

New CER working paper

## THE EU'S NEW BORDERLANDS

By Judy Batt

With the 2004 enlargement, the EU will acquire many new neighbours, some of them unstable states with fragile economies. This new working paper from the CER explains why the regions along the EU's new eastern border matter for Europe's security. Judy Batt provides potent examples of these regions' turbulent history and illustrates how relations have improved since the collapse of communism. She argues forcefully that the EU needs to be extremely careful in how it manages its new external frontier. Border checks and immigration controls must not be allowed to turn into a new Iron Curtain.

The EU is now trying to devise a 'neighbourhood policy' for the regions that will soon surround it – both those to the east and in the Balkans. But its political dialogue is mainly with national capitals, not with the people who live in the regions next to the border. This paper argues that the EU needs to develop a strong regional dimension to its neighbourhood policies. It will face a host of problems if stronger visa requirements and reinforced border controls are not accompanied by flanking measures to integrate neighbouring populations into the EU. The paper looks at what the EU can do to support these regions' striving for growth and prosperity.

Judy Batt proposes a series of practical measures for the EU to take:

- ★ Improve the visa regime so that legitimate travellers and businesspeople can cross the border quickly and without hassle.
- ★ Make the most of the new member-states' experience. The rapprochement between Poland and Ukraine in the last decade is one of the most positive developments in post-communist Europe. The EU should use the contacts and expertise of the new members in forging its new policy.
- ★ Improve the co-ordination of EU neighbourhood policy by reducing the Union's internal administrative and legal divisions. 'Wider Europe' policy sits awkwardly between different EU institutions and procedures, making the Union slow to respond, as well as tediously complicated and confusing for people in the region.
- ★ Reinforce the regional dimension of EU neighbourhood policy, so that enlargement does not disrupt trade and cause economic hardship in regions along its new external border. For example, the EU should establish regional offices to serve as consulates and resource centres.
- ★ Exploit the untapped potential of the 'Euroregions' straddling the EU's new external border.

Notes for editors:

1. Judy Batt is a research fellow at the EU Institute for Security Studies in Paris. She is available for interview.
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