

Chapter III

British political thought towards the enlargement of NATO and the EU.

1. British aims of the enlargement.

“The future treaty which you are discussing has no chance of being agreed; if it was agreed, it would have no chance of being ratified; and if it were ratified, it would have no chance of being applied. And if it was applied, it would be totally unacceptable to Britain”

The British representative at the Messina conference in 1955 on the project of the European Economic Community²⁴⁹.

Although the road of Great Britain to the European Union appeared to be long and with a great number of obstacles to overcome, its existence in the European family has still meant working out new strategies which would allow insisting on its own vision of Europe and a satisfying place in it. But how exactly were the ideas built, and who precisely created the conceptions for the UK's presence in Europe? And how did they change with the shifts of governments in power?

The process of reshaping the international framework by Great Britain was a complex one, and not successful on each stage, but the aim of having an effective foreign policy, in its Atlantic and European dimension, however, was accompanied by both, intelligent and exploitable assets²⁵⁰. The United Kingdom possesses a military and economic power, on the one hand, and reputation, cultural diplomacy, on the other. All those tangible and intangible assets contribute to credible and effective foreign policy²⁵¹.

²⁴⁹ Gowan P., *The UK in search of a new European strategy*, p. 211, in *Jaka Europa? What kind of Europe?* Materiały z konferencji naukowej, Wrocław 6-8 V 1998.

²⁵⁰ Martin L., Garnett J., *British Foreign Policy. Challenges and Choices for the Twenty-first Century*, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1997, p. 41.

²⁵¹ Ibidem.

With the replacement of authorities in rule, the aims of domestic and international policies of the Conservative and Labour Party have undergone some changes as well, yet since 1990 they have not differed much in terms of the European layout and security.

1.1. British Foreign Policy – Atlantic and European dimension.

The main purpose of each state's foreign policy is to protect and promote its national interests. Therefore, the foreign policy of Great Britain represents the issues of future structure of the European region, the proper contribution for Britain to make to the European order, and the obligations Britain should, or should not, accept²⁵². Moreover, the basis for foreign policy-making is the existence and maintenance of the principles²⁵³. One of them is Britain's belief in being a major player in the world arena. Such a conviction has been cherished since the early times of the empire, throughout the days of glory and defeat.

Although Great Britain might consider "cautious" policy, sheltering behind the security policy of others, or becoming the periphery of international politics, but why shall it? While it is strategically located, with global interests and commitments developed and the glory of historical super power, the state still possesses the assets to play a major role on the European and world stage. Moreover, Britain perceives strengthening its economy as a driving force of an effective foreign policy, which is closely connected with free trade. In terms of security, however, the power believes in the armed forces as a guarantee of peace. The defence factor expresses itself mainly through NATO membership, whereas the political and economic aspects are chiefly associated with membership of the European Union. Great Britain has relied on the Anglo-American relationship in the context of security since the end of the Second World War, being aware of the fact that the USA is the only power able to take decisive action in case a state or a group of states is in danger.

However, the awareness of creating a peaceful order of powers in the world as well as taking responsibility for it, manifests Britain's willingness to participate in "peacekeeping" operations and promote democratic, humanitarian values. The aspiration for becoming a leader should not display the UK's possessiveness of power, though, it just ought to express the understanding that any part of the world cannot be ignored as a potential partner of economic as well as political connections.

²⁵² Wallace W., *Opening the door. The enlargement of NATO and the European Union*, p. 49.

²⁵³ Martin L., Garnett J., *British Foreign...*, op. cit., p. 83-86.

Nevertheless, these basic principles are not critical to the process of British foreign policy-making, they more result from Great Britain's history and culture, thus have been maintained in policy of the Labour and Conservative Party.

Taking into consideration the development of British attitude to the common defence policy of the EU, it is worth noticing that the UK's stand on this issue has remained unchangeable. Since the beginning of the first conceptions about creating the European Defence Community in 1954, Great Britain kept silence, and the ongoing failure of this process satisfied the state, which was convinced that the most appropriate institution in terms of security was NATO²⁵⁴. Therefore, all the new visions which concerned common defence policy of the EU met Britain's dissatisfaction, as they were incompatible with its interests. Furthermore, the British feared that any development of the European defence ideas could destroy to some extent Euro-Atlantic bonds, which in London's opinion, were the guarantee of Europe's security.

However, the whole British strategy relies on the cooperation with the United States, which arouses anxiety among some European countries, for example France²⁵⁵; hence the negotiations on the crucial issues between the core states of the EU were not always equally agreed on. Great Britain claims that it is not feasible to create the European defence system without the US participation, for lack of defence potential as well as unacceptable costs for some members.

Nevertheless, the 1990s brought the European Union new visions of independent security system – the concept of shaping the European Defence Identity²⁵⁶. Not only did the vision meet protests of the Conservative government being in power until 1997, but also NATO itself. Admiral Sir James Perowne, Nato's Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic, in the debate over proposed Euro force in November 2000, warned against the creation of the European Identity, although he did not exclude the need for building the European army²⁵⁷. Moreover, the idea, surprisingly pushing through the government of Tony Blair, caused a heated discussion between proponents and opponents of building the European force, the latter of whose were, among the others, the Conservatives. During the party conference in October 2000, the representatives of the party expressed a strong opposition to the creation of the EU defence force outside NATO²⁵⁸. As a matter of fact, the

²⁵⁴ Gołembski F., *Polityka zagraniczna...*, op. cit., p. 116.

²⁵⁵ Ibidem, p. 117.

²⁵⁶ Ibidem.

²⁵⁷ Jones G., *Counter-attack over Euro force*, The Daily Telegraph from 25.11.2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/11/25/weur25.xml>.

²⁵⁸ *Maude: Party Conference Speech 2000*, October 4, 2000, Internet: http://www.conservatives.com/tile.do?def=news.story.page&obj_id=238&speeches=1.

issue of shaping an EU independent security system brought some protests inside and outside Great Britain and the European Union, which will be presented in the next chapters.

The question of “what kind of Europe”? in British foreign policy, however, occurred to be not less troublesome to answer. Since the end of Second World War and the speech of Winston Churchill about the circles and, at the same time, the position of Europe in British policy, the conception for the UK’s vision of Europe has not transformed. Great Britain has tended to be in favour of “Europe of states”, based on cooperation, in contrast to “Federal Europe” with a focus on integration, which has been gaining more and more followers on the continent²⁵⁹. Such a British attitude has confirmed member states in the conviction of its reluctance and obsession with independence as well as sovereignty.

However, the case of sovereignty is equally important with the state’s ability to participate in international politics. Each state perceives its sovereignty as the prior asset, which is actually not about its power or freedom; as it is, in fact, the matter of constitutional independence, possessing legal authority within a particular territory²⁶⁰. Thus, the vision of creating an integrated Europe means a sovereign super-state where its members are only parts of it, whereas the cooperative one builds a powerful international institution with the sovereign status of its members. As the difference between those two scenarios for Europe seems to be clear, one can also notice Britain’s reason for being reluctant to progressing further integration of the EU.

It is unquestionable, though, that Great Britain remains on the European route as long as it keeps the status of a sovereign state with all the rights and obligations in international relations. The country attempts to control the situation, which proved the Maastricht Treaty. During the Treaty negotiations, Britain acted cautiously and eventually led to the lack of any statements which would refer to federalist conceptions. Only the idea of “close union” means aiming at a new institution; the institution of a closer integration whose political nature needs to be perceived as supranational²⁶¹.

The negotiations and ratification of the Maastricht Treaty showed the importance of sovereignty for Britain. The heated parliamentary debate flared up mainly for fear of state’s independence, but also the Social Charter and a controversial issue of monetary union²⁶². The British protest against social and monetary matters led to making decisions in the EU forum, which established some rules for states not willing to join European Monetary Union. As a solution, the EU decided to accept a two-speed integration process, which found its

²⁵⁹ Martin L., Garnett J., *British Foreign...*, op. cit., p. 117.

²⁶⁰ Ibidem, p. 118.

²⁶¹ Gołembski F., *Polityka zagraniczna...*, op. cit., p. 82.

²⁶² Ibidem.

proponents among some member states. Such countries as France or Germany, were in favour of “hard core” of the European Union, a group of states which would become a driving force for the integration process, while the other members would stay less integrated until they were ready to join. The proposal, however, met both, political and economic, interests of Great Britain, as it allowed being a part of the EU without the necessity of submitting to all requirements. Thereby, Britain was given an exclusiveness clause, which enabled it to make independent decisions concerning how far the state wanted to join the integration process.

Such a vision of a “flexible” Europe, however, has its drawbacks as well. On the one hand a two-speed Europe has placed Britain in a favourable position, but on the other hand, the British government notices the fear of the EU division into first and second-class membership²⁶³. To solve the inconvenience, though, the UK suggested that although some states might choose deeper forms of integration, they should not proceed without the consent of all members. As a matter of fact, this solution was also a step against increasing the number of areas in the EU institutions with qualified majority voting²⁶⁴.

The biggest problem for Britain in the EU, however, is its commitment to the economic and monetary union (EMU). The issue in question has two dimensions of losing sovereignty: the symbolic one – e.g. the Queen’s head on banknotes, and the practical one – connected with limiting the independence of national economic management²⁶⁵. Moreover, the British anxiety about EMU results from the fact whether the system will be able to handle the necessary management tasks and how much support it will receive from national governments in case of making unpopular decisions. Furthermore, the political dimension of the monetary union is also a great enigma for Great Britain: if the countries hand over to “federal” authority their national economic management, will it mean no return and the final surrender of autonomy? Again, then, the prospect of becoming EMU member will bring the UK closer towards federalism, the model which is disapproved of by many British elites²⁶⁶.

On the other hand, though, one may ask: if Britain does not join EMU, will it become a second-class player? Or, condemned to existing on the margins of Europe, will it leave the EU eventually? These are the questions that might be asked by observers of the political arena in Europe, but the doubts are also expressed by participants of the British political scene. During the Conservative conference in October 1999, appeared a lot of voices against

²⁶³ Martin L., Garnett J., *British Foreign...*, op. cit., p. 123.

²⁶⁴ Gołembski F., *Polityka zagraniczna...*, op. cit., p. 88.

²⁶⁵ Martin L., Garnett J., *British Foreign...*, op. cit., p. 124.

²⁶⁶ Gowan P., *The UK in search...* op. cit., p. 221.

the federalism in Europe²⁶⁷. The shadow foreign secretary John Maples declared the Conservative support on keeping the pound, the fight for “free and independent Britain” and the opposition against the EU development into a federal superstate, whose Britain “will simply be a province of that superstate”. Mr Maples believed in Conservative persistence to stop “single currency that could well lead to a single tax policy”, “the social charter that will lead to a single social policy”, and “the common foreign and security policy that will lead to a European Army”. Furthermore, the speech of Tory’s ex-chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, revealed anger against such Euro scepticism or even the willingness to rule out joining the euro forever. Mr Clarke expressed his big fear for Tory’s aspirations to withdraw from the UE. The fear which became quickly dispelled by Mr Maples’s guarantee of not being anti-European.

Around the launch of the euro, the disputes reached their peak, and the fierce discussions and the difference of opinions did not omit even the Parties’ colleagues. The former prime minister John Major, in his speech at Harvard University in the United States in September 1999, claimed that Britain would join the euro, which provoked Conservative comments²⁶⁸. In reply to his statement, Conservative leader William Hague protested against Britain’s inevitability to sign up to the euro. To make the dispute complete, though, Major’s former deputy Michael Heseltine accused Mr Hague of seeking to put the Tories “on the road to withdrawal from the European Union”.

After ruling out joining the single currency during the Parliament, however, the Conservative Party leaders went on to prove the rightness of their decision²⁶⁹. Mr Lansley stated that Britain, being the fourth largest economy, was able to become successful with own currency. Furthermore, finance spokesman Francis Maude expressed his fear for joining EMU as it “would devastate the British economy”.

The discussions on the euro did appear among the Labour Party as well. However, the situation in the Blair’s Government seemed to be more complex. After coming to power in 1997, Mr Blair and the Chancellor Gordon Brown put off the decision about the euro until the next election, and cautiously agreed to join when the economic conditions were right²⁷⁰. Unfortunately, the leaders of the core states, Mr Chirac and Mr Schroeder, did not wish to wait for Blair’s decision to accept the entry. Moreover, the adherents of the euro in the

²⁶⁷ *Tories vow to rewrite EU membership terms*, BBC news online: UK politics, from October 5, 1999, Internet: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/uk_news/politics/465956.stm .

²⁶⁸ *Major: UK could soon join euro*, BBC news: UK politics, October 7, 1999, Internet: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/uk_news/politics/467582.stm .

²⁶⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁷⁰ Jones G., *Labour is stuck down by Major’s curse*, The Daily Telegraph from 30.06.2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/06/30/weur230.xml>.

Cabinet, Peter Mandelson, Stephen Byers and Robin Cook, were getting annoyed with Blair's indecisiveness. Mr Brown, on the other hand, began to be perceived as a euro-sceptic, while in fact he did not want to push Tories into "save the pound" campaign. This conservatism of actions, however, did not win the Labourites' support.

Nevertheless, it was the term of the Labour Party when Great Britain took the EU presidency in the first half of 1998. In his speech in Hague on January 20, 1998, Mr Blair declared the willingness of his Cabinet for an active and effective policy of the European Union²⁷¹. British Prime Minister stated that the priority of this presidency was creating Europe for people, for their wealth, security and liberty. Moreover, the issues which dominated the period of Britain's leadership in the EU concerned, among the others, the economic and monetary union, the enlargement, the development of Euro-Atlantic relationships.

In the case of monetary union, the British leader confirmed the UK's attitude towards joining EMU. Again, he explained that Great Britain was considering the entry for mostly economic reasons, thereby maintained the date of the next term of the Cabinet as the time of euro referendum. As for the meaning of a single currency for the future of the European Union, however, Mr Blair warned that it was not only the case of the currency which could build a welfare state; it was the matter of creating "the third road", relying on the cooperation of economic dynamics with the social justice in the contemporary world.

The programme of British presidency also concerned the enlargement of the European Union, with the leader's positive attitude. Nevertheless, the UK could discern its interest in advancing the process of entering new members: the extension of the European structures would mean less integration, and thus not pushing Britain into strengthening monetary relationships. However, the British stance on the enlargement favoured equal criteria for each of the entrants, regardless of progress each state was making.

The next significant issue of the UK's leadership was the EU-USA relations. The proper development of Euro-Atlantic cooperation was of great importance to Great Britain, as it perceived the USA to be the guarantee of European security. The aim of these efforts was, at least partly, achieved by organizing the USA-EU summit in London, on May 18, 1998²⁷². During the meeting, the British opted for limiting American sanctions to European companies, which cooperated with the countries covered with American embargo. However, the Atlantic aspect in British foreign policy played a great role, regardless of the party in

²⁷¹ *Wielka Brytania – Unia Europejska, Materiały i Dokumenty*, Centrum Europejskie Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 1998, p. 33-39.

²⁷² Gołembski F., *Polityka zagraniczna...*, op. cit., p. 100.

power, therefore strengthening the bonds between the USA and EU contributed to both: the UK's proper relationships with the United States as well as good connections between the core states.

1.2. Under Tory rule.

The attitude of British Conservative Party towards the integration processes in Europe has been based on three basic factors²⁷³. Firstly, Great Britain relies on the idea of nationalism, which, in case of Britons, becomes isolationism. Secondly, Britain longs for the superpower role in the world, whereas the last factor concerns the aspirations for being a super-state in Europe. All of these indicators of looking for a proper place in Europe prove that the Tory policy has been mainly interested in developing and regaining Great Britain's dominant position.

A strong attachment to the state's autonomy and an opposition to a federal Europe have always been cherished among Tories, although a pro-European tendency appeared already in Edward Heath's leadership²⁷⁴. He noticed the necessity of making concessions by member states in order to solve economic, political or military problems more effectively, even in the name of a closer integration. However, such a policy was not equally approved of among Tories, which led to creating an anti-integration fraction around Margaret Thatcher. For the "Iron Lady", the integration processes became a tool to achieve desired goals²⁷⁵. She agreed openly to accept the actions of the Community provided that they did not clash with the British reason of state. Moreover, she strongly opposed all plans which could threaten the UK's sovereignty, preferred the independence to possible economic benefits.

The successor of Margaret Thatcher, John Major, had a lot to do since 1990 in order to unite the divided Euro-sceptics and Euro-enthusiasts in the Conservative Party, to prevent the European issues colliding with domestic politics and to lead his party to the fourth successive term in office²⁷⁶. His position as a Prime Minister and the leader of Tories was not too stable, as he did not have a lot of followers inside the party and was little known outside the government. However, the fact that he did not manage any fractions in the party

²⁷³ A. Zięba, *Thatcherizm a zasady brytyjskiej polityki zagranicznej*, „Sprawy Międzynarodowe” 1988, no. 10, p. 52, in: Mazur S., *Stanowisko Brytyjskiej Partii Konserwatywnej wobec procesów integracyjnych zachodzących w EWG*, Zeszyty Naukowe Akademii Ekonomicznej w Krakowie, 1994, no. 437, p. 97.

²⁷⁴ Mazur S., *Stanowisko Brytyjskiej...*, op. cit., p. 98.

²⁷⁵ Ibidem, p. 99.

²⁷⁶ Young J.W., *Britain and European Unity, 1945-1999. Second edition*, London 2000, p. 150-151.

was his chief asset, and helped him unite party members. The party itself longed for a closer inner cooperation, especially on account of the fact of looming election.

Nonetheless, in the ranks of Tories there were adherents of the EC membership, but without diminishing the state sovereignty or being absorbed into a super-state. Thus, trying to sense the Conservative expectations towards his attitude, Major let the British be known as “Euro-pragmatist”, with a “friendly” attitude to Europe²⁷⁷. He did present the vision of Europe as strong nation states, he declared Britain’s readiness and need to be a part of the core states, he advocated a close American alliance, he favoured the plans of enlarging the Community, and he exercised caution to rush into the economic and monetary union. Throughout his term as the Prime Minister, Major’s tone was approaching Euro-realism: in the campaign speech, at Ellesmere Port on 31 May 1994, he advocated a “multi-track, multi-speed, multi-layered” Europe in which different countries would have a choice of cooperation areas they would wish to enter²⁷⁸. He also maintained the UK’s aspirations to lead Europe, but at the same time he realised that Britain needed to cooperate with other powerful states.

John Major’s special relations with the USA was nothing more but cultivating the intention of Churchill who upheld them, especially due to the “English-speaking peoples” he called on during his Fulton speech, on March 5, 1946²⁷⁹. However, even if the rest of the world may question Britain’s position in the international arena, a friendship with America must be fundamental, as the UK, altogether with Europe, needs the USA for NATO security. But much as the British like the Americans, though, Major’s pro-European approach was directed at setting up the Euro-corps²⁸⁰. The Prime Minister’s manoeuvre for obtaining France and Germany’s trust in terms of European affairs on the one hand, and preventing the European defence from being dominated by them, on the other hand, was to persuade the Western European Union members to provide contingents from their own national forces as necessary to cope with challenges affecting the EU interests where NATO was not involved. It would, firstly, not endanger NATO place in Europe, and secondly, all WEU members would be involved on an equal basis with the necessity of WEU Council of Ministers to authorize any development.

Surprisingly, though, the core states – France and Germany – did not share the view of mutual cooperation and understanding since the beginning of the alliance. Both countries, with their over twenty-year-old experience in control of the Community, perceived Britain

²⁷⁷ Ibidem, p. 152.

²⁷⁸ Ibidem, p.165.

²⁷⁹ *Britain and France: So near, and yet so far*, The Economist, London, April 30,1994, p. 21.

²⁸⁰ *Qu’est-ce qu’on fait? Ich weiss nicht*, The Economist, London, May 23, 1992, p. 51.

not to keep up with them²⁸¹. Moreover, they were prone to reject the UK's company, as it did not approve of their belief in a more united Europe. Their scheme for the European army corps put Britain in an uncomfortable position. Yet, Major's belief that if the UK could convince especially the Germans of its commitment to Europe, the collaboration on many common interests would be feasible²⁸². Such a cooperation was exceptionally desired by Britain as the Germans, unlike the French, were the advocate of speeding up the enlargement of the EU.

However, with the origin of the European Union, the prospects for Britain's equal role with France and Germany began to materialize provided that Great Britain would play its hand well. Therefore, when John Major took up the Cabinet and declared in March 1991 Britain's place at the heart of Europe, the EU smaller states hoped for weakening the Franco-German hegemony and gaining the vote for their interests. Unfortunately, the other arguments for British interests appeared at the Maastricht summit, which put Major again in an unfavourable position towards his powerful friends.

The Maastricht Treaty itself gave rise to a big number of reservations in Great Britain, the majority of which appeared in the government. During the parliamentary debate over the ratification, the atmosphere was extremely stormy and it led to the opposition of the majority party, i.e. the Conservative party. The Prime Minister faced the situation in which some ministers of his own Cabinet were against the ratification. Consequently, the British parliament rejected the Treaty, which forced Major to a tricky action. He decided to put a vote of confidence to the whole foreign policy to a vote, and having gained the approval of the House of Commons, thereby the Maastricht Treaty was ratified.

The signing of the Treaty by John Major (February 1992) led to a fierce criticism of the right of Tories, as its decisions aimed at a deeper economic, political and monetary integration²⁸³. The very issue of the monetary union, however, was a trouble spot for British domestic politics, which became even more troublesome along with the Maastricht Treaty. Major believed in his success at Maastricht talks as he managed to win "opt-out" clause for the UK concerning Social Charter and EMU, but it virtually exacerbated the difference of opinions in the party. Some were more interested in parliamentary sovereignty, others cared for national independence, others concerned for free enterprise, and there were also the few who had never wanted to join the European Community²⁸⁴.

²⁸¹ *On the verge of Europe*, The Economist. London, June 11, 1994, p. 51.

²⁸² *Qu'est-ce...*, op. cit.

²⁸³ Mazur S., *Stanowisko Brytyjskiej...*, op. cit., p. 101.

²⁸⁴ Young J.W., *Britain and European...*, op. cit., p. 159.

Furthermore, after the Maastricht summit Major lost the confidence of Helmut Kohl, who helped him win arguments for British interests²⁸⁵. During the long ratification process, the Prime Minister was attempting to please his party's Euro-sceptics rather than his European partners, which reinforced their belief about Britain's willingness to stay in the slow lane. By preferring to placate his own party fellows and cared for the UK's interests to the real possibility of accompanying the two biggest powers, the Prime Minister would condemn himself and his party to loneliness²⁸⁶.

The UK's approval of the EU enlargement has always been the part of British policy. The Britain's willingness to open to new countries arouse, to a great extent, from its reluctance to seek for a deeper integration, especially to enter EMU. John Major emphasized repeatedly that he continued the vision of the founders of the European Community²⁸⁷. He agreed with all member states' duty towards the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe and the necessity of incorporating them into the European structures in order to prevent divisions in Europe. Thus, Major's performance over the argument about countries' voting rights after the proposed enlargement of the EU terrified Tories as well as member states²⁸⁸. His manoeuvres with first championing the wider EU, then threatening to veto the enlargement in order to oppose new voting rules and finally accepting them did not win him support either in Britain or in the European arena²⁸⁹.

On the contrary, the confusion filled Tories with disgust. The Europhiles among the Conservatives were terrified with "the growing anti-federalist populism of the Prime Minister", whereas the Europhobes were rampant²⁹⁰. It seemed that Major's leadership was put to the test, not necessarily passed. It seemed as well that although Tories had always been divided on everything to do with the European Union, the Maastricht Treaty woke up even the sleeping parts. But for sure, this unpopular move proved that John Major was still a big enigma to his fellows. He could not be seen through in terms of European affairs; he seemed neither to like foreigners, not to dislike them²⁹¹. Even for his friends in Parliament he played a role of a chameleon, saying different things to different people. But also, even if his objective was to convince a sceptical Parliament of his European commitments, the paradox was that the majority of Tories advocated the vision of Europe committed to free

²⁸⁵ *On the verge of...*, op. cit.

²⁸⁶ *Perfidious Albion*, The Economist, London, March 26, 1994, p. 17.

²⁸⁷ Major J., *Raise your eyes, there is a land beyond*, The Economist, London, September 25, 1993, p. 27.

²⁸⁸ *Bedraggled bulldog*, The Economist, London, March 26, 1994, p. 71.

²⁸⁹ *Britain's European headache*, The Economist, London, April 2, 1994, p. 16.

²⁹⁰ *Bedraggled...*, op. cit.

²⁹¹ *An uncertain Idea of Europe*, The Economist, London, December 19, 1992, p. 59.

trade, a Europe of nations, a Europe enlarged. Nevertheless, they lacked the leader who could represent their country's and Europe's interests.

However, the Tories' "inner problem" was also noticed by the observers of the British and European scene. Will Hutton, the columnist for *The Observer*, raised the issue of Britain's clash between its own system and the economic and social goals of the European partners²⁹². He argued that the UK had no choice but to participate in the European integration process, which would require essential changes concerning political, social and economic institutions as they differed to a great extent from the European ones. Nevertheless, the Conservatives, claimed Hutton, seemed not to realize that to become "at the heart of Europe" the transformations should not be resisted. The conservatism and division in the ranks of Tories would undoubtedly lead to a favourable position of the opposition, whose objectives went hand in hand with the European integration's. That was, though, the scenario which appeared to be real.

The Tories' disputes over the visions and policies within their party and the country did not cease to appear with the defeat of the Conservative government. On the contrary, the discussions and arguments grew in strength along with more EU ideas towards a closer integration. The Euro-sceptical attitude among Tories began to win especially around the time of entering the euro zone. The time also abounded with more marked cleavages and differences of opinions although the Conservatives still put aside the possibility of tearing the party in two²⁹³. The statements of the former Prime Minister John Major and the European Commissioner Chris Patten in October 1999 about the "absurd and mad" Conservative thinking on the European Union and "the party shifting too far to the right, from where it could not possibly win an election", met with the opposing remarks²⁹⁴. Tory party chairman Michael Ancram assured he expressed the opinions of most British people saying against the single currency and further European integration. Moreover, he denied Tories being called "extreme" only because they fought for saving the pound whereas "others" were willing to sell the country.

The issue of joining or not the economic and monetary union, though, became closely associated with the enlargement of the EU. Since the memorable manoeuvre of Major as the Prime Minister in March 1994, the threat of stopping the process of enlargement or the pressure on speeding it up appeared each time Britain was hurried up

²⁹² Hutton W., *The Tories' real problem with Europe*, Guardian Weekly, April 3, 1994, p. 19.

²⁹³ *Tories in opposition: special report, Tories in turmoil*, Guardian, October 14, 1999, Internet: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,3912252,00.html>.

²⁹⁴ *Tories: We're not extreme*, October 13, 1999, BBC News, Internet: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/uk_news/politics/473163.stm.

with its decision. And again, the Conservatives were prone to threaten the future treaty on enlargement unless they got what they aimed at, which could force one to think: how much was that a real, historical need to welcome new members, and how much was that just a calculation?²⁹⁵.

1.3. Labour Party in power.

The victory of the Labour Party in the May 1997 parliamentary election brought essential changes in the European dimension of British foreign policy. First of all due to the fact that a new leader of the party and the Prime Minister was the man with fresh ideas on transformations in a domestic as well as foreign policy, but also owing to the return to power the party with a fixed attitude to European integration. The party, however, whose stance since 1988 accepted the membership of the Community as an unchangeable part of British politics²⁹⁶. Its leader, though, became famous for his pro-European views as early as in 1994 when, as a Labour leader, created a “Europe Group” associated with all aspects of EU policy²⁹⁷. His objective at that time was to perceive the Labour as an anti-federalist party, but willing to cooperate with the EU partners in order to change the image of an isolated country.

The first evident difference between the Conservative and Labour Party on the European integration appeared around the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. The Labourers did not hesitate to sign the Social Charter, thereby giving Major apparent success at Maastricht and condemning themselves to divisions about Europe. But no matter how the party was frustrated to attack the government, its then leader John Smith could stop his fellows from fierce debates. Nevertheless, despite some splits among the Labour party and weaker views of Smith’s successor Tony Blair on Europe, the 1997 election belonged to Blair and his party. As a matter of fact, it was the issue of European policy – over which the Tories were torn apart and Labours unified – which let Blair win the term, although the precise views of the Prime Minister on the key matters, such as EMU, in 1997 stayed unknown.

During the consecutive years, however, Blair’s attitude to the EU issues began to clarify, though few Labour representatives stood in contradiction to each other²⁹⁸. Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of Exchequer, was a big proponent of joining the monetary union,

²⁹⁵ Ibidem.

²⁹⁶ Young J.W., *Britain and European...*, op. cit., p. 175.

²⁹⁷ Gowan P., *The UK in search of...*, op. cit., p. 216.

²⁹⁸ Young J.W., *Britain and European...*, op. cit., p. 176.

whereas Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, expressed more scepticism to it. However, the Prime Minister's party's views were becoming more open to accept common measures against "racialism and isolationism" and to gain partners. Therefore, Labourers still believed in Washington alliance, with Blair's idea of "Clintonisation of Labour", i.e. modernisation based partly on recent Democratic experience. Furthermore, it was proudly emphasized that the cooperation of NATO was the key element of the British policy as well as the aspirations to satisfy national interests through the European Union and caring about the rapport between the EU and the USA.

In his political philosophy Blair attempted to search for the "Third Way", leaving the policy of Old Labours with the state interventionism, and directing at a liberal economic model and a problem-solving social policy²⁹⁹. The idea, though, assumed the possibility of joining liberal solutions of economy with the principles of social justice, which became the basis of the New Labour party. Nevertheless, the conception did not protect itself from being criticised. Hugo Young in his article in *Guardian Weekly* presented the attitude of Blair's Labours to people and with people sarcastically³⁰⁰. The author claimed that the Prime Minister perceived the new policy towards social matters to be favourable for him, as the big involvement in government he offered to the people must have been of a tricky nature. He believed that Blair's programme "in the name of the majority" was a way of telling people what was good for them and then regarded the people as the authors of the decisions they had nothing to do with. Anyway, the comprehension of the "Third Way" by politicians differed from that of journalists. Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, related the idea to the foreign policy, especially the Britain-USA relations, perceiving it as "somewhere between *row and kowtow*",³⁰¹.

Blair's care for social matters reflected in signing up to the Social Chapter on taking office in May 1997³⁰². However, his approval for even more European changes appeared with the Amsterdam Treaty, on 16-17 June 1997. The Prime Minister had to combine two potentially conflicting objectives: winning the core members' trust as a "normal" member state with concern for EU problems while defending its own interests, and not provoking the Euro-sceptical media in Britain to believe in selling out the UK's interests or favouring the federalist vision of the EU. Nevertheless, Blair attempted to back up at Amsterdam the transformations, which would never find the adherents among the Tories³⁰³. He approved of

²⁹⁹ Gołembski F., *Polityka zagraniczna...*, op. cit., p. 92.

³⁰⁰ Young H., *Who governs Britain: parliament or people?*, *Guardian Weekly*, October 12 1997, p. 14.

³⁰¹ Lockwood Ch., *Cook praises security services' safe hands*, *The Daily Telegraph* from April 24, 1998, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/htmlContent.jhtml?=/archive/1998/04/24/nsec24.html>.

³⁰² Young J.W., *Britain and European...*, op. cit., p. 177.

³⁰³ Gowan P., *The UK in search of...*, op. cit., p. 218.

small increases in the powers of the European Parliament, in the fields of co-decisions, proposing the Commission president and having a say on the distribution of portfolios. Moreover, Blair agreed to the UK's entering the Social Protocol in 1999, accepted a great definition of basic rights and human rights within the Treaty, and a greater EU-WEU cooperation on so-called Petersburg peacekeeping actions.

However, some of Blair's moves stayed in accordance with the stances of his predecessor. He maintained the British control over its own borders and insisted on measures to prevent "quota-hopping", the practice where non-British fishermen managed to buy up the UK's fishing quotas. Just as Major, he declared that NATO should be the centre of security and defence policy. He insisted that he would never agree to any commitment in the treaty to a WEU-EU merger as NATO had proved itself to be the best solution for Britain and Europe³⁰⁴. Blair strongly resisted to France and Germany's plan to create a European defence force, underlining markedly that NATO should stay "the cornerstone of European defence"³⁰⁵.

Yet, not long as a year later, the Labour leader was willing to consider an option of subsuming the WEU into the EU, the plan which could not find a single support in the previous Conservative government³⁰⁶. In October 1998, the Prime Minister claimed that Britain was ready to consider a defence role of the EU³⁰⁷. His change of stance, however, had a lot to do with his European partners – France and Germany – and Britain's willingness to play a leading role in Europe along with the core states. Hence, Mr Blair's strategic move was supposed to win favour with them, even if it meant attacks from the opposition. Out of the sudden, the Labour leader could not notice a negative reaction of NATO, or the Tories' accusations of Blair's steps towards a closer integration with the EU.

The Amsterdam summit stressed the further preparations for the economic and monetary union, the issue which was troublesome for Britain as well as its European partners. Nonetheless, the Labour decided to leave the option for the UK entering the euro zone open, and Gordon Brown's decision to make the Bank of England independent of government control let the potential EMU membership make easier³⁰⁸. The British indecisiveness on whether or when "be or not to be" the part of EMU raised the other

³⁰⁴ Helm T, Lockwood Ch., *Blair heads off European army*, The Daily Telegraph from 18 June 1997, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/htmlContent.jhtml?=/archive/1997/06/18/weur18.html>.

³⁰⁵ Helm T., *EU urged to review policy on defence*, The Daily Telegraph from 19 November 1997, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/htmlContent.jhtml?=/archive/1997/11/19/weu19.html>.

³⁰⁶ Butcher T., *Britain leads call for EU defence shake-up*, The Daily Telegraph from 5 November 1998, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/htmlContent.jhtml?=/archive/1998/11/05/wdef05.html>.

³⁰⁷ Hibbs J., *Blair ready to concede defence role for Europe*, The Daily Telegraph from 21 October 1998, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/htmlContent.jhtml?=/archive/1998/10/21/ndef21.html>.

³⁰⁸ Young J.W., *Britain and European...*, op. cit., p. 178.

members' curiosity and irony during the summit³⁰⁹. The UK was placed at the centre of Europe in connection with revealing the design of the euro coins, one and two euro pieces of which showed the United Kingdom's flag in the middle of them. The designs won the Prime Minister and the Queen's favour and thereby should have dispelled the doubts about losing a part of British identity with the replacement of national currency.

However, the case of entering EMU became more complex for Labour party with the first real crisis which revealed in late September 1997³¹⁰. The Cabinet and the voters still feared the prospects of the single currency, to that extent that the rumours about the possible membership led to a fall in the value of Sterling and to the division in the government. For the danger of risking the victory of the next election, though, Brown rejected the rumours of EMU, but at the same time, condemned Britain to being peripheral to the EU's one of the most important projects leading to a deeper integration.

Nevertheless, two days before the Amsterdam summit Blair was regarded as a man with great efforts to persuade his EU partners about his vision of Europe, and moreover, he was also on the way up among the Labour³¹¹. On the one hand the European media favoured him, which made him a man of a big popularity with European politicians, on the other hand, he won Commons' majority, which allowed ignoring his party's few Euro-sceptics. Thus, Mr Blair was willing to take advantage of being a superstar and intended to make concessions in order to force through his conceptions. For this reason, he was prepared to consider more qualified majority voting in the EU, but stayed reluctant to other integrationist moves. Furthermore, he was keen on promoting "the labour-market flexibility" with the focus on employability rather than employment, which raised fears of many European leaders. But the most crucial question before the summit still belonged to the European single currency. It remained doubtful, however, whether Britain would join EMU, therefore the Europeans tended to believe that the UK's involvement in the monetary union potential problems might have meant delaying the whole project.

Nonetheless, the summit proved the Prime Minister not to be "everyone's Euro star". It must be admitted, though, that he found the domestic press understanding in his European pretensions, but he missed his opportunity to put Britain "at the heart of Europe" and become the leader of it³¹². Why? The answer seems to be obvious: the UK was and will be fundamentally different in its domestic politics, it was and will always be perceived to be a

³⁰⁹ Helm T., Jones G., *New EU coin puts Britain at the centre of Europe*, The Daily Telegraph from 17 June 1997, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/htmlContent.jhtml?=/archive/1997/06/17/wcoi17.html>.

³¹⁰ Young J.W., *Britain and European...*, op. cit., p. 180.

³¹¹ *Eurohoneymoon*, The Economist, London, June 14, 1997, p. 59-60.

³¹² *Bagehot: Tony, the fabulous prince*, The Economist, London, June 21, 1997, p. 60.

newcomer in the EU, and moreover, it had and will have unsympathetic society to some European issues. While Blair had to persuade his people that the European dimension of British policy complied with its national interests, most of the European partners could take it for granted. Furthermore, when at Amsterdam it was officially stated that EMU would start on January 1, 1999, Britain's staying out of it would not help lead Europe.

The Amsterdam summit was also dominated by the Union's institutional changes and voting rules. Each treaty's objective is to extend the areas of majority voting in the European Council of Ministers, as with the bigger number of members reaching a consensus on some matters is impossible. Hence, the summiteers in Amsterdam attempted to improve the process of decision-making, especially for the prospects of inviting more countries. However, the issue met its opponents, and the case of agreed foreign policy, at Britain's insistence, was additionally equipped with an "emergency brake" for countries, which would stop them being outvoted if they saw their national interest endangered³¹³. Such a mechanism would apply to a "flexibility" idea of adopting common policies only if countries wished to. Blair was also persuaded to vote for "flexibility" in the case of majority voting, but he decided to be for the emergency brake.

The aim of the treaty to prepare the EU for its eastward enlargement was not completely achieved. The summiteers did make some decisions but they did not reach a conclusive agreement as to accept quickly all promising candidates, thus indicating the time for new changes when the applicants were closer to join³¹⁴.

The first term of Blair in power abounded with disputes over the European way of the UK, its "be or not to be" in euro zone, enhancing the issue of enlargement and the USA alliance as well as fighting with the criticism of the Tories. However, the Conservatives had to ease their anti-European tone when a former Tory party chairman, Chris Patten, became the EU commissioner in charge of the enlargement into Central and Eastern Europe³¹⁵; the nomination, which could not be overlooked by the Labours. The Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, found the subject of Mr Patten good enough to tease the Tories, expressing how "delighted" he was to see such a person responsible for enlarging the EU, but in fact, meaning how puzzled they must have been to have a Europhile among them³¹⁶. But the sarcasm in his words still stayed when Mr Cook was surprised to notice why "the whole

³¹³ *Mountains still to climb*, The Economist, London, June 21, 1997, p. 51-52.

³¹⁴ *Cheer up, Europe*, The Economist, London, June 21, 1997, p. 17.

³¹⁵ Walker M., *Patten goes straight into key EU job*, The Guardian, July 7, 1999, Internet: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/print/0,,3881209-10368500.html>.

³¹⁶ Hoggart S., *Commons sketch: Confident Cook eats his words*, The Guardian, July 21, 1999, Internet: www.guardian.co.uk/parl/Story/0,,197515,00.html.

Europe was queuing up to get on the bus which the Conservative party wanted to get off” in a discussion of the EU expansion.

It was not the first time, though, the Foreign Secretary attacked the Tories, as more “word battles” appeared each time the issue of EMU was mentioned. Around the time of planned euro campaign, Mr Cook accused the Conservatives of using “the language of fear and hysteria” while opposing the monetary union and other EU initiatives³¹⁷. He indicated a marked difference between a hostile Tory’s attitude to Europe and the Labour’s commitment to cooperating with other EU states. Moreover, the Tories were also accused of being in inner opposition on whether they would work with other centre-right groupings in the European Parliament which were for the single currency.

Nevertheless, the campaign concerning Britain’s in or out the euro zone involved both parties and brought in some confusion. The Conservative leader, William Hague, decided to join the action in a specially-adapted lorry encouraging the British to save the pound acting against misbehaviour of senior Tory ministers, Kenneth Clarke and Michael Heseltine³¹⁸. They made a compromise with Tony Blair and Liberal Democrat leader, Charles Kennedy, in favour of pro-European alliance, promoting a cross-party support on European issues. Although the representatives of the opposition did not regard their engagement as an act of disloyalty, the Tories tended to accuse the “Britain in Europe” campaign of being a cover for joining EMU. In the appraisal of the journalists, however, the campaign aimed at opposing the Euro-sceptic argument over Europe, the argument that seemed to be winning³¹⁹. Tony Blair wished to dissuade the Tory Euro-sceptics from their belief in having the majority of the public opinion, and as soon as he succeeded he wanted to hold the euro referendum. According to the political scene observers, the Tories division on the question of Europe was nothing surprising, the same as Blair’s slowly approaching positive attitude of Britons about Europe.

However, the argument between the parties on crucial matters for the European integration – the enlargement and the economic and monetary union – was sometimes regarded as “the discourse in an atmosphere of terror”, which was fuelled by politicians as well as newspapers³²⁰. Hugo Young in his article in *the Guardian* described *the Sun*, *the Times*, *the Mail* and *the Telegraph* to be the most biased against pro-European government.

³¹⁷ *Fear and hysteria in Europe, Cook warns*, BBC news from June 1, 1999, Internet: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/events/euros_99/news/358088.stm.

³¹⁸ *Hague begins „Battle for Britain”*, BBC news from October 15, 1999, Internet: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/uk_news/politics/472518.stm.

³¹⁹ *Q&A: Britain in Europe*, BBC news from October 14, 1999, Internet: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/uk_news/politics/475103.stm.

³²⁰ Young H., *Strike a blow for Europe – defeat the reign of terror*, *The Guardian*, October 14, 1999, Internet: www.guardian.co.uk/tol/news/world/article0,,567834,00.html.

Moreover, the hostile attitude of the Tories to the EU would result in “no” towards its enlarging provided the treaties were renegotiated. But mad as it seemed to be, would the Conservatives’ terror eventually lead to the greater awareness of public opinion and the victory of the pro-Euro movement in persuading the British to the currency?

The nearest future, though, proved the vision not to be realistic. The discourse on Europe from the Conservative and Labour’s point of view still went on. The Labours, in the words of Mr Cook, declared their pro-European enthusiasm as an attempt to overcome “the wave of Euro-scepticism”, thus cautiously tackling the issue of joining EMU³²¹. The Tories, on the other hand, abode by their opposition to a more centralised Europe, accusing the government European strategy of being “a disaster for Britain and Europe as a whole”. Moreover, John Maples, shadow Foreign Secretary, claimed that Britain under Labour power was losing its interests by being encouraged towards a European super-state.

Mr Blair tried to push away the Conservative opposition for fear of being subjected to “national humiliation or exit from Europe”³²². He did realise that the British were not willing to enter the euro zone, but the vision of a European super-state did not frighten him. What did worry the Prime Minister, though, was his unfavourable image – as “arrogant, metropolitan, swanky and out of touch” – especially created by the press³²³. Although his strategists attempted to imitate Bill Clinton’s natural ease and confidence while coping with the public, but without much success. The anti-EU media, led by *the Sun*, carried out a “battle” in return of an attack of Alastair Campbell, the Prime Minister’s press secretary. The battle, however, which Blair decided to give up on, and turned to television viewers instead. The press is the power that cannot be omitted, and when it is, the repercussions may be dramatic.

Mr Blair cared much about the way he was perceived by the public for the reason of promoting his pro-European politics among the British people, an honest picture of his attempts at the meetings with EU partners, but also for the reason of approaching parliamentary election. Again, the time around the next significant summit to be accompanied by the treaty in Nice was occupied by intensified discussions between the government and the opposition. Francis Maude, the Tory foreign affairs spokesman, declared the Conservatives’ intention to make an election issue of an EU treaty to be signed in Nice in December 2000³²⁴. The Tories dreaded of the next move towards a deeper

³²¹ *Europe to head Labour’s agenda*, BBC news from January 6, 2000, Internet: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/uk_news/593314.stm.

³²² *Britain: Blair’s plan for Europe*, *The Economist*, London, February 19, 2000, p. 55-56.

³²³ Ashley J., *Blair gives up on the press*, *New Statesman*, London, December 18, 2000, p. 8.

³²⁴ Jones G., *Maude issues election challenge on EU power*, *The Daily Telegraph*, June 8, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/htmlContent.jhtml?=/archive/2000/06/08/neuro08.html>.

integration in the form of extending qualified majority voting. Moreover, Mr Maude blamed Mr Blair for consenting to the creation of a super-state by other EU leaders, who he was “timidly tagging behind”.

The outcome of the Nice summit did not satisfy the opposition either. The Prime Minister’s expectations to be achieved during the gathering had been widely known³²⁵. Firstly, the aspirations for a bigger and safer Europe through the expansion with Central and Eastern European countries. Secondly, he desired to create a single speed Europe headed by Germany and France, but with Britain not to be left behind on the one hand, and not to be dragged into a super-state, on the other. Thirdly, the Labour leader wished for a stronger Britain, the one which could be supported by other member states of the EU in order to make its voice louder. Moreover, Mr Blair was prepared to fight for a protected Britain, which did not lose its “red lines” vetoes on tax, social security, treaty changes, defence, the EU budget and borders.

Although the premier’s intentions may not have been shared equally by the whole British political scene, at least the subject of the EU enlargement was fully agreed with, even the Conservatives. However, the outcome of the Nice summit was not welcomed warmly by the Tories. Their accusations mainly concerned pushing away the veto in 23 areas, the human rights charter and a Euro army³²⁶. The Prime Minister, though, claimed that he had “fought Britain’s corner” and preserved the veto in key areas of a national interest, which included moves to harmonise tax and social security³²⁷. In defence of his decisions, he stated that the agreement to extend qualified majority voting resulted from the necessity of such changes in the EU of 27 or 30 members in order not to block decisions. The Tories’ worries about the human rights charter, however, appeared three months before the summit³²⁸. At that time the government fought for new social and economic rights being included in the European Union’s Final Charter of Fundamental Rights, for fear of undermining Britain’s free-market system. The Conservatives stayed in opposition, calling on the cabinet to veto the charter, thus preventing the EU from developing into a super-state.

The last explosive issue, though, was creating so-called Euro army, which Mr Hague perceived as “independent and autonomous European identity that duplicated and conflicted

³²⁵ Lloyd Ch., *Will Nice be nice for the Brits?*, Northern Echo, Darlington (UK), December 7, 2000, p. 18.

³²⁶ Kallenbach M., *Yesterday in Parliament*, The Daily Telegraph, December 12, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/12/12/npar12.xml>.

³²⁷ Blair sold us short in Nice, says Hague, The Daily Telegraph, December 12, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/12/12/nice12.xml>.

³²⁸ Evans-Pritchard A., *Britain fights EU rights charter*, The Daily Telegraph, September 12, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/09/12/write12.xml>.

the structures of NATO”³²⁹. Taking into consideration the whole achievement of Tony Blair at Nice, the Tory leader suggested a different vision for Europe: “it would be a modern, reformed, flexible Europe, fit for the challenges of enlargement and the needs of the modern world”. One might ask: what, then, was the Europe Mr Blair was heading for?

Although the Nice Treaty met Tory’s opposition, they still emphasized their strong desire to speed up the process of enlargement. Moreover, William Hague demanded that there should be a firm date arranged for the applicants regardless of the Conservatives’ objection to the ratification of the treaty³³⁰. The opposition leader advocated creating “an enlarged area of peace and stability across Europe”, especially including the countries harassed by tyrannical communists. At a European Democratic Union conference of Centre-Right leaders in Berlin, Mr Hague was convincing his fellows to set the dates for accession.

2. Great Britain versus other members of integrating structures towards the enlargement.

As much as Great Britain had been fighting for its vision of Europe, the relationships among the influential member states and the advancement of some processes in the EU, with a special emphasis on the enlargement, the same effort had been put by the other EU countries, with a special regard for the core states, i.e. Germany and France. Those two powers had been undergoing changeable periods of rapports with the United Kingdom, which were mostly caused by the perception of national interests harmonizing with the European ones.

However, the objective of NATO as well as the European Union of enlarging their structures and ensuring new countries with security and democratic, altogether with economic stability, was especially favoured by Great Britain. In the case of the Atlantic Alliance, though, the UK could not follow any national business, as the matter of military guarantee of peace in Europe and in the world was beyond any question. Nevertheless, Britain’s inclination to welcoming new members of the EU could bring some doubts whether its attitude was nothing else than a sheer care for a balanced development of the continent, or there might be hidden reasons for maintaining such a stance.

Yet, taking into consideration Great Britain’s efforts to cut through to the leading core, it seemed to be obvious that the state was driven to act in favour of the enlargement in

³²⁹ Kallenbach M., *Yesterday...*, op. cit.

³³⁰ Jones G., *Hague calls on EU to speed up enlargement*, The Daily Telegraph, January 12, 2001, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2001/01/12/neu12.xml>.

order to weaken the position of Germany in the EU in general and French commitments to some moves of common policies, which were unacceptable for the UK³³¹. Moreover, in the British interest was to speed up the process of extending in order to delay the actions for a closer integration, just as the economic and monetary union. On the other hand, however, one could not exclude the fact that Britain wished to invite new members for the reason of a historical and traditional attitude of contributing to a well-balanced arrangement of the economic power in the world.

2.1. British interests for NATO and the EU new alliances.

A close connection between the USA and the UK has always been regarded as the top priority in the British foreign policy. No wonder, though, that the issue of NATO enlargement found its place in the British political arena, despite the fact that there was no ratification debate on the Alliance expansion in the Great Britain's parliament. However, the lack of this procedure did not stop the British from a debate on the process, which aimed at expressing different views on it, rather than influencing the ratification itself.

It is essential to underline that all political parties in the UK had approved of the Atlantic Alliance since its establishment in 1949, which undoubtedly contrasted with their attitudes to the country's membership in the European Communities. Nonetheless, it does not mean that there were not any disputes among the British politicians over the involvement in the forces. There were, the same as the temperature of the relationships between two allies, which had changed according to the operations held by NATO³³². There was the other side of fluctuation in the British attitude to NATO actions: the party in power. The Conservative cabinet of John Major had less favourable relations with Bill Clinton, which was reflected in the differences in coping with the crisis in the former Yugoslavia, whereas the Labour government became more Atlanticist, which revived the atmosphere on the Blair-Clinton line and the engagement of British forces³³³.

Yet, in the statements of the American president, the appraisal of the relations with the former Prime Minister John Major was satisfactory³³⁴. Although the atmosphere at the beginning of Clinton's presidency was strained, both politicians proved to be responsible and professional, bearing in mind how a great deal of business they had to carry out, one of

³³¹ Swatridge C., *Europe and the British press*, European Integration Studies, v. 2, no. 2 (2003), p. 39.

³³² Sharp J.M.O., *British Views on NATO Enlargement*, in: Serfaty S., Cambone S., *NATO Enlargement. The National Debates over Ratification*", Internet: <http://www.nato.int/acad/conf/enlarg97/home.htm>.

³³³ *Ibidem*.

³³⁴ Walker M., *Clinton makes a new friend at No 10*, The Guardian Weekly, June 8, 1997, p. 6.

which was undoubtedly NATO. Therefore, when Blair came to power he desired to combine the enlargement of the European Union with the NATO expansion, which would tighten Anglo-American bonds and establish intimacy and indispensability of both in the integrating structures.

However, Blair's government distinguished more benefits from the cooperation. It did also realise that the UK's value for the USA was closely associated with its leading role in the EU, which was emphasized by the Foreign Secretary, Mr Cook. After all, the United Kingdom perceived its goal in joining the military structures and opening its door to the new members. Firstly, the alliance with the United States meant keeping under control either Germany or Russia and prevent them from potential eagerness to dominate Europe. Secondly, the enlargement of NATO was supposed to keep Germany tied to the western democracies and the institutions of the western security community, thus sharing the role of a co-ordinator for the new countries and allowing other EU states to play the role, especially Britain.

The British ambassador to Washington, John Kerr, at an international conference in January 1997 emphasized the importance of the enlargement, stating that the process should correct the injustice of Yalta³³⁵. Moreover, he postulated that there was the right time to accept new candidates as it was difficult to predict how long the door would remain open. Mr Kerr dissuaded the EU states from creating a European Security and Defence Identity, since it could threaten transatlantic cohesion which was the guarantee of NATO security.

The United Kingdom could act as an advocate of the NATO expansion when the ambassadors from the 19 NATO countries were expected to appoint the UK Defence Secretary, George Robertson, as the head of the Alliance³³⁶. His candidacy found the support of the US Defence Secretary as well as a favourable response of other NATO leaders. Mr Robertson approved of the enlargement as one of the top prior actions, expressing his care for giving security to another generation.

Britain's aspirations for the expansion of the European Union, however, resulted from different reasons, although a common interest between those two processes existed: the UK's ambition for a political clout in the international scene. A lot of British newspapers posed the question of why their country was pressing so much for the Central and Eastern European states to accede to the EU and the answer did not surprise anyone³³⁷. The

³³⁵ Sharp J.M.O., *British Views...*, op. cit.

³³⁶ *Robertson poised for top NATO job*, BBC news from August 1, 1999, Internet: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/uk_news/politics/409203.stm.

³³⁷ Craske O., *Why the Change of Heart?* Review of CEE issues in the UK press since 26 June 2000, Central Europe Review, Internet: <http://www.ce-review.org/00/26/craske26.html>.

journalists spotted the connection between some European leaders' moves towards further integration and Britain's immediate response. When French president Jacques Chirac called on 27 June 2000 for creating a "pioneering group" within the EU in order to fasten the integration, the UK noticed the danger of forming a "two-speed" Europe, which was in a strong opposition to its vision. Blair's government feared of losing the influence in the EU as well as deepening the divisions in the country, therefore pushed ahead the issue of the enlargement.

Robin Cook, in the reaction to Chirac and Schroeder's plans of a federal Europe, insisted on Britain's role as the champion of the expansion³³⁸. He explained that new countries needed reassurance about the model of the EU they were aspiring for, thus could not face the Union of inequalities, with a threat of being excluded one day. Yet, if Britain really wished to give assurance of new entrees, it must have taken into consideration the fact that the fresh EU members would wait for its support, if not some benefits. Was, then, the UK ready to bear the responsibility?

The question does not seem to be groundless, as at the times of Major's government, Britain was also inclined to champion the enlargement, but facing the entrance of Austria, Sweden and Finland, appeared to be losing its faith³³⁹. And again, the doubt about welcoming new countries was closely associated with the shifts in voting powers in the European Council of Ministers, which brought a lot of objections. Such a situation proved that Britain did not realise what kind of transformations the process of enlargement required. Besides, it could also bring the thought of British self-interest, though being a part of an integrative community.

The subject of the enlargement in the context of the Nice summit appeared around the period of the general election in Britain. Robin Cook was convinced that the European issues would eventually divide the Labour and the Conservatives during the election, as their only objective was to stay out of Europe³⁴⁰. The Foreign Secretary propagated the idea of "A Labour Britain leading Europe or a Tory Britain leaving Europe". On the other hand, there were the Tories' voices which criticized the Labour's vision of the EU as a superpower and their aspirations "to be in Europe and run by Europe"³⁴¹. Francis Maude accused the Labours, and the Prime Minister in general, of leading Britain into the organization of a

³³⁸ Ibidem.

³³⁹ Palmer J., *Major plays Russian roulette over Europe*, The Guardian Weekly, March 27, 1994, p. 12.

³⁴⁰ *Cook attacks Tory Euro policy*, BBC news from February 17, 2001, Internet: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/uk_news/politics/1175533.stm.

³⁴¹ *Blair wants to be in Europe and run by Europe-Maude*, Conservative Party- News Story, Internet: http://www.conservatives.com/tile.do?def=news.story.page&obj_id=249.

European federation, which would damage NATO, the UK's relations with the USA and threaten the national interests.

However, no matter how acute the accusations against the Labour leader were, his victory for the second term proved the trust of the British people and their belief in the vision of Europe to come true. But, what had he in fact achieved to bring people closer to Europe and European problems to the people? Since coming back to power in 1997, Blair had managed to free the Bank of England, rewrite half of the British constitution, half-repair the relations with the EU by signing the "social chapter", promote a more independent European policy and promise a referendum to join EMU³⁴². So, his first term goals seemed to look quite impressive, although there was still a lot to be done and Mr Blair was eager to respond to a challenge. In terms of Britain in the European Union, however, the Labour leader still aspired for changing the UK's position in Europe into the leading one. He distinguished British strength in its close bonds with the United States, the EU membership and the G7 and the power of the English language.

Nevertheless, he felt that he needed to work hard to change Britain's attitude to Europe. The Conservative views on Europe were effective, which resulted in the British becoming more suspicious of the EU, being oppose to joining the euro, in favour of leaving the EU or willing to decrease the EU power. Despite the fact, though, that he attempted to remove the possibility of the EU transforming into a super-state, he faced the fears coming from the ambivalence over the issue. Again, the "problem of Europe" was tearing Britain apart because of the Tories, whose attitude was becoming more and more enigmatic: did they really want the UK to be a full member with all necessary compromises to take, or did they prefer being left at the margins? These puzzles posed the questions none of the Conservatives, let alone a new Tories' leader, Iain Duncan Smith, were willing to answer³⁴³.

The harsh campaign against Europe began along with the project of the European Constitution, which pushed Smith's party into threats of leaving Europe unless the idea was dramatically watered down³⁴⁴. However, all rumours connected with the Constitution had more to do with British interests for the EU in a confrontation with the EU partners – the core states – which will be thoroughly described in the following chapter.

³⁴² *Britain: Tony's big ambitions*, The Economist, London, June 9, 2001, p. 57.

³⁴³ Riddell P., *Enlargement will set Europe on the road to reform and renewal*, The Times, December 17, 2002, Internet: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/politics/article802879.ece>.

³⁴⁴ Hinsliff G., *Europe row splits open again as top Tory attacks IDS*, The Observer, May 25, 2003, Internet: <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/print/0,,4676628-110406,00.html>.

2.2. The core states about the EU enlargement.

The British relationships with the two founders of the European Communities, Germany and France, might be rated as troublesome, which results from two various reasons. The first one concerns the UK's reluctance and unwillingness to engage in a deeper union of continental countries, such as the Coal and Steel Community, the Economic Community, or the Monetary System, just only to accept the rules and join the structure after the venture works. The second reason, however, is connected with the inclination of Germany and France towards their domination in the EU. Taking both facts into consideration, though, one may state that this "friendship of three" can only result in a test of strength rather than a real cooperation for the sake of the EU.

Although Great Britain has been doing its best in a diplomatic way to enter the core of the Union, its prospects of making a breakthrough in German-Franco-British relations depend, to a large extent, on mutual interests as well as tolerance. Some journalists believed that Britain did a lot to be left on the margins of the EU³⁴⁵. First of all, the UK seemed not to decide whether it should join the euro zone, the EU central project, which put it in a worse position of the country that was able to do it, but was unwilling to act against its domestic interest, condemning itself to an "outsider" in the EU, at the same time. Moreover, Mr Blair relied on Germany's new chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, who, at the beginning of his term, expressed the conviction of Britain's participation in "a tripartite alliance to lead the EU". Nevertheless, the Prime Minister appeared not to realise the fact that Mr Schroeder's affection for Great Britain was soon counter-balanced by the francophilia. Finally, the close intellectual and personal bonds of the Labour Party with the Democrats in the USA, rather than with social democrats in Europe, did not help Britain break the domination of the core states.

The next nail in the coffin, however, turned out to be the lack of British politicians' knowledge about European politics³⁴⁶. Whereas German and French politicians and civil servants conducted regular consultations concerning the European issues, the British ones tended to categorise their partners as "New" or "Old" Labour, which proved that Great Britain perceived the distance to the USA to be shorter.

However clearly the UK advocated its support for the EU enlargement, Germany and France also made their contribution to the process, or it is better to say: in the name of the expansion. Yet, it is beyond question that the core states were in favour of the enlargement, nevertheless they pressed for closer links between each other in order to create a "hard core"

³⁴⁵ *Britain: Three's a crowd*, The Economist, London, October 10, 1998, p. 60-61.

³⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

with a vision of a two-speed Europe, the model Britain was strongly opposed to. The EU summit in Portugal in June 2000 helped Britain realise that the Franco-German relations were so strong that it would not prevent Europe from a two-speed model³⁴⁷. Moreover, Mr Blair could notice his partners' determination in pressing for a closer integration, leaving the UK behind. Mr Schroeder, two years after his friendly attitude to Tony Blair, reminded the Prime Minister that Europe had already functioned at two speeds, with the euro zone and the Shengen agreement. In defence of his intentions, Mr Chirac, the French president, underlined the need of creating "an institutional system of reinforced cooperation" in an enlarged Europe, which would even more seek for "an advanced guard" for others to follow. Both politicians, however, claimed that their plans were indispensable to realize before the EU could welcome newcomers.

Nonetheless, the attitudes of the European fellows did not discourage Mr Blair to give up his desire to become one of the EU leaders. Just the opposite, he attempted at explaining his cabinet the necessity of enhancing cooperation when the Union was enlarged, although he still objected to a Europe with "an inner and outer core"³⁴⁸. He could understand France and German's point of view only to keep Britain's influence in the EU, which seemed to be a diplomatic strategy. Furthermore, he could also negotiate on the visions of Europe, a federal one – approved by the German foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, and a nation-state one – advocated by Jacques Chirac, with his own idea as not to be pushed on the margins of Europe³⁴⁹ (the British Labour Government's policy on the longer term development of the EU was presented by Mr Blair in Warsaw to put emphasis on the enlargement, therefore it will be analyzed thoroughly in chapter IV).

The Prime Minister's efforts to stay "in touch with" the core states resulted from the incident which took place few months earlier, when France and Germany took steps to form a single economic government for the 11 countries of the euro zone³⁵⁰. The plans involved the powers of 11 finance ministers of EMU members, which excluded Britain as not the euro zone part. The initiative kept the UK in anxiety about the creation of a new policy-making body. However, the lesson that Britain learned did not lead to joining the single currency, but it learned even more caution in the European policy.

³⁴⁷ *Britain left in EU slow lane*, The Daily Telegraph from June 21, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/06/21/weu21.xml>.

³⁴⁸ Jones G., *Blair compromise on two-speed „pioneers”*, The Daily Telegraph from June 30, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/06/30/weu130.xml>.

³⁴⁹ *Blair's vision*, The Economist, London, September 30, 2000, p. 12.

³⁵⁰ Evans-Pritchard A., Helm T., McSmith A., *Britain left out cold by euro axis*, The Daily Telegraph from June 1, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/archive/2000/06/01/weur30.html>.

The two powerful EU states, though, did not avoid small clashes. As all the discussions about a closer integration, building a “hard core” of the EU or transformations of the institutions proceeded in the name of the enlargement, the intensions were not supposed to bring any objections. Yet, one of the leaders – Germany – had an inclination to domination. In June 2000, France’s Foreign Minister, Hubert Vedrine, opposed the German ambitions for a political union, which, in Mr Fischer’s vision, could lead to an outright union of both countries, leaving others behind³⁵¹. Mr Verdine distinguished a lot of threats in his colleague’s idea, worrying about over-ambitious “Europe-building” projects becoming the key topic of the ongoing French presidency, instead of focusing on the expansion into Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, French minister warned of dividing Europe into fast and slow lanes which would only result in an institutional confusion in the EU.

Surprisingly, though, President Chirac and his Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, did not perceive Mr Fischer’s vision to encourage unnecessary debates, just the opposite, they agreed on it³⁵². Nonetheless, the approval was regarded as diplomatic moves to advocate France and Germany’s leadership rather than a sincere endorsement of the vision.

The conception of Europe was strongly criticised by Mr Blair, who was afraid to be outside the core, but whose criticism of a political union was ignored by the German chancellor, thus putting the Labour leader in an uncomfortable position³⁵³. Moreover, the second core leader, Mr Chirac, was also going to persuade Mr Blair to accept the creation of the political integration commitment, otherwise exposing his state to the fringes of the EU³⁵⁴. As the Prime Minister feared to be a part of a two-speed Europe, he knew he would eventually surrender and back up the clause changing the regulation of the Treaty of Rome, according to which countries wishing to press ahead with a political union would be free to do so. Again, such an attitude towards Great Britain could provoke a thought over Germany and France’s self-interest and abusing Britain’s strong wish to become one of them.

Although the core countries’ intensions to enlarge the EU did not raise any doubts, Germany could not avoid a gaffe on the issue in question. German commissioner for the EU enlargement, Günter Verheugen, let himself express the need of holding a referendum on the expansion into Eastern Europe in order not to repeat the mistake as the German government

³⁵¹ Helm T., Bishop P., *French put brakes on Germany’s „union” plan*, The Daily Telegraph from June 14, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/06/14/wved14.xml>.

³⁵² Ibidem.

³⁵³ Helm T., Jones G., *Germany sets 4-year deadline on EU’s future*, The Daily Telegraph from June 23, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/06/23/weu23.xml>.

³⁵⁴ Coman J., Paterson T., *Chirac threatens to put Blair out of the picture*, The Daily Telegraph from June 25, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/06/25/weu25.xml>.

made with the single European currency³⁵⁵. His statement caused a dispute in Europe, with the French accusations of threatening the policy he was advocating. Furthermore, Mr Schroeder confirmed Germany's desire to welcome new countries as soon as possible and offered them economic and political chances³⁵⁶. Germany, however, could even strongly claim its support for uniting the continent while celebrating 10 years of re-unification³⁵⁷. The German chancellor emphasized his country's awareness of division, which would reinforce the integration with people beyond their borders, thereby speed up the EU expansion.

A thaw in Anglo-French relations came with the reopen of the issue of "enhanced cooperation" at Biarritz summit on October 13, 2000³⁵⁸. The disagreement between two states came to an end soon after the French rejected Mr Chirac's idea of a single "pioneer group" and the British left their fears of creating an "inner core". Out of the sudden, the view of building a multi-speed Europe found its adherents among the French, although a few months earlier they could not agree on it. However sincere the agreement with Britain seemed to be, France was suspected of securing the UK's vote to the approaching Nice Treaty³⁵⁹. Regardless of the reasons, though, Britain could win, at least for the time being, its aspirations for playing a central role in Europe.

It did not take long, however, to wait for the demand of French goodwill, as less than three weeks before the Nice summit France sent the British government proposal for the treaty ignoring the UK's "red lines"³⁶⁰. It had been widely known that there were some reforms which Great Britain would not accept, such as taxation, social security, border controls, or foreign and security policy, yet the French attempted to push Britain into the abolition of the veto in favour of the qualified majority voting. Again, the Prime Minister was caught between a rock and a hard place, risking blocking the biggest enlargement of the EU history³⁶¹. And again, he was forced to compromise at the cost of having EU allies.

³⁵⁵ Helm T., *EU chief reprimanded for expansion gaffe*, The Daily Telegraph from September 4, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/09/04/weu04.xml>.

³⁵⁶ Helm T., *Schroeder seeks to limit damage over EU growth "gaffe"*, The Daily Telegraph from September 5, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/09/05/weu05.xml>.

³⁵⁷ Helm T., *Germany „is model for uniting Europe"*, The Daily Telegraph from October 4, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/10/04/wger04.xml>.

³⁵⁸ Fletcher M., Webster P., *Leaders set for multi-speed EU*, The Times, October 14, 2000. Internet: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/politics/article988164.html>.

³⁵⁹ *Why were French keen to back Britain?*, The Daily Telegraph from October 14, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/10/14/weu214.xml>.

³⁶⁰ Evans-Pritchard A., *Tax veto must be scrapped, France insists*, The Daily Telegraph from November 24, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/11/24/neur524.xml>.

³⁶¹ Jones G., Evans-Pritchard A., *Blair loses EU allies in battle to keep veto*, The Daily Telegraph from November 24, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/11/24/neur24.xml>.

The biggest test of having or not the EU allies in order to protect each other's national and European interests was the Nice summit, whose major objective was to enable the EU to function after the most substantial enlargement. On the eve of the summit, however, Mr Blair was convinced of French support in the issue of retaining the veto on six policy areas essential to national identity³⁶². Having won Mr Chirac's favour as a key ally, though, the Labour leader was able to accept French veto on international negotiations on trade. Nevertheless, the summit's reality did not appear to be so easy, as the Franco-German axis tried to exert pressure on Mr Blair to back away on the tax veto³⁶³. The Prime Minister could not go so far, as he would have been accused by the Tories of "selling Britain", and moreover, he felt he could only make concessions if it was not against the population, which undoubtedly was.

Unexpectedly, the Nice meeting brought about a crisis between Britain and France, whose source was the EU proposed defence force³⁶⁴. Mr Chirac put forward a proposal of the independence of the EU army of NATO command structure, which thwarted Britain's plans to use the summit to guarantee the British and the Americans that Europe's defence force would not develop into the army. Obviously, such a state of affairs led Mr Blair to a disagreement with the French president, reassuring that the British "they are going to end up with something that NATO supports, Britain supports and America supports – and the French can live with". Moreover, the row was even intensified by Mr Cook's statement that the UK could not accept the French proposal of creating own defence and security force of the EU countries as it made no reference to NATO, which Great Britain perceived as the only force to secure Europe.

A real test of strength between the EU partners at Nice, however, took place when France and Germany attempted at proving one another who was the most powerful state in the EU. The Franco-German alliance was subject to a trial because of Germany's demand for a bigger number of votes in the Council of Ministers³⁶⁵. Mr Schroeder put his country on the top of the EU as the state with the largest population in the Union, thereby claiming more votes. To ease the spat, Mr Chirac emphasized the clout of those two countries'

³⁶² Jones G., *Blair „has French support” in keeping the veto on tax*, The Daily Telegraph from December 5, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/12/05/wnice105.xml>.

³⁶³ Evans-Pritchard A., *Don't mess with our tax veto, Blair tells EU allies*, The Daily Telegraph from December 8, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/12/08/wnice108.xml>.

³⁶⁴ Jones G., Evans-Pritchard A., *Chirac angers Blair by backing EU army*, The Daily Telegraph from December 8, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/12/08/wnice08.xml>.

³⁶⁵ Jones G., Evans-Pritchard A., *EU's Franco-German motor stalls over a dinner table spat*, The Daily Telegraph from December 9, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/12/09/wnice209.xml>.

partnership in advancing the European integration, which met with Germany's Chancellor's objection.

The fact that there was no rapport between the two men, however, did not prevent the treaty from being agreed on. Although there were a lot of doubts and disagreements on different issues, the politicians decided to give accord to the decisions on account of not delaying the EU enlargement.

The relationships between Germany and France with regard to the EU enlargement had been undergoing some shifts, depending on the people in power. The chancellor Gerhard Schroeder was a keen supporter of the eastern expansion for moral and economic reasons³⁶⁶. The moral factor resulted from Germany's shared responsibility for the Cold War and the division of Europe, whereas the economic factor was associated with the country's close trade and investment bonds with Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, the key argument of Germany's involvement of the enlargement concerned the stabilization of eastern societies in transition, which was a crucial component of German security. The French interest, however, seemed to be more directed towards the Mediterranean than the Eastern Europe³⁶⁷.

As Germany needed its core partner to win France over the beneficial eastern enlargement, the efforts began in 1994 when the Schaeuble -Lamers-Paper established the idea of core states, with the next attempt at the Essen summit to revive an EU Mediterranean policy in order to reach the agreement on a strategy for eastern accession³⁶⁸. The deals to be achieved in the name of the enlargement became more difficult when the term was taken by the chancellor Kohl, as it meant making more concessions, especially in financial terms, by the old EU members. However, Germany had to act strategically to gain France's favour for the expansion, while fulfilling their own national interests.

Nevertheless, around the time of the crucial for the enlargement summit in December 2000, the EU leaders tended to promote the core states of three – Germany, France and Great Britain – and change the idea of a German-Franco alliance into a consensus³⁶⁹. The efforts, though, proved to be well-grounded, as the Nice summit rejected the "alliance" and showed the divergence of interests between the states. Yet, Germany and France still believed they were able to reach a consensus on some key points of the EU, one of which was a redesign of the Union for the purposes of the enlargement.

³⁶⁶ Jeffery Ch., Paterson W.E., *Germany, France – and Great Britain?*, Internet: <http://en.internationalepolitik.de/archiv/200/spring2000/germany-france-and-greatbritain-html>.

³⁶⁷ Ibidem.

³⁶⁸ Ibidem.

³⁶⁹ Goulard S., *Squaring the Triangle?*, Internet: <http://en.internationalepolitik.de/archiv/200/winter2000/squaring-the-triangle-html>.

But the following year brought the decline of the Franco-German relationship, which raised some questions of the future shape of the EU among French journalists³⁷⁰. They worried not only about the lack of compromise between the partners, but first of all about meeting the challenges the enlargement posed. It seemed to be noticeable, though, that the idea of building a two-speed Europe was unfeasible, and besides bad for the EU itself, the same as the Nice model of “enhanced cooperation”, which could result in overlapping core groups. The solution that the journalists perceived to be sensible, was a French offer to Germany of strengthening “union for two”, even if they were acted outside the scope of the EU treaties, creating a separate organisation. However haphazard the conceptions sounded, the French still pressed for the Franco-German “guideline” for the rest, not taking into account that they might lose part of the influence when the EU had 25 members.

The reconciliation of France and Germany, however, took place when the EU expansion began to enter the final stage, and the debates reached the point of a controversial Common Agricultural Policy, the details of which will be presented in chapter IV. The improvement of mutual relations also appeared between France and Britain, the latter of which could benefit a lot from the EU “expanding into a looser political entity”³⁷¹. However, the renewal of the core states’ bonds was connected with each other’s interests in the face of the approaching enlargement as well as the works on the EU constitution. Berlin and Paris again managed to combine forces on their plans of a federal European police force and prosecution service for a Constitution draft. But this time, though, it was France which took the senior partner position due to Mr Chirac’s executive power and Germany’s economic problems. Nevertheless, no matter who the initiative belonged to, the fact was that French enthusiasm to the EU enlargement seemed to abate with the thought of German profits of it, whereas Berlin, with the economic troubles, started to worry about the bigger bill to pay the moment its eastern neighbours joined the club.

However, the phenomenon of the two countries could take one aback: although they tended to begin from opposite points of view on most key European matters, they were able to reach a consensus to that extent that the other member states were likely to follow. Nonetheless, they did realize that the EU of 25 members would not allow being dominated by two in power, yet, especially France, hoped for gaining more clout in the new Europe³⁷².

³⁷⁰ Grant Ch., *France, Germany and a „hard-core” Europe*, August/September 2001-CER Bulletin, issue 16, Internet: http://www.cer.org.uk/articles/n_19_grant.html.

³⁷¹ Bremmer Ch., *Paris and Berlin renew marriage of convenience*, The Times, December 2, 2002, Internet: <http://timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article797274.ece>.

³⁷² Grant Ch., *The return of Franco-German dominance?*, February/March 2003-CER Bulletin, Issue 28, Internet: http://www.cer.org.uk/articles/28_grant.html.

Not surprisingly, Great Britain could benefit from the renewal of the Franco-German axis for the reason of, first of all, getting on quite well with Mr Schroeder, and, secondly, having extraordinary connections with the USA as well as being capable of forming alliances with different EU member states on different issues³⁷³. The partnership with Germany resulted in the chancellor's first overseas visit to Britain after being re-elected in October 2002, which amazed the French. But however dissatisfied with young and eloquent Blair Mr Chirac could be, the visit did not put him off to strengthen the ties with Germany over mutual interests.

The crucial point in the positions of three core states in terms of the enlargement was the draft of the Constitutional Treaty produced by the Convention on July 10, 2003. Although Germany, France and Britain did not share the same views on the future development of the EU, the divisions occurred even among smaller countries. However, France was always known as a supporter of a strong Europe, but without undermining government powers³⁷⁴. Hence, the speech of Mr Fischer in May 2000 at the Humboldt University proposing a European Constitution met mixed French reactions. It aroused scepticism towards the idea of extending the German federal Europe, which led to a great suspicion against Mr Schroeder at Nice. Nevertheless, some sceptical reactions did not discourage France to support the start of the European Convention, which eventually led to the French leadership of the Convention and France's big involvement in the whole process. The positive result of the future Constitution conception resulted in a Franco-German agreement on the financial part of the EU expansion, which helped speed up the decision of the Copenhagen Summit in December 2002 to welcome ten new members to the EU.

Germany, on the other hand, had always been more integrationist, with a strong tendency to build a federal Union, with the deepening of a political dimension as the main challenge³⁷⁵. However, the Convention works did not show the Germans to aim at the favourable model, which raised criticism especially among the politicians of the German Christian Democrats. Yet, Germany, after the renewal of the Franco-German cooperation, engaged in the process to that extent that made a series of joint proposals about a lot of essential matters related to the Convention, such as European security and defence, justice and home affairs, economic governance or the institutional system. The proposals proved a compromise between different approaches of France and Germany, which gave faith to the revival of the Franco-German motor even to lead the enlarged Europe.

³⁷³ Ibidem.

³⁷⁴ Centre for European Policy Studies, *France, Germany and the UK in the Convention – common interests or pulling in different directions?*, July 28, 2003, Internet: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/future-eu.html>.

³⁷⁵ Ibidem.

The United Kingdom, however, did not oppose the future EU Constitution. The Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, endorsed the project as the element which would set out clearly the primacy of nation states³⁷⁶. Moreover, he perceived the document to work in favour of the EU enlargement, the process which Britain had always advocated.

Nonetheless, the history of the ups and downs of the most powerful countries in the European Union has shown that the hard core could not function well and long enough without the presence of the United Kingdom. No matter how strongly the idea of the Franco-German core has appealed to those two states, and how much the idea has met the scepticism of the others, though, the moves such as common foreign and security policy will not exist unless the UK joins in. Despite the fact that the vision of the EU leaders may sound frightening for the newcomers, the need of the leadership will remain a key question in the enlarged EU, and will be seen as necessary each time the EU of 25 fails to achieve an agreement.

2.3. The other member states' attitudes to NATO and EU enlargement.

The processes of extending the integrating structures with new members required great changes in the principles of their current functioning, thereby leading to different responses of their participants. The enlargement of NATO provoked debates on the costs as well as the capabilities of participating equally in the Alliance, the majority of which took place in the American Senate. The North Atlantic Treaty requires the unanimous agreement of its members to invite additional European states to join and mandates that the members evidence their approval in accordance with their respective constitutional procedures. In approving the Treaty in 1949, however, Congress elicited a promise from President Truman that all enlargements of NATO would be submitted for Senate advice and consent³⁷⁷.

Nevertheless, the enlargement of the European Union was the process which relied on a great number of alternations necessary to function in the group of ten new members, therefore the discussions and changes of attitudes among current EU countries appeared during each attempt to adjust the organization for more members, as they contributed to individual interests and profits from the membership. The negotiations of indispensable shifts in the process of expansion turned out to be crucial not only for the core states, but

³⁷⁶ Straw J., *They are refighting the battle of Maastricht they lost a decade ago*, The Times, May 28, 2003, , Internet: http://timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest_contributors/article113676.html.

³⁷⁷ Ackerman D.M., *NATO Enlargement: Senate Advice and Consent*, CRS Report for Congress, Internet: http://vienna.usembassy.gov/en/download/pdf/nato_senate.pdf.

also for the remaining ones, sometimes much smaller, but the members on the equal rights. They did approve of the EU enlargement, although they were willing to fight against losing the significance of their voices in the European institutions in favour of bigger states, or to defend their interests during particular regulations of the new treaties. No matter how extensive the EU was supposed to be, though, all its states must be treated equally, whether they would decide to join more integrative groups within the organization, or not.

2.3.1. The USA about NATO expansion.

However popular and sometimes controversial the process of the European Union's enlargement was in Europe, the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization found its substantial place in the United States, which noticed the connection between the processes. The purposes of the NATO enlargement, though, see providing increased stability and security for the whole of the Euro-Atlantic area to be the objective³⁷⁸. In order to build such security, however, it is necessary to combine the integration and cooperation of all existing structures in Europe. Furthermore, NATO aims perceive the process of enlargement to bring a lot of benefits to the new members³⁷⁹. The newcomers' developing democracies will be protected, and their freedom and security will be safeguarded in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter. Moreover, owing to the membership in the Atlantic Alliance, the future members will enhance the habit of cooperation, consultation and building a consensus to get on well with current Allies. Along with the reduction of instability through the national approach to defence policies, the new partners will reinforce European democratic values, on which the idea of integration and cooperation is based, and thereby reducing the inclination to a disintegration along ethnic and territorial lines.

The enlargement of NATO was regarded as a unique opportunity to create a security architecture in the whole of Euro-Atlantic area. President Bill Clinton declared the willingness of ensuring Central European states' security under NATO's wing, which was supposed to be the logical next step for Europe in the post-cold-war era³⁸⁰. However, it could not be overlooked that the need of joining the continent in a military context as well, resulted, to a great extent, from the closeness of Russia. Although there was, and still is, a big number of discussions and debates on how to tackle the "Russian problem", the Atlantic

³⁷⁸ *Study on NATO enlargement-chapter 1: Purposes and principles of enlargement*, NATO Basic Texts, September 1995, Internet: <http://www.nato.int/docu/basic/text/enl-9502.htm>.

³⁷⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁸⁰ *NATO rumbles to the east*, U.S. News & World Report, Washington, November 21, 1994, p. 68.

Alliance was not discouraged to continue its expansion in order not to “allow the old dividing line of Europe, which was essentially dictated by where the Red Army was in 1945, to determine the future of Europe”, according to Assistant Secretary of State, Richard Holbrook, who became known as one of the leading NATO expansionists³⁸¹.

The American conceptions of NATO’s new role in the world soon after the beginning of the system transformations in Eastern Europe kept revolving around Russia. The USA felt obliged to take the leadership on the whole European continent, with a special emphasis on integrating Germany and Russia into a new Euro-Atlantic peace and stability framework, the motor of which had to be NATO³⁸². Although there were numerous big issues in Europe to be handled, such as Polish-German distrust, the role of the Ukraine, the challenge to Russian nationalism and resentment, the nature of the military protection and the willingness of the alliance to extend its protection, NATO declared the assistance in solving the problems – providing the Eastern European countries with military security and political reinforcement of their democratic institutions – altogether with its expansion to become stronger and more powerful, even if it would mean “having a strong anti-Russian flavour”³⁸³.

Nevertheless, the U.S. President was keen to continue the process of opening the NATO’s door but with Russia’s agreement on it, which occurred to be feasible in May 1997³⁸⁴. Mr Clinton’s enthusiasm to that historic event led to calling it “a step closer to a peaceful, undivided and democratic Europe for the first time in history”. The agreement guaranteed Russian “no veto” over NATO’s plans, operations or ambitions to enlarge, thereby ensuring Moscow with a seat in a separate council.

The United States’ expansion of the alliance was supposed to symbolize the American commitment to a continuing leadership role in Europe, perceiving a larger NATO to be a tool for creating a new European order, with a wider EU to take a secondary, mainly economic role³⁸⁵. The process of expanding NATO, however, was regarded as a simultaneous one with the enlargement of the European Union. Bill Clinton wished to enhance his foreign policy ambition by an economic reinforcement in the form of a fast accession of the new NATO members to the EU³⁸⁶. He justified his plans with a vision of creating a framework of an undivided, democratic Europe, which could only take place if those two processes were parallel. It was of special importance, he stated, as the post-

³⁸¹ Ibidem.

³⁸² Bresler R.J., *National purpose and NATO expansion*, USA Today, New York, January 1996, vol. 124, p. 15.

³⁸³ Ibidem.

³⁸⁴ Walker M., *NATO deal revives Marshall’s vision*, The Guardian Weekly, May 25, 1997, p. 6.

³⁸⁵ Wallace W., *Opening the door...*, op. cit., p. 32.

³⁸⁶ Walker M., *Clinton maps out vision for Europe*, The Guardian Weekly, June 1, 1997, p. 6.

communist countries to join NATO would even more need an economic integration. Moreover, it was believed that the enlargement of NATO and the EU would complete Germany's multilateral integration, which would oblige Berlin to include its neighbours' interests in considering its own policies³⁸⁷.

Nonetheless, the question of eastern enlargement of the Alliance raised some doubts, especially associated with its costs. The period before the ratification of the enlargement by Senate was occupied with the debates, most of which concerned the financial matters³⁸⁸. The first element was connected with the absolute cost, which aroused the concern of balancing the federal budget as well as the awareness of the NATO allies to be able to bear a substantial portion of it. The second element, though, related to how money was to be spent. The senators worried about unequal burdens to bear, as there was a gap between the capabilities of US forces and those of current allies. Therefore, they predicted difficulty adjusting costs to a reasonable level for all and to assure that current and new allies would contribute substantially to allied capabilities.

Moreover, the issue of allied commitment to the process was not clear enough for the senators³⁸⁹. Firstly, the anxiety resulted from the expansion itself, as some politicians claimed that the American involvement in the process was greater than the attitude of other allies. Secondly, the concerns were caused also by the uncertainty whether the politics of the EU would manage with both, the enlargement and the monetary union. Although the EU accession was supposed to include three of NATO expansion's countries, some could have been satisfied while regarding those two processes as parallel, but on the other hand, long accession talks would bring some doubts as to whether they would not delay the enlargement. Eventually, both expansions were to be a source of "hard and soft" security in Central Europe³⁹⁰.

The closer to the Madrid summit, during which the membership invitations were to be issued, the more strained the US-European relations began to be. The day before the final summit, however, top NATO diplomats met to reach the agreement on the issue in question³⁹¹. President Bill Clinton, Mr Blair and other leaders encountered to head off the crises over the countries to join NATO. The US president insisted that only three states – Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic should become the members, which met strong

³⁸⁷ Voigt K., *NATO enlargement: sustaining the momentum*, NATO Review, no. 2, March 1996, vol. 44, p. 15-19.

³⁸⁸ Cambone S., *Will the US Senate endorse NATO's enlargement?*, NATO Review, no. 6, November-December 1997, vol. 45, p. 12-16.

³⁸⁹ Ibidem.

³⁹⁰ Ibidem.

³⁹¹ Black I., Fairhall D., *NATO tries to paper over the cracks*, The Guardian Weekly, July 13, 1997, p. 4.

opposition of France, Italy and several other countries that favoured Romania and Slovenia. Although the dispute could have foiled the next day top meeting, Mr Clinton managed to assure that “the door to NATO remains open”, and with Britain’s assistance in preventing French-American crisis, the official invitations could be handed in.

However, the road from the beginning of the expansion talks, which occurred in April 1993 when the President of Poland, Lech Wałęsa, and the President of the Czech Republic, Vaclav Havel, used the opening of the Holocaust Museum in Washington to urge new President Clinton to expand NATO eastward, to the Madrid summit was not an easy one³⁹². Although the issue found President Clinton’s support, there were some politicians to object to such a move, especially the experts of Russian politics. Nevertheless, the representatives of both sides – the USA and Russia – could meet a consensus on the expansion, which left the President only with convincing his own country to the process. Being faced with the financial arguments, however, Mr Clinton could persuade of the legitimacy of his plans stating that the enlargement would strengthen democracy, civilian control of the military and provide added security for the United States. He could also compare the process to the Marshall Plan, which brought the reconstruction of western Europe, contributed to the political reconciliation between France and Germany and peace in Europe³⁹³. All these efforts for gaining American approve of the expansion, though, led to US Senate endorsement of it on May 1, 1998.

2.3.2. EU member states towards the enlargement.

Although the process of the EU enlargement was mostly designed by the core states of the organization – Germany, France and Great Britain – the other states, however, asserted their existence and influence in the debates as well. They could not express strong objection to the expansion itself, yet some moves to delay the process or oppose it resulted from the eagerness to manifest their rights in the EU and to defend their interests. As the discussions on the enlargement, which occurred among the EU members, took place around or during new treaties, different attitudes and the creation of “coalitions” of the countries could be also observed.

When more serious talks about enlarging the Union appeared among the states, the prospects of joining the club were perceived by the current countries in two different

³⁹² Leonard T.M., *NATO expansion: Romania and Bulgaria within the larger context*, East European Quarterly, winter 1999, vol. 33, p. 517-525.

³⁹³ Ibidem.

ways³⁹⁴. Most of them advocated the European Commission's proposal to begin talks in 1998 with five countries – Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Estonia – and also Cyprus, whereas Sweden, Italy, Denmark, Greece, Spain and Portugal favoured the conception of “regatta”, which would mean opening negotiations at the same time with ten applicants. However, the problem seemed to concern not only the scenario for what groups of countries to bring together, but also how to explain the situation to those which became excluded from the first batch, i.e. Lithuania, Latvia, Romania and Bulgaria. Moreover, the issue which caused anxiety in 1997 was Cyprus, the island which the EU planned to start talks with the following year with the involvement of both Turkish and Greek sides.

Nonetheless, the questions of the order of the accession negotiations did not bring as much anxiety related to the enlargement as the changes for enlarged European institutions. Starting with the Maastricht Treaty, it included more majority voting and “flexibility”, the instrument which enabled some states to adopt common policies even if others did not, but it was always the majority voting that caused a real battle between small and big countries³⁹⁵. France, Spain, Germany and Great Britain attempted at redressing the over-representation of the small states, proving the enlargement to bring even more small countries, thereby making the imbalance in the representation. The small states, on the other hand, would defend their clout resisting the big ones' efforts. The voices for protecting small states' interests reiterated with the subsequent treaties, the most controversial of which turned out to be the Nice summit.

However, a few months before the summit, the EU faced the expansion crisis triggered by Austria, which was officially imposed sanctions when in February 2000 Mr Schuessel's conservative People's Party formed a coalition with the Right-wing Freedom Party led by the populist Joerg Haider³⁹⁶. The Austrian's government opposed the sanctions after a few months, which resulted in its threat to block the EU enlargement. Moreover, the Chancellor Schuessel announced that the referendum on the sanctions would be held if the 14 EU partners did not restore normal relations. The EU states were worried about the announcement, especially due to the fact that admitting new members from Central and Eastern Europe was the EU principal challenge. Although Austria expressed its support for the expansion, however, the threat was an effort against questioning the state's compliance with common European values.

³⁹⁴ *How to say no*, The Economist, London, November 1, 1997, p. 23.

³⁹⁵ *Battling for Britain*, The Economist, London, May 3, 1997, p. 54.

³⁹⁶ Leidig M., Helm T., *Austria threatens EU enlargement in sanctions row*, The Daily Telegraph from July 5, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/07/05waus05.xml>.

The turbulences within the EU, though, led to fixing a firm date for the next round European enlargement, which was supposed to take place on January 1, 2005, the date to be suitable for some reasons³⁹⁷. Firstly, the new entrants would benefit from more money allotted to economic aid as the EU poorer regions of Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Greece would have stopped taking the resources. Secondly, the German government would dispose of the issues of the expansion costs and eastern migrations during its 2002 general election, perceiving the year 2005 to be remote enough to avoid the problems of the campaign. Moreover, France and Germany's plans to set up the intergovernmental conference in 2004 for adjusting the EU institutions and determine the hard core of the Union, seemed to complete the reasons.

Yet, there was one crucial argument which was in favour of 2005, according to Mr Busek, the Austrian government's envoy on enlargement, namely excluding new members from the subsidies enjoyed by the current members, as a result of the EU treaty reforms³⁹⁸. The issue of CAP subsidies, though, was a tinderbox of the enlargement, as the EU countries did not have any rights to deny the newcomers any forms of aid, therefore some of them considered the ideas of delaying the admission in order to have time for the reforms. How much the alleged plans were just speculations and to what extent they were serious intentions, was soon to be decided, with the final deal to take place at Nice.

The Nice summit was dominated by the debate on national vetoes, which were to be reduced if the EU ever dreamed about functioning as a union of 25 or 30 states, according to the European Commission's president, Romano Prodi³⁹⁹. However, not all members regarded the veto as an obstacle in decision-making process, and necessary to be replaced for Qualified Majority Voting in all European areas. Mr Blair was of the opinion that if a country opposed a proposal and threatened veto, there was usually a good reason for that, therefore there were several areas Britain wished to remain the veto on, such as taxation, social security or immigration⁴⁰⁰. However, Great Britain was not the only country, which demurred at QMV. France could consider two versions of voting as far as taxation was concerned, while it expressed a strong opposition to immigration, the attitude approved by Germany, Austria and Spain. Furthermore, the French fought against QMV on foreign trade in the service sector, fearing that their culture would not succeed in a confrontation

³⁹⁷ Helm T., *EU to set 2005 as date for next expansion*, The Daily Telegraph from July 14, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/07/14/weu14.xml>.

³⁹⁸ Coman J., *Growth of EU could cost 24bn pounds in farm aid*, The Daily Telegraph from July 16, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/07/16/weu16.xml>.

³⁹⁹ Evans-Pritchard A., *Prodi needs QMV to stop Brussels grinding to halt*, The Daily Telegraph from December 6, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/12/06/weu206.xml>.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibidem.

with Hollywood productions, whereas Spain, Greece and Portugal attempted to block the voting over regional aid, for fear of losing billions when the newcomers entered.

Despite earlier arrangements, though, during the summit the coalitions could break down, with the allies being embroiled in “dirty tricks”⁴⁰¹. Great Britain lost the support of Denmark in stopping harmonisation of social security, while Germany dropped its veto on asylum policy, thereby making Sweden back out from its support on taxation. Nevertheless, the change of coalition partners led to a row on the British-Danish axis, when Britain’s officials suspected Denmark of accepting a deal to allow QMV on social policy although it would not protect the Danish welfare system. Such a serious accusation frustrated Denmark’s politicians and led to an uncomfortable situation during a crucial meeting for the future of the EU.

However, the next critical moment at Nice appeared to be the issue of re-weighting votes in the Council of Ministers, the alteration which reformed the institution for almost double number of members. For the biggest states, such as France, Germany, Britain and Italy, it was a matter of power to maintain a decisive voice within an enlarged EU, which angered the smaller partners⁴⁰². Portugal and Belgium called for a revolt by the smaller countries, as the result of the change in the Council of Ministers was that Britain and two or three biggest countries would be able to block decisions, also when the EU enlarged. No wonder, then, that such a state of affairs resulted in immediate and strong responses of the smaller states. Austria or Luxembourg opposed the idea of having their votes downsized⁴⁰³; the Portuguese Prime Minister was furious seeing Spain more than triple its votes, therefore he called the summit an “institutional coup d’etat”⁴⁰⁴. The Dutch Prime Minister, though, demanded more votes than Belgium, and Greece accused France of trying to create a “directoire of big countries”⁴⁰⁵.

The Nice summit was supposed to be a final meeting to agree the unification of the continent, the symbolic moment to welcome former communist countries to the European family based on fixed, democratic and widely accepted principles to share equally by all their members. Nonetheless, the reality occurred to be different; the summit turned into a battle for power and influence of the current members, with playing “dirty tricks” on one

⁴⁰¹ Evans-Pritchard A., Jones G., *Blair deserted by EU allies in veto struggle*, The Daily Telegraph from December 9, 2000, Internet:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/12/09/wnice09.xml>.

⁴⁰² Jones G., *Commentary: Blair’s battle tales hide truth of „victory”*, The Daily Telegraph from December 12, 2000, Internet: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/12/12/nice112.xml>.

⁴⁰³ Lloyd Ch., *Will Nice...*, op. cit.

⁴⁰⁴ Jones G., Evans-Pritchard A., *Europe’s leaders wrestle for power and influence*, The Daily Telegraph from December 11, 2000, Internet:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2000/12/11/wnice111.xml>.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibidem.

another and having rows over which country – smaller or bigger one – should be more powerful and dominant. This “show”, however, did not resemble an encounter whose objective was to prepare for the new states to join and together lead Europe. Moreover, an appropriate conclusion of the summit was given by the Scandinavian countries which put forward the idea of an alternative presidency (the French led the presidency during the summit), as they lost confidence in France⁴⁰⁶.

Thus, the French presidency ended in the atmosphere of argument and dissatisfaction, but it did not discourage the EU states to enlarge the club, just the opposite, the vision of “permanent revolution” seemed to motivate the community since the beginning of the Swedish leadership of the EU, i.e. since 2001⁴⁰⁷. The conception of revolution, however, included three ambitious goals for the Union to achieve: to circulate the euro notes on January 1, 2002, to enlarge the EU within five years, and to organise a debate on the future EU constitution. Even if the Swedes would not manage to speed up the issues, the Belgians, who took over during the second half of the year, would definitely carry on, especially with the idea of constitution, as they were perceived to be keen integrationists, the attitude that not all EU states were in favour of, because it meant “widening” the club altogether with “deepening” it⁴⁰⁸. The big ones, Britain, Spain and some Scandinavians, were afraid with the enthusiasm about “ever-closer union”, as well as the small states, which expressed their fear of any “anti-small countries’ reforms” at Nice. The doubts over more or less integrative options for the EU, however, matched with the rise of Euro scepticism, which became a real danger for any alterations to be introduced for the new EU.

Nonetheless, strange as it could seem to be, the anxieties did not contribute to the EU states’ unwillingness to enlarge the club. It turned out that West European countries had appreciated long years of peace and stability, which resulted in their desire to share the stable values with those who lacked them. Mr Verheugen, the EU enlargement commissioner, could justify the pursuit with three main reasons: stability, a moral obligation to help the victims of Nazism and communism and the economic opportunity offered by the new markets of the east⁴⁰⁹. Of course, one cannot underestimate the fact of previous enlargements and the experience the current states got. Joining Greece, Spain and Portugal proved the EU partners that the membership could help establish the principles of democracy and bond together the countries with autocratic past.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibidem.

⁴⁰⁷ *Europe: Permanent revolution for Europe’s Union?*, The Economist, London, February 3, 2001, p. 31.

⁴⁰⁸ *Nice Uncle Gerhard and the little ‘uns*, The Economist, London, February 3, 2001, p. 32.

⁴⁰⁹ *Reasons of state*, The Economist, London, May 19, 2001, p. 5-7.

However, it is necessary to mention that the eastern enlargement was associated with some threats for the old EU states. One reason was, especially for Germany and Austria, the immigration from the east⁴¹⁰. Austria, mostly in favour of the expansion, had had some doubts about foreigners in campaigns, whereas Germany could worry about “Haiderisation of European politics”, which concerned the potential problem of political backsliding. Adding to it the enlargement-related matters of the EU institutions – voting rights in the Council of Ministers, seats in the European Parliament or QMV – as well as the money-related issues – agricultural and regional policies – it all came to the conclusion of numerous “sacrifices” to be made by the current members in order to regain stability of Europe.

However integrated on the issue of enlargement the EU states seemed to be, the dark horse became Ireland, which approved of the Nice Treaty at the second attempt, leaving the EU “green light” to the enlargement⁴¹¹. The matter about having a ringing endorsement of the EU, though, turned out not to be so obvious, as the EU officials were to settle the case of financing the 2004 admission⁴¹². The Swedish Prime Minister predicted troubles over the outcome of the negotiations, while the Danish diplomats were able to keep the meeting going until the consensus was achieved. Although the debates considered different scenarios for the new EU budget, with the countries’ demands and fears concerning new members, the road ahead remained open and the EU soon hoped to have the last print on paper and ten new members signed up.

3. British disappointments and hopes.

The process of NATO and the EU enlargement was multi-dimensional. Both of them were widely discussed from a political and economic point of view, not only among politicians and experts, but also with the engagement of the public opinion. Although the preparations for NATO membership were not on the same scale as the huge economic, legal and political reforms required of the EU candidates, both expansions raised concern of journalists, academics, politicians, experts as well as the societies.

The research on the attitudes to the enlargements related to the trends in the Alliance and the EU countries and in those of their new cooperation partners from the first ideas about widening the structures to the final stages of them. The studies attempted at assessing

⁴¹⁰ Ibidem.

⁴¹¹ *The Irish agree; now will everyone else kindly do the same?*, The Economist, London, October 26, 2002, p. 27.

⁴¹² Watson R., *EU expansion timetable may be delayed*, The Times, October 24, 2002, , Internet: <http://timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article817016.ece>.

the amount of support for the future members and analysed the changes of attitudes towards them along with the increase of the states' awareness. Moreover, the insight into public perceptions of the Alliance concerned the issues of European security and challenges for the military structures, whereas the EU enlargement studies included the views on the most important aspects of the EU membership, such as the Common Agricultural Policy, the monetary union, the Single European Market or the future constitution.

However, the analysis of British opinions on the pros and cons of both processes could not make the overview complete if it was not confronted with the public perceptions of other countries of the integrative structures. The comparison of Britain's public opinion on the issues in question with the views of other participants and observers of the events contributed to reinforcing British attitudes and presenting how much, if ever, and to which extent, they differed from the others, making the country a leader of the enlargements or locating it among its partners.

3.1. British public opinion on NATO enlargement.

The expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, although less demanding for the candidates than the EU membership, caused quite an intensified debate on the fears of the process from the very beginning. The dispute over enlarging the Alliance with three Central European countries had a lot to do with Russia and the unsuccessful Moscow coup in August 1991, encouraging NATO partners to consider all pros and cons of the move⁴¹³. Despite the fact that the former Warsaw Treaty countries, after being freed from the Soviet domination, unofficially became NATO members but with a little encouragement of the allied partners. Only when the threat of Soviet power appeared did the states find more interest among NATO members, though not without some doubts.

The Head of the International Security Programme at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, Trevor Taylor, distinguished the points in which a larger NATO would cause more problems than it could actually solve⁴¹⁴. He was of the opinion that once NATO absorbed eastern partners, Russia would fear of the West's domination, which could result in Moscow's investment in a military instead of economic development. Such a situation, however, would lead to a more difficult partnership between Russia and the West, making the significant issues of the proliferation of nuclear and conventional arms almost impossible to solve.

⁴¹³ Taylor T., *NATO and Central Europe*, NATO Review, no. 5, October 1991, vol. 39, p. 17-22.

⁴¹⁴ Ibidem.

Moreover, Mr Taylor regarded the accession of the new members as disruptive of NATO's arrangements and machinery. Since 1950, the organization has maintained the main principle that there must be an equal commitment to the defence of all the territory of allies as well as the commitment to give credible and effective help for an attacked ally by other actions – command structures, infrastructure elements, allies' forces, multinational exercises and guiding strategy. It all goes to an integrated alliance, which would involve only credible members, capable of taking all necessary actions, without any political problems, as NATO has no provision for associate partners with no military involvement. Having two types of membership, however, might result in disagreements, as the countries without military commitment would be excluded from the most significant debates.

Furthermore, the expert found the additional resources to spend on the security of Central Europe unbearable for the current NATO states, as their public opinion had already opposed defence overspending. Besides, the issue which could cause a serious row among the allied partners was admitting the members and exposing themselves to a possible nuclear war because of Russia. On the other hand, however, appeared another question: since Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary were in no real danger of Russia, as Moscow advocated abiding international commitments, was there any rush for the three countries to join NATO? Or was there anything for the current NATO members to be afraid of? The following years and debates could allow finding the solutions.

It has been widely known that British political parties had been keen adherents of the Atlantic Alliance since its establishment in 1949, which undoubtedly contrasted with their views on the country's membership in the European Communities. In return, Great Britain gained respect of other allies as a major budget contributor, a leader of major commands and a provider of men and material⁴¹⁵. Moreover, British officers could allow being known as major contributors to the formulation of NATO tactics and doctrines. No wonder, then, that the state played a leading role in the continent, and the political arena could support the Alliance's activities and ambitions.

Outside the government, however, the views on NATO enlargement differed according to the level of defence and foreign affairs' awareness, although the majority of the British public opinion seemed to be unconcerned about the process⁴¹⁶. The people who had been participating in British politics could be divided into proponents and opponents of the expansions for various reasons⁴¹⁷. The sceptics tended to worry about weakening the

⁴¹⁵ Sharp J.O.M., *British Views...*, op. cit.

⁴¹⁶ Ibidem.

⁴¹⁷ Ibidem.

Alliance integration as well as its task of collective defence, therefore they objected to any changes of NATO. Among them there was a group, which did not find the idea of admitting Central European states beneficial for the organization. Just the opposite, they could notice the danger coming from Russia as a country encircled with military partners, thus provoking it to xenophobic behaviours. There was one more anxiety to appear: a new possible Yalta that would condemn Central Europe to a permanent Russian sphere of influence. However, the representatives of such views were perceived to be unaware of NATO's adaptation to the post-Cold War world, and its possibility of cooperation with Moscow.

On the other hand, there were those who supported NATO enlargement only to gain the markets of former Russian satellites to sell expensive offensive military equipment, hence raising Russia's concern. Moreover, they did not notice any threat of impoverishing Central Europe by expanding NATO and the EU; they wished to locate their defence industries on both sides of the Alliance in order to protect the new members from unnecessary expenses, and bring profits for themselves at the same time. Most British supporters of NATO expansion, though, could believe that the process would reinforce market economies and pluralistic democracies in the Central European states. Those ones favoured the gradual transitions of NATO from the organisation involved in the security of its members to the structure with the collective defence for the whole Europe.

Taking the attitudes of British diplomats in Moscow into consideration, however, one could notice their ambiguous views on the enlargement⁴¹⁸. Some of the former ambassadors expressed their fear that the expansion would frustrate the Russian president, who had not overcome the loss of the Warsaw Pact or the Soviet Union yet. Nevertheless, the officials condemned Russians for the false accusations that NATO enlargement had damaged their political and economic reforms. Yet, there were the diplomats in Moscow who approved of the accession of new members to the Atlantic Alliance, not worried about Russia's reactions, but convinced about NATO's role of providing stability in Central and Eastern Europe.

With reference to the Atlantic Alliance, the British also paid much attention to the role of armed forces on peacekeeping operations⁴¹⁹. According to Michael Clarke of the Centre for Defence Studies in London, Britain's political leaders were not aware of the amount of support for NATO external operations, or deliberately ignored it. Nonetheless, the British represented readiness for active and responsible participation in international affairs,

⁴¹⁸ Ibidem.

⁴¹⁹ V.C .Bruce E., *The image of the Alliance: Public opinion seminar Gauges support*, NATO Review, no. 6, December 1993, vol. 41, p. 6-11.

with a tendency to succeed in any tasks assigned to them. On the other hand, though, there was a kind of inconsistency in the public perception, stated Mr. Clarke, as the attitudes towards international peacekeeping operations could change rapidly. A possible explanation to it could be the fact that with the end of the Cold War, 80% of NATO supporters ceased to perceive any threat to the West, thus becoming unconcerned of the issues of the Alliance to be of British national business⁴²⁰.

However, the arguments that some considered in favour of the enlargement, the others criticized, just like the Alliance's tendency to become a military organisation for collective defence⁴²¹. Moreover, the discussions which appeared in the House of Commons were occupied with the fears over the difficulties in reaching consensus after NATO absorbed nineteen members. The concerns were not groundless as the new entrants could bring the complexes of the outside countries, thus being sensitive to defending their interests. As for the anxiety about losing the Alliance cohesion, though, the British as well as other members could notice the domination of the USA within the organization. Although the agreement in January 1994 among NATO partners on the eastern expansion was collective, some allies complained about the US command in the course of the process without enough consultations with the others⁴²². Furthermore, the USA were also accused of being dictatorially as far as which candidates to enter the Alliance was concerned. Despite the fact that some states, including Britain, were willing to admit more than three new partners, Washington decided not to exceed that number, which met the other countries' annoyance⁴²³.

Apart from small clashes between the members, however, the British disputes in the House of Commons also discerned the impact of NATO expansion on military effectiveness. Although the future partners were assessed positively in terms of the Alliance's requirements, the fears concerned the state of their armed forces or NATO-compatible communications, which would be able to meet the standards in few years' time after the admission. Therefore, the new members would contribute to small peacekeeping operations, but it would reduce the military effectiveness of the whole Alliance anyway. Moreover, the British discussants worried not so much about the necessary resources but more about the issue of personnel and organisation. The three states had already attempted at restructuring their armed forces to decrease the high number of officers and the ministers of defence, but

⁴²⁰ Ibidem.

⁴²¹ *The Implications of Enlargement for the Existing NATO Members*, Research Paper 98/52, Internet: <http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp98/rp98-052.pdf>.

⁴²² Ibidem.

⁴²³ Sloan S., *Transatlantic relations: Stormy weather on the way to enlargement?*, NATO Review, vol. 45, no. 5, September 1997, p. 12-16.

still the doubts related to the question how resilient the new structures could be to absorb the information flows demanded by the membership. Since the future allies lacked English-speaking officers, would they meet the Alliance's requirements and be capable of the mutual cooperation, even once trained?

Though the British politicians were engaged in debating over such "technical" questions, the public opinion approached the process in a more trouble-free way. According to experts, the analyses of public opinion were crucial for the Alliance's point of view, hence being a decisive factor in defining political choices in democracies⁴²⁴. In spite of its changeability, however, the politicians could make use of it, as the public perception identified new security questions for NATO to embark on. Therefore, Britain could rely on its society about the approval of the expansion, since 72% of the British in 1991 considered NATO to be a significant military organisation⁴²⁵. The endorsement did not change much in 1993, although the Atlantic Alliance was faced with the questions of its future, the membership and the relations with Russia⁴²⁶. The confidence in NATO encouraged politicians to make efforts to adapt the organization to the challenges of the reality, the more so because the public criticized the operations in the former Yugoslavia.

However influential the public's message in the debates of foreign and domestic matters was, the governments and international organizations could not forget that people's attitudes tended to change rapidly, but no matter how long they would remain or how strong they would be, the fact was the societies expected their countries' leadership in creating the security system for Europe.

3.2. British public opinion on the EU enlargement.

The enlargement of the European Union required more economic, political and legal adjustments from the candidates than the expansion of the Atlantic Alliance, hence no wonder that the public opinion was a bit confused about the process, and that the people's perception was dependent on the level of their knowledge connected with it. Moreover, the road of the new members lasted long – from the moment of the membership application till the very admission – which also affected the attitudes of the societies.

The survey, conducted after the 1995 enlargement with Austria, Finland and Sweden, concerned the attitudes of the EU states towards the eastern expansion, and was

⁴²⁴ V. C. Bruce, E., *NATO's public opinion seminar indicates continuing but not unshakeable support*, NATO Review, no. 2, April 1992, vol. 40, p. 5-8.

⁴²⁵ Ibidem.

⁴²⁶ V.C .Bruce E., *The image of...*, op. cit.

carried out in January-March 1996 by Eurobarometer⁴²⁷. The British people asked about their preferences for the immediate future of the EU expressed the approval of 44% for more joint actions to be taken in the existing EU states, rather than “leave the Union as it is”, the alternative which found the support of 21%, whereas the crucial vision of enlarging the community with new states was backed up by a small number of 15% of Britons. Not surprisingly, however, the results stayed in line with Britain’s political climate, with Tories in rule, the divisions among Euro-sceptics and Euro-enthusiasts, thus influencing the approaches of the society to the EU issues. It could not, though, result from the low level of the expansion awareness, as 46% of respondents claimed that they had heard or read about discussions concerning the future eastern enlargement. On the other hand, the upsetting element was the fact that a big number of the British – 51% - was quite unaware of the process, although the British government conducted debates on the UK’s position in the Union or its stances on the European issues.

One may state, though, that such a low level of EU consciousness among British society could arise from always positive attitude of British political parties to inviting new members, thus bringing the media disputes to the matters of cons and pros of a greater European integration. Nevertheless, when asked about being in favour of the candidates becoming part of the European Union in the future, the United Kingdom’s positive response to the enlargement was 40%, which put the country in a group of less receptive ones to new applicants, a conservative attitude, typical of the British.⁴²⁸

Soon after the accession negotiations with the applicants were officially opened on March 31, 1998, the support for the enlargement in the UK did not undergo a substantial shift⁴²⁹. In spring 1998, the British favoured the expansion in 43%, whereas those who could not make a decision were 32%. The result seemed to be satisfying in comparison to the research carried out two years later, although the previous one faced Britons with more options to choose from, while the current one measured the attitudes only concerning the support of the process. Nonetheless, such a positive public perception of the enlargement should be associated with the British cabinet being taken over by pro-European Labour Party and numerous critical debates on the Maastricht Treaty.

The situation, however, transformed dramatically in 2000, when the EU public opinion survey presented Great Britain as one among the states with the lowest support:

⁴²⁷ *The European Union Public Opinion Report*, Standard Eurobarometer 45, Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb45/eb45_report_en.pdf.

⁴²⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁴²⁹ *The European Union Public Opinion Report*, Standard Eurobarometer 49, Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb49/eb49_report_en.pdf.

23% in spring and 28% in autumn⁴³⁰. Yet, when the Eurobarometer modified a bit the question and asked about the opinion concerning the statement: “The European Union should be enlarged and include new countries”, the idea of expansion found 31% of supporters in the UK⁴³¹. Undoubtedly, there was a connection between the answers obtained and the level of understanding a notion at all, if not the complex issues of the European integration process. Moreover, the fall in the enlargement support could not be regarded as separate from the events in the European political arena, which was occupied with the Nice negotiations. Entering the “sensitive” EU matters, such as the disputes over qualified majority voting, the institutional shifts, common agricultural policy and regional funds, or labour market, contributed a lot to the confusion, but also presenting the issues of national interests resulted in reinforcing the sense of danger of the enlargement.

Although the United Kingdom was engaged in the EU issues in 2001 more than in the previous years, the knowledge and awareness of British population was quite poor, according to ICM Research⁴³². At the end of 2001, the British claimed in 21% that they did not know about the European Union at all, whereas only 14% felt quite well-informed. The result turned out to be alarming, especially taking the almost 30-year-old UK’s history in the EU into consideration, or just the atmosphere of recent European events, such as the Nice summit. However, the former argument soon appeared to be groundless, as the survey proved the level of information of the society about the current British Government’s policy on the EU to be very low, with 14% of those who could follow the Cabinet’s EU policy, and 21% of those who could not. Moreover, the interviewees stated that they did not trust the government much about the Union, as only 18% of them were able to express their average confidence, with only 1% of the population to believe the government, and 17% of those who failed to believe. Peter Hain, the Europe Minister, claimed that there was no surprise that a lot of people in the UK knew little about the EU, although the good thing was that the more the citizens knew, the more positive they felt about the EU⁴³³.

The matter of the British membership in the community, though, was not so strictly assessed; 47% regarded it as a positive thing for the country (13%-very good thing; 34%-fairly good thing) versus 25% opinions about the UK’s presence in the EU as negative (12%-very bad; 13%-fairly bad). Not surprisingly, however, Britons did not give much

⁴³⁰ Ronkowski P., *Poparcie społeczeństw krajów „15” dla członkostwa i rozszerzenia Unii Europejskiej na jesieni 2000*, Biuletyn Analiz UKIE, p. 34-37.

⁴³¹ *The European Union Public Opinion Report*, Standard Eurobarometer 54, Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb54/eb54_report_en.pdf.

⁴³² *European Union Survey*, ICM Research, October 2001, Internet: [http://www.icmresearch.co.uk/pdf/2001_october_foreign_and_commonwealth_office_european_union_survey.pdf#search="british%20about%20eu"](http://www.icmresearch.co.uk/pdf/2001_october_foreign_and_commonwealth_office_european_union_survey.pdf#search=).

⁴³³ *FCO publishes poll on public attitudes to Europe*, 05.12.2001, Internet: <http://www.fco.gov.uk>.

support for the EU future task of welcoming new countries to join: only 8% chose such an option among the other nine. Yet, this point could be explained by the fact that the respondents were faced with many other alternatives to indicate, therefore the enlargement objective lost against more important issues, according to the British public opinion, such as maintaining peace and security in Europe, fighting poverty, crime or unemployment. Remaining opinions, though, showed that the divisions in the political arena had an impact on the society, leading to much confusion, lack of knowledge and information, and inspiring doubts as to whether the EU organization would work efficiently and with satisfying results as a group of 25 members, since there were more problems, except the process itself, to worry about. Again, the Minister of Europe identified this kind of attitude with a practical European approach which the Government was keen to advance⁴³⁴.

The next year did not bring any substantial changes in the British public perception and awareness about the EU expansion⁴³⁵. The level of personal information remained almost untouched, with 49% of those who were “not very well informed”, 27% quite well informed and 21% of the people who admitted knowing little or not at all. The research results proved that more than half of the population (66%) was aware of the fact that the EU would enlarge with Central European countries in the near future. However, 61% were not able to name any country which was applying to join the Union, whereas those of them who risked naming some of them turned out to be wrong, making the total of people unaware of the EU enlargement or the states to join amount to 83%. When asking about the acceptance of all 13 applicant countries, however, 39% of the respondents decided to support them, while 19% confirmed their opposition. It did not prove a general favour for the enlargement, as a total of “don’t know” and “neither support nor oppose” amounted to 42%, which confirmed a lack of a strong opinion on this issue.

Considering the process in terms of advantages or disadvantages, though, the British opted as much for the latter (33%), as for the former (28%), perceiving it to bring opportunities as well as potential threats. The majority of people in Britain thought the EU after the enlargement would be stronger and more politically and economically influential, with 63% believing British companies entering a larger single European market. Nonetheless, those who acknowledged the expansion in terms of greater stability and peace, were also sceptical about the EU effectiveness, slower decision-making, or crime control in

⁴³⁴ Ibidem.

⁴³⁵ *European Union enlargement, UK Opinion Poll*, Flash Eurobarometer 124, EOS Gallup Europe, April 2002, p. 7-13.

the face of few internal boundaries. Furthermore, a big number of people (57%) worried about British interests in an enlarged EU, political – the difficulties to force through the UK’s point of view and form allies, and economic one – British companies faced with more taxes and low-wage competition. Moreover, 53% of the British feared the state would lose jobs as more countries relocated to benefit from lower wage costs in other parts of the EU.

The interviewees also distinguished more economic influence of the EU enlargement in the world, with 65% believing more countries were able to reach western standards of life on the one hand, and with 58% concerning about British farming industry, and 6 out of 10 thinking Britain would pay more into the EU than it actually would get, on the other.

Not surprisingly, however, the people associated the enlargement with the impact on their lives, a positive as well as negative one. 68% could express their satisfaction from the fact that admitting new countries would mean the reduction of cross-border pollution as the new members would have to meet EU environmental standards, and 66% could appreciate the increase of cultural richness. Nevertheless, for a big number of Britons (65%) the expansion meant the risk of handling organised crime, or the reduction of drug smuggling (60%). More than half of the British society also feared too many people coming to the UK, as a threat to the labour market and a concern to British sense of isolationism and identity.

Although the British people did not demonstrate great interest in the EU itself, which resulted in their ignorance of some European matters, and their support for the process of enlargement did not belong to the biggest one as well, it would be unfair to state that the UK’s public opinion opposed admitting new countries to the Union. They did have some doubts about doubling the number of the states, which was mostly connected with the shortage of information on the crucial matters, as the British politicians fought over the European problems among themselves. On the other hand, however, such a state of affairs has been scientifically proved as deriving from “rationality” and “identity” aspects⁴³⁶. According to the first strand, populations support the integration due to the benefits of the membership, whereas the “identity” element concerns the attitudes to the integration as a result of reluctance to share a political power with foreigners.

In general terms, though, the British public opinion behaved according to the theory: it could discern the profits of the EU participation for its own interests as well as for the EU, although it displayed some anxieties as far as its identification with new members was concerned.

⁴³⁶ Jones E., van der Bijl N., *Public Opinion and Enlargement: A Gravity Approach*, European Union Politics 2004; 5(3), p. 331-335.

3.3. British views versus other member states about NATO and EU enlargement.

The enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization found its place at political debates in all allied countries, handling the process less or more enthusiastically for a lot of reasons. Some member states supported the expansion for regional considerations, the others could locate it in a broader context of a strategic evolution of the European Union, but no matter what the causes were, the allied partners were able to back up the process in principle because the USA perceived it to be essential for the European stability and the vitality of the alliance⁴³⁷. Although the countries differed in terms of financial constraints or the EU role in security problems, the attitudes towards the states to be welcomed as NATO members did not cause any opposition⁴³⁸. On the basis of the interviews with officials from the allied partners and discussions of observers as well as other accessible sources, the analysis of the states' positions to NATO enlargement was created⁴³⁹.

According to the analysis, the countries of the Atlantic Alliance endorsed the expansion with three Central European states, and agreed to leave the door open for more candidates to join. Belgium expressed its support for Slovenia and Romania, similarly to Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain, with Bulgaria's candidacy favoured by Greece, and Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia seen by Denmark to join in a second round of the enlargement. Some of the countries, however, looked at the process from the angle of the relations with Russia. France's stance on NATO importance and its expansion was dependent to a large extent on the possible revitalization and aggression from Russia. Moreover, French road to accepting its membership, then moves of the Alliance had been of different natures, as President Chirac and Prime Minister Jospin did not present equal views on the expansion. Mr Chirac eventually advocated admitting new countries to the Alliance, considering France's return to NATO's integrated command structure in the long term, while Mr Jospin wished the enlargement to proceed slowly, remaining critical to American influence in Europe. Therefore, the ultimate view on the

⁴³⁷ Gallis P.E., *NATO Enlargement: The Process and Allied Views*, CRS Report for Congress, FAS, July 1, 1997, Internet: <http://www.fas.org/man/crs/gprime.htm>.

⁴³⁸ Library of Congress. CRS. *European Monetary Union and the Euro: How will the United States be Affected?*, by Arlene Wilson. CRS Report 97-445. April 11, 1997; and *NATO and Bosnia: A Looming Transatlantic Debate*, by Stanley R. Sloan. CRS Report 97-480. April 22, 1997 [in:] Gallis P.E., *NATO Enlargement...* op.cit.

⁴³⁹ Kay S. and Binnendijk H., *After the Madrid Summit: Parliamentary Ratification of NATO Enlargement*, INSS, NDU. March 1997 [in:] Gallis P.E., *NATO Enlargement...* op.cit.

move was unclear, which was reflected in the French public perception of the expansion: only 39% could appreciate new allies in 1997⁴⁴⁰.

Besides France, Russian relations became a decisive element about the alliance for Germany, whose Chancellor Kohl subjected Germany's endorsement of the expansion to the guarantee of maintaining good terms with Russia. Furthermore, the process inspired some concerns among the allied partners for regard of the costs. Belgium worried about budgetary sacrifices to be made towards qualification to the European monetary union, which restricted its capabilities in the face of the expansion. Denmark could also object to additional expenditures for admitting newcomers, although the country advocated international peacekeeping efforts, with more political missions to be undertaken. France suffered from limitations of the resources, thus preventing it from independent military missions, the case which was found difficult for Spain as well, especially in the moment of Spanish economy coming slowly from recession, with a still high level of unemployment.

However, Germany also expressed its anxiety about the financial side of the process, although the government believed that the Germans would be able to accept some expenses in the name of reinforcing stability in Europe, though the unification of the country or the substantial assistance to the development of democracies in Central Europe and to Russia bore heavy burdens⁴⁴¹. Other countries, e.g. Holland, were divided over the issue of enlargement costs, although the Dutch supporters believed new members should realize the fact of a meaningful contribution to their own defence. Portugal also faced a hard time with accepting costs of the expansion, especially a difficult task while making efforts to stop inflation and encourage growth.

No matter what concerns or fears appeared in the Alliance's countries on the way to the expansion, a general approval of the process was unquestionable, and on the eve of this historical moment the Secretary General of NATO, Javier Solana justified the only acceptable direction leading to welcoming new members in the name of strengthening the world security⁴⁴². He confirmed the organization's objective of guarding all European democracies, regardless of their geographical location or historical nuances, which was proved by the fact of opening doors to three Central European states – Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. Moreover, Mr Solana reassured that the Alliance could only enlarge if it distinguished the strategic interests for its partners, which undoubtedly happened

⁴⁴⁰ "French Public less eager than in '96 to welcome new members to NATO", USIA Opinion Analysis., Washington: USIA. April 1, 1997, [in:] Gallis P.E., *NATO Enlargement...* op.cit.

⁴⁴¹ Gallis P.E., *NATO Enlargement...* op.cit.

⁴⁴² Solana J., *Do We Need New Allies? Yes, to Enhance Everyone's Security*, NATO News Article: Wall Street Journal, 12 March 1998, Internet: <http://www.nato.int/docu/articles/1998/a980312a.htm>.

during the current expansion, taking four main points into consideration. Firstly, the newcomers would substantially reinforce the political and military clout of NATO, by committing their forces and financial resources. Secondly, an expanded Alliance meant no new dividing lines in Europe, and assisting the countries to enhance their political, economic and military reforms, to contain old animosity and to inspire the need of integration.

Moreover, according to the Secretary General, a reinforced and larger NATO was on good terms with Russia, having a greater range of issues to cooperate on within the NATO-Russia Founding Act. Although Moscow did not approve of the expansion, there were no fears of the shortage of areas to work mutually on. Finally, in reference to the biggest concern of the allies, Mr Solana ensured that the costs of the enlargement would not exceed the Alliance's capabilities.

The speech of Solana brought some comfort to the allies, although the process did not require so much concern about NATO's reality after the accession, more anxiety for the member states, however, was associated with the enlargement of the European Union. Since the beginning of system transformations in the Central European countries after 1989, the European Community's states were concerned with their neighbours' situations and majority of them wished to support the countries or even considered their future membership in the integrative organization. According to the research carried out in December 1990, more than four to one (69%) expressed their understanding and offered benefiting from programmes and resources available only to member states in the fields of technological research, youth training, university student exchanges⁴⁴³. Moreover, the Italians were the most keen to accelerate integration within Community and 72% of them wanted to increase the budget to help the reforms in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Italy, altogether with Britain (69%) and Greece (68%) were the first to see the reforming states in progress among the EC in the future.

The period just before the enlargement of the EU with Sweden, Austria and Finland moved away the issue of the Central and Eastern countries to join in the Union, although the results of the studies presented fairly favourable attitudes to the potential EU candidates⁴⁴⁴. The interviewees in Greece, Spain, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom could support the efforts of the countries to become future EU partners, but the affinity for each of the possible candidates hardly reached 50%, with the exception

⁴⁴³ *Eurobarometer: Public Opinion in the European Community*, Commission of the European Communities, no. 34, December 1990, p. 59-60.

⁴⁴⁴ *Eurobarometer: Public Opinion in the European Union*, Commission of the European Union, no. 42, Spring 1995, p. 49.

for Hungary (55%) and Poland (51%). Belgium, France and Luxembourg were even sceptical to the admission of Slovakia, Bulgaria, Rumania and Slovenia.

However, the situation did not change much the following year as the support for the future newcomers amounted to 51%, still for Hungary, and Malta and Poland with about 50% backup, leaving the other candidates with the average 35% in general⁴⁴⁵. Not surprisingly, though, the study proved some member states to be more or less receptive to new applicants, and the groups did not differ from the favourable or unfavourable ones from the 1995 research. Still, the leading places were taken by Sweden, Greece, Spain, Italy, Finland and the Netherlands (50% and more), whereas the least friendly turned out to be Belgium, Luxembourg, Austria and France (31% and less). This time the results were contrasted with the states' awareness of the enlargement, and showed the connection between the attitudes to the process and the knowledge about it. The countries whose approach to new members was positive, admitted having read or heard something about the expansion, for example in Denmark, 79% of people were aware about the issue, just like in Finland (77%), the Netherlands (75%) or Sweden (73%). The states which were more negative, on the other hand, as Belgium, the UK, or Ireland, read or heard not much about the process (46%). However, one country remained a riddle: Greece, whose citizens knew little, but whose attitude to candidates reached 52%. A possible explanation of this phenomenon could be the fact that the Greek did realize how much they gained (as a net beneficiary), and how much their economic situation altered after entering the EU, thus supporting the other countries, even did not follow the news.

Soon after the accession negotiations with Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia were opened on March 31, 1998, and Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia signed Accession Partnerships, the importance of the enlargement became even more crucial for the representatives of the member states, as the laborious and disputable process was to mark its beginning. The President of the European Commission, Jacques Santer, in a speech to the European Parliament in July 1997, emphasised the significance of the event, as "a historic turning point for Europe", a chance, which had to be taken "for the sake of its security, economy, culture and status in the world"⁴⁴⁶. The question, however, remained whether the European societies did realize the opportunity and would show the understanding with desirable attitudes?

⁴⁴⁵ *Eurobarometer: Public Opinion in the European Union*, Commission of the European Union, no. 45, December 1996, p. 65-67.

⁴⁴⁶ *The European Union Public Opinion Report*, Standard Eurobarometer 49..., op. cit.

The idea of enlarging the EU with 10 or even 12 new members met quite a positive reception among the EU states in 1998⁴⁴⁷. 74% of the Union's citizens believed the organization would gain more clout if it included more members, with only 34% worried about the fall of their states' importance as a result of the process. The majority of respondents in the EU bound with the expansion hope for cultural enrichment as well as peace and security. Furthermore, many Europeans noticed the necessity of the EU institutions' reforms (55%) and being ready to launch the single currency before the newcomers joined (47%). However, the statements of such advanced issues could be misleading, as not so many Europeans were really interested in an economic dimension of the enlargement. 64% of the Dutch, 63% of the Danes, 62% of the Germans were aware that a larger Union meant more money from their country. There were also such nations which expressed their economic concern by being opposed to providing future members with financial assistance before the admission, with the exception of the Greek, the Irish and the Portuguese.

The average support for all 11 candidates in 1998, however, was declared by 63% of the Danes and 61% of the Swedes, which meant the highest level of backup by these two nations. The remaining states favoured the enlargement with an average 45% of support, although they did not approve of each applicant equally. Portugal, Spain, Belgium, Luxembourg and Italy were the ones with the least amount of spread between the lowest and the highest level of support, while Greece, Austria and Germany had the highest spread, with more diverse attitudes to the future members.

The year 2000, the period of essential changes for the EU and the candidates, did not bring a substantial shift in the member states' approach to the enlargement itself. According to the studies conducted in autumn 2000, the support for the process of expansion in the whole Union amounted to 44%, with the highest enthusiasm noted in Greece (70%), Italy (59%), Ireland (59%), and a little above 50% in Sweden, Denmark, Spain and Portugal⁴⁴⁸. Traditionally, the states which remained more pessimistic about welcoming new partners were Luxembourg, Belgium and Holland, with an average 44%, while Germany, Finland, France, Austria and the UK took an even more unfriendly attitude, with an average score of 35%. Moreover, the assessment of the candidate countries did not come out satisfactorily as well, because fewer EU nations than the year before advocated the membership of the Central and Eastern European states. Since spring till autumn 2000, there was a 4% fall of the average support for the candidates as far as the whole EU was

⁴⁴⁷ Ibidem.

⁴⁴⁸ Ronkowski P., *Poparcie społeczeństw...*, op. cit., p. 35-36.

concerned. Surprisingly, the biggest decrease took place among the societies of usually favourable nations, such as the Swedes and the Danes (from 61% in spring in Sweden to 51% in autumn, and from 58% to 48% in Denmark respectively). The other EU countries were also less receptive (about 9 to 4 percentage points fewer) to the future partners, with only Italy and Luxembourg becoming 1% less enthusiastic.

However, despite the fall in the EU states' support to the newcomers, the average level of acceptance in the EU-15 remained unchanged in comparison to the period of spring 2000, and came to 44% in autumn as well. The unfavourable situation among the EU countries resulted from the hot phase of the accession negotiations. The public opinion was not encouraged at this stage of the process to be inclined towards the applicants, and the debates and discussions on crucial EU issues did not dissipate the doubts of the nations. Furthermore, the lack of the actions promoting the process of enlargement in the Union had already influenced the societies, even those always receptive to Cyprus and Malta, as the states whose membership could not bring any threats to the EU countries. The crisis of the social support for the enlargement, however, should have been taken seriously into account by the policy-makers, and hopefully it would, since the public opinion was affected by politicians, but the people affected the political arena as well.

On the eve of the enlargement, in 2003, the research noted a positive trend in the number of the opponents of the process, whose number had fallen to 30%⁴⁴⁹. Taking the particular EU nations into consideration, though, there were still countries which strongly opposed the process, such as France (49%), Germany and Luxembourg (34% each), Belgium (33%), Great Britain (32%), Finland and Austria (31% each) and the Netherlands (28%). The attitudes of them could be justified with their financial position in the EU, as all except Finland were the net payers to the European budget, whereas as the net beneficiaries, such as Spain, Greece, Italy and Ireland, had the fewest objectors to the enlargement (respectively 14%, 17%, 19% and 15%).

Although the situation with opponents and supporters of the expansion could be understandable, the alarming fact was that every fifth citizen of the Union thought the EU should not be enlarged with any of the candidate countries. The biggest number of the followers of such a view were in France (34%), Belgium (26%), Britain and Austria (22% each) and Germany (21%), while 45% of Europeans would willingly see only some of the applicants in the organization. The greatest favour was expressed towards the accession of

⁴⁴⁹ Bogusławska J., *Przeciwnicy rozszerzenia w Unii Europejskiej*, Biuletyn no. 14 (118), 12 March 2003, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, Biuro Analiz, p. 763-765.

Malta, Hungary, Cyprus, the Czech Republic and Poland, whereas the admission of Turkey, Romania, Slovenia and Bulgaria met the biggest opposition.

Since the public opinion obtained a substantial amount of information from the policy-makers, while forming their attitudes towards the enlargement, it would be interesting to compare whether the approaches of the political parties in some EU states agreed with the perception of their societies⁴⁵⁰. Austria had been a quite controversial country in the Union, with the experience of Joerg Haider in rule, but its stance on the expansion had undergone a shift: from being sceptical to some countries, e.g. the Czech Republic, and the attempt to stop the process, to the favourable attitude towards it, with the reassurance of signing and ratifying the Accession Treaty. With reference to the views of Austrian public opinion, however, one could state that the turbulences in the government affected the society as well, being rather opposed to the move and welcoming newcomers. Belgium and France had right parties in rule, sceptical to the enlargement, which was quite dangerous for the Accession Treaty. Moreover, both states could discern disadvantages of the expansion, such as a big influx of people from Central Europe, negative effects on Common Agricultural Policy, or the fear of unemployment, the threats which were shared by Euro-sceptical societies as well.

The politicians in the Netherlands, on the other hand, fought against the admission of some states: Poland, Slovakia, Lithuania and Latvia, accusing them of not meeting the accession requirements, thus provoking the government to object to the enlargement in 2002. Fortunately, the following election brought the anti-European parties only 24% seats in parliament, which moved the danger of objection. The Dutch society, however, followed the government's disputes, and expressed their support for the expansion, but for only some countries to join in. A similar situation took place in Italy, where unfavourable to the process party propagated the arguments against, but hopefully its percentage of seats in parliament amounted to 4, which did not threaten the treaty, and did not influence the attitudes of the society.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibidem.