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There was broad agreement that the European Union has fundamentally changed as a result of the enlargements of 2004/7, and as a result, the EU 'isn't what it was' and European integration will never be the same again.

An EU characterized by unprecedented Diversity

Participants in the group agreed that the EU of 27 members is characterized by an unprecedented level of diversity. Though heterogeneity has always been a hallmark of the European project, in an EU of 27 members with an ambitious policy agenda, the lack of an internal consensus on key policy issues is consequential. In this context, speakers pointed to the absence of a consensus on enlargement or on where the final borders of the EU should lie appear as particularly pertinent examples.

Participants also proposed that the failure of the Lisbon Treaty has further frustrated the EU's capacity to manage its diversity, since for the present moment the EU member states are facing the prospect of never having a new treaty framework. However, without the Lisbon Treaty (or a re-worked version of it), some participants argued, the EU will be neither sustainable at its current membership level nor will it be prepared to take on new members. Though some workshop participants strongly doubted whether Lisbon was indeed essential for the future health of the EU, there was a shared concern that without new or modified institutions Europe might be ill equipped to tackle the 'big reforms to come'.

Europe a la Carte – The Solution?

Workshop participants agreed that the EU's diversity means that 'uniform' patterns of integration involving the EU as a whole will cease to be the norm. There was a broad consensus that flexible and differentiated modes of integration will most probably become more apparent. A number of speakers spoke in positive terms about this, viewing new forms of flexible integration as a possible source of strength for the EU.

Participants described how an EU based on flexible integration would allow EU states to opt-in or out of certain EU policy spheres or zones. The model already in place for Schengen or the eurozone, where states can choose not to take part, would be expanded. Other speakers saw merit in such an idea and proposed the inclusion of the candidate states and other non-member states into such a formula, as a kind of bespoke, 'half-way house' between membership and non-membership – thus blurring the two categories to a certain .

Though this idea found some appeal with members of the workshop from candidate and other neighbouring states, it was stressed that should a model transpire it must not be allowed to get in the way of a proper enlargement agenda and the full inclusion of the candidate states inside the EU. Ukrainian participants noted that whilst greater flexibility was seen as inevitable, it was vital for Kiev that the EU gets the Lisbon Treaty functioning, since, it was argued, it is in Ukraine's interest to have a stable EU with a strong Common and Foreign Security Policy (CFSP) and a coherent energy policy.

There was a consensus amongst participants that whilst integration 'a la carte' has some appeal, it is not necessarily the panacea for the EU's future sustainability. Moreover, as one participant pointed out, for flexible or 'enhanced' cooperation to work as the basis of sustainable integration in Europe strong leadership with purpose is still required.

The group concurred that the balance which previously existed between the large and the small member states is certain to diminish (in favor of the former), second; that integration will be driven, perhaps more than ever by intergovernmental bargaining and third, that the EU's relations with its neighbours will become driven by regional

actors and groups of member states, as seen in the examples of the Mediterranean Union, the Black Sea Synergy, the Eastern Partnership.

To Enlarge or not to Enlarge

It was argued by some in the group that the EU can best be sustained by keeping the enlargement dynamic going. Supporters of the enlargement process argued that the current indecision on the part of the EU and the lack of leadership on the enlargement question runs the risk of 'losing' Turkey and might mean that Ukraine slips away from the EU's orbit. Such observations notwithstanding, it is clear that the EU is not ready to embrace new members in the very near future. Enlargement fatigue means that there is not a desperate sense of urgency to bring in the states of the western Balkans, to confront the Turkish question more squarely nor to begin discussing the prospect of Ukrainian membership. Having said this, Ukraine's right to become a member of the European Union was not actually disputed by any workshop speakers. Participants tended to take the view that it was just a matter of time, but was also hugely dependent on Ukraine's own efforts at embedding democratic reforms at home.

It was noted that the future of enlargement and its role in sustaining the EU is also highly dependent on the support of European public opinion. Participants pointed to the fact that by and large, the public are massively under-informed about enlargement and thus tend to be highly negative and resistant. One speaker said that this has to be seriously thought about as part of the EU's internal efforts at recalibrating itself for the next wave(s) of enlargement.

The EU's Role in the World

Despite the profound changes that the EU has been through over the past few years, the EU's foreign policy 'mission' remains the same. Workshop participants agreed that extending the EU's zone of peace and prosperity, beginning with the neighbourhood should remain the central goal. Recent events in Georgia, however, whilst showing that the EU was indeed maturing as a foreign policy actor, still revealed the lack of common thinking amongst member states. Participants responded in various ways to this observation; either we accept that national divergences will always persist, especially on big foreign policy questions (and especially relations with Russia) or we turn our attention to salvaging the Lisbon Treaty as a means to bolster the CFSP and the EU's collective voice.