the general stability of the party system.

Within the context of the EU-enlargement, this function became a central task for the European party families. Through ambitious educational programmes, they could partly evaluate the applicant parties and partly influence them. The Christian democratic EPP and EUCD was clearly the

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709 As described in chapter 6, this was not the only reason for creating the European Forum. There were also strategic reasons. In order to initiate co-operation with the former communists, it was easier to use more informal channels of communication like the European Forum.
most ambitious party family with the establishment of the Christian Democratic Academy in Budapest already in 1991. This was transformed into the Robert Schuman Institute in 1995 due to formal reasons, but the ambitious educational programme continued. The topics of the courses and seminars offered at these two institutes had several themes but in short they covered three areas: broad knowledge of constitutional and political science matters, know-how in the role as a politician and the basic ideas of Christian democracy.\footnote{See von der Bank & Szabó, eds. (2006) p 43} The various courses and seminars arranged by the social democratic PES seemed to have roughly the same structure of themes but it was less institutionalised. It was mainly the European Forum that coordinated the training programmes and this was a loose network-like organisation. The educational programme offered by the ELDR was clearly less ambitious. However, much thanks to the foundations (especially the German Friedrich Naumann Foundation) the liberal parties in Central and Eastern Europe were offered a relatively robust and continuous set of courses and seminars about democratic institutions and liberalism.\footnote{Interview with Christian Busoi, 1 July 2008. Also the European Liberal Study Centre (Centre d’Études liberal, Democratique et Réformateur Européen) in Brussels became an important base for organising courses and seminars.} The importance of the foundations in the educative part was central for all three party families. It was the foundations that in most cases arranged the seminars or courses on the ground.

However the formal training programmes were only one part of the process of socialisation and learning. The second part began as soon as the applicant parties became organisationally attached to the party families and gradually came nearer full status as equal members. By being part of the European party family as observers or similar the applicant parties could attend meetings with the right to speak but not to vote. These were typical examples of socialisation and learning processes. The participants from the applicant parties had now the opportunity to follow the formal and informal procedures of the party family from within and at the same time build up a network of contacts. Similarly, this was a chance for the existing member parties to get to know the applicant parties and evaluate them in a more accurate way.

The detailed development of this process was rather special for each party family. The liberal party family adopted the observer and affiliate status already in 1991. This meant that the applicant parties had the right to attend ELDR party meetings but without any voting rights. Moreover it opened up the organisation for full membership for parties from non-EU
countries as early as 1995. This means that many liberal parties in Central and Eastern Europe had already been ELDR members for several years at the time of the EU-enlargement. In the case of the EPP, the parallel organisation EUCD served this purpose to some degree. The main bulk of the applicant parties became members of the EUCD relatively early and this involved a great number of meetings and congresses etcetera which constituted an important arena for socialisation.\textsuperscript{712} For the PES, this process began somewhat later due to the problematic situation in the early phase. As late as 1995, the first formal stage of incorporation took place when the PES accepted a group of applicant parties as observers. This group was gradually enlarged with new parties and in around 2000 most applicant parties were observers or associate members. In parallel, the European Forum accepted a group of parties into its steering board in 1998-1999. This smaller and less formal setting was probably even more important as a socialisation arena as they were accepted as full members of the board.\textsuperscript{713}

\textit{Training and recruiting new political elites: two overlapping functions}

The situation within the EU-institutions after the 2004 and 2007 enlargements was quite stable. The concerns about a problematic situation due to east/west historical and cultural differences and democratic inexperience turned out to be unwarranted. Instead the situation in the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council of Ministers was surprisingly stable and harmonious. The main reason for this is in my view the ambitious engagement of the European party families in integrating the new parties gradually through a long-term process of socialisation and learning. Throughout this process the European party families performed both a recruiting and educating function.

These two functions were not performed in two isolated processes. On the contrary, they were closely interrelated: the European party families wanted to recruit new members from the region but a condition was that the prospective partners were stable and shared more or less the same values as the mother organisation. The fact that the two functions were interconnected is illustrated by the strong focus on younger politicians in the applicant parties. As young politicians, they were seen as ‘less shaped’ by

\textsuperscript{712} For many politicians in Central and Eastern Europe, the EUCD offered an arena for building close friendships since it was not as formal as the EPP. See conversation between Lojze Peterle and Wim van Velzen 12 September 1996, reproduced in EPP/EUCD Yearbook 1996.

\textsuperscript{713} This began with the Czech and Hungarian parties, which were seen as the ‘best cases’ by the European Forum and the PES. See chapter 6.3.
the old totalitarian system and were therefore more preferable to recruit. Furthermore, younger politicians are obviously more open-minded and easier to influence when it comes to basic political values and behaviour. This is certainly related to the unequal power relation described earlier. Likewise, the driving forces were to a large degree purely egoistic (i.e. maximise influence), at least in the Christian democratic and social democratic party families in the third phase. Yet even so, the broad implications are in my view positive. The EU-enlargement went more smoothly than many expected and in my view the European party families came out stronger after this success. In short: the relative success of the great EU-enlargements eastwards in 2004 and 2007 was to a great degree enabled by the efforts from the European party families.

Indirect functions: building party stability and excluding extremism

As with all new democracies, the post-1989 situation in Central and Eastern Europe was chaotic and from time to time fragile. In these contexts, stable political parties that refrain from extremist positions and actions are seen as vital for a successful democratic consolidation process.\(^{714}\)

As described in the historical chapter, the main challenge in Central and Eastern Europe was the high degree of fluidity among the parties and party systems.\(^{715}\) This means that there was both a high level of party instability and party fragmentation and a high level of voter volatility. This challenge was to a great extent related to the fact that social cleavages were relatively weak in post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe. This in turn was connected to a relatively weak left-right dimension in party politics and possibilities for nationalist and ethnic issues to win ground. Moreover, this is also connected to the historical tradition in the region of nationalism and strongman-rule. In short: the democratic challenges that were related to political parties consisted of two interrelated factors: the fluid character of the parties and party systems and secondly the weak left-right dimension combined with tendencies of nationalism and xenophobia in certain parties.

So in what way may the West European party families have contributed in dealing with these challenges? If we review the possible party functions that are included, these two match each of the two challenges mentioned above. The function ‘simplify choices for voters’ is clearly related to the fluid party landscape in Central and Eastern Europe. For the European party families, this was mainly a challenge of knowing what parties they would consider as prospective partners. The party function ‘generate sym-

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\(^{714}\) See Diamond (1999) p 65-68.
\(^{715}\) For a further elaboration on this issue, see chapter 3.6.
bols of identification and loyalty’ is connected to the assumption that the European party families have served as role models for the parties in Central and Eastern Europe and as such isolated the more extreme political movements. Now follows one section each on how the European party families may have played a role in the above-mentioned challenges.

**Simplify choices for voters: encouraging party stability**

There were several reasons why the European party families preferred more stable party organisations among their partners. The first was simply that it was too complicated for the European party to choose partner if there were repeated party splits and mergers. The second was that it was seen as too complicated to include too many parties from one country into the European party organisation. Thirdly, as mentioned in the ‘realist image’ it was in the interest of the European party families to have stable and strong partners in the region to stand strong also after an EU-enlargement.

The challenge of a fluid party landscape was mainly a challenge for the Christian democratic EPP and the liberal ELDR. Compared to the former communist parties, the Christian democratic and liberal parties in Central and Eastern Europe were all more or less inexperienced in the early stage. This inexperience was seen as a problematic in itself as it was feared that the former communist party would use its organisational skills and networks and stay in power. The first phase was therefore characterised by practical support to the new, inexperienced and also poor parties. The Christian democrats contributed through their member parties and foundations with symbolic equipment assistance such as typewriters and copying machines. It was the same with the liberal party family but it seems that the practical-equipment support from the ELDR was minimal due to its smaller organisation and smaller member parties. The main contribution however, was in the form of recognition and official support for a party in the first election campaigns.

Apart from this early support, I would say that the main contribution of the European party families in this context is the educational programmes that they set up for their applicant parties. These programmes consisted of a number of courses and seminars where a recurrent theme was the importance of organisational stability. Moreover, the fact that these educational programmes went on (and to some degree still go on) over the years and also put special focus on the younger politicians, indicates that a certain process of learning took place in the longer term. In parallel with these educational programmes, there were recurrent occasions when representatives from the European party family directly encouraged their applicant parties to unite. If that was not possible they at least attempted to hinder
further party splits. As mentioned, the EPP and ELDR are of main interest here, as the instability was worst among the centre-right parties. For the PES, this was mainly a concern in the countries where the former communist party was weak or non-existent, like in the Baltic States, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia.

The most visible example of how a European party family attempted to enforce organisational stability is the new membership criteria put up by the Christian democrats. Firstly the EUCD had its traditional demand for a ‘national equipe’ if there were several potential member parties from the same countries. This was seen as an umbrella structure for the different parties’ joint membership in the EUCD. However, this rule was not used sharply but more as a recommendation. In 1996 the EPP put forward new relatively tough membership criteria mainly to control the inclusion of new parties from Central and Eastern Europe. The new criteria were among other things ‘at least 10 per cent in the last parliamentary elections’ and ‘no party splits in the last two years’. As mentioned in chapter 5 and 9, these criteria were partly an ingredient to calm down the worried EPP-parties and should not be taken too seriously. Yet these criteria had in my view an indirect psychological effect on the applicant parties. It was clear that the EPP were prepared to block out parties on the grounds of organisational weakness or instability. The criteria of no party splits in the last two years had surely an effect, as each party had to wait two years after a split until it was accepted. It is likely that it refrained from splitting up during those two years at least.

In short: the European party families encouraged organisational stability among its applicant parties throughout the whole process to full membership. In the early phase it was much about practical assistance and in the longer term it was mainly about education and learning processes. In the case of the EPP, the encouragement also included new criteria for organisational stability.

Generate symbols of identification and loyalty
This function is connected to the significance of political parties for the long-term stability of democracy. The basic assumption is that voters need a political anchor which they can rely on and be loyal to. Moreover, the idea is that long-term loyalty to a political party is a certain shield against

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716 The demand for a national ‘equipe’ had for some time been unpopular within the EUCD. It was abolished some years after 1990 and not used sharply upon the parties in Central and Eastern Europe. Interview with Thomas Jansen, 14 June 2007.
extremist movements and populist/demagogic leaders. In the context of this thesis, the perspective is moved upwards to the elite-level. Consequently, the European party families are here assumed to have constituted stable role models, which the partner parties in Central and Eastern Europe can lean on and trust. The logical consequence of this is the isolation of parties or individuals with nationalist/extremist and/or authoritarian attitudes and behaviour. Thus what is assumed here is a direct function at the elite-level (being a role model) and an indirect function by fostering the future member parties to become stable ‘symbols of identification and loyalty’.

All three party families invested considerable time and energy in a range of activities that can be summarised as ‘encouraging democratic values’. In the early stage though, their main contribution was simply to distance themselves from all tendencies of extremism. A lack of official recognition from the European party families sent a signal that the party was not to be seen as a legitimate and serious actor. This was mainly an issue for the Christian democratic EPP/EUCD and the liberal ELDR. For the ELDR, this was rather non-problematic, and it rejected these kinds of parties immediately. For the EPP and its sub organisation the EUCD, the issue was more delicate as it was clearly more pragmatic than the liberal party family. Nevertheless, the most extreme cases of nationalism/populism xenophobia were clearly dealt with. When it came to the PES, the early phase was not about isolating parties with extremist views but instead of isolating the former communist parties. No matter if some of them had already reformed themselves into social democratic parties, the signal from the PES was quite clear: they would not easily include the former communist parties with their authoritarian heritage. They would have to prove themselves first. In short, the European party families had a kind of ‘gate-keeping’ function against political extremes. This gate-keeping function continued throughout the whole process but was probably most crucial in the early phase.

The most impressive work from all three European party families to encourage democratic values was expressed through their educational programmes. All three had a clear line within these programmes with courses

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717 The Smallholders’ Party from Hungary lost its membership in the EUCD partly due to the nationalist and populist style of its new leader. Another example is when the party leader for the Slovak Christian Democratic Movement had made xenophobic statements against the Hungarian minority. The EPP acted quickly but discreetly and had ‘discussions’ with the party leader about his behaviour. See chapter 5.3.

718 In some cases, the PES had to keep a watchful eye on member parties with nationalist/populist tendencies. The Slovak party Smer was in fact suspended from the PES when they entered into a coalition with a nationalist party.
and seminars that brought up issues about democratic institutions, human rights and above all minority rights. When it came to the EPP, this was systematised and institutionalised in the Christian Democrat Academy in Budapest. The PES used its parallel organisation the European Forum which organised a number of courses and seminars over the years. The educational programme of the ELDR was not as institutionalised as those of the social democrats and above all not like the well-organised EPP. Yet they arranged a number of seminars and courses, especially through their foundations. These educational programmes had a potential double effect. Firstly, they were informative and simply taught the basics of the democratic rules of the game and democratic institutions. Secondly, they had a certain fostering effect. As one Romanian respondent put it, ‘democracy is a learning process that the post-communist countries must go through’ and this applies also to the political parties. The educational programmes were also a kind of filter, where certain authoritarian attitudes or behaviour could be detected and dealt with. The response from the European party families were either straightforward criticism or more diplomatic reprimands. But often there was a grey zone where the West European parties had to be quite flexible in how to deal with the authoritarian past.

If we look at the three different party families the general pattern is the same: educational programmes which in several ways encourage democratic values and with a certain focus on younger politicians. However, there are some differences that should be mentioned. The Christian democratic EPP had the hardest time when it came to nationalism and xenophobia. When nationalism became an increasing problem in Central and Eastern Europe around 1992-1993, the EPP and EUCD faced some difficult decisions as there were nationalist and populist tendencies in some of their potential partners. Actions were always taken in the form of resolutions, letters or meetings. Yet, as mentioned in section 10.1, the EPP seems to have handled these challenges rather discreetly compared to the social democrats and the liberals. This is probably related to the pragmatic party

719 Interview with Laszlo Tökes, 2 December 2008.

720 One of the most intriguing examples of the creativity of the West European parties was how the social democratic European Forum handled the ‘culture of silence’ within the former communist parties. The European Forum arranger made sure that one person from Western Europe was present at the Forum lecture. This person then started to raise critical questions during and after the lecture. This in turn encouraged the others to follow suit and engage in critical discussions. This was brought up in the interview with Bo Toresson, former secretary general for the European Forum.
culture within the EPP but certainly its own cultural-conservative back-
ground may have contributed to a more forgiving attitude to moderate 
nationalism than among the liberals and the social democrats.

When it came to the social democratic PES, they invested heavily in fostering 
democratic values among the former communist parties. There was a 
genuine hesitation towards the seriousness of the former communist parties 
in their will to change. This probably explains the amount of energy that the 
PES – through the European Forum – invested in fostering democratic values 
among these parties. The specific focus of the PES in this project differed 
somewhat from that of the EPP and ELDR. Firstly, they put much focus on 
internal party democracy. This was not only about education but also about 
visiting the party headquarters, meeting the party leadership and scrutinise 
the party statutes. 721 Secondly, the discrimination of the Roma people in 
some countries seems to have been of much greater concern for the PES than 
for the EPP and ELDR. The European Forum arranged seminars and confer-
ences on the issue and also went out to visit Roma villages. The main differ-
ence between the PES and the two other party families is its strong focus on 
gender equality as a part of the educational project of the applicant parties. 
As mentioned in the previous section, the attitude of the parties in Central 
and Eastern Europe was rather reluctant to both the Roma- and gender-
equality projects. On the other hand, this may be an indication that these 
two projects were most necessary as they touched upon issues with deep 
historically entrenched attitudes.

The efforts to encourage democratic values through education and learn-
ing in the ELDR were less institutionalised than both the EPP and the PES. 
Yet, as the party family which had/has the strongest focus on human rights 
and minority rights it most likely had a pre-emptive effect on nationalist or 
xenophobic tendencies within its potential member parties. 722 Nevertheless, 
the ELDR had a relatively strong programme of activities through its at-
tached foundations. Especially the German Friedrich Naumann Founda-
tion, with its permanent presence in each country, contributed to certain 
continuity with recurrent summer courses, winter courses and seminars 
etcetera. Apart from this, it is my impression that the liberals also played a 
role as a ‘watch-dog’ on the EPP, sometimes criticising it for harbouring

721 These visits were according to several European Forum respondents an effective 
way to get an impression of the internal party organisational culture. See interviews 
with for example Lena Hjelm-Wallén and Conny Fredriksson.

722 This is perhaps even more important within the liberal party family as most of 
the potential member parties were quite small and therefore more sensitive to influence 
from charismatic individuals.
parties with nationalist/populist tendencies. In this way, the ELDR may have had a double contribution: ensuring that its potential member parties respected democracy and human rights, and a potential restraining effect on the EPP and its applicant parties.

Democratic influence fulfilled?
The main assumption in this section is that the European party families may have contributed to the democratic consolidation process in Central and Eastern Europe. This influence is assumed to have taken place indirectly through influences from the European party families on the potential member parties. By imposing organisational stability and democratic values on the potential member parties in Central and Eastern Europe, the European party families have in my view contributed to improving two classical party functions: ‘simplification of the party landscape’ and ‘generating symbols for identification and loyalty’.

However, it is impossible to evaluate the degree of influence of the European party families (and their sub-networks) without engaging in speculation. Yet a contra-factual thought-experiment may be appropriate here. If we imagine that there were no European parties at all and that potential contacts with Western parties were ad-hoc and unsystematic, what would be the difference compared with the real history? I am quite convinced that the parties in Central and Eastern Europe would have been less stable and more apt to have nationalist or xenophobic tendencies. The mere fact that the European party families existed as role models and that they were future potential homes for the new inexperienced parties surely had a certain ‘structuring effect’ on the emerging party systems in Central and Eastern Europe.

Finally, in the light of the empirical findings, it is obvious that the table used as a framework for party functions needs to be revised in the context

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723 One example is when the EPP-chairman Wilfried Martens spoke to an anti-government protest crowd in Budapest in 2006. The ELDR and the Hungarian Free Democrats criticised Martens for being naive and unaware of the fact that several flags in the crowd symbolised the old Hungarian fascist movement. Also the PES criticised the EPP-chairman. Interview with Matyas Eörsi, 16 July 2008.

724 In this context ‘democratic values’ basically means a fundamental respect for the basic democratic rules of the game and for human rights including minority rights.

725 There are several parallel explanations for the gradual stabilisation of the parties and party systems in Central and Eastern Europe. One example is the fact that each election sorted out weaker parties as they ended up without any votes. The first elections were critical in this manner and caused a partial stabilisation, or an ‘early freezing’ of the party systems. See Àgh (1998) p 109-110.
of democratisation. The function ‘train political elites’ refers basically to the traditional function of political parties to be a forum for learning and socialisation for the prospective political elites. However, in the framework of this thesis it is clearly more related to the European party families’ potential for influencing the applicant parties in the ways demonstrated above. Consequently, the function ‘educating political elites’ has both an indirect and direct effect in this study.

10.3 Evaluation of the two images
In this chapter I set out to present two alternative images of the eastward enlargement of the European party families. The first is a realist image that depicts the enlargement as a strategy of the West European parties to control their environment. This in turn may even suggest a certain Western neo-colonialism in their behaviour towards the potential member parties. The second image is clearly more positive. It frames the European party families as important channels for democratic contribution in the enlargement process. This could be seen partly in their role of preparing the party families for the enlargement and partly for indirectly contributing to the democratic consolidation processes in Central and Eastern Europe. The question is then which one of these images constitutes the most correct or fair interpretation of this process.

Before I attempt to deal with this question, something should be said about the relation between these two images. We can start with a brief overview of the general context. After the fall of the communist regimes in 1991, and especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, there was a certain sense of apolitical and ideological vacuum in Central and Eastern Europe. After more than forty years of communist dictatorship and Soviet (Russian) domination there was suddenly nothing to hold on to. The EU stepped in and filled this vacuum, partly in order to secure stability in the region and partly to encourage democratic rule in Central and Eastern Europe. Already at this general point, we can illuminate a certain ambiguity in the driving forces behind the EU’s strategies towards Central and Eastern Europe. On the one hand there was a genuine idealistic atmosphere in spreading democratic values and welcoming the countries, which were formerly under the shadow of the Soviet empire, into the ‘European family’. On the other hand there were obvious incentives behind the goals of the EU in relation to Central and Eastern Europe which were clearly of a more egoistic character. This was mainly about taking a step eastwards geo-politically at the expense of Russia and moreover about the economic possibilities of extending the EU-market eastwards.
Throughout this thesis, the same ambiguity has been discerned among the European party families, but with the difference that it has taken place in and between political parties and this in turn means that potential conflicts are not possible to hide in diplomatic language to the same extent. Even if the European party families are loose organisations, a certain commitment to the party’s basic values is a condition for inclusion. Thus, in this chapter I have demonstrated how the European party families acted pre-emptively in order to ensure that the potential member parties adapted according to their wishes.\textsuperscript{726} This can certainly mirror the cartel party model as the West European parties acted pre-emptively in order to ensure that the emerging party systems in Central and Eastern Europe did not differ too much from those in Western Europe in the event of an EU-enlargement. This would otherwise threaten the existing stability (i.e. power structures) in the current European party system. Departing from the historical aspect where Central and Eastern Europe has been viewed as ‘the other’ to a varying extent, we can also interpret this process as Western neo-colonialism. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the historical aspect must be included in order to understand the underlying dynamics. Throughout modern history, Central and Eastern Europe has been depicted as ‘the other’ in contrast to the West European self-image as enlightened, rational and modern.\textsuperscript{727} This structural inequality is furthermore reinforced by the historical legacy of German and Austrian domination in the region.

So, why do I plunge so deeply into these basic conditions for the unequal east-west power-relation instead of trying to answer the question set out above? The reason is that the political context and the historical conditions that surround this eastward enlargement of the European party families make it very difficult to separate the two images from each other as they are intertwined. In order for the European party families to successfully fulfil the important democratic functions described earlier in this chapter, the condition was that the applicant parties were open, needed role-models and were prepared to adapt. Even if this sounds simple, it involved a complicated dynamic of conditionality where, in the end, the applicant parties had to adapt if they wanted to be accepted. This could be seen partly in the

\textsuperscript{726} As mentioned earlier in this chapter this concerned both formal qualities such as organisational stability and informal qualities such as following the expected code of behaviour, or in other words the ‘logic of appropriateness’.

\textsuperscript{727} This tendency is related to Edward Said’s orientalism, see Said (1978). It should be mentioned that there were clear differences depending on the country in Central and Eastern Europe. The tendency among the respondents was generally to describe the Czech Republic as more ‘Western’ than the other countries. To some extent the same can be said about Poland, Hungary, Slovenia and the Baltic states.
socialisation and learning processes that surrounded the educational programmes and partly in the more straightforward demands put forward by the European party families. In short: without the historical legacy of east-west inequality and the post-1989 political-ideological vacuum in Central and Eastern Europe (i.e. the structural conditions that enabled an unequal power-relation) the democratic contribution of the European party families would have failed or at least been weaker.

Thus, the main conclusion is that neither of the two images can solely be appointed to represent a correct and fair interpretation of the process. They must be seen together in order to function. This conclusion was partly formulated earlier in this chapter and it deserves to be repeated: the eastward enlargement of the European parties involved an unequal east-west power-relation and this was unavoidable considering the context and historical legacy combined with the intentions of the West European parties to influence the applicant parties in certain ways.

Having said this, I do not want to fall into the deterministic trap regarding the degree of interconnectedness between these two images. After all, the focus of this thesis is a process and throughout this process – from identification to incorporation – the dynamics changed somewhat. Once the applicant parties were accepted as observers and associate members, they were increasingly accepted as equals. As observers they took part in meetings and congresses and became personally acquainted with the ordinary participants. As a former vice President of the PES said: ‘They moved from one side of the table to the other’ and thereby achieved a new status within the party family. Thus, throughout this process I would argue that even though the power-relation has been present, the political parties of Central and Eastern Europe have been included as full equal members of the European party families. This is an interesting case of how historical prejudices can be overcome through more knowledge and inter-personal communication. In my view, the European party families, which to a large degree consist of different networks of individual politicians, have made an important contribution in this sense.

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728 Interview with Lena Hjelm-Wallén, 9 April 2009.
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**Appendix A: Questionnaire for West European party families.**

1. Can you describe in which way you have been involved in the process of establishing contacts with and eventually integrating sister parties in Central and Eastern Europe into the European party family?

2. In your experience, how did your party family, including the foundations adapt to the new political situation in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989?

   Follow-up question: What actors in Western Europe were active in the process of establishing contacts? (the parties on national level, the foundations, the EP-group, the party international, the European party federation?) How was it coordinated?

3. How did you handle the dilemma of choosing partner party in each country? Did potential member parties in the region differ from the typical Western style due to the historical heritage? Country specific experiences are welcome here.

4. What were the main differences between countries in the region when it comes to the character of your partner parties?

5. What kind of support did your sister parties ask for and what support could you provide? Country specific experiences are welcome here.

6. Did your party family attempt to influence the partner-parties in the region? For example when it comes to party programme, party organisation etc?

7. Did you have any problems with specific partner parties? How did you deal with it?

8. What were in your view the main phases in the process of integrating the Central and Eastern European parties into your party family?
Appendix B: Questionnaire for parties from Central and Eastern Europe.

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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Can you describe your political background?</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Can you describe in which way you have been involved in your party's relations with international party networks including the (ELDR/EPP/PES)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Could the international links be of any substantial help at any time for your party? If yes, who were the main actors to be of assistance?</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Did your party have any strategy with the link to the European party or to the party international? For example access to strategic international contacts. Could it be used in national politics?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Was your party at the national level any time pressured to change/adapt its organisation or ideology or style in any way by the (ELDR/EPP/PES) or by the party international?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Did your party learn anything of importance from the (ELDR/EPP/PES), the party international and their linked parties and organisations in the early stage?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>After the EU-membership in 2004, have you been able to use the link to the European party in another way? For example to move domestic conflicts to the EP-level.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Is (Christian democracy/liberalism/social democracy) in your view different in your home country if you compare with the older EU-members? For example due to your historical experiences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Do you feel closer to the parties within (the ELDR/EPP/PES) which are from countries with a communist past?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Do you feel at home in the (ELDR/EPP/PES)? Has your party ever discussed any other alternative?</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>In your experience, what were/are the main advantages of being a part of (ELDR/EPP/PES)?</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Finally, can you recommend any other persons that I can interview about this?</td>
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