

**Written Evidence from Alyson JK Bailes, UK citizen b. 1949**

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**General introductory remark:**

As an official I was involved closely from the UK side in the process of NATO, but not of EU, enlargement. I have engaged with the latter mostly in a think-tank and academic capacity and thus cannot claim 'insider' knowledge. As my speciality lies in politico-military affairs I will comment on the questions below principally from a strategic, security, and general political perspective. I have not felt able to contribute anything specific on questions 5 and 6, though I believe the response to both should be broadly positive.

**1. What has been the impact of EU enlargement on UK interests? How has the UK influenced the enlargement process?**

The UK has in general been a strong promoter of EU as well as NATO enlargement. It favoured the entry of Greece during the Cold War and of Finland, Sweden and Austria in 1995, when the UK would gladly have seen Norway join as well. The UK maintained this attitude towards Central European and Mediterranean candidates when their accession became a serious topic in the middle to late 1990s. It is interesting to note that this position was typical, at the time, of parliamentary as well as governmental and official opinion - some other EU members were less punctilious about consulting representative institutions, at least before the ratification stage.

Within this general support, the UK was particularly supportive of (all) the Visegrad states and also sensitive to the concerns of the Baltic States, thus balancing French sympathies which were directed more South-eastwards. The UK, if not always consciously, also gave weight to the strategic considerations which – I will argue below – were not sufficiently represented within the formal EU negotiating and decision-making process. In these and other ways (including NGO and academic inputs), the UK's influence helped to ensure that the 2004 enlargement was an inclusive one, covering a coherent geographical area and well balanced between North and South. The UK was also more favourable than not towards parallelism in EU and NATO enlargement, though not going so far as to hold up a state that became eligible for one institution before the other.

In my view these UK positions were consistent with a very deep-seated strategic national interest going well back into history: the preference for a Europe neither dominated by a single power, nor torn between several in a way that might drag Britain into war. Following World War Two the institutions of NATO and the EU (with its precursors) met these requirements excellently in Western Europe while managing to hold Communist aggression or encroachment at bay. The historic opportunity to extend them Eastwards as far as the new Russian border was one that the UK could not afford to miss, reducing at a stroke the risks of both internal and external conflict in the zone of most immediate strategic importance for our homeland. At the time when key decisions were made in the mid-1990s, the reality of war in the non-integrated Western Balkans, and the fact that difficult historical/ethnic

issues did *not* lead to violence among the integration-seeking countries of Central Europe, made this basic logic more obvious than it has perhaps been in the 2000s. It still applies, however, very powerfully to the case of the Balkans where there is an opportunity to transform (however slowly and painfully) Europe's worst historical powder-keg into an area of permanent peace.

Secondary UK interests that the enlargement process was intended to serve, and in my opinion did serve, were the inclusion in a larger European market of new states with unexplored growth potential, who could offer some interesting things for UK needs (investment opportunities, supply of qualified labour); and the extension and strengthening of democracy as Europe's default political system. Without the profound transformations and continuing discipline inherent in EU membership, countries with such a limited and ambiguous modern political record could hardly be expected to have come through the years of post-accession disillusionment, and then the 2008 crash, with the workings of pluralist democracy in such relatively good shape as they seem to be today. Here the relative importance of EU enlargement, compared with NATO, can also be seen: NATO demands democracy as a general criterion but has no intrusive political, economic and social instruments to ensure its continued operation, let alone offering a collective political experience of the kind provided on a daily basis in the EU institutions.

A common view is that the UK sought through enlargement to diversify the EU in order to complicate and burden the latter's policy-making processes and thus slow down a feared slide towards federalism. If this was the aim, it worked - from Greece's entry onwards - as no state entering in the 1990s or subsequently has favoured speedy supranational integration. However, the true relevance of such diversification for UK interests is probably more complex. In the first place, we do not know what pro- or anti-federal dynamics would have operated in a 'small' West European EU in the 2000s if enlargement had not taken place. It is at least possible that the uncertainties of such a Europe, including less disciplined trade relationships and migration flows, would have limited federal enthusiasm anyway, at least at popular level – *vide* the initial French and Dutch rejection of the European Constitution, and the French attack on Schengen principles at a time of immigration fears. Secondly, the divergent interests and stubborn national positions of new members can work and have worked against UK interests on specific EU policy issues, such as the Republic of Cyprus's attitude regarding relations with Northern Cyprus and Turkey, or Poland's resiling from climate change goals, or Baltic State positions on certain Russia-related issues where UK interests favour a more pragmatic balance.

Thirdly, the general effect of adding more small and medium-sized members to an organization is to increase the burden on the large ones – including the UK – in terms both of leadership and of concrete contributions. This is particularly clear when it comes to providing 'hard' and 'soft' security cover for new partners and their territories, through the NATO and EU respectively. This automatic disadvantage of enlargement is to some extent balanced by the possibility of extending a single coherent strategic policy over the whole enlarged space: thus for instance, UK interests in the fight against terrorism are better served by having the same anti- and counter-terrorist policies observed by 28 states than by 15. However, this example also shows that the UK interest does not automatically lie in fostering intra-EU divergences or weakening the grip of joint positions. If the EU had not insisted on

new members joining Schengen, their outer defences – now also the UK's outer defences – against crime, smuggling, terrorism, trafficking in dangerous goods, and illegal migration would be far weaker today. In other words, the UK's best interest may sometime lie in new members' being obliged, and ready, to accept the centralizing and standardizing forces of the EU more fully than the UK itself. This is only an apparent paradox and it applies equally well to large Eurozone members who like the rules to bite more sharply on the 'smalls' than on themselves.

A fourth disadvantage in such large and rapid enlargement was the possibility that (as predicted by many experts and some politicians) it would force the EU to develop a small 'hard core' in order to ensure a minimum of coherence and forward momentum. This would have been against UK interests if the UK was excluded, as it risked being in terms of integrationist philosophy and on several internal issues. In the early 2000s, the UK's joint leadership with France in ESDP/CSDP provided one line of defence against this but it was less of a factor later. Nevertheless, the 'hard core' scenario has not (yet) been reflected in the reality of general EU governance. A parallel and serious problem does confront the UK in the shape of the Eurozone grouping, but this is not something that can be blamed on enlargement (which, if nothing else, brought in Sweden as a non-Eurozone ally for the UK on many economic and monetary issues). On other issues, central EU leadership has been more indistinct and malleable – indeed, often too weak – as an effect of Franco-German differences and the claims of other larger members now including Poland. The prevailing picture thus remains one of 'variable geometry' which has traditionally been seen as serving British interests well. It may further be remarked that in cases where EU policy-making has actually been too weak and slow for British interests – such as in responses to the Euro-crisis – this has always at bottom been a matter of hesitation or disagreement among the larger powers, not a result of small new partners getting in the way.

Fifth and finally, if one starts from the position that enlargement is good for the UK, it would be bad if the new members themselves risked blocking its future stages. In fact this has only ever happened in the case of the Republic of Cyprus and its attitude to Turkey. All other new members (including Sweden and Finland, maybe not so much Austria) have been only too keen to bring in countries from the next tier, even when not especially friendly with them (eg Hungary and Romania). An obvious motive for many states is their wish to be replaced as the outer 'buffer' zone of the EU, with all the exposure that implies.

The conventional wisdom about EU diversification cited above could, and perhaps would better, be turned into a positive statement: enlargement in the 1990s and 2000s brought in nations that were either above-averagely connected to and friendly with the UK (the Nordics), or at least had reasons to appreciate British policy and no reason to fear it. The new opportunities provided for pursuing British interests thus included the chance to mobilize such states in support of positive British policy aims within the EU, and not just to block undesirable developments. The question is whether UK diplomacy consciously and consistently tried to exploit this possibility. As an outsider I have the impression that it did so more within NATO, on broad issues of EU strategy such as the Europe-US relationship, and in specific security areas such as non-proliferation than on the EU internal agenda. At any rate it is clear that the UK did not create a permanent common front even with the Visegrad states, given the periodic resurgence of the 'Weimar triangle' (France, Germany, Poland). However,

since the geo-strategic logic behind these relationships is an enduring one – linked to Russia as much as the presence of a reunified Germany – it remains a factor that might still be made to serve British interests in future.

**2. What effect has EU enlargement had on UK interests in specific policy areas? What advantages or disadvantages has the UK experienced as a result? Please give examples.**

Most of the examples I want to mention are in the answer to question 1. As a further case in the security sphere, I believe the inclusion of the new members in ESDP/CSDP and the supporting defence market systems (including the EDA) has served – together with NATO membership – British aims in rationalizing European industrial and operational defence capabilities and holding states back from irretrievable defence cuts. The 1995 enlargement was especially important here as Sweden and Finland played an active role in shaping ESDP, contributing to and leading EU missions, and exploring new ground in defence industrial cooperation. However the Central European new members have not been without their value especially in non-military EU operations. They would doubtless have done more if they had not been pressed simultaneously to contribute in Iraq and Afghanistan.

A parallel point can be made about CFSP, where the new members have on the one hand provided a source of relatively 'clean-handed' EU representatives and mediators for external tasks, and on the other, brought in new regional expertise and experience that has generally (though not always) served the UK's interest in a well-informed, hard-headed and proactive European diplomacy. They have broadly shared UK objectives in arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation policies; and the opportunity to tighten up their export controls on strategic goods (through the CFSP Common Position and various EC regulations) has been particularly helpful for UK policies against WMD threats. The fact that the diplomatically weightier and more experienced new members have come from Northern and North-Central Europe has ensured that issues of Northern, Baltic, and Eastern cooperation, ranging beyond the EU's own borders and beyond the likely enlargement zone, can never again be neglected: something that for geo-political reasons is good for the UK, even if details of the new members' own proposals may not always have been welcome.

More generally, the addition of these large numbers - almost doubling the EU 'caucus' - has strengthened the EU's collective voice and clout in wider European (eg OSCE) and global (eg UN) fora. This is more likely to work in the UK's interest than not, given that such collective positions are negotiated in consensus mode and cannot go directly against UK wishes. The main weakness, in fact, remains the tendency of some larger EU partners to break ranks.

**3. How do you consider the balance between the roles of member states and of the EU institutions in the process? Might UK interests be served by any changes to the balance of competences in this area?**

First I would stress that the chance of reclaiming powers from the Commission in the enlargement context is vanishingly slim and that doing so would not clearly and permanently serve the UK interest. It is useful in several ways – aside from the sheer work burden - to have the Commission carrying out the detailed work of negotiation

with new members. This ensures that the other side hears a single EU voice; limits day-to-day political interference (which is more likely to come from other parties than the UK); ensures some broadly coherent base for comparative analysis of the candidates; and allows Commission-controlled financial and technical instruments (in theory) to be applied directly to candidates' identified needs. The reports and assessments published by the Commission at various stages in the process provide a good basis for public information and parliamentary debate.

On the other hand, it would be unacceptable – in my view, also at any stage of future EU development – to have the basic decisions on recognizing a candidate, starting talks, and accepting a new member made by any other than the existing member states and their parliaments. Despite the sometime frustrating delays involved in ratifying accession treaties, this is the only way to ensure formal and deep-seated political consent to the searching transformations required on the new member's side, and the extended burdens (especially clear in the security field since entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty) to be assumed by the others. For the same reasons I would hesitate to strengthen the role of the European Parliament in decision-making – as distinct from information flows, evaluation, debate, and socialization of candidate countries' parliamentarians – in this field.

I suspect that the main problems for British interests, and for the effectiveness of enlargement as a whole, lie less in the distribution of competences than in the way they have been exercised; on which see the next question.

#### **4. How effectively have the member states and the EU institutions run the enlargement process? Have lessons drawn from previous enlargement rounds been applied?**

As I have not had personal insight into the details of an accession process I will limit myself to a broader observation about a problem I see – at two levels – in the proper weighing and weighting of strategic, security-related, and other external factors.

Extending the EU's laws and policies over a new piece of territory, and subsuming it in the EU's single market space and trade personality, is a profoundly strategic action. I have argued that it is clearly positive for the peace and security of the new member and the EU as a whole (including the UK), but the changes that it brings in local and continental balances may not be equally welcome to all. At the least, the EU's diplomacy and a whole range of its practical policies must now address a new direct neighbour or set of neighbours. Insofar as the new member has strong feelings – positive or negative – about those neighbours, these will flow into the EU policy melting-pot and must be taken into account by older members, even the most physically remote. (If there is a direct military threat and the same state is joining NATO, then the latter is competent in the first instance; but this covers only a small part of the possible spectrum of regional repercussions.)

However, it is my understanding that in post-Cold War enlargement negotiations, the Brussels institutions have explicitly rejected the idea that strategic considerations should determine who becomes a candidate, what terms they are offered in negotiation, or whether and when they are accepted. Countries should not be looked at in regional groups but are to be assessed strictly on their own merits – an idea now in

the ascendant also within the ENP, including post-Arab Spring policies. It is easy to see why the Commission, in particular, should take this line. They must ensure that countries are truly compatible with and able to absorb the EU acquis, and any softening of standards to help candidates with a strong strategic appeal would endanger this. Large derogations and long transitional periods are anathema for the same reasons. Shutting an eye to defects in democracy and governance would be equally dangerous, including ultimately for the EU's image. In that context there are many who fear that a 'strategic' enlargement philosophy would quickly bring in Turkey, or would have brought it long ago. In a less emotive case in the 1990s, Brussels officials argued for a while that the three Baltic States need not necessarily be taken at the same time since Estonia was clearly ahead in economic adaptation, and Lithuania behind. Related to this is the Commission's default suspicion of regional groupings fostered by candidate countries or between them and existing members, for instance in the Visegrad and Black Sea areas. From the Brussels viewpoint these were seen as potentially creating competing and confusing norms that would delay full EU compliance, and also giving a chance for candidates to 'gang up'. From a strategic viewpoint, however – including from the UK's standpoint on European stability – nothing could be more welcome than for states on the enlargement frontier to work together to settle their differences, to learn or re-learn the ropes of modern multilateralism, to tackle local security issues in subsidiarity mode, and to reach out to non-candidates like Russia and the other NIS.

How much has this mattered? I would not, personally, argue that any of the states accepted should have been *left out* for strategic reasons. Clearly it would have made no sense to separate the three Baltic States (what might Russia have done next?). Another good decision was to bring in Slovenia with the main CE group in 2004, given the inspiration this clearly offered for Croatia and should offer for other WB members to come. However, certain secondary issues or implications of the Big Bang accessions could have been better handled with a clearer strategic vision. The Kaliningrad issue should have been anticipated much earlier and the need to moot extreme solutions avoided. The consequences of taking in (only) the Republic of Cyprus needed much deeper thought. Perhaps the most important targets for clear strategic thinking are, however, the candidates still to come and those who cannot realistically be offered the carrot of true membership any time soon – a point reverted to under questions 7-8 below.

If any force is seen in this argument, the question is whether the Member States in Council could introduce a stronger strategic element in their own thinking on enlargement to balance the Commission's perhaps necessarily strategy-blind approach. This might best be done without fanfare and at informal-style meetings, given the risk of the aims and implications being misunderstood. There would be an obvious role for the HR in providing a basis for discussion. The equally obvious danger is that the MS's strategic perspectives may turn out as divergent on this as on anything else. The fact that Greece has felt able to block FYROM on the grounds of a national position that is basically non-strategic and even counter-strategic highlights the problem. The difficulty of reconciling attitudes towards Turkey is even clearer. Arguably, however, it is better for states to confront each others' rationales openly than to leave these to influence the process by various back-door means. If it were possible for a clear strategic narrative on a particular accession to emerge, even if limited to the most political level of EU governance, I believe that in most cases this

would also be helpful for public opinion and would – not least – help the new member and others to keep things in perspective during the always bumpy post-entry phase.

The second level at which I see a problem over the security components of enlargement is a workaday one: namely the fact that the Commission are obliged to negotiate with candidates on a number of policies where they themselves still have very limited competence, including CFSP and CSDP. Do sufficient other methods exist to allow candidates to gain a more intimate and realistic picture of what goes on in these fields, and to make the equivalent of pre-adaptations? Perhaps the answer is Yes. But a further and larger challenge arises from the fact that while negotiating, the candidates are also being addressed and influenced by the EU - and by the Commission itself - in a number of other ways, including spending from external funds not directly tied to enlargement, military and civilian CSDP missions, humanitarian activities, trade relations, the handling of refugees and asylum-seekers, climate and energy policies, and many others. The cluster of external-policy Commissioners in Brussels has expanded to a point where the one responsible for enlargement is hardly even *primus inter pares*. Even if the EU did have some larger strategic vision of where it was heading and what it wanted to achieve with a particular candidate country, is there any chance that all these EU instruments, contacts and influences could be marshalled to send a coherent message and have a consistent transformative effect to that end?<sup>1</sup>

On the question of learning lessons, it may be that the problems just mentioned have been noted and addressed in recent years, in ways that I am not aware of. Clearly, some other lessons have been learned since the mid-2000s, such as the need to scrutinize law-and-order issues and other aspects of governance more closely during negotiations, in the light of the Romanian and Bulgarian experience. Thinking has also moved forward on ways to address a state's continued weaknesses after accession; but I suspect there are and perhaps will always be serious difficulties in this respect. One problem is that the idea of political sanctions appears to have been very widely discredited (whether on good grounds or not) after the experiment with Austria in the 1990s. Another is that since the Cold War's end, the EU and NATO have more and more consistently tried to block and limit investigations of their members' behaviour by other institutions – notably the OSCE, a number of whose missions have been terminated as a result. It could indeed be argued that the ECJ takes over some of the necessary functions when it comes to individual cases of bad governance, but it can only work within the EU's competence. It is perhaps quixotic to wish for any real break-through in this area, given that the older member states would be concerned about any stricter system of post-accession scrutiny backfiring on themselves; while if they maintained a double standard of immunity, the solution would not be politically sustainable. However, the rise of unconventional and

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<sup>1</sup> Even in that ideal state, the candidate itself could of course be swayed by factors even further outside the negotiating process proper. During Iceland's accession talks in 2009-13, the actual negotiations were conducted with efficiency and propriety, but popular support for EU entry slumped in the polls due largely to an (unjustified) tendency to blame 'Europe' for the Icesave dispute with the UK and Netherlands. The enthusiasm for using the Euro was also damped by Icelanders' reading of the trials and supposedly unfair treatment of small states in the Eurozone. It seems clear that if such negative views should be counteracted, that is not a task for the Commission nor can it be achieved by any change in the actual negotiations. It would demand, again, a more strategic and political engagement by member states using more traditional modes of influence..

extreme politics within so many EU states at present makes the general question of 'Quis custodiet ipsos custodes' one that we will dodge at our peril.

**7. What challenges/opportunities might EU enlargement face in future?**

**8. How might the EU's approach to enlargement be improved in future?**

Taking these two questions together, I would first of all set the issue of North-western enlargement aside. I do not see any realistic prospect of Norway's applying again to the EU as long as its oil and gas wealth largely insulates it from the problems of European economic management, and as long as it looks primarily to the US and NATO for strategic protection. For internal-political reasons, Iceland also is not likely to find itself in active negotiation with Brussels again for the next couple of years, though I would rate it more likely than not that a new start could be made after that. The more important point is that the UK and the EU generally do not lose much by having these two states stay outside, albeit participating in the EEA and Schengen. Differences of institutional status have yet to obstruct any significant type of cooperation that the UK might wish to launch with these countries, while the recent strengthening of Nordic Cooperation in all fields of security has made it easier than ever for London (or Brussels) to work with the whole Northern group at once. It is true that Icelandic and/or Norwegian entry would give the EU a stronger and clearer basis for pursuing its goals in Arctic policy; but this issue is not yet so high on the EU or UK agenda as to call the rest of enlargement tactics in question. (For instance, it is not a prize for which anyone – on either side - would contemplate major concessions on fish.) The EU's current aims in the Arctic are, in any case, arguably compatible with keeping a low institutional profile, while Iceland and Norway are already furthering European interests by pursuing Arctic policies very similar to the EU's.

The proximate challenge is therefore how to proceed in the Western Balkans, where enlargement is bedevilled by stubborn weaknesses of some of the individual states (including structural ones in Bosnia-Herzegovina), by the attitude of Greece towards FYROM, and by general 'enlargement fatigue' and competing distractions on the EU side. It follows from all the analysis above that I believe it is both in Europe's general interest and in the UK's national interest to press ahead nevertheless, defining full Balkan integration as a strategic imperative to be achieved sooner or later regardless of cost. I believe the Ukrainian crisis of early 2014 has merely underlined the logic of this, inasmuch as it shows how a weak and relatively new-made state without strong institutional affiliations can fall prey both to corrupt 'capture' of government at home, and attack and would-be fragmentation from abroad. Some of the WB states plumbed greater depths of self-imposed violence in the 1990s, yet on the whole they have come further since in (re-)creating strong, but compatible, national identities and in closing out non-Western (including extreme Islamic) influences. This is partly, if not wholly, thanks to the EU's engagement – with conditionality in the accession process as the strongest single lever - but by the same token, it could be put at risk by calling the latter in question. In sum, the Western Balkans seem to me a clear test-case for the value of applying a higher-level strategic approach, based hard-headedly on why the region matters for us as much on why Europe matters for its people.

It is by now a cliché-ed observation that towards the next tier of interested states – Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia – the EU has neither said Yes or No clearly enough. Understandably not wanting to exclude these peoples from all benefits of integration,



it has tried to achieve leverage for reform by holding out hopes of closer relations; but the lever has not been grounded in anything in terms of formal pre-accession processes, conditionality, or substantial and targeted resource transfers. (These weaknesses now form part of a familiar critique of the Eastern Partnership as a whole, to which I might add – as above – the lack of a strong sense of intra-regional interactions.) Still less has the EU as an institution offered Ukraine a strategic alternative, in the form either of protection against its large neighbour, or partnership and guidance in negotiating a good *modus vivendi* with Russia. This should not be blamed entirely on the differences in how individual EU states value their relations with Russia, compared with the national aspirations of other NIS; or on the presence or absence of the oil/gas factor and which way it slants the calculations. When the going has got violent first in Georgia and then in Ukraine, the EU has shown its bottom-line strategic stance in a remarkably united way by working for damage limitation, an end to violence, and stabilization by political means. I have no basis for arguing that UK interests demand anything different from this: neither letting Russia have a free hand, nor standing on the military barricades at Ukraine's side, would reduce the risks for us as a nation nor further our hopes of continued *peaceful* transformation in neighbourhood regions. By the same token, it is hard to see how any individual UK action or insight could help the EU out of its strategic dilemma.

It is difficult to write about future EU policy towards the Western NIS while the Ukraine crisis is still going on, demanding tactical interventions which may or not prove convenient later. Personally I believe that the way forward has to be a *non-enlargement* policy and thus technically outside the terms of this enquiry. A more frank and clear strategic understanding of the region should underline that none of the states involved (and far less Belarus) is anywhere near the standards required for even a medium-term prospect of membership. The *modus vivendi* that Ukraine's new rulers are likely to seek with Moscow will also dictate prudence on their side. This creates a situation in which a more *critical* and focussed Western involvement, with plenty of emphasis on governance and bottom-up engagement, could actually suit everyone, as well as coming back more closely in line with the merits-based approach that the Commission should have been defending all along. The quality of such a policy could further be improved by discussing and trying to coordinate it with key non-state actors, such as concerned business, banks and NGOs.

Whether this is best achieved in the framework of yet another revision of the ENP is a different question. There may be no alternative; and yet the weaknesses of the concept have been clear enough recently on the Arab front as well as in the East. From a purely academic point of view I have always wondered why Brussels is so closed to the idea of further institutional experimentation in these parts of the EU's neighbourhood, while allowing something close to associate membership in the form of the EEA (and Switzerland's *sui generis* status) to the West, allowing two Western non-members into Schengen, and so forth. The short answer is double standards between wealthy and poorer neighbours; while a longer answer would come back to the resistance towards designing group relationships for strategic ends that was mentioned before. If only in the form of brainstorming, I believe this is a time in history when it would be worth at least speculating on the possibilities of a scheme bringing together neighbours who have no real or early enlargement prospect, but do have shared interests with Europe in strategic stability, non-proliferation, anti-terrorism etc – a kind of Balladur Stability Pact *de nos jours*. Failing this or as an

adjunct, could the EU put more effort into low-profile sub-regional groups, like those around the Black Sea, that include some or all of the target countries, especially in the Western NIS? Whether or not this had any effect at all on Russia (and Russia might be included in some variants), it could at least help to limit the non-military security threats entering Europe through a weak South-Eastern underbelly. Or if the EU really is too inflexible to take action with such obvious strategic sense, is there some scenario of reviving or re-applying the OSCE that could fill some of the gap?

9. What future impact might EU enlargement have on UK interests? How might any positive impacts be enhanced or disadvantageous impacts be addressed?

On the specific enlargement 'fronts' and considerations for handling them I would refer to my answers above, since I do not think the UK has any fundamental interest that stands out from the European mainstream in these cases. I do believe that the UK has an interest in continuing enlargement to its feasible limits, within which the Western Balkans definitely fall, and which in the very long term might even include parts of the Levant and North Africa. In terms of intra-EU dynamics there is a clear opening for British leadership and innovation in this field, and also a chance to make common cause with many of the more strategically responsible post-1990 members of the Union (see question 1 above). Putting it the other way round: without a clear British stance, there are many other factors liable to lead to a confusion and state of weakness in this part of European policy that will benefit no-one.

In saying this I am not ignoring the aspects of enlargement, such as freedom of movement, that pose very serious domestic challenges for the UK. I am personally among those who believe that the balance of *legal* new-member migration is positive for our country even in economic and social terms. Illegal and abusive behaviour must of course be dealt with as strictly as when it comes from any other origin. I have, however, not covered these aspects in my evidence because of lack of detailed knowledge, compounded by having lived outside the UK in recent years. I can only repeat, as my final opinion, that the existential importance of enlargement for war and peace in our part of the world (and perhaps the world as a whole) is important enough to be worth paying a high price for.

Signed: Alyson JK Bailes  
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*This evidence is given in a purely personal capacity*