PATTERNS OF EUROPEANISATION AND TRANSNATIONAL PARTY COOPERATION: 
PARTY DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

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Nearly a decade since the fall of Communist regimes in Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs), the still relatively new party systems have not yet clearly settled into stable patterns - either in terms of durable or principal party actors or levels of individual party support. It would appear therefore that party development in CEECs has been undergoing a long transition period without, as yet, firm signs of moving into system consolidation. That conclusion would broadly fit with the general view about regime change there. At the same time, cross-national variation is increasingly evident not merely between regions like East-Central Europe and the Balkans, not to mention republics from the former USSR, but also among the countries in each of these regions. The same may be said about party systems in the CEECs, thus both inviting comparison but also raising doubts about too firm judgements concerning common trends among these countries.

However, this is not to say that new party system stabilisation and democratisation march automatically in conjunction, for the former may be autonomous. Problems of settledness in party development are no clear proof that regime change itself is endangered. The most obvious case is perhaps Poland, where high party system fragmentation and a slow developmental path have not prevented that country from achieving - an albeit economically disruptive - democratic transition, with reasonable prospects of consolidation. Equally, there are now familiar party actors in Albania but by no stretch of the imagination can it be argued that this country (where areas of territory are not really under effective state authority) has successfully negotiated the pitfalls of regime transition. This paper does not, however, intend to enter the general debate about the relationship between party system consolidation and democratic consolidation, except to note that the latter may affect the former if only because it relates to the wider environment in which party development takes place. There are different levels to this development, for parties are both institutional and societal actors and also engage in competition among themselves 1.

The concern of this paper is instead to set out and explore this development in the CEECs while recognising difficulties of comparison with Western Europe. It does this by, firstly, considering familiar methods of cross-national comparison of party systems, especially the ideological, before looking at the question of Europeanisation. It then concentrates on an analysis of transnational party cooperation as a focussed way of evaluating the Europeanisation dynamic in party development in the new democracies in Central & Eastern Europe in contrast with the more descriptive approach of identifying party families across Europe. In examining transnational party cooperation (TPC), the paper draws on elite interviews with party leaders and senior officials in a variety of CEECs 2.

Party system stabilisation is undoubtedly affected by the democratisation process in a variety of ways. Thus, the generally difficult transitions in the CEECs warn against more than tentative characterisation of their party systems. The fact that economic transformation and, in many cases, state and nation-building have accompanied political change reinforces that conclusion. But, the party systems are also affected by historical inheritances including any significant pre-authoritarian experience of democratic rule.

This leads to our first consideration for, much more than the postwar European and the Southern European transitions, those taking place in the CEECs have revealed weak historical background in party

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2 These interviews were conducted for the project on Regime Change in East-Central Europe funded under the East/West Change Programme of the Economic & Social Research Council. The interviews were carried out during 1993-96 in Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Bulgaria as well as with parties in Western Europe in Austria, Germany and the UK. Update interviews were conducted in Slovakia in 1998.
development. Historical parties like the Social Democrats did not perform well in the first free elections in 1990, leaving the way open for new parties to dominate the political stage although, in the second phase of party development, many former regime parties successfully converted themselves from Communist into democratic Socialist or Social Democratic parties. By and large, the four decades of Communist rule left greater discontinuities in party development than was the case in the earlier two experiences of European democratisations. Hence, party identification has taken longer to emerge.

There are additional reasons for this problem. The initial dominance in several transitions of anti-Communist umbrella movements inhibited the ready occurrence of political pluralism expressed through the medium of organised parties along recognisable ideological lines. The continuing importance of Solidarity is one reason for the belated flowering of full competitive politics in Poland; and similar problems were encountered with Civic Forum and Public Against Violence in both parts of the soon-to-split Czechoslovakia. Analogous movements in Bulgaria and Hungary - the United Democratic Front and the Hungarian Democratic Forum - were however more obviously identified with the centre-Right in the political spectrum. But even they had to transform themselves into organised parties, the UDF much more successfully than the MDF which fell from grace. Party development in the CEECs has furthermore been marked by a distinct focus on parliamentary activity and a tendency towards elite control. At the same time, a pattern of splits and recombinations has persisted in party formation 3. As a whole, parties in these new democracies have often demonstrated weak organisational links with the public 4.

Do these problems of party system settledness mean that identifying patterns of party development is particularly difficult? To some extent, this must be so; although a decade on in time interim assessments are possible, while growing cross-national variation - with some party systems more stabilised than others - does invite comparison. Comparisons, therefore, with models of party development in Western Europe have to be qualified by the fact that in the CEECs most party systems are not yet fully established. What, therefore, is shown by such comparisons?

Given that party systems are multi-level in their development, there is a matter of which criteria to adopt. The most obvious is the ideological and, therefore, we look at party families and how far these are replicated in the CEECs. In a survey of party development, Dieter Segert (1995) identified the following patterns:

* the scarcity of modern conservative parties, with a notable exception in the Czech ODS;
* a pattern of centre-Right parties settling in the Liberal camp; with traditional authoritarian parties in the right in certain countries (Hungary, Poland and Slovakia);
* strong Left parties as modernised successors to the former Communist regime parties or, alternatively, in the form of Social Democratic parties (notably, the CSSD in the Czech Republic);
* the failure of Green parties to establish themselves despite their initial impact during the fall of Communism;
* and, the absence of agrarian parties except in Poland and Hungary 5:

This provides a useful snapshot at a particular moment in transition which may not be ephemeral, since longer-term patterns can be distinguished. If these transpire, then already some differences from Western Europe emerge. This is especially so with respect to the first and fourth patterns, while the third suggests some similarity - except the modernised Left parties derived from former regime parties in CEECs, while they tended often to have been in opposition in Western Europe and, in any case, had long practice of

operating in a pluralist environment. It should be noted, however, that Segert underrates the importance of centre-Right parties including those of the Christian Democratic tendency.

But there are limitations to this exercise in party families. It offers some descriptive value with restricted mileage for cross-national comparison. Labels alone do not automatically tell us much of substance, although admittedly individual party self-identification with a West European type of party family may denote an element of conviction, or otherwise, opportunism. Thus, the two types of Left parties are the clearest case of transnationally identifiable forces, as are the Christian Democrats on the centre-Right in some countries, such as the Czech and Slovak republics. But there are many examples in the CEECs of parties that do not adopt transnational nomenclature, although in terms of ideological precepts they may approximate to one party family or the other. This is true of other parties on the centre-Right in particular, such as the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) in the Czech Republic and the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDf) and their allegiance with conservative or Christian Democratic parties. Taking self-identified and de facto members of European party families together does nevertheless allow us some scope for cross-national comparison.

But there are obvious deficiencies in that conventional ideological labels are broad even in Western Europe, and they may not be meaningfully transferable to the CEECs. According to Agh, this is because their local connotations may be idiosyncratic but also as parties in the CEECs often have obscure profiles. The last may alter with time as transition progresses, although the first problem reflects possible differences of political culture and, given the quite different political experiences in Eastern and Western Europe since the Second World War, one should expect there to be significant problems of culture-boundness when measuring ideological labels cross-nationally.

Similar to this exercise is the categorisation of parties into "standard" and "non-standard", terms initially applied to the Slovak party scene. "Standard" parties are those related without too much difficulty to the Left/Right spectrum in European politics; while "non-standard" parties fail to do so because of their propensity to national and social populism, authoritarianism, radicalism and extremism as well as a confrontational and charismatic approach - the archetype of the latter being Meciar's Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS). However, some "non-standard" forces are less problematic in that they primarily have not followed the pattern of ideological and organisational differentiation. This has notably been so with the Bulgarian UDF, which - originally ideologically disparate - evolved into a more recognisable centre-Right formation during the period of Socialist Party government (1994-97). This categorisation of "standard" parties furthermore stresses 'compatibility with international party structures', thus overlapping with the exercise of aligning party families.

Whatever approach is adopted, it has to be recognised there are in CEECs different types of parties not usually found in Western Europe. This is because of cleavage fault lines which are particular to CEECs or individual states in the region. The most obvious example is ethnic parties like the Hungarian parties in Slovakia (now united in the SMK) as well as the similar Hungarian Democratic Federation of Romania (HDFR) in Hungary and the Turkish Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) in Bulgaria. Olson calls into question the resemblance of party systems in East-Central Europe to their counterparts in Western Europe precisely because of issue alignments being different or sufficiently so. In Poland, for instance, Weslowski has suggested as many as six major dimensions which cut across the party system there: national and universal; confessional and secular; authoritarian and democratic; laissez-faire and interventionist;

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8 ibid, p. 106.
elitist and populist; and, Communist-purging and Communist-forgiving 10. Some of these might however remain or decline as issue alignments and not evolve into deep cleavages, particularly if they are largely transition phenomena. It is not impossible to find examples of multi-cleavage polities in Western Europe. Postwar Italy was said to feature five cleavages: the economic (pro-market, pro-state); the international (pro-USSR, pro-USA); the institutional (pro-1948 Constitution, pro-other institutional arrangement); the social (revolution or reaction vs. reform); and, the state-church cleavage 11. However, some of these diminished with time and, in any case, the different Italian parties had little difficulty identifying with standard party families in Western Europe. The point of difference between them and party systems in the CEECs is that none of the Italian parties were uniquely bound within one particular cleavage.

There are further levels in party systems that may highlight broad developmental differences between the CEECs and Western Europe. Thus, Olson goes on to note the organisational pattern of cadre parties in the former compared with the greater prevalence of mass parties in the latter. These cadre parties are distinguished by strong elite control and focus on parliamentary life combined with catch-all electoral appeals, this being possible through the instruments of mass communication. Olson argues therefore that leaders of these parties need not recapitulate the developmental sequences of Western Europe but rather they may leapfrog directly into a mass communications video age 12. This may have influenced the degree to which leader personalities have been important in early party development in CEECs 13. Such a pattern is not uncommon in democratic transitions, as shown in previous regime changes in Europe. Whether these features of party life in Central & Eastern Europe become permanent remains to be seen.

It is clear, therefore, that familiar comparative concepts may be applied to the new democracies in the Eastern half of Europe, but only to a restricted degree. In particular, they encounter not merely differences of historical experience but also suffer from trying to compare unsettled party systems with long-established ones. With one or two exceptions, the CEECs have suffered from the debilitating effects on civil society from long Communist rule; and it would be surprising if that inheritance had not inhibited party development. Furthermore, these countries have undergone several parallel transformations - economic as well as political, and in many cases state and nation-building as well - and this combination has provided influential parameters on the emergence and activities of political parties. Notwithstanding these difficulties, they have developed into vital and central actors in the new democracies in the CEECs.

(3) Patterns of Europeanisation: Multi-Level Approaches

In the evolution of new democracies, Europeanisation tends to have different faces, although these may be connected and they often have a common focus in accession to European organisations. Above all, Europeanisation involves a basic policy reorientation towards institutionalised European cooperation - referring primarily to the organisations of European integration but also some others like NATO and the Council of Europe. The European framework has allowed countries exiting from non-democratic rule to start anew in international relations. In the postwar transitions, Europeanisation provided a means for the post-Fascist countries (Italy, Federal Republic of Germany) to make a break with the unfortunate recent past and to seek international acceptance within a relatively short space of time. Similarly, in Southern Europe, those countries transiting from right-wing authoritarian rule were able to embrace Europeanisation as a way of casting off international isolation. In doing so, Europe became associated with liberal democracy and thus acquired a symbolic value - one underlined by the democratic requirements for entry to the EEC 14.

An analogous pattern has been evident in CEECs with their common option for joining the EU, which now exercises rather tighter criteria for testing the democratic credentials of prospective member states. The systemic implications of Europeanisation are particularly visible in those countries where new democracies - perhaps, initially - lack broad consensus and "Europe" becomes drawn into domestic polarisation over what are contested transitions. But in Central & Eastern Europe the question of Europeanisation has assumed a rather broader meaning. Firstly, it has a distinct historical edge in that these countries, to varying degrees, emphasise the need to reconnect with mainstream European politics as in the catchphrases "Return to Europe" or "Back to Europe". The concrete process of joining the EU thus represents an historical mission. Linked with this, Europeanisation also entails a cultural or modernising message as it involves the basic transformation of these countries into civil societies, indeed ones that will underpin the process of democratisation.

Clearly, there are different dimensions to Europeanisation - economic (with marketisation) as well as social and cultural. It is, however, the political which interests us here. Undoubtedly, this provides a systemic pressure in that the established form of political regime in Western Europe - that of parliamentary democracy - becomes the model for new democracies in the East. And, the dictates of democratic conditionality seek to ensure that this model is not adopted merely in formal but also qualitative terms. The EU has been the main source of this pressure with Europe Agreements and Accession Partnerships but also the Commission's avis on applicant countries stressing the importance of respect for human rights and guarantees for minorities. There are, however, obstacles to this process of Europeanisation for it is not automatic despite the Europeanising dynamic of the EU and its conditional promise of eventual membership. Insofar as this dynamic depends essentially on an overriding motive in new democracies to achieve EU entry, then political pressures and influences from Brussels but also EU member states are likely to be effective. If, on the other hand, this aim is clouded or contested domestically, then accordingly the scope for political Europeanisation is reduced. That is most noticeable in those CEECs where traditionalist or nationalist attitudes hold sway among elites. But, also, mentalities carried over from predecessor Communist regimes can restrain the advance of elite understanding of Western norms, practices and procedures that facilitates Europeanisation. The very overload of everyday and systemic tasks in transition and transformation may also add to this problem.

It is here that we should turn to Europeanisation patterns in party development. For it is against this background of EU promise and pressures that political elites in the CEECs and their parties are most likely to approximate to Western European ideological tendencies. This may take two forms. Firstly, there is a diffuse sense of following European models of party development. This is not always directly related to the EU and may be influenced either by cross-national trends in Western Europe or be stimulated by particular national models there.

This pattern has been most noticeable on the Left with the Social Democratisation of former regime parties in the CEECs. Reform Communists looked consciously to European models and the domestic motivation was evident in their desire for legitimation, with recognition by the Socialist International (SI) being the most obvious external accolade. This influence of European models on the Left was most pronounced in the case of the newly proclaimed Hungarian Socialist Party, whose leaders and activists made frequent visits

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16 Cases include Portugal during 1974-74 and, among the CEECs, Slovakia during the Meciar government of 1994-98 and Romania and Bulgaria before the changes in power there in 1996 and 1997.
17 On the meaning of Europeanisation in post-Communist Central & Eastern Europe, see A. Agh, 'The Europeanisation of ECE polities and the emergence of the new ECE democratic parliaments' in Agh (ed.), The Emergence of East Central European Parliaments: the First Steps (Hungarian Centre of Democracy Studies, Budapest, 1994), pp. 9-10.
18 ibid, pp. 18-19.
to Western Europe in the early transition years. But it was later evident too in other former Communist parties. The Slovak party changed its name in 1990 to Party of the Democratic Left (SDL) with Peter Weiss, its new chairman, deliberately aiming to create a modern European left party. In particular, it was the Italian Democratic Party of the Left (PDS) - the former PCI - that acted as elsewhere as a national model for the European left. It had a strong influence on the SDL in both strategic and organisational ways.

There are, therefore, different levels at which the Europeanisation of party development can take place. These may be typed as identity and ideology, programme, organisation, electoral politics and personnel. It is in all of these respects that transnational party cooperation may impact on party development in new democracies; and that is the second form of approximation to West European ideological tendencies. It exerts real, sometimes everyday, pressures or influences through inter-elite socialisation between countries in both halves of Europe and through a variety of channels that tend to have an integrative effect. These channels are various and usually act in parallel and are in some cases linked. They are: the party groups in the European Parliament (EP) as well as in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the different EU party federations related to these party groups such as the Party of European Socialists (PES), the European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party (ELDR), the (Christian Democratic) European People's Party (EPP) and the conservative European Democratic Union (EDU), the traditional party internationals such as the Socialist and the Liberal and, not to be omitted, bilateral links between parties in different countries, a growing pattern all the more significant when it involves those belonging to the EU party organisations. This last development sometimes reflects traditional bilateral links between countries, often geographically close, but also a new tendency of dividing the labour of transnational cooperation with the East between different national parties in Western Europe.

Such cooperation, normally very secondary to mainstream EU activity, has nevertheless grown with the increased institutional weight of the EP. So far as applicant countries are concerned, its potential impact may be enhanced by new party systems being more open to international influences - among a range of formative ones - than those in established democracies. At the same time, transnational party linkages are limited in their influence on democratisation. First and foremost, they cannot be expected as such to instil democratic values and depend on potentially receptive ground - a point that needs to be taken in much of Central & Eastern Europe, where democratic traditions at the mass level were largely absent or weakly developed before 1989. There are therefore cultural barriers to the impact of TPC, just as there may be political ones if elites in new democracies are either uninterested or mistrustful. They operate primarily via party leaders and organisations although to some extent the latter has included local or regional branches as well as national party headquarters. Activity has involved election training as well as policy and organisational advice and has sometimes included financial support.

Whatever its limitations, transnational party cooperation provides a convenient and pertinent mechanism for assessing how far party development in the CEECs has in reality been determined by Western European models whether in an integral or partial form. In this sense, it is unique and should therefore be utilised as a method in the comparative analysis of political parties.

(4) Transnational Party Cooperation and Political Parties in Central & Eastern Europe

In one obvious way, TPC accords strongly with the categorisation into party families. Parties from new democracies interested in joining transnational party formations have to declare an adherence to one or other conventional ideological tendency. This is not merely nominal as even this decision may entail some ideological adjustment or certainly a sharpening of party identity - at presumably a formative stage of individual party development except in the case of historical parties. Then, the process of being accepted has come to be tightened up by most formations in response to the wave of new parties seeking membership.

in the 1990s. This policy was on the Left determined by the problem of how to deal with applications from former regime parties; but it also reflected general difficulties that emerged early on of identifying the correct or acceptable partner parties in the CEECs. Finally, once parties have joined, they are subject to various pressures to conform to TPC programmes and policy positions. These are, admittedly, largely platonic given the transnational party formations do not transmit policy stands into policy action; but the very process of policy debate has its own mild dynamic effects.

One may generalise but in the end the impacts of TPC are likely to be quite party-variable and, under certain conditions also nationally-variable. We now explore these impacts more specifically under a number of headings. In doing so, an attempt will be made to answer two questions: how really influential has involvement in TPC activity been for party development in the CEECs; and, can one in any way draw conclusions about the impact of European models of political parties? At the same time, attention will also be given to difficulties encountered in transnational party relations between EU member states and the CEECs.

Party identification proved a major problem for TPC especially in the first year or two. There was a time pressure to find partner parties because the first free elections were called within only a few months after the fall of Communist regimes. Mistakes were therefore made and in some instances these proved embarrassing. The problem could therefore be described as situational, enhanced by difficulties in acquiring accurate information at this stage; but in fact it was more than that. Similar ideological labels sometimes turned out to be delusive; transnational actors occasionally discovered more ideological sympathy with tendencies within rival parties than with their formal fraternal partners; and, there was some element of opportunism in dealings with transnational actors since election training and support was in dire need 21. While in the course of time a greater familiarity with the party scene in the different CEECs developed on the part of transnational actors, and they generally became wiser, some problems of party identification persisted due to the instability of political parties in CEECs or the fact that East/West cultural differences were imprinted on ideological terms.

The greatest problems were found on the centre-Right of the political spectrum. Among the Christian Democrats, the problem was not so much ascertaining which parties were de facto CD without their using the title but rather trying to draw a line to exclude those holding hard Right views. According to the adviser on Eastern Europe to the chairman of the EPP group in the European Parliament, the European Union of Christian Democrats (EUCD) had become more careful about scrutinising party programmes before admitting new parties into the first stage of formal links. This followed some dilemma over contacts with Christian parties in Poland which were rather right-wing and even anti-semitic 22. In one case at least, the Hungarian Smallholders' Party, a party was suspended from membership of the EUCD because of its increasingly nationalist-populist standpoint 23.

The same problem was faced by conservative parties looking for reliable partners in the CEECs. Party terminology was particularly difficult since "conservative" was a rare name in these countries and in some of them was associated with reactionary tendencies. Instead, parties of this ilk displayed myriad and sometimes idiosyncratic names. The usual way of sifting them out was to study party programmes to test their conformity with standard centre-right views, for programmes were seen as a form of basic commitment 24. There was the same problem of self-demarcation from the hard Right, the main difficulty concerning parties with nationalist tendencies. These were tested for their views on patriotism and soundings could produce a negative response, as in a reluctance to pursue further talks with the Croatian Democratic Union.

23 Interview with Klaus Welle, secretary-general of the EPP and EUCD, Brussels, January 1996.
24 Interview with Alexis Wintoniak, executive secretary of the European Democratic Union (EDU), Vienna, November 1995.
On the positive side, however, there were many cases on the centre-Right of especially Christian Democratic parties in CEECs that found no difficulty in aligning themselves with these transnational formations. This was, for instance, true of Christian Democratic parties in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovenia. Some like the Slovak Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) took slightly divergent lines, such as in taking a fundamentalist standpoint on religious matters which made it more sympathetic to the Bavarian CSU rather than the CDU in Germany 26. That reflected a relatively strong religious presence in Slovak society, but this did not put it out on a limb transnationally, for the KDH's record on human and minority rights was clear-cut. These Christian Democratic parties from the CEECs went on to play a fairly active part in the transnational organisations, this being facilitated by a strong support for the values of European integration - their most salient commonality with standard Christian Democratic parties in Western Europe.

The European Liberals encountered severe problems at first of identifying partner parties, although their opportunity for influencing party development was, in individual cases at least, if anything greater than with conservative and Christian Democratic parties. As the deputy secretary-general of the Liberal group in the EP noted,

``Everybody called themselves liberals at the time of the revolutions, so it was not an easy task to identify [these parties]; and so we made mistakes, so we headed into uncharted waters, we didn't have fixed points; we didn't know whether he or she was a liberal, whether the party set up was a true liberal party and so on. What we did: we travelled extensively to meet with these people, and some of them we discarded immediately afterwards as we saw they were nationalist, for example. I even remember that Zhirinovsky's [extreme right-wing] party was invited to a Liberal International congress in Helsinki. Of course, quickly we discovered that this was not a happy event!' 27.

The situation was that much more fluid for Liberals since the tradition of Liberalism was generally not strong in the CEECs. But, eventually, this provided transnational actors of this tendency with a special scope for helping to establish if not mould new parties. One can see this in two cases. The Hungarian Alliance of Free Democrats (AFD) were one of the earliest applicants to Liberal organisations; indeed, they possessed a name automatically recognisable in European Liberal circles. There was some rivalry with Fidesz, but the Free Democrats `were extremely well-prepared when we met them' and, besides, there were already signs that Fidesz was trying to occupy conservative political space 28. It was their very commitment to TPC that explained the profound effect this had on the AFD's defining its party identity. A long-standing debate took place while it maintained good links with both Liberal and Socialist/Social Democratic parties in Western Europe, reflecting different programmatic wings in the AFD. This debate over whether to join the SI or LI involved the AFD's policy direction in a formative way. As Laszlo Rajk, one of its leading figures, pointed out, both pragmatic and ideological factors weighed with this decision as well as the strength of bilateral links with individual parties in Western Europe. In particular, the `bad connotation of "Socialist" as a word' in Hungary was a factor in these considerations; hence, `internal policy rather than an

26 Interview with Juraj Kohutiar, international secretary of the KDH, Bratislava, November 1995. Initially, the German CDU had reservations about accepting the KDH into the EUCD and EDU because of differences over such moral issues as abortion and it looked for alternative partners. Eventually, the CDU accepted the KDH particularly because of its firm defence of Slovak democracy faced with threats from the Meciar government.
27 Interview with Bo Jensen, Liberal group, EP, Brussels, January 1996.
28 ibid.
actual strategy' over international links proved to be more influential. Therefore, in the end, the AFD opted for membership of the Liberal International and the ELDR.

The Slovak Democratic Union (DU) was established later in transition, shortly before the parliamentary elections of 1994. Electoral pressure was therefore a factor in explaining the DU's strong reliance on advice from European Liberals. It drew on their own programmes not least as 'liberalism doesn't have a long tradition in Slovakia', so that 'we have to implement the experience of our partners and make this work in our Slovak conditions', this being an 'important source of information but also of inspiration'. In particular, specific programmatic tenets like devolution of power to the local level were mentioned. To this extent, the DU's early identity formation was significantly determined by standard European Liberal ideas. It also reflected the general pattern in Slovakia during the 1994-98 parliament when opposition parties placed that much more importance on transnational linkages as a defence mechanism against authoritarian pressures from the then Meciar government.

A major obstacle to the development of transnational linkages were the umbrella movements that emerged from opposition to Communist rule. They were ideologically diverse and therefore did not relate to transnational organisations which operated along conventional ideological lines. Talking about Polish Solidarity during 1989-90, Bronislaw Geremek - one of its leading figures - noted that contacts were made with all the main internationals - Socialist, Christian Democratic and Liberal - and with parties of different political tendencies in various West European countries. He explained: 'My conclusion is that in 1989 the leadership of Solidarity tried to preserve a social movement, in which all these political tendencies would be preserved without a very clear definition of political colour, of political behaviour, ideological attitude... it was very difficult to translate the psychological problem of the parties in terms of Western political structures'.

Eventually, different parties emerged from Solidarity's ranks but they did not always start relating to transnational links. In the case of the Polish Democratic Union (DU), internal debate about whether it should follow a centre-left or centre-right direction continued but did not harness transnational links as a factor unlike the Hungarian AFD. The DU did not really wish to relate to European party families, for the party bureau took a formal decision not to pursue transnational links as there was a fragile balance in the DU that might have been disturbed by any priority over such links. In fact, the DU contained a strong Liberal element, as with Geremek for instance its parliamentary group chairman, but there were also Christian Democrats in its ranks. DU leaders kept open links with different transnational organisations for some while. Eventually, the DU merged with the Liberal Democratic Congress (KLD), which had already joined the conservative EDU and maintained good links with European Democrats, to form the Union of Freedom (UW). This new party later joined the Christian Democratic EPP. In general, the party scene in Poland was fragmented, complicated and was slow to crystallise. This undoubtedly explained why transnational actors often found it difficult to settle on firm partners there.

The transnational actors in fact played a waiting game but kept open contacts in these umbrella movements. When they split, the way was open for more serious consideration of longer-term links. In Czechoslovakia, Civic Forum divided in 1991 into the Civic Democratic Party led by Klaus and the Civic Movement led by Dienstbier. While the former allied with European Conservatives in the EDU; the latter, renamed Free Democrats, joined the Liberal International. In Slovakia, Public Against Violence split into a couple of

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29 Interview with Laszlo Rajk, member of the Hungarian Parliament and head of cultural affairs of the AFD, Budapest, March 1993.
31 Interview with Bronislaw Geremek, chairman of the international affairs committee of the Polish Sejm, Warsaw, September 1994.
32 In 1995, it was reported that transnational relations with Polish parties are still mostly reduced to exchange of information and targeted more on mutual reconnaissance than on establishing specific and long-term forms of constant cooperation (S. Gebethner and R. Gortat, 'Pan-European cooperation between political parties', paper for European Dialogues, Brussels, February 1995, p.1).
small parties, but the bulk of its support went with Meciar's Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS). But the HZDS as a populist-nationalist force contained mixed and some contradictory elements, including anti- and reform Communists, advocates of a market economy and state intervention and those who were pro-Western or Slavophile. This composition really prevented the HZDS establishing viable transnational links with Western Europe. At one stage, it was rumoured the HZDS had applied to all three internationals (Liberal, Socialist and Christian Democratic) simultaneously, but nothing came from these contacts; and, in the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly, it had difficulty obtaining a firm link with any of the groups. The problem was mainly its ideological diversity, but European doubts about Meciar's dubious democratic credentials also played a part, as did attitudes within the HZDS itself.

Altogether, therefore, a fairly clear pattern had emerged during the first half of the 1990s whereby "standard parties" in the CEECs had declared themselves in relation to transnational membership. It was also apparent, after some initial mistaken identities, that a line of demarcation was drawn on the right excluding parties that were nationalist, racialist or ideologically extremist. On the political Left, there was much less of a problem in identifying parties as party nomenclature was familiar. The problem was how to respond to former Communist regime parties that had now converted themselves into parties called Socialist (as in Hungary and Bulgaria), Social Democratic (as in Poland) or Democratic Left (as in Slovakia). Their new programmes tended to adopt centre-Left policies and policy lines like support for EU entry, economic reform albeit in some cases offering a milder version of this; and this was often combined with leadership change involving generational turnover. Continuities nevertheless remained at the level of party activists, electoral support and strong organisation. The initial response of the SI, at the time of the 1990 elections, was to favour the old reconstituted Social Democratic parties but these did not perform impressively. Only very gradually, however, did the SI - and later the PES - come round to considering former regime parties as members. This required a long process of vetting candidate parties, a practice applied by all transnational organisations and one that employed a fairly strict form of democratic conditionality at the party-political level. In the case of the ex-Communists, it demonstrated the degree of influence that could be exerted by transnational actors.

The procedure in all cases is similar in that an emphasis is placed on accurate information which is gathered from a variety of sources. These include: party programmes, public statements by leaders, confidential reports by West European embassies in the country of the candidate party, 'missions' by transnational organisations to the party headquarters and often invitations to party delegations to come and visit the transnational party offices, usually in Brussels, for detailed discussions of policy matters. Personal impressions have invariably influenced decisions on requests for membership. The SI was the most assiduous of these organisations and it also investigated the way parties handled their own past, clearly this with particular reference to former Communists. The latter sought links with the SI and it soon became clear their motivation was international legitimation.

The SI nevertheless acted cautiously, although it had already in 1991 shown some sympathy by opposing wholesale discrimination against former Communists. In criticising their disqualification from public office, the SI argued for observing constitutional principles and therefore supporting liberal-democratic

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34 Originally in the Liberal group at Strasbourg, the HZDS was asked to leave and then it tried the Socialists and Christian Democrats in vain. It eventually became an associated member of the conservative European Democrats, but since there was resistance to this from Scandinavian conservative parties it was given to understand there was no hope of full membership (Interview with Jan Figel, KDH vice-chairman and vice-chairman of the Christian Democratic group in the Parliamentary Assembly, Bratislava, September 1998).

35 According to an official of the German SPD's international office, discussions with representatives of the HZDS at a Romanian party congress revealed an attitude that was 'inner-oriented, not towards cooperation' and that they 'didn't want to speak with West European parties', if anything were 'Eastern-oriented' (Interview with Gisela Nauk, SPD international office, Bonn, November 1995).
values. These parties were closely scrutinised over several years, and it helped that several of them were elected to national government during 1992-94. They lobbied hard for a formal link and hardly disclosed the high priority they accorded this. By the mid-1990s, the parties in Hungary and Slovakia (HSP and SDL) were recommended for membership and observer status was offered the two Polish parties - the Social Democrats (SLD) and Union of Labour (UP). But some cross-national differentiation was evident in the SI approach. Doubts were expressed over the Slovak party and, more seriously, over the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP).

The SDL was a fervent applicant to the SI and regular visits were paid to Brussels. However, the SI remained hesitant for a time owing to internal divisions in the SDL and the crisis which hit the party after its serious loss of support in the 1994 election. Concern was also expressed over an interest by some SDL leaders in a deal with the Meciar government, thus raising doubts about the party's firm democratic commitment. This phase passed and SI membership was confirmed. The SDL had chosen to lean in particular on the Italian PDS to press its case because of close leadership level links that had developed between the two parties. The Italian party had also acted as a guide to the Slovak one over such matters as election campaigning and policy matters, so it is possible to speak of the PDS as something of a model for the SDL. Such bilateral links were not unusual in the transnational organisations and followed a pattern of dividing labour between member parties in Western Europe with a view to both vetting closely candidate parties but also influencing their own evolution. Often geographical proximity was the basis. For instance, Austrian parties concentrated on other, usually neighbouring, countries in Central Europe; just as Scandinavian parties paid special attention to new parties in the Baltic states. The German parties spread their contacts more broadly throughout the CEECs.

The BSP proved more difficult to handle as it was deeply divided - and it eventually split - but also as the Bulgarian transition was for some time in doubt, not least as a result of the BSP's own questionable policies while in government during 1995-97. Even in the mid-1990s, SI circles in Brussels were not sure as 'this is a former Communist party, we still don't know if it is a reformed party or if it still has very strong tendencies of a Communist party'. Some SI member parties, like the British and Swedish, were opposed to a link with the BSP, but there was a willingness to keep open contact with the BSP and to involve it in policy discussions. Its success in the 1994 election helped here as a legitimacy factor, for one consideration in the SI was encouraging strong parties to facilitate Bulgaria's democratisation and the party's mass base could encourage centre-left inclinations as part of that. But the divisions in the BSP persisted and included a Social Democratic faction (Alliance for Social Democracy) and one attached to traditional Communist ideals (Marxist Platform). The former placed a high priority on links with the SI, as one of its leaders explained:

'...There has always been a very clear perception of the importance of these international contacts - not only contacts but recognition and legitimisation of the BSP by its counterparts in Europe; and, therefore, there has always been a consistent effort...it's important from the point of view of belonging in real terms to a set of values which are also the values of the EU - this is the democratic mentality, the perception of civil society. It is important from that point of view, because belonging to the SI will inevitably bring about certain obligations on the part of the BSP as a whole. It will bring about new kinds of commitments which are important for the general education, maturing of the BSP to what the actual "Socialist" ideal stands for, because in this country there is a very mixed and erroneous perception of socialism, both on the part of the opposition and on the part of many of the members of the BSP. Socialism is equivalent to

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38 Interview with Bo Toresson, secretary-general of the SI Forum for Democracy and Solidarity, Brussels, January 1996.
39 Interview with Dobrin Kanev, National Assembly of Bulgaria, Sofia, September 1995.
Communism to many of the politicians of today, which is the result of the misuse of the term in the past. So, this is an important challenge to restore socialism, its new value and new respect.40

This was an explicit acknowledgement of the strategic importance of TPC for party identity. But it was one that did not work for the BSP as a whole. Problems were already present in some differences between the factions over SI membership together with reservations among activists, due in part to lack of knowledge about the international but also suspicion over criticisms of the BSP by some West European parties 41. Finally, in 1997 the BSP split with the Social Democrats leaving to form the Euro-Left, which became thereby freer to pursue transnational links.

The European Left and the SI in particular, followed by the PES once these links with former regime parties developed, thus played a fairly significant part in the reestablishment of a viable Left in the new democracies of the CEECs. Clearly, other factors were influential and these related to both internal party affairs but also, more broadly, emerging political culture in these countries. In Hungary, for instance, there was no trace of wariness towards transnational involvements as evident in Bulgaria but also Slovakia, where these links of opposition parties became a matter of polemics on the part of the ruling HZDS. As one close observer of the Hungarian scene from the PES, present during the 1990 election, noted:

`My impression was that the average Hungarian in the street was probably aware of the fact that there were all these foreign politicians from whichever party involved in the campaign. To that extent, there was a very large sense of occasion: they were one of the first [in Eastern Europe], they were able to construct a multi-party system without any internal revolution - a very smooth transition, they were very proud of that. To that extent, there was a sense of Hungarians opening their arms to all colours, especially from Western Europe' 42.

This undoubtedly helped account for Hungarian parties of different tendencies being to the fore among the CEECs in initiating and developing transnational links. And, in turn, once accepted into these organisations, they played a part as sponsor for parties in other CEECs.

There were two ways in which TPC evolved and affected the prospects for party development in the CEECs converging with established patterns in Western Europe. The first concerned the inheritance from the Communist period and therefore reflected directly on a major difference between both parts of Europe. Several respondents among transnational actors commented on some differences of understanding and mentality in dialogue with party representatives from the CEECs, especially in the first years after transition began. To some degree, it was due to an unfamiliarity with democratic techniques and competitive politics, but the problems also had its deeper aspects. As the secretary-general of the SI’s European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity remarked on the Czech Social Democratic Party:

`This is one of the most disappointing experiences: the lack of experience, the lack of self-confidence, the lack of creativity. I have learned a lot, you have to start from the very beginning. It even concerns quite a good leader like Milos Zeman. He is young, he was not involved in the Communist structures; but he is educated in a Communist country, with all the influences of a Communist ideology and system. That means even Milos Zeman has to be trained. He is a good speaker, he is a good economist, he has a lot. But how to organise, how to delegate - all those experts that we have been brought up with - they don't have it!. They are lacking all those qualities we have been brought up with. It's a question of mentality' 43.

The CSSD was an historical party and, therefore, there were no ideological obstacles to affiliation with the SI and other transnational organisations of the same tendency. But complications arising from experience

40 Interview with Elena Poptodorova, BSP national deputy, Sofia, September 1995.
41 ibid.
42 Interview with Peter Brown-Pappamikail, PES, Brussels, January 1996.
43 Interview with Bo Toresson, SI Forum for Democracy and Solidarity, Brussels, January 1996.
under Communist rule were present, although in the course of time European links helped to instil more confidence among the party elite all the more once the party's popular support rose 44.

There was a certain culture-boundness in these problems, but they tended to diminish with time. Political and electoral experience was acquired first-hand as well as vicariously through transnational actors; while, it could be said, increasingly routine contact with the latter created patterns of socialisation that also helped reduce the pull of inheritances from the Communist period. There was, as noted by interview respondents, some differentiation between different regions and sometimes countries from the former Communist world. This was particularly marked between the CEECs and republics from the former Soviet Union, with the possible exception of the Baltic states due to their own European background and close party links with Scandinavia and Sweden in particular 45. But there was another factor that impinged - and increasingly so - on TPC and its influence on party development in the new democracies; and that was the prospects for EU membership. This second way in which TPC evolved became more and more visible during the course of the later 1990s.

Transnational organisations and contacts came to be viewed as a non-official channel for networking in favour of EU accession. Some figures in transnational organisations were also ministers in EU member governments, while opposition politicians could be in office at some future time when entry negotiations proceeded. Such transnational party fora were a relatively informal occasion for cultivating personal contacts. It could generally be said that the greater the possibility of eventual EU membership, the more it was likely that parties from CEECs would be ready to conform with European party-political patterns, subject to obvious constraints in domestic politics. Clearly, one cannot view this relationship in isolation from other developments - of which the most important was the state of regime transition, which in turn affected both party systems and decisions in Brussels about opening entry negotiations.

Many interview respondents remarked on significant differences between East-Central European and Balkan countries when it came to TPC. In some cases, these responses appeared to convey culturalist preconceptions and it is therefore important to take account of cross-national variation within both regions. All the same, links with parties in Balkan countries proved difficult for a number of reasons. They were basically non-existent with republics in the former Yugoslavia until the Dayton peace agreement of late 1995, with the one exception of Slovenia. Since then, the SI and its member parties in Western Europe have begun to show an interest in these republics but there has been little progress in countries like Serbia and Croatia because of their authoritarian regimes. Milosevic's Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) is distinctly a pariah party in transnational circles, but links have developed with parties in Macedonia and Montenegro 46.

Among centre-right parties, it was found much easier to find Christian Democratic parties in East-Central Europe than in the Balkans for confessional reasons (Slovenia here counted among the former), save for a

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44 Interview with Svetlana Navarova, head of international office, CSSD, Prague, November 1995. According to her, 32% CSSD members were in an internal party survey formerly in the Communist Party and ‘live in another world’, while older members tended to have conservative ideas. Complications were evident in internal disputes over the party’s role in 1948 when it merged with the Communists; and over dislike for returned exiles and former dissidents, as their presence made people guilty because of compromises made with the Communist regime. On the other hand, European links ‘helped us to feel better’ while attendance at party congresses abroad and involvement in transnational policy projects and training was confidence raising.

45 According to the adviser on Eastern Europe to the chairman of the EPP group in the EP, contact was easier with countries that were not part of ‘Soviet society and had a more reasonable intellectual elastic around them’, referring to methods of thinking, consultation and dialogue; and cultural differences were also evident between East-Central Europe and the Balkan countries at this level (Interview with Stephen Biller, EPP group, Brussels, January 1996).

few small parties like the Hungarian Christian Democrats in Romania. This was a clear admission that the cultural divide between Catholic and Orthodox countries imprinted itself on party development. Nevertheless, transnational links were most developed with Romania and particularly Bulgaria judging by the membership of the SI, LI and EUCD by the mid-1990s. The various German political foundations were more active and influential in Bulgaria than in any other Balkan country; and there was evidence they competed to support the different political tendencies inside the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF). In Albania, the Democratic Party had formal links with the EDU and EUCD, becoming a full member of the latter in 1995, but these were not established without difficulty. Some parties in the EUCD were opposed to accepting it because of ethnic tensions, complaints having been received from the Greek minority, and because of doubts about its democratic commitment - it was the party of President Berisha, whose authoritarian practices were becoming controversial. But the Democratic Party's desire for international acceptance was such that outside pressure for Albania to negotiate with Athens were successful. Special account was also taken of difficult conditions in Albania including inheritances from the oppressive Hoxha Communist regime.

Overall, transnational links with Balkan countries were less intensive than with those in East-Central Europe. Geographical distance may have had a small influence here, but far more important was the problem in matching West European party formations with viable partner parties in countries that were undergoing, in many cases, difficult and uncertain transitions. The greater incidence of ethnic problems in the Balkan countries also played a part, ethnic nationalism and authoritarian tendencies being - as noted above - a basic check on TPC. These same factors explained why transnational links with Russia were threadbare if not non-existent for a long time, as many interview respondents pointed out. Russia's party system was simply too unstable and peculiar with many individual parties often undefinable in West European ideological terms. Furthermore, hostility in Russia towards foreign influence proved a major disincentive to developing transnational links. All the same, some ad hoc contacts have slowly developed in the last few years. In August 1998, the EPP organised a conference in St. Petersburg for its West European member parties to engage in dialogue with parties in Russia and some other states like the Ukraine, Moldavia, Armenia, Georgia and Belarus.

Behind these regional differences lay the issue of EU entry for the CEECs. Differences in prospects here influenced TPC to the extent that transnational actors in Brussels were more prepared to invest resources as well as time in countries that had better chances of membership in the near future; just as party leaders from the CEECs increasingly viewed the transnational organisations as mechanisms for furthering entry prospects. This differentiation was moreover influenced by progress or the lack of it with democratisation.

49 Interview with Ivan Krastev, Centre for Liberal Strategies (CLS) and former head of Friedrich Naumann Foundation office in Bulgaria, Sofia, September 1995.
50 Interview with Klaus Welle, secretary-general of EPP and EUCD, Brussels, January 1996. He commented: 'For countries like Albania, it is very important to have this international forum; also their political success is dependent on international support, political contacts which they can achieve via European international networks'.
51 The former head of the Naumann Foundation office in Bulgaria noted that the activity of the German political foundations had been 'a total failure' in Russia because of the party situation there, but also as: 'Russian people are suspicious of any foreigners trying to intervene in their political life; even for Westernisers it was difficult to cooperate closer with the Naumann Foundation' (Interview with Ivan Krastev, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 1995).
52 EPP News, No. 157, 1998. A further conference was planned for 1999 in Kiev.
53 Interview with Bo Jensen, deputy secretary-general Liberal group, EP, Brussels, January 1996, who remarked that one consideration on the part of transnational organisations was the future balance of party
Transnational actors were as a whole more cautious about developing close links with countries where the outcome of regime change was difficult to predict, although in some cases they did choose to make a special effort to support allied parties precisely to help democratisation along. Clearly, both factors - EU entry prospects and transition outcomes - were related and tended to mean that the most meaningful TPC was with countries in East-Central Europe rather than elsewhere among the CEECs. But this was also due to the fact party systems in the former were in any case more matchable to those in Western Europe. In this context, TPC was something of a dependent variable of both factors, although its own importance was significantly enhanced by the issue of EU entry.

In conclusion, TPC was certainly influential within these bounds. But it was undoubtedly secondary to domestic factors in party development. This is shown, in particular, by the fate of umbrella movements, which succumbed to the dynamics of political competition in their own countries. It was only then that transnational organisations started to relate effectively to their successor parties. Nevertheless, in some individual cases of parties transnational support could have a fairly decisive effect in the formative stage. TPC was also constrained, where applicable, by cultural reservations towards outside influence and these included nationalism, which proved a very firm deterrent to transnational activity. European party leaders kept nationalist forces or those with authoritarian tendencies at a distance, although there is not much evidence this exclusion had an effect in changing the approach of such forces.

At the same time, there were different ways in which TPC could help influence party development particularly at elite levels. It was party leaders and senior officials who were most directly concerned with TPC, but they themselves were in a position to mould their own parties given these were often top-down in their structural life. Policy training and advice on election campaigns could also have wider effects within parties. Interview respondents remarked frequently on the sense of belonging to international groupings - there was undoubtedly a feel-good factor emanating from involvement in transnational meetings. And these were not simply regarded as tame events, since they had a European and particularly EU focus so that serious political messages were transmitted via these organisations. Recognition proved a valuable encouragement to party development, and in the case of the political Left the legitimation this accorded was given a top priority.

It cannot, nevertheless, be argued that TPC witnessed a process of conscious model-building based on Western European experience. For one thing, this experience was itself extremely diverse and there has been no evidence that particular European models have been favoured, except possibly in the case of former regime parties looking to Socialist and Social Democratic parties in Western Europe or certain countries there. Even within transnational organisations this diversity was evident. Rather, what has occurred is a certain eclectic pattern, whereby different lessons and practices have been drawn from different fraternaly-linked parties. It is also clear that the increasingly routinised habit of inter-elite socialisation among party representatives from both parts of Europe has gradually influenced attitides, ideas and approaches to the game of democratic politics.

(5) Conclusion: Towards "Standard Parties" in Central & Eastern Europe?

By and large, focussing on transnational party cooperation between EU member states and the new democracies in the CEECs does provide a relevant new dimension to the comparative study of political parties in the latter. It adds substantially to identifying the emergence of party families there as the transnational organisations offer various advantages to these parties and, at the same time, apply conditions for acceptance that can have a secondary influence on their development. The outcome of this process tends to confirm conventional party families and it benefits from the general dynamic of "Back to Europe".

group representation in the EP with enlargement and that party leaders from the CEECs `only talk of enlargement' at transnational party conferences.
This is quite evident in the fact that, with some notable exceptions^54, parties in the CEECs have overwhelmingly sought links with parties - whether transnational, or national - in Western Europe rather elsewhere in the CEECs. There has been some tendency in recent years for various regional associational networks to develop among parties in different parts of the former Communist world, including conferences on common interests. Some of these have developed with the assistance of transnational organisations^55. Thus, overall, the pattern in the 1990s has been for West European party-political habits and attitudes to imprint themselves on parties from the CEECs without little sign so far of the opposite effect. Whether in the course of time distinct national influences from new member parties in the CEECs start to influence transnational organisations is likely, all the more if they come from successful entrants to the EU. One may therefore speak of a pattern of Europeanisation, but it has been one-sided in its effects.

There are various other conclusions to draw. Europeanisation through TPC has concentrated on the major political forces in European politics to the exclusion of certain categories. Namely, it has been parties that are Christian Democratic, Conservative, Liberal and Socialist that have benefitted from this activity. Greens have a weak form of TPC and, in any case, they are not very strong in the CEECs. However, parties that are nationalist or populist or ethnically hostile have been shunned, just as have parties with authoritarian leanings. Ideological or systemic objections have, combined with the transnational organisations' own version of democratic conditionality, seen to the exclusion of such parties. In this way, therefore, TPC has tended to draw a fairly clear distinction between standard and non-standard parties and to deepen the divide between them. It is difficult, however, to argue that TPC has actually helped to weaken the standing of non-standard parties especially if they draw on political cultures that are, at least in part, not friendly towards outside influences.

In different ways, TPC has been strengthened by factors less present in previous phases of democratic transition in postwar Western Europe. Firstly, parties that emerged in post-Communist countries had much weaker historical roots than those in post-Fascist and Southern European states. To that degree, therefore, transnational organisations had more opportunity to have a formative influence on party development in the CEECs. Secondly, the impact of the international environment has been so much greater in the transitions of the 1990s compared with those of the 1970s in Southern Europe. Because of the coming of the Cold War international factors were indeed important in postwar Europe. However, transnational parties did not then exist; whereas in the 1990s they have benefitted from the strong impact of international developments in the post-Communist transitions. And, most of all, this has been present in the desire to join the EU. This link between EU entry and TPC will almost certainly increase in the near future, with continuing effects on party development. However, also likely is greater cross-national variation in this pattern, as has already become evident in the last few years.

For all these different reasons, the comparative study of political parties in Central and Eastern Europe will encounter greater differentiation. It will, therefore, make less and less sense to view them in contradistinction to parties in Western Europe. And that conclusion will be further supported the more party systems in the CEECs become stabilised and therefore, individually, are more comparable to those in countries in Western Europe.

^54 One such exception was the Slovak HZDS which has cultivated links with parties mainly in the CEECs as well as Russia and China. This confirmed suspicions that Meciar had Slavophile rather than pro-European inclinations in his foreign policy. However, it also reflected his failure to win friends among parties in Western Europe.

^55 One example is a regional body of Socialist parties from the Visegrad countries sponsored by the SI. There are plans to repeat this model for parties from the Balkan countries and from the Baltic states (Interview with Ivan Puskac, international secretary of the Slovak SDL, Bratislava, September 1998).