

The Democracy Promotion Policies of Central and Eastern European States



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Introduction¹

The European Union's new member states (NMS) from Central and Eastern Europe have quickly made their mark on European foreign policy. In particular, they have gained some reputation as active supporters of democracy promotion. This paper outlines the factors that account for the NMS' (still relatively idealistic) attachment to democracy support. It also attempts to elaborate the differences among the NMS, which are routinely understated. Due to their geographical location, the NMS² have a shared interest in the promotion of a strong EU "Eastern policy". The perception that all Central and Eastern European EU members share the same goals and interests towards Eastern neighbours and Russia is widespread in many Western European states. However, the differences between the NMS are significant and each has its own vision of the role it should play inside and outside the EU. For example, Poland aspires to become a regional power, while Estonia strives for internal development first. By taking a closer look at the strategies, priorities and interests of the different Central and Eastern European states the paper illustrates that the new EU members are far from being a homogeneous group. The common experience of recent democratic transition has not translated into identical positions on external democracy promotion.

Explaining support for democracy promotion

Other researchers have rightly observed that democracy building, especially in the Eastern neighbourhood, is a common mission for all NMS. While one should not overstate the vigour of their democracy support, many of the NMS do have notably idealistic attitudes towards the normative importance of democracy promotion. At the same time, this idealism is closely interconnected with pragmatic and rational interests. In other words, there are various factors at play when we talk about adherence to democracy and its promotion in the NMS. Democracy promotion is becoming institutionalised and could become a consistent and long-lasting element of the NMS' foreign policy.³ Though it would be too superficial to classify all the NMS as equally fervent democracy promoters, there are some common factors which explain NMS perspectives in this respect. They include historical experience, identity building, pragmatic/geopolitical reasoning, external influences and EU-related issues.

Historical experience. Almost all of the NMS have a shared historical experience upon which their perception of democracy and its promotion is based. The Soviet experience provided these countries with the possibility of comparing life in authoritarian and democratic systems. Therefore, the need to democratise neighbouring countries in order to have a "Ring of Friends" around Europe is much better understood in

¹ The author wishes to thank two anonymous referees for comments on an earlier version of the paper.

² In this article, the definition "the new members" applies to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria. Cyprus and Malta are excluded from the analysis because of their different geographical and historical positions.

³ For overviews, see Raik, Kristi and Gromadzki, Grzegorz. "Between activeness and influence: The contribution of new member states to EU policies towards the Eastern neighbours", Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Stefan Batory Foundation, Open Estonia Foundation, Tallinn, Estonia, September, 2006; Král, David. "Perspectives of the role of CEE countries in shaping the EU policy towards new Eastern neighbours", EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, Prague, 2005; and Pääbo, Heiko. "Changing roles – Baltic States relations with Russia", University of Tartu, Department of Political Science/EuroCollege.

the new than in the old EU states. On the one hand, ongoing memories of Soviet suppression has prompted the NMS to take actions to prevent “the repeating of history” – democracy promotion is seen as an important measure to achieve this goal. On the other hand, in less than a decade all the NMS have successfully undergone processes of very complex transformation⁴ and reform implementation. Many of those individuals who implemented reforms, who therefore have invaluable experience, are still very active in the politics of these countries and strongly contribute to debates about foreign policy priorities and directions.

Equally significant is the fact that many of the EU’s new neighbours openly declare their intention to follow the reform paths followed by EU newcomers. They want to absorb and learn from their transformational experience. Taken together, the combination of the history of authoritarian oppression, successful transition to democracy and the desire of neighbours to “import” the experience of transformation, forms sufficient grounds for democracy promotion to become an important pillar in the foreign policies of new member states.

The identity question. Another important factor, which contributes to the importance of democracy promotion in the new member states’ foreign policy agendas is the need to anchor their European identity. According to the social-constructivist theoretical approach, the process of “identity construction” drives a state’s behaviour towards other actors: how you are perceived by others is of crucial importance for the general understanding of “who you are”. As all the NMS have been going through identity transformation processes from “post-communist countries” to “European states”, today they have an urgent need to strengthen this “European” identity. Offering democracy-building experiences to others countries which are not so advanced in this respect is the easiest way to create

⁴ T. Kuzio refers to “triple transition” – to democracy, market economy and stateness. See Kuzio, Taras., “Transition in Post-Communist States: Triple or Quadruple?”, *Politics*, vol.21 no.3, September 2001, pp.169-178.

and enhance such an identity. Democracy promotion is therefore seen as the appropriate way to project the “Europeanness” of the NMS into the international arena⁵. At the same time, a turn eastwards in the NMS’ foreign policies represents their willingness to fill in a so-called “action gap”, which emerged in their policies after their accessions to NATO and the EU. Before attaining membership of the EU and NATO, the bulk of the NMS foreign policy efforts were directed westwards, ie: they were working hard to achieve membership of these organisations. After the accession, the need for new external activities emerged and democracy promotion offered a means to fill this “action gap”.

Geopolitical reasoning. Traditional realist and geopolitical reasoning for democracy promotion activities is closely related to the Russian factor. In terms of both history and identity, Russia has always been one of the main players in Central and Eastern Europe. Its influence on the history of almost all the new members has been felt for centuries. Since memories of relations with Russia (and its predecessor, the Soviet Union) are mainly negative⁶, Russia is usually perceived as a threat to security and well-being.

Moscow’s own actions and rhetoric (embargoes on imports of Polish meat, the “bronze statue” incident with Estonia etc.) are hardly designed to soften such attitudes. Consequently, a strategic partnership with Russia, pursued by the old EU members, is perceived with skepticism in “New Europe”, which fears the restoration of the Russian sphere of influence in Central and Eastern Europe. The countries that lie between the EU and Russia (especially Ukraine, but also Moldova and to a lesser extent Belarus and the South Caucasus countries) are treated as the main “battlefield”. Therefore, the NMS see the

⁵ For more on new EU members’ identity and their relation to democracy promotion see Jonavicius, L., “Geopolitical projections of new Lithuanian foreign policy”, *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*. 2006, No.1, pp. 16-41.

⁶ Of course, different countries have different memories, but the fact is that all new EU members have at least for some time been repressed or occupied by former Soviet Union or tsarist Russia. Such history usually implies the perception of Russia as the “enemy”, “threat” or “other” in identity terms.

democratisation of countries in between and the support for democratic norms more generally, as the creation of a "preventive shield" between "us" (Europe) and "them" (Russia). Democracy promotion is understood in very pragmatic terms and is treated as the action which is necessary to protect one's own security, stability and prosperity. However, it is interesting that the main targets in this respect are the countries "in between", not Russia itself. NMS actions towards democratisation in Russia are mainly channeled through Brussels and bilateral democracy promotion policies are oriented towards smaller countries, which are seen as "lost in transition" and flustering between East and West.

External incentives. As Russia can be seen as an important element stimulating particular external activities of new members, the same is true of the US. As is well known, Washington's strong advocacy for Eastern European states' membership in Western organisations (starting with NATO) has helped create a strong pro-American block of states.⁷ During the Cold War, Washington implemented a so-called "non-recognition of Baltic annexation" policy⁸. Such historical experience generated a very positive attitude towards the US not only in Baltic States but in other Eastern European countries as well⁹. It has led the NMS to ally themselves with US democracy promotion policies, just as many older member states have questioned the latter.

One argument made in the region is that after the US shifted its attention to other regions (Greater Middle East) it left democracy promotion in Eastern Europe

⁷ Lecture of Professor Adam Daniel Rotfeld, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, "The 'Old' and 'New' Europe: New Dilemmas of the Transatlantic Relation". Lecture delivered at the Danish Institute of International Affairs, Copenhagen, 24 April 2003. Available on-line: http://www.msz.gov.pl/files/file_library/29/5_257.doc

⁸ The US never officially accepted the fact of voluntary admission of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union, as has been claimed by Moscow. Baltic States even retained their diplomatic missions in the US.

⁹ It is especially applicable to Poland and Romania. See Zaborowski, Marcin., "Between Power and Weakness: Poland – A New Actor in the Transatlantic Security", Contribution to the conference New Europe, Old Europe and the New Transatlantic Agenda held on 6 September 2003 in Warsaw. See: http://www.csm.org.pl/images/rte/File/Raporty%20i%20publikacje/Raporty%20i%20analizy/2003/rap_i_an_0803.pdf

in the hands of new EU (and NATO) members. With memories still fresh of American support and with the need to strengthen their "europeaness", the NMS are eager to take up this responsibility.

EU-related commitments. Eastern and Central European states' accession to the EU has formally required them to assume new commitments in the field of development cooperation. After joining the EU in 2004 (and 2007) new members assumed commitments in the development cooperation sphere as agreed in "The European Consensus on Development Cooperation". This states: "the Member States which have joined the EU after 2002, and that have not reached a level of 0.17% ODA/GNI, will strive to increase their ODA to reach, within their respective budget allocation processes, that level by 2010... Member states, which joined the EU after 2002 will strive to increase by 2015 their ODA/GNI to 0.33%".¹⁰

This means that the NMS have to allocate quite significant amounts of new development aid within a relatively short period of time. As most of them are "emerging donor countries" (with the exception of the Vysegrad Four), they look for the most convenient ways to find a balance between these development policy commitments and their own interests. The NMS have little relevant experience in helping African states implement the Millennium Development Goals.¹¹ Therefore, they have started to increase their ODA allocations while insisting that most of their ODA be oriented towards their closest neighbours or to the regions that are of most importance to them. Since democratisation is one of the constituent elements of European development cooperation policy, it is used by many NMS as a "lifebuoy", which allows for the fulfillment of international aid commitments and the

¹⁰ Joint statement by the Council and the representatives of the governments of the member states meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on European Union Development Policy: "The European Consensus", Brussels, 22 November 2005. See: http://ec.europa.eu/development/ICenter/Pdf/european_consensus_2005_en.pdf

¹¹ See UN Millennium Development Goals. - <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

implementation of their national interests at the same time.

The NMS still rank amongst the poorest member states and their external aid funds remain limited despite the formal requirement to increase development cooperation. (See tables 1 and 2). This means that despite their strong advocacy of democracy promotion, the NMS still do not grant significant amounts of traditional democracy assistance but rather seek to impart and share their experience of recent transition with other states. One influential recent report has suggested that NMS still have much work to do to strengthen the good governance component of their incipient ODA programmes.¹²

Table 1: GDP per capita in PPS (EU 27 = 100)¹³

2007	(forecast)
EU 27	100
Luxembourg	283.9
Ireland	143.8
The Netherlands	133
Austria	129.3
Denmark	126.6
Belgium	122.3
Sweden	121.8
United Kingdom	119.4
Finland	117.3
Germany	114.2
France	112.6
Italy	103.3
Spain	103.1
Cyprus	92.9
Slovenia	90.6
Greece	89.5
Czech Republic	81.4
Malta	75.5
Portugal	74
Estonia	72.5
Hungary	65.7
Slovakia	66.6
Lithuania	60.9
Latvia	60.3
Poland	55.1
Romania	39.5
Bulgaria	38.7

Table 2. ODA of new EU member states¹⁴

COUNTRY	2006 ODA (mln. of EUR)	2006 ODA (% of GNI)
EU-15	45854	0.44
EU-10	556	0.10
Czech Republic	110	0.11
Estonia	6	0.06
Latvia	8	0.06
Poland	250	0.1
Lithuania	14	0.064
Slovakia	30	0.085
Slovenia	35	0.127
Hungary	89	0.1

This gives a broad outline of the factors underpinning NMS' commitment to democracy promotion. This is not to suggest that this commitment is perfect nor subject to countervailing considerations. But, without being too idealistic, the normative value attached to democracy in the NMS does still appear striking compared with the sceptical attitudes prevailing towards this agenda in some of the older member states. The factors mentioned above, though important to all NMS, have different impacts on policies and activities. These factors should be treated as independent variables, which have different values in different states. It is obvious that countries where the perception of Russia tends to be more negative and where historical experience is more complicated, would strive to orient their democratisation activities towards states in between them and Russia (Baltic States, Poland), while states without such severe historical relations with Russia would tend to have a more balanced attitude (Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia). The same logic can be applied to the identity question. All factors have some influence on directions and means of NMS democracy promoting policies, but their combination produces different outcomes.

¹² PASOS, "The Challenge of EU Development Co-operation Policy for New Member States", November 2007.

¹³ Eurostat data.

¹⁴ OECD/DAC Annual Report 2005 and replies by EU MS to the Monterrey Survey.

Variation between the new EU members

The NMS can be grouped into several distinct clusters, which are united by historical, cultural and geographical characteristics. The best-known groups are the "Vysegrad Four" (V4), which is comprised of Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, and the Baltic States, which include Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Romania and Bulgaria can also be classed as a separate group thanks to their geographical position and different EU accession date. Slovenia, the only country from the former Yugoslavia, cannot be included in any of these groupings and presents an individual case. The principal policy that these different groups share is support for further EU and NATO enlargement (See table 3). Beyond this, notable differences predominate.

Table 3: Support for further EU enlargement¹⁵

Country	Percentage of respondents, who answered "for" to the question "What is your opinion on further enlargement of the EU to include other countries in future years?"
Poland	76
Lithuania	68
Slovenia	67
Romania	67
Czech Republic	64
Hungary	64
Slovakia	59
Bulgaria	58
Latvia	56
Estonia	55
EU-15	49

Slightly differently, Raik and Gromadzki draw a "Carpathian Mountains dividing line" that divides the new member states into two groups: first, those north

of the Carpathian Mountains (the three Baltic States and Poland), and second, those south of the Carpathian Mountains (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria). The "North of the Carpathians" countries have only one neighbourhood, Eastern Europe, and they focus overwhelmingly on Ukraine and Belarus. The "South of the Carpathians" states, by contrast, have two neighbourhoods - the Western Balkans as well as Eastern Europe. They (particularly Bulgaria, Slovenia and Hungary) are often more interested in the the Western Balkans than in Eastern Europe¹⁶. This geographical distribution of NMS does mean that geography determines different priorities or measures and that countries south of the Carpathians are different from those in the north.

Retaining the more traditional sub-groups, the following variations in characteristics can be observed:

(a) The Baltic States

Estonia. One general feature, which could be applied to Estonia especially, is the so-called "golden province" policy. The term is closely related to membership of the EU that provided Estonia with an opportunity to distance itself from the direct planning and implementation of many former "external" activities, thanks to the common decision-making processes of the EU institutions. In other words, EU membership gave countries - especially smaller ones - a chance to opt out of external affairs, delegate their competencies to the EU level and concentrate on resolving internal problems. A country willing to make such choices can be conditionally called a "golden province". Some characteristics of Estonia show that it is one of the countries that has chosen this path.

Estonia's democracy promotion policy is very closely related to its EU membership. Only in recent years did Tallinn start to implement more active democracy promotion policies, largely due to the need to boost its external security. As Vahur Made has noted, "the active participation of Estonia in Georgia, Ukraine and

¹⁵ Source: Eurobarometer 67, First Results, June 2007/50.

¹⁶ Raik, Gromadzki., p. 25

Moldova has an important political undertone. Shifts to democracy will decrease the influence of Russia in the countries of the former Soviet Union and may thus be considered as security guarantors for Estonia".¹⁷

The Estonian Government's *European Union Policy for 2004–2006* also ties security in the region directly to democratisation in "Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia and other Southern Caucasian states".¹⁸ Therefore, democracy promotion is seen as the means to increase Estonia's own security. Such considerations help to define the priority regions as well. Most attention is paid to Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. Being a small state, Estonia considers countries where the environment for cooperation is friendlier to be more important from the point of view of the neighbourhood policy and development cooperation.¹⁹ This explains why Estonia does not concern itself so much with Belarus, which actually poses the biggest threat to regional security.

Estonia's democracy promotion, as well as its development aid, is mostly implemented through "soft measures" such as training, consultancy and IT-development. Estonia's aspirations are related to the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy. Participation in the EU Neighbourhood Policy and its programmes provides good possibilities for cooperation with European Union partners and increasing Estonian influence and resources. It is also useful to enjoy cooperation with different European Union member states which have similar interests and objectives with regard to the new neighbours in the East.²⁰

Latvia. *Latvia's Foreign Policy Guidelines 2006-2010* includes democracy promotion as a key foreign policy objective.²¹ These guidelines stress that "Latvia is

interested in ensuring that in the EU's neighbouring countries and proximate regions, long-term stability is maintained, democracy is strengthened, economic and social development continues to progress, and the policies of the various countries are focused on cooperation with European institutions. Latvia will devote particular attention to the countries of Eastern Europe, with which it will continue to develop intensive political dialogue and cooperation so as to transfer the reform experience which it has accumulated in recent years".²² Such statements confirm that Latvian democracy promotion is focused on neighbouring countries; pursues an "open door" policy in the EU context; and uses the "accumulated experience of transition" as its main measure.

Observers note that the Latvian government stresses the need for the same dual transition in the Western Newly Independent States (NIS) that the Baltic States themselves had to go through in order to integrate into Western institutions. The third transition of de-Sovietisation is implied but not stated outright. Again, we see a direct link between security and democratisation in the region. Placed within the context of the larger document, there is limited focus on the EU's eastern neighbourhood.²³ Priority countries for Latvian assistance (both for democracy promotion and for development aid) are defined in Latvia's MFA statement of development cooperation: "While the attention of the big donors is mainly focused on the African region, Latvia is interested in the economic growth, stability and strengthening of democracy in neighbouring regions. Therefore, Latvia has set the former Soviet republics to the east of the EU - Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine - as its development assistance priority regions for 2007."²⁴ Such reasoning only supports the presumption that development cooperation is employed as the "shelter" for democracy promotion activities.

Latvia is also interested in promoting cooperation with Belarus. However, such cooperation can occur at

¹⁷ Made, Vahur, *Estonian bilateral relations with Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova*, Estonian School of Diplomacy, 2005. See: http://edk.edu.ee/default.asp?object_id=6&id=29&site_id=1

¹⁸ Cited in: Galbreath, David J. and Lamoreux, Jeremy W., "Bastion, Beacon or Bridge? Conceptualizing the Baltic Logic of the EU's Neighbourhood", *Geopolitics*, No.12, 2007, pp. 120-121.

¹⁹ Made, *Estonian bilateral relations*.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ "Latvia's Foreign Policy Guidelines 2006-2010". Available online: <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/policy/quidlines/>

²² Ibid.

²³ Galbreath & Lamoreaux, p. 122.

²⁴ Latvian Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia. See: <http://www.am.gov.lv/en/DevelopmentCo-operation/>

present only in specific areas like civil society development and faces some problems. The biggest of these is the lack of strong non-governmental actors, which would be able to assist government in the implementation of democracy promotion policies or provide bottom-up incentives for such policies. It cannot be said that there are no such players at all, just that their number and capabilities are limited. The main sectors where Latvia focuses its assistance are economic relations; market reform; customs; regional security; illegal migration and organised crime²⁵.

Lithuania. After accession to NATO and the EU, Lithuania declared its intention to become “the regional leader through its quality of membership in the EU and NATO and through proactively developed neighbouring relations”.²⁶ Such leadership was contemplated in the speeches of many Lithuanian political leaders. These aspirations have been prompted by the need to strengthen Lithuania’s “European” identity²⁷ and by its key geo-strategic location.

Vilnius also took steps to meet the challenge of becoming the regional centre for conferences and seminars on democratisation in Eastern Europe. These have included the Vilnius Conference²⁸ (at which US Vice President Dick Cheney famously accused Russia of backtracking on democracy and using its vast energy resources to blackmail its neighbours), the European Humanities University²⁹ (which has been expelled from Belarus by the Lukashenko regime), and ongoing gatherings of Belarusian opposition forces. According

²⁵ Galbreath & Lamoreux, p. 122.

²⁶ Paulauskas, Arturas., “Lithuania’s new foreign policy”. Presentation at the conference *Lithuania’s New Foreign Policy*, Vilnius, 24 May 2004.

²⁷ See Jonavicius, *Geopolitical projections of new Lithuanian foreign policy*, Op.cit.

²⁸ The Vilnius Conference 2006 (“Common Vision for a Common Neighborhood”) brought together delegations from the Baltic and Black Sea regions to discuss common interests and reinforce their commitments to the advancement of democracy and common values in their respective regions.

²⁹ The European Humanities University (EHU) is a non-state establishment of undergraduate and post-graduate education in Belarus from 1992 to 2004. In 2004, EHU was forced to terminate its activities in Belarus. However, thanks to political, administrative, and financial support from the Government of Lithuania, Governments of the European Union, NGOs and US and EU foundations, EHU managed to resume its operations in Lithuania and open bachelors and masters degree programmes for Belarusian students in autumn 2005.

to the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Lithuania’s promotion of development and democracy is based mainly on areas where it has a comparative advantage, for instance, in creating the rule of law, enhancement of democracy, protection of human rights, transition to the market economy and Euro-Atlantic integration, strengthening of administrative capacities and building civil society. The priority partner countries are Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, South Caucasus, Afghanistan and Iraq. Priority cooperation areas are: the promotion of democracy; rule of law and human rights; economic development; Euro-integration processes; administrative capacity-building”.³⁰

Among other priority countries, Belarus and Georgia deserve special attention. Although the activities of Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus during Ukraine’s Orange Revolution have been the most visible in the international arena,³¹ Minsk and Tbilisi are at the centre of Lithuanian efforts. One particular geographical priority for Lithuania is the Kaliningrad region, where Vilnius has special ambitions and is the most important external player (Lithuania was the biggest foreign investor in the region in 2006). The main instruments of democratisation being employed by Lithuania are the same as those of the other Baltic States: training, technical assistance and the experience of transition and Euro-Atlantic integration.

In summary, the Baltic States’ democracy promotion is very closely linked to their EU integration. Keeping in mind that Russia is perceived as the main external threat, and that there is the need to strengthen the newly acquired “European” identity, democracy promotion can be treated as a continuation of the European integration process. Pragmatic geopolitical interests strengthen its importance as well. The importance of geography is clearly reflected in chosen priority regions, which are mainly neighbouring

³⁰ Lithuanian Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Policy, MFA of Lithuania. See: <http://www.urm.lt/index.php?2049798648>

³¹ During the December 2004 crisis, which followed the undemocratic presidential elections, important European decision-makers, including EU High Representative Javier Solana and Presidents Kwasniewski of Poland and Adamkus of Lithuania, successfully helped negotiate democratic changes in Ukraine.

countries. One exception is the South Caucasus, which dominates as a priority for all three Baltic countries, but which has no clear cultural or geographical affinity. The Baltic States were the most fervent advocates of the inclusion of the South Caucasus in the ENP. They also proposed the strategy of “3+3” to “express solidarity towards the former small Soviet republics” of the Southern Caucasus. However, an explanation for this can be found in the South Caucasus’ energy potential – this region is seen as providing a possible alternative to Russian oil and gas. The shared history of Soviet oppression can also serve as explanation for Baltic countries’ involvement in South Caucasus.

The main instruments used by the Baltic States to promote democracy are “soft” measures – technical assistance, training, transfer of knowledge and reform implementation experience. All three countries strongly contribute to civil society building in Eastern European states also. Another significant factor, which relates to the fact that all Baltic States are small countries, is their efforts to place Eastern Europe’s democratisation as high as possible on the EU agenda. They try to attract Western Europe’s attention to the region and to overcome the still dominant “Russia first”³² approach.

The real impact and effectiveness of Baltic States democracy promotion policies is not easily measured. However, some observations can be made. Firstly, Baltic States’ best results are achieved in small countries. On the one hand, their resources and capabilities are still too small to have visible effects in such big and complex countries as Ukraine. The efforts of Lithuania, Latvia or Estonia, though useful, usually drown in the stream of bigger players’ activities. On the other hand, Lithuanians are very well-known and respected for their support in Georgia. The same can be said about Latvians in Moldova. Consequently, the specialisation of support and the concentration of

efforts (both on sectoral and geographical levels) is the most effective strategy for small democracy donors, such as the Baltic States. Regrettably, there is still a lack of cooperation and coordination among Baltic States in this area.

(b) The Vysegrad Four

The four Vysegrad countries - Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia – have experienced measurable success in democratising their own states after the breakdown of the USSR. They are active in democracy promotion activities as well.

Poland. Poland is the biggest and, to many, the most influential country among the new EU members involved in democracy promotion. Poland has been the most vocal supporter of the Eastern dimension of the ENP. On the other hand, Poland’s ambitions are more far-reaching. Warsaw is trying to establish itself as a regional leader and this is an additional reason why it wants to play a leading role in democracy promotion. As stated by the Polish MFA, “as both a Central European and Baltic country, we feel predestined to play the role of a keystone in regional cooperation, also involving the Scandinavian sub-region”.³³ David Kral confirms the importance of the factors mentioned earlier in the paper, when he explains Poland’s eagerness for democracy promotion in Eastern Europe. These include (1) concerns about Poland’s geopolitical security, driven by the belief that enlargement should not stop at Poland’s eastern borders, (2) the idea of historical reconciliation, a necessity to anchor Ukraine’s reforms by providing the incentive of EU accession, and (3) pragmatic considerations relating to improving entrepreneurship and the business environment in order to foster mutual economic ties.³⁴

Polish-Russian relations are also of great importance in shaping Warsaw’s position and policies towards its

³³ Polish Foreign Ministry. See: http://www.msz.gov.pl/Government_information_on_Polish_foreign_policy,in,2006,4599.html (viewed 20/09/2007)

³⁴ Král, David., “Perspectives of the role of CEE countries in shaping the EU policy towards new Eastern neighbours”, EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, Prague, 2005. See: <http://www.europeum.org/doc/pdf/837.pdf> (Last seen on October 14, 2007)

³² See for example Vahl, Marius., “A Privileged Partnership? EU-Russian Relations in a Comparative Perspective”, DIIS Working Paper no 2006/3. See:

<http://se2.isn.ch/serviceengine/FileContent?serviceID=10&fileid=6EAB4FBF-967E-8163-74F9-B0B59DDE3C01&lng=en>

eastern neighbours. Continuing tensions and conflicts between Moscow and Warsaw strengthen anti-Russian sentiments in Poland, which are transformed into democracy promotion on its eastern borders. In this respect, Poland strongly resembles the Baltic States, which share a similarly negative attitude towards Russia. Last, but not least, identity formation has a role to play. "One could say that the mission of supporting freedom in the world is crucial to the way we perceive our identity. It also influenced the EU's engagement in backing the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, as well as its position regarding sanctions imposed on Cuba and its attitude towards Belarus."³⁵

Poland wants to play a bigger role than other countries in democracy promotion, especially in Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia and Moldova. Although some Polish aid also targets Sub-Saharan Africa, its development cooperation is mainly oriented towards Eastern Europe (see Annex 1). Of course, the democratisation of Ukraine and its engagement with Europe is by far the most important goal of Poland's democracy promotion policy. As is claimed by Longhurst and Zaborowski, an independent and pro-Western Ukraine is the main objective of Poland's Eastern policy.³⁶ However, activism towards Kiev is not only spurred by historical and economic relations. Indeed, it is arguably because of Polish engagement in Ukraine that Poland's international status has improved and that it is now perceived as a state with a regional specialism and the ability to shape its immediate environment.³⁷

Belarus can be ranked as second on the list of priority countries. However, Warsaw's activities towards the Minsk regime are implemented mostly through NGOs, because there are few possibilities of direct contact with Lukashenka's administration. Instrumentally,

³⁵ Rokita, Jan., *Polish Foreign Policy – How Much Continuation, How Much Change*, Center for International Relations, 2005. See: http://www.csm.org.pl/images/rte/File/EN/Publications/Conference%20proceedings/2005/konf_i_sem_0105a.pdf

³⁶ Longhurst, Kerry, Zaborowski, Marcin., "The New Atlanticist: Poland's Foreign and Security Policy Priorities", Chatham House Papers, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2007. p.64. See: http://www.csm.org.pl/images/rte/File/Raporty%20i%20publikacje/Ksiazki/CHP_NewAtlanticist_All.pdf

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.67

Polish democratisation policy is aimed at all areas concerning transition to effective democratic institutions and market economies. It gives technical assistance to economic, social and institutional transformation activities as well as to companies building and developing market economies. The development of local governance is likewise given great importance, as is the strengthening of civil society.³⁸

One big difference in comparing Poland (and other V4 countries) to Baltic States is the scope and coverage of democracy promotion policies. The Western CIS is not the only region in the world where Warsaw is working to promote democracy. Polish missions are also present in the regions of Asia (Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Vietnam) and Africa (Chad). Although building stability and security, and safeguarding basic humanitarian needs (not democracy promotion) are the main priorities in these countries, this broad geographical range of Poland's external actions is increasingly significant.

The Czech Republic. The Czech Republic is the only NMS country that is surrounded by EU states. This helps explain why in the 1990s the Czech Republic was not particularly active in Eastern Europe.³⁹ According to Kratochvíl and Tulmets there are three basic reasons why Prague has chosen not to put much emphasis on cooperation with Eastern Europe until it anchors itself as a fully-fledged EU and NATO member: (1) For Czech politicians the "East" was often synonymous with Russia. Hence, even when Poland and Hungary were busy weaving an intricate net of relations with their neighbouring countries, particularly Ukraine, the Czech Republic still saw developments to the East through a Russo-centric prism. (2) The second factor was related to the country's efforts to gear all its policies towards one central aim – gaining full EU membership as quickly as possible. This meant that whenever two foreign policy options clashed, the one

³⁸ For an exhaustive list of Polish democracy promotion measures see: <http://www.polishaid.gov.pl/Ukraine,186.html>

³⁹ Kratochvíl, Petr, Tulmets, Elsa., *Checking the Czech Role in the European Neighbourhood*, Institute of International Relations, Prague, 2/2007, May 2007. See: <http://www.fesprag.cz/dokumenty/2-ENP-final-en.pdf>

leading more directly to EU membership was almost invariably chosen. (3) Czech diplomacy has long seen the Balkans as its main priority area. Czech politicians of all stripes have continuously declared their support for Balkan countries such as Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro in their efforts to overcome the legacy of war and cultivate relations with the European Union.⁴⁰

Therefore, until the middle of 2005, the Czech Republic had quite different geographical priorities than the Balts and Poles, preferring cooperation with the Balkan region. However, after EU accession the Czech Republic did begin to turn its attention eastwards to a greater degree. In this way, democratisation and related human rights issues have become a clearer focus of Czech policy. The Czech Foreign Ministry created a special department in 2004 to deal with issues related to the transition to democracy. The switch to a more specialised agenda was followed by a precise definition of the geographic scope of Czech policy. The two main priority countries in the region are now Ukraine and Moldova, but Belarus and Georgia are included as well and receive a large portion of Czech aid for ENP countries⁴¹.

An examination of Czech activities regarding democracy promotion at the EU level over the last few years demonstrates that democracy promotion is becoming a more and more important element of its general foreign activities. Another important factor that should be mentioned is geographical scope. Like Poland, and in contrast to the Baltic States, Prague aims at a much broader range of countries. The priority countries selected for development assistance have been the following: Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Yemen, Moldova, Mongolia, Serbia, Montenegro, Vietnam, and Zambia.⁴² Despite Cuba not being listed as one of the priority countries, the Czech Republic has been highly active with regards to democracy and human rights promotion in this country. The Czech

Republic considers that support for those priority states complies with national security interests, and that there is a need to ensure a constant increase of development cooperation among those states.⁴³

Slovakia. The best way to describe Slovakian policy is to say that it is a balance between the East, the West and the South. Slovakia's motivation for implementing democratisation policies (though mostly in the framework of international organisations), is related to its specific experience with transition to democracy. Having had an elected but authoritarian regime for some time, Slovakia understands well that the difficulties of becoming a democratic state can be protracted and last well beyond formal periods of transition.⁴⁴ Being the smallest of the Vysegrad countries, it has adopted a somewhat different approach to promoting democratic values. Slovakia's foreign policy mainly focuses on strengthening peace and stability in Europe, and the continuous democratisation of the EU in order to bring it closer to its citizens. To attain those objectives, and to further promote democratic values, Slovakia has chosen to make use of its membership in various international organisations. The axioms of Slovakia's foreign policy are: respect for international law, expanding the space of democracy, freedom, peace, stability and prosperity, respect for fundamental human rights and "solidarity among nations"⁴⁵.

Slovakia's diplomatic efforts when implementing democracy promotion policies focus on two priority regions – specifically, by applying the European Neighborhood Policy to Ukraine and supporting EU membership for Western Balkan countries. However, not being as strong as Poland in Eastern Europe, the Slovakian government firmly backs official and NGO-

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Basic information on the Czech Republic's development cooperation. See: <http://www.mzv.cz/wwwo/mzv/default.asp?id=8382&ido=7592&idj=2&amb=1>

⁴³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. See: <http://www.mzv.cz/wwwo/mzv/default.asp?id=44994&ido=18661&idj=2>

⁴⁴ Slovakia's experience is related to Vladimir Meciar's popularity. He was one of the leading presidential candidates in Slovakia in 1998 and 2004 and is former Prime Minister of Slovakia. He has been criticised by his opponents as well as by Western political organisations for having an autocratic style of administration and a lack of respect for democratic order.

⁴⁵ "Medium-Term Foreign Policy Strategy of the Slovak Republic until 2015". See:

http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00002703/01/strategy_fp_sr_until_2015.pdf

level democracy promotion activities, especially in Belarus and Ukraine. These two countries are the main priorities for Slovak support in Eastern Europe. In the case of development assistance, Slovakia's priorities are Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia, along with Afghanistan, Albania, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mongolia, Mozambique, Sudan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.⁴⁶ Therefore, Slovak assistance, not unlike Czech assistance, is distributed among Southern and Eastern European countries and includes several developing states in the third world. If we look at the instruments of democracy promotion policy used by the Slovak government, we can see a strong accent on the transfer of accumulated experience.

Slovakia is an interesting case in one respect, which is mentioned by Slovak NGO activists. Paradoxically, despite having one of the strongest and most active NGO sectors, Slovakia sometimes faces passivity on the governmental side. Though this problem is characteristic to other NMS as well, Slovakian activists perhaps suffer the most.

Hungary. Compared to the other V4 states, Hungary's role in democracy promotion was very modest until quite recently. The country's main foreign policy guide, entitled *Hungary in the World*, does not say a word about the post-Soviet space. When making geographical references, it mentions the EU, Hungary's neighbours, Central European regional cooperation, non-EU neighbours (in this sense Ukraine is included), the US and Canada.⁴⁷

The driving force of Hungarian foreign policy, even after EU accession, was the protection of its minorities abroad. As stated in *The Renewed Nation Policy*, the government's objectives were "reunification of the Hungarian nation", the preservation and growth of Hungarian communities living abroad within their

native lands through utilisation of the means made available by EU integration and (primarily economic) cooperation⁴⁸. The presence of over three million ethnic Hungarians in neighbouring countries, principally in Slovakia and the former Yugoslavia, is a major factor in Hungary's generally cautious foreign policy approach. Even the moderate policy towards Ukraine is spurred mainly by the presence of a Hungarian minority there. Therefore, Hungary seems to have adopted a more modest role in democratisation and has focused instead on economic cooperation and development. Nonetheless, the formation of a healthy market economy and the emergence of small and medium-size enterprise are fundamental if an effective democratisation process is to take place. This is especially true in the post-communist states. With economic motivations pre-eminent, Hungary concentrates its aid on the transition to market economics; privatisation and support for small and medium-size enterprises.⁴⁹

Furthermore, Hungary has focused on its immediate neighbours, particularly Serbia. The stabilisation of Serbia and the resolution of the Kosovo crisis are regarded as absolute top priorities by the Hungarian government. Hungary has been one of the major players in ensuring that Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia are invited for the next round of NATO expansion.⁵⁰ The NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme has been widely promoted by Hungary in the Balkan region. Despite taking a more relaxed approach, and avoiding outright condemnation of the Lukashenka regime, Hungary took some concrete measures to positively affect change in Belarus. It has been decided that in 2008 a Hungarian embassy will open in Minsk. The embassy will be tasked with promoting dialogue between the regime and civil society, and fostering economic cooperation between Belarus and Hungary.⁵¹ Critics of Hungarian foreign policy usually stress that

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.69.

⁴⁹ Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. See: http://www.kulugyminiszterium.hu/kum/en/bal/foreign_policy/international_development/idc.htm

⁵⁰ Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. See: http://www.kulugyminiszterium.hu/kum/en/bal/foreign_policy/Missions_heads_Conference_2007/Goncz_speech_070730.htm

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶ "Medium-Term Strategy for Official Development Assistance: 2003 – 2008", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Bratislava, 2003. See: http://www.slovakaid.sk/index.php/filemanager/download/90/koncepcia_en.pdf

⁴⁷ Póti, Lazlo, "Hungarian Foreign Policy and ENP in the East: Energy (and) Nationality-Based Policy", *International Issues & Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*, Vol. XV, No. 3-4/2006, p 68.

Hungary tends to be a "lone runner", as it often takes a different path to those chosen by other Vysegrad states or even EU members in general.⁵² The most prominent example of this is the deal between Russian Gazprom and Hungary's MOL, signed in March 2007. The agreement allows Gazprom to build an extension to the Russian-Turkish "Blue Stream" pipeline, which will allow it to pump Russian gas to Hungary via the Balkans. According to various experts, this deal marks the end of the "Nabucco" pipeline project, which was initiated as an alternative to Russia-controlled pipelines (ie: as a means to decrease Europe's energy dependency).⁵³

Parsimoniously summarising the V4 countries' democracy promotion is thus not easy. On the one hand, all of the V4 include democratisation in their respective foreign policy agendas. Democracy building in the Eastern neighbourhood is a common mission for all of them. Their foreign policy is more idealistic than that of many old member states because of their shared experience of having lived under totalitarian rule⁵⁴. On the other hand, their priorities and reasoning are quite different. The Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary view the Western Balkan region as a priority. This can be explained by both country-specific and general factors. In the case of Hungary, enduring links to Croatia and the presence of the Hungarian ethnic minority in the Vojvodina region of Serbia play a crucial role. In the case of the Czech Republic and Slovakia cultural links to Southern Slavs, positive memories of the Little Entente and the activism of their diplomacy shape their activities in the region.⁵⁵

Meanwhile, the geographical focus of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary is not as clear-cut as that of Poland. Since neither the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary nor Slovenia share a border with

Russia, this eliminates many contentious issues. Historical legacies are also much less controversial than they are for Poland⁵⁶. Poland is seen as the most active "democracy promoter" in the group and this is mainly due to its "regional leadership" aspirations. One clear difference, which separates V4 countries from other NMS and especially from the Baltic States, is the strength of their NGO sector. One of the main problems, which the Baltic States faces in the implementation of democracy promotion, is the lack of grassroots NGO support. Therefore, Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn are forced to use a "top-down" approach, ie: invite local NGOs to participate in democracy promotion. In Vysegrad states, which have a very long history of NGO activities, the situation is the opposite. It is mainly NGOs which put pressure on governments to pay more attention and provide more funding for democracy promotion and development activities.

(c) Slovenia.

Slovenia is the country that places most emphasis on the Balkans with regard to democracy and especially market economy promotion. Being one of the most southern NMS, Slovenia has very modest or even non-existent policies towards the former Soviet Union states. At the same time, Slovenia is the most economically advanced country. Generally, the "golden province" metaphor can also be applied in the Slovenian case. However, as Anton Rupnik has stated, the national security and economic development of Slovenia depends, among other things, on the security, democratic development and economic stability of the countries within the neighbouring southeastern European region. This is why Slovenia has taken a constructive approach to the stabilisation and development problems of southeastern Europe. Consequently, Slovenia's participation in regional initiatives and organisations acting in the region has been a permanent feature of its foreign policy ever since its independence.⁵⁷

⁵² Szent-Ivanyi, Istvan., "Hungarian Foreign Policy Weakness", *HVG*, August 2007, See: http://hvg.hu/english/20070821_szent-ivanyi_hungarian_foreign_policy.aspx

⁵³ "Hungary: Gazprom's Subtle Attempt to Take Over MOL", *Stratfor*, 05 July 2007. See: <http://intellbriefs.blogspot.com/2007/07/hungary-gazproms-subtle-attempt-to-take.html>

⁵⁴ Raik & Gromadzki, Op.cit., p.23.

⁵⁵ Kral, Op.cit., p.5.

⁵⁶ Kratochvíl & Tulmets, *Checking the Czech Role*, Op.Cit.

⁵⁷ Rupnik, Anton., "Slovenia and southeastern Europe – Re-establishing Traditional Economic Partnerships", in *South-East Europe Review for Labour and Social Affairs*, Dusseldorf, 2003, vol. 5, No.4 , Mar., 67-80. See: <http://www.cceol.com/asp/getdocument.aspx?logid=5&id=B92D7424-1282-43E6-8B50-4446335F148A>

The former Yugoslavian republic shares common historical experiences and memories with its neighbouring Balkan countries - Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro and Macedonia. Since Slovenia used to be part of Yugoslavia, it has extensive knowledge of and close links to the southeastern European region. Nevertheless, there are also more pragmatic explanations - Slovenia is perhaps the only country among the NMS that works hard in the private sector, not limiting itself to the political sphere. Slovenian investments in the Balkan States are significant and create a strong bond between Ljubljana and all Balkan States. Slovenian companies and enterprises have invested heavily over the last decade in many ex-Yugoslav countries, and for this reason, the prosperity of the region and eventual accession to the EU is undoubtedly in Slovenia's interests.⁵⁸

(d) Bulgaria and Romania.

The two most recent EU newcomers (having joined in 2007) are also the least experienced democracy promoters in the region. However, both have specific interests and visions about democratisation policy.

According to former Romanian Minister for Foreign Affairs Mihai-Razvan Ungureanu, Romania has now become a sentry on this last frontier of the democratic world. The democratic "Orange spirit" has taken hold in several countries in the area; it brought democratic governments to Georgia and the Ukraine, and it is on the upswing in the Republic of Moldova, Belarus, and Kyrgyzstan. One can see that this is a favorable time for democracy in the area. The democratic community should help to advance this process - by combating problems such as illicit arms sales, organised crime, and terrorism that make it harder to resolve frozen conflicts. These include the Transdnistrian breakaway region of Moldova, the Armenian-Azerbaijani tensions over Nagorno Karabakh, the Russian-Chechen war, and the Ossetia-Ingushetia conflict.

Romania believes it has a strong moral and political duty to be an anchor country along this frontier of the democratic community and to act for the advance of democracy and freedom in neighbouring areas like the Black Sea and the Western Balkans. Promoting security, democracy, and stability in its neighborhood is a priority for Romania⁵⁹. This is also affirmed by Romanian activism in the region. Two main areas of endeavour can be discerned. First, Romanian relations with Moldova: due to very close cultural and historical relations, and keeping in mind the fact that a great number of Moldavians have Romanian passports and citizenship, Moldova is the most important target of the Romanian democracy promotion policy. The second important element of Romanian foreign policy is the creation of and participation in democracy promoting regional organisations. The best example here is the Community of Democratic Choice (CDC)⁶⁰. Finally, the growing importance of a Black Sea region provides a range of challenges and opportunities. The Black Sea dimension contains at least two crucial issues for the EU as a whole: energy and hard security.⁶¹ Since the US, EU and Russia - the main international players - have major stakes in the region it is still not clear how things will develop on this dimension. However, it provides a chance for both Romania and Bulgaria to become important democracy promoting players in the region. For the moment, Romania is much more active than Bulgaria, but opportunities are still there for each of them.

Being the most southern NMS, Bulgaria is perhaps (together with Slovenia) the most isolated state (keeping in mind the conditions necessary to implement democracy promotion policies). Bulgaria's

⁵⁹ Ungureanu, Mihai-Razvan, (Romanian Foreign Minister), "Romania's Priorities in Foreign Policy", *Internationale Politik*, Volume 6/2005. See:

<http://en.internationalepolitik.de/archiv/2005/summer2005/romania--s-priorities-in-foreign-policy.html>

⁶⁰ The Community of Democratic Choice is an international organisation established on 2 December 2005 by nine states of Eastern Europe in Kiev. Its foundational agreement was signed mainly by countries from the region between the Baltic, The Black Sea and The Caspian Sea ("The Three Seas"). Its main task is to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law in that region. CDC founding members are Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Georgia, Macedonia, Romania, Moldova, and Ukraine.

⁶¹ Raik & Gromadzki, p.15, Op.cit.

⁵⁸ See Hunya, Gábor, and Schwarzhappel, Monika, *Shift to the East*, Database on Foreign Direct Investment in Central, East and Southeast Europe, Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (wiiw), May 2007.

comparatively weak economy and as yet unfinished achievements in consolidating democracy inside the country hampers its activism. Democracy promotion is not mentioned in Bulgaria's foreign policy priorities.⁶² Bulgaria is still restricted to observer status in the Community of Democratic Choice. Its strategic geographical location and participation in the creation of both EU and US policies for the Black Sea area could, however, become the impetus for a more active foreign policy.

Conclusions

Several main generalisations can be made about the new member states' democracy promotion policies. First, the NMS have much in common but are not homogenous in their priorities, interests and instruments in foreign policy. In terms of the substance of foreign policy, there have inevitably been differences of emphasis – the interests of the Baltic States in the Western Balkans are not the same as those of the Hungarians, while the interests of the Czechs and Slovenes with regard to Belarus, Moldova or Russia are not alike either.

The "Carpathian dividing line" distinguishes between Baltic States and Poland on the one hand, and the Vysegrad Four, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria on the other. Such differentiation is caused mainly by: (1) history and (2) relations with Russia. History and bilateral, cultural and ethnic relations among nations result in different countries trying to assist those states that are seen as the most similar and the closest in terms of historical experience. Therefore, Baltic States tend to offer assistance to the South Caucasus (all of which are former Soviet republics and small states), while Slovenia and the V4 pay closer attention to the Balkans (with whom they share a long common history). Lithuania and Poland are meanwhile active in

Ukraine and Belarus (with which they share the common history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Republic of Two Nations).

Countries that have experienced more complicated relations with Russia, and which see their own security and prosperity as being possible only when Russia is "pushed back" as far as possible from their borders, implement more active and hardline democratisation policies on their eastern borders (Poland, Baltic States). Meanwhile, Central and Southeastern European countries do not have such tense relations with Russia and their democracy promotion policies tend to be more "soft" – historical relations, and successful transition instead of antagonism towards Russia are the main impetus for democracy promotion.

Measures and instruments to promote democracy are similar in all NMS. Firstly, policy is mainly political and knowledge-based rather than economic in nature. The tools employed include the transfer of knowhow and transformational experience in state and society building, assistance to strengthen administrative capacities, and support in reform implementation in order to meet the requirements of Euro-Atlantic integration. The second important instrument is comprised of new international political initiatives. At the EU level, the best example is NMS activities in the development of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The NMS have sought to keep the democratisation question as high as possible on the general EU agenda. Other activities in this respect are the creation of such regional initiatives as the Community for Democratic Choice and the organisation of various conferences and seminars. The problem that the NMS face at the EU level is the complexity and abundance of issues the EU has to deal with. Nevertheless, NMS are successfully adapting to the situation – development cooperation commitments, for example, are transformed into democracy promotion possibilities. Finally, the new EU-created European Neighbourhood and Partnership financial instrument provides the biggest (quasi-) external spur to strengthening NMS democracy promotion policies.

⁶² "Policy of the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria in the field of European integration, economic growth and social responsibility", Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. See: http://www.mfa.government.bg/index.php?tid=2&item_id=10202

However, EU membership and opportunities are not the sole external incentive for the implementation of democratisation on the eastern border of the EU. The majority of NMS have strong and warm relations with the US. Washington's political and financial support inspires the activism of NMS not only at the governmental, but also at the NGO level. NGO activities are a separate but very influential tool. On the one hand, it is impossible to promote democracy at the government level in some countries (Belarus, Russia). On the other, the democracy promotion (and all related actions) of NGOs fills the gap which is left between the political elites/state administration (governmental support) and civil society in many transitional countries. In other words, NGO-based democracy promotion is necessary in order to strengthen a democratic tradition at all levels of the recipient state. NGOs from the new member states, which have accumulated enormous civil society-building experience during their countries' transition, are now eager to share it. Polish, Czech and Slovak non-governmental organisations not only implement democracy promotion policies, but also influence decision-making on this issue very strongly. Interestingly, NGOs are comparatively weak in Baltic States. Therefore, these countries follow a more top-down model of democracy promotion, ie: government decides on priorities, instruments and regions. This is one of the most striking differences among NMS.

Is democracy promotion, as pursued by NMS, effective? It is still impossible to answer this question unambiguously. However, it is more or less clear what should be done in order to make it more efficient. The most important issue is cooperation, which implies coordination of activities and division of labour. Some roots of cooperation efforts can be found among NMS and especially inside such groupings as the Baltic

States and V4, but they are still in a formative stage and have to be elaborated. A characteristic feature of NMS democracy promotion activities is still spontaneity. It is especially problematic on the lowest technical level, where particular decisions on timing, measures, implementers and targets are made. The division of labour is another problematic field: at present everybody is doing everything and everywhere. Such a situation causes overlapping and ineffectiveness. Smaller donor states would benefit and achieve more if they concentrated on specific sectors and regions. Such sectoral and regional concentration would allow for much more efficient use of limited resources and greater visibility. The same is applicable to larger donors – their activities have to complement each other, not overlap. In other words, some joint coordination efforts should be made. The coordination of initiatives is useful not only with regard to recipient countries. Speaking with one voice, which is possible only under strict coordination and cooperation, would strengthen the NMS voice at the EU level as well.

The intention of this paper was to provide a comprehensive analysis of democracy promotion policies implemented by the new EU member states. The overview gives a clearer picture of how, what and why the NMS are doing in this sphere. Will their activism and experience bring success and democracy to Ukraine, Russia or the South Caucasus? The answer to this question depends on several factors. It is obvious that only the joint efforts of all interested players, in combination with favorable circumstances and internal developments in the countries concerned, can bring positive results. So far, efforts emanating from the NMS look set to be of increasing and positive relevance for the European Union in tackling these challenges.

Annex 1

NMS priority countries, sectors and comparative advantages in development cooperation⁶³

Country	Priority countries	Sectoral priorities	Comparative advantages
Estonia	Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Afghanistan	(1) Good governance and democratisation; (2) Education; (3) Economic development and trade liberalisation; (4) Environment; (5) Information and communication technologies.	Development of the IT-sector and e-governance.
Latvia	Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine	(1) Political and economic reform processes; (2) European and transatlantic integration processes; (3) Development of democratic and civil society; (4) Education, culture, social development, health, environmental protection.	Good governance; Institutional transformation and capacity building; Harmonisation with the <i>acquis</i> .
Lithuania	Kaliningrad Region, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, South Caucasus, Afghanistan and Iraq.	(1) Good governance; (2) Economic reform processes and transport; (3) Euro-integration processes; (4) Security; (5) Environment; (5) Health and social security; (6) Culture and education.	Transition management.
Poland	Afghanistan, Georgia, Iraq, Moldova, Vietnam, the Palestinian National Authority.	(1) Sustainable development; (2) Poverty; (3) Health; (4) Education.	Health sector; Education; Access to potable water; Environment; Capacity building; Democratic institutions; Public administration efficiency; Cross-border cooperation; Reconstruction of the economy.
Czech Republic	Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Mongolia, Serbia, Montenegro, Vietnam, Yemen and Zambia.	(1) Health care; (2) Education; (3) Energy production.	Health care; Education; Energy production.
Slovakia	Serbia and Montenegro, Kenya, Sudan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus	(1) Democratic institutions; (2) Infrastructure; (3) Agriculture.	Institutional framework; Know-how; Experience and capacities. N/A
Hungary	Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vietnam, Palestinian National Authority, Macedonia.	(1) Knowledge transfer; (2) Education; (3) Technical training; (4) Agriculture.	
Slovenia	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, FYR of Macedonia and Moldova.	(1) Euro-integration processes: administrative reform; (2) Trade, investment, financial institution capacity building; (3) Integrated environmental planning and management, agricultural and forestry management; (4) Post-secondary education; (5) De-mining and treatment of war-affected children.	(1) Euro-integration processes: administrative reform; (2) Trade, investment, financial institution capacity building; (3) Integrated environmental planning and management, agricultural and forestry management; (4) Post-secondary education; (5) De-mining and treatment of war-affected children.

⁶³ Adapted from: Mojmir Mrak, Maja Bucar, "Challenges of development cooperation for EU new member states", ABCDE World Bank Conference, Bled, Slovenia, 17-18 May 2007. See: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTABCDESLQ2007/Resources/PAPERABCDEBucarMrak.pdf>

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The European Union's new member states (NMS) from Central and Eastern Europe have quickly made their mark on European foreign policy. In particular, they have gained some reputation as active supporters of democracy promotion. This paper outlines the factors that account for the NMS' (still relatively idealistic) attachment to democracy support. It also attempts to elaborate the differences among the NMS, which are routinely understated. By taking a closer look at the strategies, priorities and interests of the different Central and Eastern European states the paper illustrates that the new EU members are far from being a homogeneous group. The common experience of recent democratic transition has not translated into identical positions on external democracy promotion.

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