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EUROPEAN UNION'S POSITIVE CONDITIONALITY MODEL IN PRE-ACCESSION PROCESS

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Abstract. The concept of positive conditionality has been seen as 'the golden carrot' of the EU's external relations, enlargement and neighbourhood policies. Regarded as a mutually important and valuable method of partnership between the EU and its partner countries to develop social, political and economic progress with an effective motivation system, positive conditionality is nowadays used in areas ranging from development cooperation to neighbourhood policy, and most successfully in the enlargement agenda. The EU and its member states have characterised conditionality as a functional cooperation or pre-accession method of integration, where guidance and strict rules are needed to provide effective convergence with the EU and to support transitional societies in the modernisation process. The motivation of conditionality has been characterised as functional and in the mutual interests of both the target states and the EU. This paper will study the driving force behind the pre-accession conditionality from the first to fifth enlargements: has it been a neo-functional motive to support the fulfilment of accession criteria by candidates, or a neo-imperial motive to use the accession conditionality mainly in the interests of the existing member states to fix their advantages in economic and political affairs? This paper will offer a comparative analysis on the pre-accession situation, conditionality levels and argumentation of motivation for the first five EU enlargements.

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1. Introduction

The EU and its member states have had a remarkable influence on the modernisation and development in candidate, neighbouring and colonial countries throughout its existence. Conditionality, integration, harmonisation and Europeanisation have been the main conceptual instruments of such partnership, and possible future membership has often been the main motivation for keeping this cooperation effective. It has been a specific type of partnership with an ever-growing set of criteria for democracy, market economy and administrative capacity in target countries and with remarkable financial and knowledge support on the EU's part. Since the 1990s, the conditions have been developed into an official comprehensive form with demands, an evaluation model, rewards and possible sanctions. The EU and its member states have characterised conditionality as a functional part of integration, where guidance and strict rules are needed to provide effective modernisation, convergence and the use of funds.

In many aspects the pre-accession conditionality has served as the best option to explain to candidate countries that they have a 'take it or leave it' situation. Solana (2003) simply describes it as, "We just ask the countries which are interested in participating in our structures to comply with our rules and to share our values". This paper will focus on the driving forces which have been dominant in the pre-accession conditionality from the first to fifth enlargements: has it been a neo-functional motive to support fulfilment of accession criteria by candidates, or a neo-imperial motive to use the accession conditionality mainly in the interests of the existing member states to fix their advantages in economic and political affairs? It will offer a comparative analysis on the pre-accession situation, conditionality levels and argumentation of motivation for the first five EU enlargements. Finally the paper will analyse the developing trends in the components and levels of positive conditionality affecting the neighbourhood and pre-accession frameworks. Presumably these research results allow us to evaluate and project the logic and dynamics of the EU enlargement process and external relations in the future. But the analysis of conditionality principles also allows us to debate the nature and goals of the EU: is it still a functional and integrated union of member states or is it transforming into an empire with a centre and peripheries?

2. What do we mean by conditionality?

Generally speaking, conditionality can be considered a theoretical sub-component or method explaining the logical relations between two or more actors. Conditionality provides a toolbox in linking the state or international organisation, or benefits desired by another state, to the fulfilment of certain conditions (Smith 1987). Conditionality can be perceived in that sense as a norm or institutional agreement. Killick (1998:6) has defined conditionality as "a set of mutual arrangements by which a government takes, or promises to take, certain policy actions, in support of which an international financial institution or other agency will provide specified amounts of financial assistance". There is some analogy with legal norms, especially with negative conditionality, where any rejection or violation causes punishments and sanctions.

The main functional argument for using conditionality is greater social, economic or political influence, while avoiding more dangerous or costlier methods. Conditionality is based on the belief that assistance will produce cumulative progress and growth: forced reforms create political support and political support allows the reforms and modernisation to continue (Fiero 2003:95). Conditionality models can be divided into two quite different sets: first, those designed for development cooperation in the least developed countries (e.g. Killick 1998, Chekel 2001, Collier 1999), and second, those developed by the EU and NATO in order to impose a structural pre-accession conditionality (e.g. Grabbe 2001, Schimmelfennig, Engert and Knobel 2006, Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2007, Sedelmeier 2006, 2007, Stokke 1995, Zielonka 2006, Weber 1995). This paper applies to both sets of theory while assessing the need and motivation of the pre-accession conditionality with the help of the comparative quantitative method.

One of the main findings in the previous studies has revealed that the implementation of conditionality tends to be ineffective and unreliable. Most conditional frameworks created by the UK, EC, US and the USSR failed in the long run to achieve their goals in political and economic terms (Killick 1998: 8). Moreover, it has become evident that the multilaterals are largely unable to impose sanctions due to expenditure targets, monitoring difficulties and political pressures and that conditionality or at least negative conditionality therefore does not work to impose policies upon unwilling recipients (Schimmelfennig, Engert, and Knobel 2006). Despite the low efficiency of political conditionality in the 1970s and 1980s, the popularity of this method has grown in recent years. This may be explained by the even lower cost-efficiency of military intervention measures compared to earlier periods, the multilateral nature of the international arena and a will to follow a non-violent line by some international actors (Killick 1998:9). The practical problem remains: only few target countries can comply with a good policy environment and a desire to follow external conditional pressure, as conditionality can also bring about several negative effects (Sedelmeier 2007:198). As a consequence, "the extension of the practice of conditionality from the occasional circumstances of crisis management to the continuous process of general economic policy-making has implied a transfer of sovereignty which is not only unprecedented but is often dysfunctional" (Collier 1999:319). A high level of aid dependence most often weakens democratic governance when the imperatives of aid management supersede the requirements of domestic decision-making (Santiso 2002).

European countries have a wide range of experience in implementing conditional relations with each other and developing countries outside Europe (Grabbe 2001:1013). Conditionality as a concept can be differentiated, categorised and measured according to three main aspects. First, *ex post* conditionality has a usual form of international law: conditions need to be met after ratification of an agreement or a treaty or a contract is signed. *Ex ante* conditionality means that conditions need to be fulfilled in advance or just before a treaty is signed (Santiso 2002:6). Second, conditionality can be unilateral or multilateral. Whereas the Cold War's unilateral conditionality was dominant, since the 1990s the conditionality of the EU, the OSCE and NATO has started to replace the former unilateral conditionality (Stokke 1995:7). Third, conditionality can be both negative and positive in essence. Negative conditionality aims at influencing an already existing situation (trade regime, diplomatic relations, etc.), which is promised/threatened to be changed if the target country does not meet certain requirements. Negative conditionality implies that sanctions will be imposed, such as reducing, suspending or terminating benefits if the state in question does not comply with the criteria (Fierro 2003:100). Positive conditionality has an *ex ante* nature. Here the point of departure does not satisfy one party (imposer) and it motivates the other actor to change it. Influence is usually based on the actors' promise to provide certain incentives, whenever the recipient country succeeds in meeting the conditions. Positive conditionality may include reducing trade barriers, creating a new cooperation network, providing financial aid and commencing a visa-free regime. Positive conditionality is also known as 'the method of the carrot' whereas negative conditionality can be considered as 'the method of the stick' (Fierro 2003:100, Crawford 2001:1). Positive conditionality is asymmetric by nature, as one contractor is asked to start fulfilling a contract earlier. It is also technically more complex than the negative, but can be implemented gradually and without broad consensus. It is demanding of its pre-conditions, as it can only succeed in a situation where the awaited benefits of the receiving party are greater than the cost of the adjustments (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2007:89). The moral aspect of positive conditionality enables ends to be met: the recipient country needs resources for reforms, and the donor country needs relocation of economic resources and conflict prevention in its neighbourhood (Sjursen 2002:494).

Choosing the positive conditionality model from all the other options is motivated with the long-term aim of having prosperity, stability and security beyond the imposers' borders. A softer approach of relations is usually preferred as it is perceived as the best option for a democratic and friendly relationship. With the imposer's step-by-step socialisation of the target country, socio-economic values and habits are changed to more favourable combinations (Schimmelfennig, Engert and Knobel 2006, Sedelemeier 2006). When conditionality models are selected and assessed, 'efficiency' becomes the most important variable. But efficiency in any individual case depends purely on the expectations of the acting party: if the present goal is achieved with planned resources conditionality turns out to be successful. Sustainability and continuity are also important aspects in some conditional relations, where clear economic or social progress cannot be shown or achieved (for example in development cooperation) (Checkel 2000). Success is also a matter of the socio-economic environment and cultural background, influenced by 'path-dependency' during the modernisation process. For the acting side the success of conditional relations depends on the following variables: the degree of target countries' dependence on the imposing party; third countries' supportive or neutralising influence; and the degree of target countries' willingness to follow conditions (see the model of the external motivator by Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2007:93). In addition, positive conditionality may also include subcomponents such as legitimacy based on mutual benefit, interest and voluntarism; one-way shared (pooled) sovereignty; asymmetric contractual relations; functional and economic reasoning; and creation of independent institutions to safeguard the process (Sedelmeier 2006:18, Stokke 1995:2). The following empirical part of this paper will first detect visible conditionality components and then analyse the motivation and logic for the detected conditionality model.

3. The EU's positive conditionality: experience from founding process and colonial ties

The EU's positive conditionality approach has its theoretical and ideological roots derived from the Breton Woods conditionality model dating back to the end of WWII. Two newly established institutions, the World Bank and the IMF, applied the principles of positive conditionality for member states and applicant countries. In the beginning, conditionality shaped in Breton Woods merely covered monetary policy and some aspects of market economics. It was based on voluntarism and support instead of sanctions, without a clear set of benchmarks or rules (Fierro 2003:95–96). The next major step in the development of conditionality models was taken with the establishment of the European Communities with the Treaties of Paris and Rome. Starting with regulations and common rules in the area of steel and coal it developed into the most regulated economic union in the world. The EC's conditional nature was most evident in its relations with Germany. After WWII, Germany regained its independence only as a 'semi-sovereign state'. Its sovereignty was limited by using both EC and NATO institutions. The Paris Agreements of 1954 prevented Germany from developing nuclear, biological or chemical weapons and assigned German forces to NATO's integrated command. The Treaties of Paris and Rome positioned Germany in tight economic and legislative relations with the EC and the ECSC (Keohane 2002:745). The German example is the main argument even today when persuading applicant countries to follow the model of positive conditionality: fifty years after strong conditionality, Germany is a respected economic power, playing important political and even military roles as well. Engagement in and acceptance of a matrix of norms, rules, practices and organisations, even when perceiving such as an act of weakness, can give remarkable momentum for modernisation and development (Patten 1999).

Simultaneously a neo-colonial conditional model was developed within the EC for the former territories of the EU member states on other continents from Africa to the Pacific (ACP). A central thrust of the EU-ACP agreements has been the strengthening of the ACP societies by introducing democracy clauses, adopting a sharper focus on state reform and recognising the centrality of political dialogue (Santiso 2002). A major development in terms of positive conditionality use was achieved by the Lomé Convention in 1975, establishing a new preferential trade agreement in exchange for political and social reforms in APC target countries. The conditional relationship between the EU and the ACP countries developed significantly during the 1980s but not towards higher progress, as in many cases better policy reforms and improving performance led to decreasing levels of development aid (Collier and Dollar 1998). New models of development cooperation in the period of 1990–2000 were fully built on conditionality when assistance was linked with respect to human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Positive conditionality became the cornerstone in relations with less developed former colonies and neighbouring countries deemed to cooperate or join the EU, as stated by former commissioner of the EU Christopher Patten: “In all our programs, there is a clear conditionality linked to our assistance (for example, the human rights clauses in the Lomé Convention and in our Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with the NIS, and the Copenhagen Criteria for EU accession, now extended with clarifications to Turkey). Figures show that assistance to states which do not respect the conditions set has been slowed down, whereas it has generally been strengthened, over time, to those showing a positive trend towards fulfilment” (Patten 1999).

4. The EU pre-accession conditionality in practice

In the course of fifty-six years and six enlargement rounds the Community of the founding six members has grown to an EU with twenty-seven members. Enlargements have been different in all aspects: including from one to ten candidates, lasting from three to ten years, based on a clear agenda and criteria or even lacking a clear accession application (GDR in 1991). The applicants have also been on very different levels of economic and political development: varying from Greece, Portugal and GDR to Switzerland and Sweden. EU representatives have during the last enlargements stressed continuity in the principles and methods of the pre-accession process and actual accession (Weber 1995:199). Conditionality in the first accession rounds has been debated based on the Paris and Rome Treaties provisions, allowing certain criteria and conditions for accession. To name a few here, the applicant country must fully accept the fundamental objectives of the basic treaties establishing the Community; its political institutions must have a democratic and pluralist character; and it must have the capacity to adopt the entire body of legislation adopted by the Community (*acquis communautaire*) (The Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community 1952).

The main treaty-based conditions have been necessary to achieve support for accession from all the member states. As the interests of some member states can differ from common EU interests, some applicants have faced controversial demands from the European Commission on the one hand, and from a member state on the other (Sedelmeier 2007:203). Some conditions of the demands of applicant countries have also been debated during the first and the fourth rounds of enlargement, to safeguard their economic and social advantages and progress. Later new non-treaty criteria have appeared (final version as the Copenhagen Criteria) that have also added economic and social demands and clarified the political criteria. The use of conditionality has evolved alongside the growth of the complexity of conditions, reaching its highest level in recent years (Grabbe 2001). As will be demonstrated in the following subsections, EU conditionality reached its climax during the last enlargement round. These subsections attempt to detect and measure conditionality levels by using the comparative quantitative method: GDP per capita, unemployment and inflation rates, innovation: patents per million, misery index (summarised level of inflation and unemployment), and the maturity of democracy. Criteria are selected on the basis of the adoption of official accession criteria (Copenhagen Criteria) and with the precondition of being quantitative in measures.

4.1. Pre-accession process and positive conditionality in 1960–1992

The first enlargement did not comprise any official and systematic assessment from the EEC's side, as an EC legal base was much less developed and all candidate countries had enjoyed statehood long enough to be capable of harmonisation. As economic and political stability was not officially rated or evaluated, the arguments in support of acceptance are not available today. The EEC's readiness to include applicants without any monitoring offers an interesting reference point for later enlargements. Indeed, accession conditions were very limited and negotiated on an ad hoc basis with every applicant separately in the first enlargement round (Her Majesty's Stationery Office 1971). Only Ireland's economic reality created questions whether the EC was able to integrate a country with a nominal GDP of only 32% of the EC average (54% in nominal data) and with low economic innovation. As to innovations, Ireland had less than one-tenth the international patents of the EC average, even after ten years of EC membership. Finally, Ireland's backwardness and low competitiveness were not seen as a reason for imposed conditionality (European Commission 1972). Just the opposite, several opt-outs and special clauses were accepted to meet the actual conditions set by the applicants. Switzerland and Norway were especially demanding, both declining their accession to the union in the end. It is also important to note that no ex-post or ex-ante criteria were used for actual accession – only consensual acceptance of the existing member states was demanded (European Commission 1972). Following ratification by the respective parliaments, the United Kingdom along with Ireland and Denmark joined the European Community on January 1, 1973.

The second round of accession with Greece was based on positive experience with Ireland and a vision that fast and functional accession can be the best solution for long-term problems even without conditionality (European Commission 1976). Greece had started its economic integration into the EC with the signing of the Athens Agreement on July 9, 1961. The Association Agreement provided a customs union between Greece and the Community and free movement of persons, services and capital. Greece's fast EC accession was interrupted by the military coup in 1967. Previous agreements and cooperation with the EC were restored only after the end of the military regime in 1974 after which Greece submitted its application to the European Community (EC) for a second time on June 12, 1975 (European Commission 1976). There was a question of whether Greece would be able to catch up with the EC member states by being left out, having a transition period or receiving full membership at once. Arguments made by Greece supported guaranteed agricultural prices, influx of Community structural funds, growth of tourism and an inflow of capital with as quick convergence as possible. The European Commission on the other hand expressed doubts in the administrative capacity of Greece to apply for additional funds from EC sources. Greece, with its GDP PPP per capita higher than Ireland (Greece's 63% of the EC average vs. Ireland's 60%), was seen as the next possible success case. But when looking at nominal GDP per capita data, differences were significantly greater: Italy as the poorest founding member had GDP per capita of 57% of the EC-9 average and Ireland with 47% was also demanding additional economic resources to close the gap (European Commission 1976 and OECD 2008). To avoid post-accession problems the Council requested that the European Commission evaluate the economic situation in Greece. Aware of the political significance of this enlargement, the European Commission stressed Greece's backward economy and agriculture compared with the nine member states of the European Economic Community (European Commission 1976).

Table 1. GDP per capita of EC member states and Greece (nominal and PPP)

	GDP PPP per capita		**GDP PPP per capita**		**Nominal GDP per capita**	
	1967	**% of EC-6**	**1977**	**% of EC-9**	**1977**	**% of EC-9**
Germany	10.243	103	14.219	109	8378	138
EC-6 avg.	**9921**	**100**	13.696	105	6951	114
Denmark	11.437	115	14.655	113	8450	140
Ireland	5352	54	7795	60	2875	47
UK	10.049	101	12.384	95	4390	73
EC-9 avg.	----	----	**13.001**	**100**	6050	100
Greece	----	----	8255	63	2879	47

Source: Groningen Growth and Development Centre and the Conference Board 2007 and Nation Master database 2008.

Greece's primary export articles of olive oil, wine and fruit were already oversupplied by Italy and France. A quarter of a million Greek workers were already working in the EC and Germany, the UK and France were expecting more of them coming after Greece's potential membership. The situation with Greece's economic competitiveness and innovation was also questionable: Greece, with its 0.4 patents per million people, could not compete with the EC's average of 38.5 patents per million or even with Ireland's respective figure of 3.9 patents per million (European Commission 1976 and Eurostat 2008).

Finally the European Commission proposed a seven to eight year transition period for Greece. After an ultimatum from Greek Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis that "his country would rather abandon accession altogether than be accepted in a manner that failed to respect the dignity of the nation," the EC Council of Ministers accepted Greece's accession. The Council also stated that Greece did not need to go through any preliminary phase but would, instead, be

Table 2. Economic data in 1977:
EC average, Germany as top result, former applicants compared to Greece

	Unemployment	Inflation	Misery index	Patents per. Mil
Germany	4.1	3.62	7.72	78.85
EC-6 avg.	5.0	8.70	13.70	44.58
Denmark	6.4	11.14	17.54	31.33
Ireland	15.8	13.64	29.44	3.93
UK	5.8	15.97	21.77	43.96
EC-9 avg.	6.5	10.30	16.80	38.52
Greece	2.1	12.21	14.31	0.47

Source: Eurostat 2008 (Patents), International Labour Organization Bureau of Statistics 2008 (unemployment) and International Monetary Fund 2008 (inflation).

granted a transition period of five years to adjust to the EC rules (Gerson 1976:3). Finally, Greece achieved even more favourable conditions than candidate countries in the first round. Greece was also offered an exemption on the payments relating to value added tax (VAT), making Greece the second largest net beneficiary of the Community budget. Greece's economy was also assisted with several aid programmes by the European Commission, particularly under the regional policy and the common agricultural policy (CAP). In exchange a compromise was demanded of Greece: free movement of Greek workers and of agricultural products was made subject to seven years of transitional period and did not come into effect until January 1, 1988 (European Commission Communication 1978). Official accession talks began on July 27, 1976 and were completed within less than three years on May 23, 1979. The Greek Parliament ratified the Act of Accession on June 28, 1979, making Greece the tenth Member State of the European Community on January 1, 1981 (Bulmer and Lequesne 2005:230).

The complications with Greek accession provided new competence for the EC to prepare enlargements but did not take away the positive attitude for upcoming enlargements. Portugal and Spain in many ways had a similar starting point as Greece when approaching the EC. All three had overcome major political problems and re-established democracy but at the same time suffered from an outdated economy and stagnant bureaucracy (Soares 1977:8). Portugal became actively engaged with the EC after the democratic revolution in 1973, by signing a free-trade agreement. The official membership application was submitted on March 28, 1977. Spain followed suit two years later after the death of General Francisco Franco (Bulmer and Lequesne 2005:230–233). Similarly to Greece some member states supported the idea of the quick accession of the Iberian states and some were against it. "Politically understandable – economically impossible", this short phrase summarises the opinions expressed in most of the member states of the European Community on Portugal's application for accession (Thatcher 1993:545). In economic terms (GDP PPP per capita) Portugal would have been the poorest member state in 1984 and Spain bypassed only Ireland and Greece (both with 64% of the EC average). At the same time Spain had a remarkable unemployment rate (20.5%) and labour migration pressure on its EC neighbours. Several Portuguese indicators were regarded as highly alarming: a large agricultural sector (22% of GDP), high foreign debt (70% of GDP) and high energy dependency (80% of internal consumption was imported). The same is true with inflation, which was also running at an annual rate of about 27% (European Commission 1978). As for the innovation records in the applicant states, they (Portugal with 0.8 and Spain with 2.8 patents per million inhabitants) could compete only with Greece (0.8), failing significantly to compete with the EC average (40.0) and that of Ireland as well (16.0) (Eurosat 2008). Both states had also thus far experienced a very short period of democracy and lacked administrative capacity according to the Commission's evaluation in 1978 (p. 1) but were ready to join the EC.

Table 3. Economic data in 1977 and 1984:
EC average, Germany, former candidate states, Spain and Portugal

	Unemployment		Inflation		Misery index		Innovation/Patents	
	1977	**1984**	**1977**	**1984**	**1977**	**1984**	**1977**	**1984**
Germany	**4.1**	**8.7**	**3.6**	**2.4**	**7.7**	**11.1**	**78.85**	**92.11**
EC-6 avg.	5.0	9.4	8.7	6.1	13.7	15.5	44.58	51.21
EC-9 avg.	6.5	11.5	10.3	6.3	16.8	17.8	38.52	44.65
Greece	2.1	8.3	12.2	18.5	14.3	26.8	0.47	0.81
EC-10 avg.	----	10.2	----	7.5	----	17.7	No data	40.26
Portugal	7.5	8.5	27.1	28.8	34.6	37.3	No data	0.83
Spain	5.2	20.3	24.4	11.3	29.6	31.6	No data	2.85

Source: Eurostat 2008 (Patents), International Labour Organization Bureau of Statistics 2008 (unemployment) and International Monetary Fund 2008 (inflation).

The European Commission as the main evaluator expressed the need and motivation in its report to the Council (European Commission 1978 and 1984) in supporting temporary restrictions and conditions. The Commission also proposed that concrete changes be made during the accession process: for example the elimination of the present imbalance in dismantling tariffs between the Community and the applicants, harmonisation of the basic conditions of competition, etc. (European Commission 1978:14). The Commission's assessment clearly states that the Community was about to dictate conditions ensuring faster integration for Portugal: "The economic options of restructuring and renewed expansion are both dictated by and conditional upon integration in Europe – dictated by it because the development gap is a major obstacle to integration, which means that Portugal must achieve faster growth than the Community's, and be conditional on it because the restructuring must dovetail into the economic coherence of an enlarged Community" (European Commission 1978).

Pressure for conditionality and restrictions were initiated mainly by Greece to keep its existing financial support and market for its wine, fish and olive oil. Arguments used seven years earlier by Greece itself, that membership was a politically important step towards long-term democracy and social development, and the EC should not look at the contemporary situation but possible potential of the acceding countries, were now seen as negative aspects leading to Spanish and Portuguese accession (Thatcher 1993:546). The Commission also sent a clear message regarding its position about the importance of meeting conditions, by stating that with such serious economic differences, there can be no common economic policy (Stadlmann 1977). However, imposing conditionality appeared to be complicated since political motivations in the Council seemed to prevail over the rational arguments of the Commission. Both acceding countries used the argument of historical opportunity to avoid uncomfortable political or economic comparison with the EC-10 and possible pre-accession conditions. But due to the experiences of the first and second enlargements the EC introduced a more complex set of conditions for accession (Ortega 1985). The European Commission submitted a favourable opinion regarding Spain's application on November 29, 1978. The lengthy and difficult negotiations began on February 6, 1979 and culminated in the signing of Spain's Treaty of Accession to the EEC on June 12, 1985 in Madrid.

The fourth enlargement comprised countries with high political and social stability and economic development. It started formally on July 9, 1989, with Austria submitting its application for accession. It was followed by Sweden on July 1, 1991, Finland on March 18, 1992, Switzerland on May 20, 1992 (the latter withdrew its application following its rejection of the EEA) and, finally, by Norway on November 25, 1992 (European Commission 1992). For their part, the EC-12 looked favourably on the accession of the applicant countries, as they were all democratic, their standard of living was high, and they had no need for Community subsidies. All the applicant countries were geographically 'more European' than their predecessors and had a higher GDP than the average in the EC. They all benefited from membership in the EEA, which took them closer to the single market. None of the formal treaty accession criteria were under discussion (European Commission 1994).

As was the case with previous accessions the European Commission provided their opinion on accession ability. Due to the applicants' very high social and economic levels, no systematic survey was conducted. The European Commission found no need for pre-accession reforms in economic, political or administrative aspects. The main problems of the acceding countries turned out to be rather sceptical public opinion, specific economic interests and an attempt to keep their social model. Finland and Sweden were also concerned about the maintenance of special treatments for their polar regions (European Commission 1992).

As candidate countries whose gross domestic product (GDP) and per capita income were among the highest in Europe and which, apart from Norway, were traditionally neutral, they sought fiercely to defend their economic interests and social systems, all the while carefully managing public opinion at home, which was marked by a strong current of Euro-scepticism. Moreover, the economic sectors of the Four, which were very export-orientated, were deeply divided over whether it was advisable to join the European Union. Usual pre-negotiation evaluations were also not necessary as most of the applicants had a sufficient administrative and political basis to start the accession talks. Accordingly, most of the demands and conditions were raised by the applicants, not the EU (European Council Conclusions 1992:6).

Table 4. EC member and candidate states' economic data in 1989 and 1992

	Unemployment		Inflation		Misery index		Patents	
	1989	**1992**	**1989**	**1992**	**1989**	**1992**	**1989**	**1992**
EC-9 avg.	9.6	9.0	4.1	3.3	13.7	12.2	52.03	44.69
Greece	7.5	8.7	13.7	15.8	21.2	24.5	1.29	1.36
EC-10 avg.	8.6	8.9	5.0	4.5	13.7	13.4	46.95	44.69
Portugal	5.0	4.1	12.6	9.0	37.3	13.1	0.30	0.68
Spain	17.3	18.4	6.8	5.9	31.6	23.4	4.39	4.31
EC-12 avg.	9.1	9.3	5.8	5.0	14.9	14.3	39.52	38.05
Finland	3.1	11.6	---	2.6	---	14.2	74.22	93.25
Sweden	1.5	5.2	---	2.4	---	7.6	93.25	107.70
Austria	3.1	3.7	---	4.0	---	7.7	54.09	42.16
Norway	3.8	5.4	4,6	2.5	8.3	7.8	35.12	41.89
Switzerland	0.6	2.8	1.9	5.9	2.5	8.7	187.67	174.60

Source: Eurostat 2008 (Patents), International Labour Organization Bureau of Statistics 2008 (unemployment) and International Monetary Fund 2008 (inflation).

Table 5. EC member states' GDP per capita compared to candidate states' GDP

	GDP PPP per capita		**GDP PPP per capita**		**GDP nominal per cap**		**GDP nominal per cap**	
	1989	**% EC-10**	**1992**	**% EC-12**	**1989**	**% of EC-10**	**1992**	**% of EC-12**
Luxembourg	**22.862**	**148**	**24.852**	**154**	**26.358**	**176**	**39.203**	**184**
Greece	10.111	65	10.201	63	6887	46	9838	46
Portugal	10.372	67	11.417	71	5831	39	10.327	48
Spain	11.582	75	12.414	77	10.387	69	15.680	74
EC-12 avg.	**15.470**	**100**	**16.132**	**100**	**15.010**	**100**	**21.311**	**100**
Finland	16.946	110	15.058	93	23.420	156	21.788	102
Sweden	17.524	113	16.980	105	23.819	159	30.551	143
Austria	16.360	106	17.481	108	17.237	115	25.015	117
Norway	18.157	117	19.561	121	23.506	157	29.668	139
Switzerland	20.935	135	20.831	129	27.788	185	36.286	170

Source: Groningen Growth and Development Centre and the Conference Board 2007 and NationMaster database 2008.

The most complicated demands were set by Norway, categorically refusing to adopt the Common Fisheries Policy or allow European vessels to access its territorial waters. Norway also refused to suspend whale hunting, although this was prohibited by a Community directive. In the end, Finland achieved the most opt-outs of continued financing for the northernmost regions of the country in addition to securing new regional funds and Community agricultural aid (European Council Conclusions 1993). Austria succeeded in obtaining various derogations from the EC-12 enabling it to continue subsidising its mountain farming, to restrict heavy goods transit by road in the alpine regions and to protect the property of its own nationals by restricting the purchase of plots of land by foreign nationals in the regions popular among tourists. Sweden received preferential treatment in refraining from taking part in the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and in retaining some of its distinctive social, ecological and health-related features. No EC-initiated conditions were set (European Council Conclusions 1992). The accession negotiations were the shortest in the EC history, lasting only from February 1, 1993 to March 30, 1994. Acceding countries also wanted to continue their democratic traditions by acceding only with the support of referenda. The results were as forecast: a clear 'yes' in Finland, a small 'yes' in Sweden, and another 'no' from the Norwegians (European Commission 1994). On January 1, 1995, Austria, Finland and Sweden became full members of the European Union.

Accession of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) to the EC is not usually described as a part of the enlargement as the GDR officially joined the Federal Republic of Germany, not the EC. But in practical terms the GDR provided influential experience for the member states before the upcoming fifth enlargement. Social and administrative reforms in the GDR provided empirical data as well as experience and an emotional background for the upcoming fifth enlargement. The GDR was economically and politically quite comparable to the previous accessions of Greece, Spain and Portugal, being problematic in all areas from democratic institutions to market economy. In the level of GDP PPP per capita the GDR with its 41% of the EC average was approximately one third that of the FRG, and less than one forth that of the Norwegian or Swiss level (Groningen Growth and Development Centre and the Conference Board 2007, NationMaster 2008). Possible labour migration was also seen as a sensitive question for EU member states, so the unemployment level was seen as important. The GDR with unemployment of 17.8% was almost twice as high of the EC average (9.3%) or FRG (7.9%) (International Labour Organisation 2008).

Independent political institutions (freely elected parliament) also only existed for a few months before joining the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the EU (Bulmer and Lequesne 2005). The GDR became a special case due to an agreement between the USSR/Russia, West Germany and France that they would all support the reunification of Germany and inclusion of the GDR in the EC. While the SU-German agreement played a vital role in starting the process, the German-French agreement played a decisive role in integrating the GDR area to the EC. The second special aspect of the GDR's political and administrative capability compared to other CEE countries was the FRG's readiness to put forth a full effort in terms of resourcing to fully reform or replace it. But the GDR's political and administrative system in general needed as much reform as any other CEE administrative system (Seliger 2001). As the FRG was officially ready to finance and guide the GDR's process of convergence to the EC, the question was who could have been supporting possible pre-accession conditions and on what legal basis and why, as the GDR was about to end its legal existence. Accordingly, no criteria or positive conditionality was demanded. When the FRG was ready to integrate the GDR without any conditionality or transitional period, it was an interesting experiment both for the CEE and the EC countries (Steinitz 2002:9). From an historical perspective the CEE countries misinterpreted the situation completely. Their hope was that relying on 'historical guilt' the FRG would offer them the same treatment as the GDR; reality, however, proved that the fast accession of the GDR would only be possible if the costs of other possible applicants were cut off and they were left to reform their societies with their own resources. With the unconditional acceptance of the GDR the EU created a precedent that economic and administrative capacity was not central when qualifying for membership. What matters is the political support of France and Germany (Steinitz 2002:3).

Table 6. EC member states' GDP per capita compared to candidate states' GDP

	GDP PPP per capita		**GDP PPP per capita**		**GDP nominal per cap**		**GDP nominal per cap**	
	1989	**% EC-10**	**1992**	**% EC-12**	**1989**	**% of EC-10**	**1992**	**% of EC-12**
Luxembourg	**22,862**	**148**	**24,852**	**154**	**26,358**	**176**	**39,203**	184
Greece	10,111	65	10,201	63	6887	46	9838	46
Portugal	10,372	67	11,417	71	5831	39	10,327	48
Spain	11,582	75	12,414	77	10,387	69	15,680	74
EC-12 avg.	**15,470**	**100**	**16,132**	**100**	**15,010**	**100**	**21,311**	100
Finland	16,946	110	15,058	93	23,420	156	21,788	102
Sweden	17,524	113	16,980	105	23,819	159	30,551	143
Austria	16,360	106	17,481	108	17,237	115	25,015	117
Switzerland	20,935	135	20,831	129	27,788	185	36,286	170
GDR	8422	54	6591	41	----	----	----	----

Source: Groningen Growth and Development Centre and the Conference Board 2007 and NationMaster database 2008.

4.2. Pre-Accession conditionality in the fifth and sixth accession rounds

The fifth round of enlargement was special for many reasons. It brought together more applicants (twelve) than all previous enlargements together (nine), while having countries with quite low economic development compared to the EU average and short of administrative capacity. It was also the first time some applicant countries were found not sufficiently developed for immediate accession (European Commission 1999). The existing EU-15 (in the beginning of accession EC-12) were more prepared for a guided accession than ever before as well, after experiencing both successful and complicated pre-accession processes in previous rounds. The group of candidate countries was not very homogenous, as it consisted of Malta and Cyprus next to the ten CEE countries (Official Journal 2003). The membership applications were handed over as follows: Hungary (March 31, 1994), Poland (April 5, 1994), Romania (June 22, 1995), Slovakia (June 27, 1995), Latvia (October 13, 1995), Estonia (November 24, 1995), Lithuania (December 8, 1995), Bulgaria (December 14, 1995), the Czech Republic (January 17, 1996) and Slovenia (June 10, 1996). But even in 1993 the European Council defined the cornerstones of the upcoming enlargement while meeting in Copenhagen: the political, economic and the *acquis* criteria[1] as a conditional relationship with the applicants (European Commission 1999, European Council 1993).

In 1995 the European Commission presented a White Paper on "Preparation of the Associated Countries of Central and Eastern Europe for Integration into the Internal Market of the Union." It was followed by Agenda 2000, defining and evaluating the situation and needs in the applicant countries (European Commission 1995 and 1999). The results of the Commission's evaluation indicated that the political criterion – to have a pluralist democracy – was by candidate states fulfilled before handing over the accession applications. All applicant countries had a parliamentary democracy. They had all ratified the UN Charter and basic human rights conventions, and joined the Helsinki Final Act and Treaty on conventional armed forces in Europe. Only the question of national and social minorities was seen as a possible source of cross-border threats and it was included in the accession conditions in a far more sophisticated way than it was stated in the *acquis* (European Commission 1999). The post-Soviet administrative system was also seen as a possible problem for the adoption of the *acquis*. The European Commission's criticism was that the CEE countries' administration was overstaffed but under-productive (European Council 1994). The applicants' economies were also evaluated by the European Commission, based on the question: "Are they able to survive in the competition of the internal market?" Special attention was paid to the development of the agricultural and industrial sectors to control the level of EU subsidies to be needed after the possible accession.

The twelve candidate countries comprised on one hand countries that were socio-economically close to 50% of the EC's average GDP PPP level (Cyprus 64%, Malta 58%, Slovenia 58% Estonia 53%) and on the other hand countries with approximately one third of the EC's average GDP PPP (Poland 30%, Hungary 34%, Turkey 35%). Romania, with its GDP PPP of only 17% of the EC average, was by far the lowest level in the history of enlargements (NationMaster 2008). The applicant countries were first evaluated with AGENDA 2000 in year 1995 and last by the final Comprehensive Monitoring Report of the European Commission in 1999 (European Commission 1995 and 1999).

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[1] According to the political criteria, countries must have achieved "stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities." The economic criteria provided "the existence of a functioning market economy; the capacity to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union and stability of main macro-economic fundamentals (inflation, public deficit, current accounts)." The *acquis* criteria referred to an "applicant country's administrative capacity and ability to assume the obligations of membership – that is, the legal and institutional framework, known as the *acquis,* by means of which the Union implements its objectives." (European Council, Presidency Conclusions, European Council of Copenhagen, 21–22 June 1993).

Table 7. Main economic data of candidate states in 1992 compared with the EU average and Luxembourg

	GDP per cap		GDP per cap		Unemploy-ment	Inflation	Misery index
	PPP	% EC avg.	Nom.	% EC avg.			
Bulgaria	4884	30	1215	6	15.3	91.3	106.6
Czechoslovakia	7254	45	2605	12	5.1	8.5	13.6
Cyprus	10,388	64	11,279	53	1.8	6.5	8.3
Estonia	8587	53	2601	12	3.7	25.0	28.7
Hungary	5528	34	3593	17	9.8	23.1	32.9
Latvia	5992	37	1842	9	2.3	243.3	245.6
Malta	9363	58	7483	35	4.0	1.6	5.6
Lithuania	6425	40	2314	11	3.5	11.1	14.6
Romania	2797	17	1101	5	8.2	210.4	218.6
Slovenia	9315	58	6272	29	11.5	11.4	22.9
Poland	4842	30	2198	10	13.6	45.1	58.7
Turkey	5615	35	2722	13	8.3	70.1	78.4
Applicants avg.	5684	35	5684	27	7.3	62.3	69.5
EC-12 avg.	16,132	100	21,312	100	9.3	5.0	14.3
Luxembourg	24,852	154	39,203	184	1.6	2.4	4.0

Source: Eurostat 2008 (Patents), International Labour Organization Bureau of Statistics 2008 (unemployment), International Monetary Fund 2008 (inflation), NationMaster database and Groningen Growth and Development Centre and the Conference Board 2007.

In the aforementioned monitoring reports the European Commission provided feedback in three different categories. The first level was the fundamental question of whether the country was ready to join the EU on January 1, 2004. It meant that countries were not evaluated by their present ability to join, but by the ability to be ready for accession in 2004. The second level involved questions and issues needed to be solved before the actual accession. The third level covered questions that would block accession if left unresolved, despite the preliminary positive decision (European Commission 1999 and 2003). Comparative results were first presented in the Luxembourg European Council in 1997 and the candidate countries scored as follows (from 40 points as maximum):

Table 8. Scores on Copenhagen Criteria

Hungary	33
Poland	32
Czech Republic	29
Slovenia	25
Estonia	24
Slovak Republic	23
Lithuania	19
Latvia	18
Romania	13
Bulgaria	10

Source: European Council 1997.

Based on the AGENDA 2000 evaluation results, a sophisticated system of positive conditionality was started. The most significant reform in the pre-accession positive conditionality was the creation of the system of intermediate evaluation. Based on Agenda 2000, the European Commission started to produce a comprehensive 'Progress Report' every year that had both a comparative analysis for all candidate states and a chapter for every candidate county. The candidate countries were divided into two groups: the Luxembourg Group (with higher accession capability) and Helsinki Group (with lower accession capability). The evaluation on practical terms was also divided into two levels and time periods: overwhelming reports were prepared for the Luxembourg and Helsinki European Councils to qualify for accession negotiations and regular annual progress reports after the Helsinki Council. Progress reports provided simultaneous criticism and support for all the applicants. Progress reports included no clear benchmarks and offered no comments on the EU average levels or similar problems among member states (European Council 1999).

In the complicated starting situation, where the EU set fundamental conditions ('open market economy', 'consolidated democracy', 'administrative ability to adopt the *acquis*') for membership but the candidate countries did not have the internal resources to meet them, the logical solution was to create a framework of structural support and financial motivation for demanded reforms. In the period from 1991 to 2004 four main pre-accession instruments (or pre-structural foundations) were introduced to assist the applicant countries: PHARE, ISPA, TACIS and SAPARD. In the first stage these were launched to assist Poland, Hungary, Romania and Czechoslovakia. Later, these were used universally for all the CEE countries (European Commission 1999). The conditional relationship did not start with application and did not end completely with the approval for membership – it was gradually decreased but some elements remained, for example using an 'internal market scoreboard' on the transposition of internal market directives instead of 'regular reports' (European Commission 2003).

During the fifth pre-accession process the EU was also very clearly emphasising that the accession terms must be kept as universal as possible, because of the high number of applicant states. The candidate countries did not have the right to opt-out from any policy or EU initiative, either: they mainly had a 'take it or leave it' scenario. At the same time the EU set several restrictions and conditions for possible new members in joining the Euro zone, Schengen visa area, agricultural subsidies, structural fund resources, etc. (Official Journal 2003). The so-called 'hidden agenda' has also caused official criticism from the applicant countries. The hidden agenda consists of demands which are not officially introduced and included in the accession partnership framework, but are still bases for judgment of the accession readiness of candidate states. The questions of the hidden agenda were addressed in the European Commission's Reports to ease the candidate countries' concerns about the importance and content of the hidden agenda. Within the hidden agenda human rights and minority treatment played a complicated role. In the final Monitoring Report the European Commission paid attention to the evaluation of several questions not related to the Copenhagen Criteria (labour migration, social security, non-citizen rights, etc.) (European Commission 2003). According to the final report of the Commission in 2003 ten applicant countries (Malta, Cyprus, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovenia) were accepted, and Romania and Bulgaria were required to show some additional progress before being accepted for membership three years later. The cases of Romania and Bulgaria clearly indicated that the EU's positive conditionality is more than a soft guiding framework – it is a strict system of structural support and control where not all participants qualify for the prize.

5. Principles, motivation and justification of the EU pre-accession conditionality

It would be good to know what the measurable rational criteria for the EU are, defining when to use conditionality and what practical methods to prefer. Is the reasoning rational or emotional? Is faster convergence or the political and economic gains of the member states the purpose of conditionality? The following comparison will search for functional reasons in the EU pre-accession conditionality. The applicant countries will be compared to the EU average, previous weakest applicants in their accession period and previous weakest applicants at the moment of comparison. The inclusion of both medium and problematic cases should ensure the validity of the comparison. The data is taken from the year before the European Commission Report on whether or not to start the conditional pre-accession relation. The criteria of measuring are based on the later Copenhagen Criteria, but using a simplified and quantitative approach.

5.1. Criteria of political stability and democracy

The criteria of political stability and democracy are based on the Paris Treaty's preamble paragraph stating that "democratic European states can be members of the founded Community." During the accession consultations and negotiations, the criteria that the applicant country must have a democratic regime was under continuous debate. The first questions were: should the applicants' democracies be 'ready and consolidated' before the application is accepted (as a pre-condition) and is it functional to demand that the applicants go on with their quest for democracy without community support? The second question has been how to measure a 'sufficient democracy' level and what components it should consist of. The third question is how long the democratic government should have existed to be listed as stable (Killick 1998, Schimmelfennig, Engert and Knobel 2006). A structural and comprehensive list explaining the benchmarks for consolidated democracy first appeared within the Copenhagen Criteria (consisting of free elections and a government formed according to the results of the elections, the rule of law, minority tolerance, media freedoms, etc.). In the earlier accessions the democracy criterion was only a general pre-condition and measured by the existence of a democratic constitution and holding free and fair elections (European Council Conclusions, Copenhagen 1993). In practice the quickest development from democratisation to EU membership was achieved by the GDR with only seven months. The longest period of suspension occurred in Cyprus, which had problems with borders and de facto sovereignty.

Table 9. Democratic stability in candidate states

	Independent democracy	Last mil. coup or war	EC/EU application	EC/EU accession	Continuous democracy as of application and accession	
Greece	July 1974	Apr. 1967	Jan. 1976	Jan. 1981	17 months	67 months
Portugal	Apr. 1975	Apr. 1974	Apr. 1977	Jan. 1986	24 months	127 months
Spain	Jan. 1978	Feb. 1981	Apr. 1977	Jan. 1986	0 months	96 months
GDR	Mar. 1990	–	–	Oct. 1990	–	7 months
Slovenia	Jun. 1991	July 1991	June 1996	May 2004	60 months	155 months
Estonia	Aug. 1991	Aug. 1991	Nov. 1995	May 2004	51 months	153 months
Cyprus	Oct. 1960	July 1974	Jul 1990	May 2004	388 months	528 months
Poland	Aug. 1989	–	Apr. 1994	May 2004	55 months	177 months
Hungary	Mar. 1990	–	Mar. 1994	May 2004	48 months	170 months

Source: CIA Factbook 2008.

The comparison of democratic stability between the CEE states and Greece, Portugal and Spain is most interesting. While Greece and Portugal needed a democratic tradition of two years to be able to submit the application and the Spanish application was submitted even before a fully functional democracy, the CEE countries had to wait from four to five years to be welcomed with their accession applications. The period from achieving an independent democracy to full membership has also differed during the accessions: Greece needed six and a half years, Spain eight and Portugal ten and a half. The CEE countries all needed from thirteen to fifteen years for full membership. Accordingly the fifth and sixth accession round countries were treated with much tougher criteria and conditions: their waiting time for application acceptance was circa two times longer and their waiting time for full membership circa 50% longer than that of Greece, Spain and Portugal.

5.2. Economic criteria

Economic criteria are mentioned in the founding treaties only very briefly by marking the need for a market economy (Treaties of Rome 1957). Founding treaties or later reform treaties say nothing about 'openness of economy' or 'the ability to sustain competition in the internal market'. Accordingly, it is interesting which specific criteria and justification has been chosen by the European Commission to evaluate candidate countries. The basic set for most monitoring reports has been: inflation, unemployment, GDP per capita (nominal and PPP), innovation (represented by the level of international patents), government debt and trade deficit. The fifth and sixth enlargements added the criteria of economic openness (European Commission 2003). When comparing member states and applicants in the most general economic category – GDP PPP per capita – there are no differences between the applicants of the first four rounds and the best prepared applicants of the fifth round. For example Greece was equal to Cyprus and weaker than Malta. Ireland, Portugal, the GDR and Estonia were all quite on the same level and the other CEE countries were further behind. The situation in Bulgaria and Romania was especially problematic, but they were also not accepted in their first accession attempt (Official Journal 2003).

Table 10. GDP PPP and GDP Nominal levels is applicant countries

	GDP per capita % of EC average USD		**GDP per capita % of EC poorest USD**	
	GDP PPP %	GDP Nom %	GDP PPP %	GDP Nom %
Ireland 1967	54	49	63	75
Greece 1977	63	44	105	100
Portugal 1984	57	35	91	43
Spain 1984	68	52	113	79
GDR 1989	54	31	64	---
Slovenia 1992	58	35	91	63
Estonia 1992	53	29	84	26
Cyprus 1992	64	47	102	114
Czechoslovakia 1992	45	29	71	26
Malta 1992	58	35	92	76

Source: Groningen Growth and Development Centre and the Conference Board 2007 and NationMaster database 2008.

In terms of nominal GDP per capita, compared to the EC average, the situation was slightly different: Spain was closest to the EC average, followed by Cyprus, Greece and Ireland (all above 40% of the EC average). Portugal, Malta and Slovenia had 35% of the EC average; the GDR had 31% of the average and Czechoslovakia and Estonia and both 29% of the EC average (Groningen Centre 2007). All the remaining applicants of the first four rounds had higher levels of nominal GDP and all the other applicants of the fifth enlargement had lower levels of nominal GDP. Accordingly motivation for positive conditionality can be seen when comparing nominal GDP level, but it is not evident when comparing GDP PPP levels.

Inflation and unemployment levels indicate the strength of the economy and society in sustaining competition in the EC internal market. With both indicators the ideal situation is not zero: 2% inflation is mainly considered to be the most effective and 5% unemployment as well (Barro 1997: 895). Among the candidate countries Cyprus and Malta represent an almost ideal example in both categories, being even better than the EC average and by far better than the worst EC member state in the same year. The GDR also had an almost ideal inflation level but unemployment double that of the EC average (the GDR's unemployment was only nominally lower than Spain's 1984 level). Czechoslovakia had close to ideal employment and a level of inflation slightly higher than ideal, which was still on a far better level than in Ireland, Greece, Portugal and Spain. Slovenia had both unemployment and inflation over the EC average (inflation 226% of the average and unemployment 123%) but in both categories it demonstrated close to average results compared with the earlier weakest applicants in their year of evaluation. Accordingly in these main economic categories the need for positive conditionality among the fifth accession round does not appear. A supportive argument against conditionality and restrictions would be that inflation or unemployment that was double the EC average did not cause a labour or capital outflow from Greece, Portugal or Spain (Delattre 1997).

Table 11. Inflation and unemployment in applicant states in the year of EC evaluation

	Nominal	**Nominal**	**% of EC average**		**% of EC worst**	
	Inflation	Unemploy-ment	Inflation	Unemploy-ment	Inflation	Unemploy-ment
Ireland 1977	13.6	15.8	132	244	74	169
Greece 1977	12.2	2.1	118	32	66	13
Portugal 1984	28.1	8.5	383	83	155	54
Spain 1984	11.3	20.3	150	198	61	130
GDR 1989	2.8	17.8	48	191	20	96
Slovenia 1992	11.4	11.5	226	123	72	62
Estonia 1992	24.9	3.7	496	40	157	20
Cyprus 1992	6.5	1.8	129	19	41	10
Czechoslovakia 1992	8.5	5.1	169	55	53	27
Malta 1992	1.6	4.0	32	43	10	22

Source: Eurostat 2008 (Patents), International Labour Organization Bureau of Statistics 2008 (unemployment) and International Monetary Fund 2008 (inflation).

The purposes of pre-accession conditionality for the EU have diverse general terms regarding economic gains, security gains and sharing cultural and social values. On the practical level there are also normative purposes for preparing candidate countries for the Copenhagen Criteria, administrative motivation for guided and measurable enlargement process and the mutual need to reduce the risks of possible failure of the pre-accession process. A clear link between the wish to help candidate states to fulfil accession criteria and conditionality was not detectable. Accordingly the motivation for conditionality could have been initiated from other aims: member states' interests, institutional comfort, and possible neo-imperial ambitions (Veebel 2004). Conditionality, while being introduced as a voluntary choice, was often hinted at as being the only rational or normal option: "Keep your eyes fixed firmly on your country's interest and its aspiration to join the great European family of nations" (Prodi 2004).

6. Conclusions

The use of positive conditionality has been a growing trend in the EU. It started gradually in the framework of development cooperation and post-colonial relations and it has developed as the central method of the EU's pre-accession process for the fifth round of enlargement and neighbourhood policy. Practical implementation of the concept of positive conditionality has changed remarkably during the last half century. The complexity of positive conditionality has also developed simultaneously with the criteria for cooperation and membership. The reasoning for pre-accession conditionality, which from a rational point of view should be helping the candidate states to fulfil accession criteria, is not so simplified, combining the interests of member states, institutions, idealistic lobby groups, etc., as well. Effective convergence and development has been the public goal for setting up positive conditionality, but in practical comparison the rational reasons and qualified criteria are hard to find.

The use of positive conditionality has not been based on neutral evaluation but rather on the political and economic interests of member states and EU institutions, as conditionality still lacks clear measurable benchmarks and results are not evaluated by a neutral evaluator. The higher levels of criteria and conditions have also been initiated by candidate countries' growing willingness to cooperate and fulfil the conditions. The opinion of the target countries about conditionality has been neither harmonised nor fully positive. While most candidate countries have welcomed positive conditionality, some countries have interpreted positive conditionality with neo-functional integration as a logical first step in integration; some countries on the other hand have been critical and characterised this type of partnership as a sign of neo-colonialist or imperialist thinking, the aim of which is not the fastest development of the target countries, but profitability for the EU and its member states. Any possible neo-colonialist 'conspiracy theory' has usually been blocked by the argument that "we all have met similar conditions for membership in earlier periods" and it is a logical first step towards closer cooperation. Despite some criticism, positive conditionality is certainly the favourite and strongest growing method in the EU's external relations and enlargement process.

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