



Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Email from Dr Valentina Kostadinova, University of Buckingham, 30 June 2014

I participated in the Balance of Competences Review held in the University of Birmingham in May 2014. Below are the few points I have on this matter.

With regards to the first broad topic (questions 1-3), I think EU enlargement has had positive economic effects in some respects. The old member states broaden their markets through Enlargement, a point that shouldn't be overlooked. In terms of q.2, two broad issue areas immediately spring up to mind. Firstly, of course, immigration. This is an issue area in which there is a very strong public perception at the moment that Enlargement was not a good idea. Politicians have to take this into account as it makes making the case for future enlargements more difficult to make. Secondly, an advantage for the UK has been that the Eastern Enlargement has increased the number of 'neo-liberal' member states, thus most likely improving the UK's bargaining position on issues, like social policy.

On the second broad topic (questions 4-6), I think the most problematic area is the long-term institutional change in the new member state. As discussed at the meeting at the University of Birmingham, once a country becomes a full member, the ability for inducing internal institutional change externally diminishes dramatically. The other participants made the point that the EU has learned this lesson and now wants the member states to be much better prepared before accession. I think, however, it will be interesting to consider whether there are insufficiently used mechanisms to apply pressure. For example, soon after accession some of the funding for programmes in Bulgaria was suspended because of Bulgaria's problems with corruption. May this be a precedent that can be utilised more? Bulgarian public was quite supportive of this EU move (as far as I know).

On the last broad point (questions 7-9) I would firstly emphasise that it is crucial we don't get carried away and/ or apply our past experience to the present. It seems to me that the eurozone crisis will have a profound effect on the EU's standing in the world. Therefore, I would expect that relatively speaking the EU's attractiveness will diminish (at least in the short-term). This is a crucial structural difference with the immediate post-Cold war situation. Secondly, I think it is paramount for the EU to really think through the responsibilities it will take on if it acquires borders with unstable regions (i.e. the Middle East in case of Turkish

accession). Will the EU be able to cope/ respond appropriately? It seems to me that the EU still needs to learn when it comes to dealing with geostrategically crucial points (Ukraine is a case in hand). So, the EU should be aware that any further Enlargements are most likely going to bring up geo/strategic issues, with which the current technocracy in Brussels is perhaps not equipped to deal appropriately (but as was the case in Ukraine could contribute to the deepening of controversies).