



PRESS RELEASE

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New CER pamphlet

EUROPE'S BLURRED BOUNDARIES

Rethinking enlargement and neighbourhood policy

By Charles Grant

Fewer than half of the people in the EU now support further enlargement of the Union. Most EU governments are not enthusiastic either. Bulgaria and Romania will join and Croatia may sneak in. But will enlargement stop thereafter?

In a new Centre for European Reform pamphlet, Charles Grant examines the causes of the growing hostility to enlargement. He argues that closing the door to aspiring candidates from the Balkans and the former Soviet Union could make them unstable and hostile. He therefore suggests various ways out of the enlargement impasse.

He argues that a Union of 27 or more countries will need more flexible ways of co-operation and integration. Smaller groups of EU countries could work together on tax, defence or fighting terrorism. The increased use of such 'variable geometry' may reassure those who fear that further widening will come at the expense of deepening.

But even if the EU keeps the door open, future accessions are a long way off, and some of the countries around the EU will never join (because they are not willing, not ready, or simply because they are not European). Therefore, the EU needs an effective 'neighbourhood policy'. The carrots offered by the current policy are not juicy enough to entice Moldova to reform its economy or Egypt to embrace democracy. The EU should offer more free trade and allow the best-performing neighbours to take part in EU foreign policy.

Charles Grant predicts that in the future EU, the boundaries between membership and non-membership will become increasingly blurred. *Avant-garde* groups of member-states will move ahead with certain policies without getting all 27 members on board. Meanwhile, neighbouring countries that are not in the EU will take part in increasing numbers of EU policies without being full members. He concludes with a list of recommendations on how to revive enlargement and how to strengthen the EU's neighbourhood policy.

Notes for editors:

1. Charles Grant is director of the Centre for European Reform. He can be contacted on 00 44 20 7233 1199.
2. Commissioner Olli Rehn will launch the pamphlet at a seminar in Brussels on October 11th 2006.
3. This paper can be ordered from the CER website (www.cer.org.uk) or by contacting Kate Meakins at kate@cer.org.uk or on +44 20 7233 1199.

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