
PREFACE

The present volume contains papers held at the conference on "Problems of European Integration" in Erlangen, Germany, in November 1997. The contributions published here are mostly devoted to two large areas of themes.

The first group of papers addresses the European integration process in the context of global development and examines the problems which may be caused by the inevitable adaptation of the EU and its member as well as its "candidate" countries to the conditions imposed on them by the globalization.

In the second part, there are studies which, mostly in comparative manner, analyze the state of the political and economic reforms in the Eastern European countries (namely in Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia and Bulgaria) in respect to their capability for accessing the EU, as well as the impacts which the future accession to the EU would have on their further development. Some of these contributions use the experiences gained during the enlargement of the EU into South and from the Irish case in order to estimate these impacts more precisely.

Finally, the third part of the studies presents an insider view at strategies which the EU administration is about to apply in the access negotiations with the EEC.

Despite the diversity of theoretical approaches and empirical data on which the particular studies are based, their results allow for a more general view at the problem under scrutiny as they try to answer to a catalogue of questions which are fundamental for the understanding of the social changes, chances and risks inherent to the integration of the EEC into the EU. The main concern in the perspective of the postsocialist accession candidates consists in the question whether the successful integration performed by the Southern European countries and Ireland will be reiterated in the East too. Relying on data drawn from his analysis of the economic effects which the accession to the EU had in the South European states Axt stresses the fact that, after joining the EU, the Eastern countries will not be better off automatically, but will have to face a period of economic turbulences the outcome of which will be decisive for their further - positive or negative - development. Palankai's contribution provides a profound comparative assessment of the present economic potentials in the EEC in this respect. Palankai considers them to be capable to meet the economic demands of the common market. But not only the economic factors are considered as relevant for a successful integration. Some of the papers reflect on political institutions and political cultures in the EEC which encompass and influence the functions of economic structures and the actors involved. The Czech and Bulgarian experiences (Pavlik, Genov) show that the postsocialist lawless capitalism arising due to the lack of institutional regulations and of civic responsibility in the new entrepreneur class exhibits counterproductive effects in both economic and social spheres of the transformation societies. On the one hand the implementation of EU regulations is expected to help in establishing a framework of rules for economic life,

on the other one is afraid of the reactions to the partial renunciation of state sovereign rights. Adam stresses that the different structures of social networks and intermediary institutions are also significant for the shape of political cultures on which the future of the EEC should depend. He argues that the prevailing paternalistic patterns of social institutions and networks, but also the lack of social capital (in the form of trustant cooperation) may hinder the outcome of democratic processes compatible to standards expected by the EU. Another feature characteristic of the political culture of the EEC is the emergence of new nationalism. Dieringer and Müller explore the nationalistic ideologies in Poland and Hungary and examine how the expected accession reinforces the nationalistic tendencies in these countries.

The papers discussing the general European and the global context of the integration processes point out two main problems with which the EU will have to cope. The first concerns the internal changes in the economic, political and social balance in the EU which we have to expect due to its enlargement (Genov). The second thematizes the changes which the EU will probably undergo when responding to the requirements of globalization. Srubar argues that the EU institutions lack democratic legitimacy by elections. Genov, too, points out the risky tendencies which globalization imposes on the integration process. He argues that the social tensions caused in the EEC by the deregulation of labor markets and weakening social welfare will be imported into the EU where they can hardly be resolved.

From the volume as a whole the European integration appears as a process in which the individualizing and deregulating moments carried on by globalization merge with the need for institutional framing of economic processes and with a counterbalancing solidarity based on a well functioning civil society. The future will reveal whether these tendencies will prove as contradictory or whether they will give birth to a renewal of European civil society. Both options are immanent to the present stage of the European integration as the contributors to this volume indicate.

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