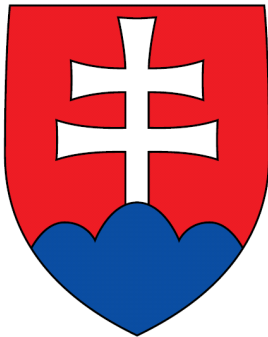




Strategies of New EU Member States

Presentation, Brussels, 1 June 2010



Permanent Representation of the Slovak
Republic to the European Union
Brussels

Research Goals



1. To identify national preferences and strategies of the new member states (NMS) from Central and Eastern Europe.
2. To identify policy areas in which the NMS either support further integration and are willing to pool their sovereignty the EU or tend to support intergovernmental modes of decision-making or prefer to keep the full control over their interests.
3. To determine factors those condition the priorities and the behaviour of new EU member states.

Methodology

- **Content analysis** of official documents and the media to identify the most important priorities in the context of three formative events:
 - EU accession talks (1998-2002);
 - the Convention on the Future of Europe (Convention);
 - the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC).
- **Semi-structured interviews** with representatives of the NMS, EU institutions and 'old' member states.
- **An expert survey.**
- **Patterns of voting in the Council.**



Structure

- Political culture and style in the NMS
- The NMS and the Lisbon Treaty
- Decision-making and public opinion
- Administrative capacity and coordination
- Foreign and security policy
- Energy policy
- Euro-zone entry
- Conclusions and recommendations



Political culture and style of the NMS

- Pro-integration political culture as a result of accession process
- Against deepening in tax, social policies and JHA (size of NMS and communist past matter)
- Reactive style (rare pace-setters, occasional foot-draggers, frequent fence-sitters)
- Poland and political communication
- Political culture and political preferences



Ratification of the Lisbon Treaty



- Dependency of the NMS on EU structural funds matters
- Political elite divided in Poland and the Czech Republic
- Ideology matters: significance of centre-right parties and presidents
- Higher cross-party unanimous support in NMS than in older MS (only Italy & Luxembourg)
- Opposition to the EU from mainstream parties in NMS, fringe parties in OMS

Decision-making and public opinion



- Public support for the EU, intra-EU exports, size of MS and governmental ideology do not matter
- In split decisions average support among EU-27 at 93,7 percent
- Only Poland and Lithuania scored below this average
- Significant relationship between size of MS and perceived benefits of EU membership

Administrative capacity and coordination

- Absorbing and learning
- Importance of EU presidency
- Strategy of prioritisation
- Insufficient stability of national administration
- Insufficient representation in EU institutions
- Ineffectiveness of domestic coordination



Foreign and security policy



- Limited preferences, domestic and international constraints
- Keen on external energy security, transatlantic relations and enlargement
- Focus on Russia, Eastern partnership and Afghanistan
- Interest in institutional status quo
- Importance of Cold War legacy, structural dependencies and territorial legacies

Energy Policy

- Accession negotiations did not focus on structural weaknesses
- NMS are keen on diversification of resources
- NMS have shifted the debate from liberalization to energy security (agenda-setters: Lisbon, European Nuclear Energy F.)
- Decisions on energy mix should stay with MS
- Catalytic effects of the 2009 gas crisis (dependency on Russia, lack of resources, need for guidelines)



Euro-zone entry

- Complicated accession: technocrats versus politicians, economic crisis
- Classification of the NMS:
 - Red Riding Hoods
 - Sleeping Beauties
 - Cinderellas
- Variation in preferences: economic diversity, patterns and traditions of monetary & fiscal policies, absence of templates, ambivalent EU institutions
- Policy dilemmas (high growth vs. low inflation, flexibility vs. stability of exchange rate, reforms vs. public opinion, euro charisma vs. bad times)



Conclusions



- At the beginning strong **preference to complete EU membership**, however, this process has significantly **slowed down**.
- General **support of further integration** (interviews, analysis of the voting in the Council). NMS tend to support new integration in broad strategic though limited issues.
- Strong preference to keep **'visibility' within the EU** (one country - one commissioner, rotating EU presidency) and to defend veto in cultural and ethical issues due to newly regained sovereignty and importance of national identity.
- Defence of **veto power in taxation and social policy** due to different economic conditions. NMS are still poorer, their ability to close the welfare gap requires differentiated tax, labour, and environmental regimes.

Recommendations

- Define comprehensive list of nat. preferences that serves as “checklist” for national positions
- Improve domestic coordination mechanisms
- Ensure stability of EU staff
- Fill job vacancies in EU institutions
- Strengthen capacities of Permanent Representations
- Share experience in preparing for EU presidency
- Share practices on Euro-zone entry
- Build alliances with old MS and the Commission (eastern policy, nuclear power, energy security)



**Thank you for
attention!**

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**SLOVAK RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY**

The research project “New member states’ strategies in the EU: striking a new balance between intergovernmental and supranational decision-making?” (conducted from January 2007 to June 2010) was supported by the Slovak Research and Development Agency under the contract No. APVV-0660-06.