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**MASTER'S DEGREE IN SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN STUDIES**

MASTER'S DEGREE THESIS  
**THE GREEK CASE OF THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS:  
A COMPARISON TO THE OTHER SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

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## Chapter 1.0 Introduction

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### 1.1 European Union and Enlargement

Integral to the European Union's existence and functioning is the enlargement process which practically seeks to expand the borders of the EU's political, economic, social, legal and foreign policy agenda (Sjursen, 2006). The enlargement of the European Union is seen as a means of strengthening the dominance of the EU member states and extending the number of states that formulate the entire EU framework (Matei and Matei, 2010). According to Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2002) enlargement is one of the core values and policies of the European Union in terms of its fundamental reasons for existence; the integration of European countries in the onset of intensifying the power of the European Union. Enlargement, as Petrovic (2010) states, is a tool for the European Union to accomplish two basic objectives; first to leverage gains which are associated with an increase in the number of members of the EU and second to "extend and secure a zone of peace and political stability further from its borders in the east" (p. 2).

The first practical steps towards eastern enlargement were implemented in 1999 when the European Union introduced the Stabilization and Association Process with five Balkan countries in an attempt to initiate relationships that could later on lead to accession and integration of Southeastern countries to the EU (Serbos, 2008). The Stabilization and Association Process was in essence a mediator of the forthcoming enlargement in the south eastern European zone and it was primarily directed towards providing assistance, guidelines and support to the five Balkan countries in regards to some fundamental areas such as democracy, respect and

protection of human rights, rule of law, economic stability and minority protection (Serbos, 2008). From that point on, discussions and agreements between the European Union and SEE countries have been ongoing and eventually at the present three SEE countries (Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia) have been admitted to EU, three states are in the process of candidacy (Turkey, FYROM and Croatia), Montenegro is an officially candidate country while Serbia and Albania have indeed applied but they are not yet candidates.

## **1.2 Background to the Research Questions**

Despite the fact that the integration of European Union members is based on the same principles, the same procedures and processes and the same requirements and criteria, there are many researchers and academics that view the Southeastern enlargement (the integration of Southeastern countries to the EU) as being differentiated in terms of three basic issues: the integration process is dominantly externally driven, coercive and highly demanding (Anastasakis, 2005; Cuculic, 2002; Grabbe, 2002). According to Anastasakis (2005) the “Europeanization” of the Southeastern Europe is much different in both the context and the process when compared to the integration of the Western or Central European countries. This is explained by the assumption that the Balkans constitute a fragmented area in the continental Europe in regards to political and social issues. The post-communist political climate, along with the economic instability in many of the South Eastern countries have both led to a process of Europeanization quite variant and differentiated in comparison to other members or prospective candidates. Particularly, as Grabbe (2002) notes, the integration of SEE countries and the candidacy of some Balkan states presents differences that are to be traced even

from the origination of the prospective eastern enlargement; these countries signify enlargement outside the typical Western cultural, political and economic development and therefore they constitute by definition and nature a different case of integration which adheres to two issues: on the one hand EU membership appears to be a pathway to growth and development for these states and on the other hand the European Union is more demanding given their diversified background.

Serbos (2008) argues that while the application for membership is feasible to all countries in the European area, the Southeastern states appear to be facing some difficulties regarding the EU's negotiations and agreements towards accession. In that respect, while Bulgaria, Slovenia and Romania have become members of the EU, remaining SEE countries are challenged by very demanding developments in the onset of accession and integration. In the light of these, this dissertation seeks to explore and investigate the framework of integration of SEE countries in order to assess the extent to which differences exist and the degree to which the membership criteria or the membership process is in fact differentiated from other states. The cases that are used for the study of this subject are Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey. The justification for these countries is based on three assumptions; first although Greece is a Balkan country it is considered outside the typical framework of other SEE countries and has gained membership to the EU long before these states have initiated negotiations, second, Bulgaria is considered to be an indicative case of an SEE country that has managed to fulfill criteria and become member of the European Union and third, Turkey which is an SEE country as well, although has been negotiating with the European Union for more than two decades is still being challenged by extensive negotiations which have been inconclusive in regards to its potential membership and prospective integration.

### **1.3 Research Questions of the Dissertation**

Having in mind the brief background for the eastern enlargement and the challenges that are posed to the SEE countries, the dissertation will attempt to answer the following questions:

- a. In what ways are southeastern European countries treated differently when it comes to membership and integration to the European Union?
- b. What reasons underpin the difference in the integration process?

### **1.4 Objectives of the Research and Methodology to accomplish them**

In the light of the argumentation that the southeastern enlargement presents some differences along with the reported facts that the membership processes and integration procedures to the EU are not always consistent and become subjects to uneven patterns of accession or even negotiations, this dissertation deals with reviewing and evaluating three cases: the Greek case of integration to the EU, the Bulgarian case of integration to the EU and finally the Turkish case of prospective membership. The objective is to compare the three cases in order to identify:

- a. whether there are indeed differences in the membership and integration process
- b. the reasons underpinning the differences in the case of 'uneven' patterns of candidacy, accession and membership ('uneven' is drawn from the claims of Sedelmeir, 2005)
- c. the extent to which other considerations apart from the Copenhagen criteria (which are the formal and official requirements set by the European Union) are emphasized in the onset of SEE countries

For the achievement of the objectives and the answering of the research questions the case study approach is undertaken. The three case studies include the three countries upon which the dissertation focuses. The perspective and the philosophy under which the research is implemented is Interpretivism which in comparative political studies is a preferable philosophy because it attempts to explain and interpret various discourses under the premise of understanding the research subject (Landman, 2008). In the light of this study, secondary research is adopted which is defined by Stewart and Kamins (1993) as the research based on past studies, publications, official documents, research articles and generally secondary data that are re-evaluated and re-processed in the onset of a new study based on new objectives. The secondary sources that are used in this dissertation include: academic journals, European Union's official documents, records on the three countries' negotiations and accession procedures.

### **1.5 Outline of the following chapters**

The following chapters of the dissertation are divided as following: The second chapter reviews theories and literature regarding the integration process, the criteria and requirements, the negotiations and agreements between the European Union and a candidate state to become a member. Moving on, the third chapter engages into comparative analysis of the three cases that are explored in the dissertation; the case of Greek integration, the case of Bulgarian integration and the case of Turkish candidacy. The chapter is broken into three sections (sub-chapters), each dealing with the respective country. Continuing, the fourth chapter discusses the comparative analysis and the results from the study in terms of the two research questions that

have been set in the introductory chapter. Finally, the fifth chapter provides conclusions and general remarks on the entire dissertation.



## Chapter 2.0 Review of Literature

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### 2.1 The importance of EU enlargement

The European Union enlargement is amongst the most critical policies underpinning the entire framework for strengthening the power and intensifying the dominance of the EU in the international scheme (Archick, 2008; Neibuhr, 2008). Enlargement is defined by Faber (2009) as “the formal (or legal) event of the accession of new member states to the EC/ EU or indeed as the simple act of adding new member states to the European Community/ Union” (p. 21). The author draws on the definition given by Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2002) who argue that enlargement is the “process of gradual and formal horizontal institutionalization of organizational rules and norms” (p. 503) but comments on a basic difference which stems from the assumption that enlargement is divided actually into three phases and should not be seen or considered as a continuous process. These three phases are the pre-accession process, the accession and the membership of EU countries and for this reason Faber (2009) indicates that enlargement actually represents the sequence of stages that are pertinent to the achievement of membership to the European Union.

Schmidt (2009) states that the enlargement policy is underlined particularly by the objective to achieve stability and peace within a greater geographical area that is set in the boundaries of the European territory and which is to eventually formulate the final form of the European Union. Similarly, Niebuhr (2008) posits that the enlargement policy is in fact the cornerstone of the EU expansion to all potential countries which adhere to specific conditions and which are sought to promote a

stable and peace territory on the one hand but on the other hand extend the power and ability of the EU to influence world politics.

Apart from the description of the enlargement as an integral policy to the EU development, the importance of enlargement should also be identified and discussed. According to Sjursen (2006) the European Union's enlargement can be seen as both a strengthening approach but also as a threatening process. The risks of enlargement are presented by Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2002) who note that the European identity, the harmonization and the institutionalization may not always be feasible in such a manner that integration is smoothed. In particular, the enlargement process can well threaten the valuable convergence to a number of areas including social, economic, political and even cultural frameworks (Schmidt, 2009). In that respect, the enlargement of the European Union is on the one hand the road to full integration of the geographically proximate countries in the onset of asserting dominance but on the other hand it entails many risks especially when the European identity which is built upon fundamental common principles is threatened by the conditions in which prospective members adhere to (Neibuhr, 2008). Steunenberg and Dimitrova (2007) explains that due to this twofold potential role of enlargement, the European Union has to pursue expansion but at the same time protect its principles and ensure that stability in all areas (especially economic, political and social) is maintained. For this very reason, the EU enlargement as a policy is underpinned by a number of procedures, criteria, requirements, negotiations with the prospective members and accession frameworks that have been established in order to assure that the integration of new members brings about positive effects on both sides (the new members and the existing members in their collective form – the EU).

## **2.2 The EU integration process**

The European Union's officially spelled out decision to enlarge was initially established in 1993 at the European Council meeting in Copenhagen where it was concluded that membership status would be offered to central and eastern countries that had already signed various agreements with the European Union (Marktler, 2006). The European Council in this meeting at 1993 also provisioned for two important issues underpinning the membership status: first the criteria, requirements and conditions that would be considered for the prospective members (including the criteria for candidacy) and second the processes of EU integration regarding negotiations and agreements.

### **2.2.1 The Copenhagen Criteria**

The conditions and requirements that the European Union has set in order to accommodate candidacy and membership are formally known as the Copenhagen Criteria. The Copenhagen criteria in essence relate to economic and political conditions which candidates and prospective members should satisfy or meet in order to officially start negotiations and discussions for the accession (Plumper et al., 2006). These economic and political requirements state that:

Membership requires that the candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union (European Council 1993).

According to Marktler (2006) applicant countries for membership should satisfy the following conditions:

- a. Political criteria: the countries should achieve institutional stability in areas such as the rule of law, democracy, human rights and minority protection
- b. Economic criteria: the countries should achieve a macro- economic stability reflected in a functioning market and ability as well as capacity to keep pace with the competitive market forces of the remaining European Union's member states
- c. Acquis criterion: the countries should be able to adopt the 'acquis communautaire' (the obligations of membership as spelled out by the European Union under the aim of achieving the political and economic goals of the EU).

Apart from the requirements set for the applicant and candidate countries, there is also one fundamental requirement set for the European Union itself within the framework of new members' accession; the European Union must be able to absorb (absorbing capacity) new countries without jeopardizing the full integration or the European identity (Anastassakis, 2005; Grabbe, 2002; Matei and Matei, 2010). Sjursen (2006) comments, that, this in fact is the ultimate reflection of the EU's attempt to ensure the European Identity and promote the Europeanization on the prospective members. Haughton (2007) further states that this requirement for the European Union merely accounts for the protection of the core principles that are aimed by the EU.

### **2.2.2 The process of EU membership (negotiations and agreements)**

The process of membership of countries to the European Union entails a series of steps which are pertained to three phases: the pre-accession negotiations, the evaluation of the progress of the candidate countries towards meeting the criteria and

finally the actual accession (Sedelmeir, 2005). Steunenberg and Dimitrova (2007) state that there is also another phase which includes the negotiations and discussions for candidacy (prior to the pre-accession negotiations).

Countries that wish to join the European Union should first of all satisfy the criterion for candidacy and this criterion according to Faber (2009) is the geographical requirement stating that countries in the European continent being able to apply for membership. Sjursen (2006) and Sedelmeier (2005) explain that this is pertinent to the Europeanization requirement which implies that all candidates should adhere to similar and common principles in order to apply to the European Union. But this 'Europeanization' is rather vague and there is no explicit or solidly defined set of procedures or requirements that candidates must conform to or comply with (Marktler, 2006; Steunenberg and Dimitrova, 2007). In the pre - accession negotiations, the European Union actually evaluates the political, social and economic infrastructure of the countries and assesses their capabilities to adopt the 'acquis communautaire'. In details, "accession talks begin with a screening process to see to what extent applicants meet the EU's 80,000 pages of rules and regulations known as the *acquis communautaire*" (Archick, 2008, p. 3) In this phase, the countries are familiarized with the rules and regulations which are principally governing the European Union and the obligations that membership brings along in terms of adopting these legal and regulatory frameworks in the onset of achieving the political and economic aims of the EU. During the pre-accession negotiations, meetings take place at the collective level and at the individual (with each different country) level. These meetings have the objective to assess the overall readiness and preparedness of the countries for the prospective accession.

The negotiation phase constitutes of both discussions on the requirements and criteria particularly for each country and evaluation of the progress of each country towards the established criteria (Archick, 2008). In this stage the European Union spells out specific objectives to be achieved via reforms in order to achieve harmonization and stability of the institutions, political stability and macro – economic stability. In essence, this stage is underpinned by the restructurings and reforms that candidate countries should implement in order to satisfy the Copenhagen criteria. The progress of the countries is evaluated and assessed in pre-determined and pre-defined periods by the European Union. Particularly, the European Council reviews the steps made towards fulfilling the requirements and prepares progress reports for the countries. These progress reports are prepared for each different chapter of the *acquis* (Steunenberg and Dimitrova, 2007). Moreover, during this phase the candidate countries have the ability to adapt and adjust their administrative structures in order to establish the grounds for effective adoption of the *acquis* (Marktler, 2006)

The third phase is the actual integration – membership of the country to the European Union. This comes as a result of the previous phases and on the basis of the outcomes of the negotiations. The country should have achieved the benchmarks targeted and set by the EU and the evaluation on the progress should be positive on all matters. If no drawbacks emerge (in the sense that the negotiations are not suspended to the country's failure to comply with the specifications) an Accession Treaty signifies the acceptance of the country as a European Union member and the actual membership initiates. This Treaty provisions the actual date of accession, the outcomes of the negotiations made with the candidate country, the progress of the country and the institutions as well as other treaties that the country should adapt to in order to actual membership to be achieved. But the reforms and the progress do

not end at this point; the countries are responsible for making ongoing adjustments in order to improve on all areas reflecting the requirements initially set.

### **2.3 South - Eastern Enlargement and Some Important Notes**

Enlargement, in practical terms, refers predominantly to the expansion of the European Union towards east; this expansion is expected to accomplish a particular objective which is the political stability in the region and consequently the extension of the peace zone over a greater geographical area (Raik, 2004; Torreblanca, 2003). Petrovic (2010) comments, that the eastern enlargement is seen as the strategy to “spread peace, democracy and prosperity in the European continent” (p. 3). For many academics and authors the enlargement towards the east constitutes a ‘puzzle’ that unveils inconsistencies and uneven patterns of criteria application, conditions for accession (including the pre- accession phase as well as the accession phase) and membership specifications (Sedelmeier, 2005). Specifically, it has been stressed that while the European Union itself is promoting its own expansion towards east, the conditionality for accommodating new members from the region becomes in some cases different when compared to other past procedures (Haughton, 2007; Qerimi, 2003). As Sedelmeier (2005) notes the substantive policies that the European Union imposes and implements in the onset of accession and integration of eastern European countries (and specifically south eastern European countries) present variations in comparison to the standard principles, requirements and processes.

Similarly, according to Sjurssen and Smith (2004) the European Union when considering the conditions and requirements for offering membership to respective countries has not always been consistent given that “candidates have been treated differently and the EU’s reasons for so doing have not always been clear” (p. 135). In

some cases the European Union has placed much more emphasis on other considerations than the officially set criteria and requirements as these are established. Haughton (2007) comments that such considerations are to be found in the area of ensuring the European identity and the EU's absorbing capacity which are provisioned in the Copenhagen criteria and essentially that this provision is what gives the EU the 'flexibility' to modify conditionality and to change the substantive policies when it comes to south eastern enlargement.

The accession of some south eastern European countries has taken on much longer than expected by academics and researchers. Petrovic (2010) and Sedelmeier (2005) state that while negotiations, discussions and assessments of the criteria fulfillment in the western countries have been subject to speeding processes, the south eastern countries have experienced many delays and far more pressuring conditions and requirements. In 2004 the enlargement brought about eight new members of the eastern Europe and in 2007 Bulgaria and Romania became members too. These two waves of eastern enlargement are commented by many authors as being different at both the inter-level state and between the countries (Haughton, 2007). Even negotiations for accession of eastern countries (and especially south eastern countries) are seen as different and based on inconsistencies as for example the case of Turkey (Hillion, 2007).

## **Chapter 3.0: Analysis of the Study**

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This chapter presents **the three cases** that have been investigated through secondary research. The main analysis of the dissertation is being conducted here and the chapter is divided into three different sections (each section for each country). Due to the fact that the three countries have been subjects to negotiations and accession processes (for the two cases of Bulgaria and Greece) in different points in time and this reflects different process requirements and criteria being imposed by the European Union, the discussion is not focused on specific areas but on a broad description of the procedures for accession. What is meant by this is that, the Greek accession to EU was implemented at a time where there were no official, standardized procedures and set of criteria for membership; rather a wide range of issues relevant to the Europeanization of the candidate country (especially in terms of foreign policy and security). Unlike the Greek case, the cases of Turkey and Bulgaria are underpinned by the development of the Copenhagen Criteria which reflect a more formal, structured and standardized process of accession and integration. To this end, comparison cannot be established on the same grounds and for this reason the discussion of the analysis of the study is implemented on a general approach to what EU requires of the candidates and to what extent these requirements are seen as flexible or rigid and pressuring for the countries (inconsistencies in the requirements).

### **3.1 The Greek case of European Integration**

Greece has been an official member of the European Union since 1981. The Greek accession marked the opening of the path towards the membership of the Mediterranean countries; the Mediterranean enlargement proceeded the first

enlargement of the EEC (European Economic Community) implemented eight years earlier with the accession of UK, Ireland and Denmark (Oltheten et al., 2003). The Association Agreement signed in 1961 between the EEC and Greece signified the future accession of the country within a time period of twenty two years (Ifantis, 2004; Tsinisizelis, 2002). With a seven year period marked by frozen bilateral relations (owing to the military regime in Greece), in 1975 as soon as restoration of the democracy was achieved by the collapse of the previous regime, the country applied for full membership and this occurred only six years later (Sotiropoulos, 2004). Greece eventually became the tenth member of the then EEC. Despite the freezing of the negotiations and sooner than expected (the Athens Agreement foresaw the membership in 22 years) Greece managed to enter the EEC which signaled a period of required transformations in order to “bridge the gap between its political, economic and cultural identity as a western European nation with its East European location and traditions” (Tsinisizelis, 2002 p. 148).

In 1976 and in the onset of Greek application for membership, the European Commission commented (through a report) on its evaluation of the application; this was a standardized procedure where the Commission should take a stance on the prospective candidacy of a country. Eventually the report was positively evaluating Greece as a potential new member but established some pre-accession transition period in order for institutionalization to become effective and economic reforms to be processed by the country (Ifantis, 2004). Hibou (2009) comments that the Commission’s opinion of Greece was underlined by the perspective that the country was not ready (in terms of economic conditions) but political reasons were more dominant in positively accepting the candidacy despite the fact that economic criteria were considered as fundamental in the membership to the European Community.

However Tsoukalis (1981) underlines that Greece's posed application in June 1975, found the Community not ready to handle the relative procedure. That was because the Community had to maintain certain "delicate balances" (Tsoukalis:1981) concerning interests, costs and benefits, taking into consideration the other two Iberian countries – Spain and Portugal- which were "flirting" with their entrance into the Community. Nonetheless, European report in January 1976 was not that positive as the approaches Karamanlis (Greece's Prime minister) had till that time from the others Europeans leaders. Maybe was the first time that a relative Community's concern is up regarding an enlargement where countries which were not possessing an outstanding economy could bring a problematic effect to the Community. Therefore, Community's first approach was to reject and move to the future Greece's accession, but when Karamanlis threatened to withdraw Greece's application, no member government wanted to take on its shoulders the burden of such a refusal, while it is remarkable what the Reginald Dale of the *Financial Times* wrote: "If Greece becomes a member, it will be largely by default." (Tsoukalis : 1981). The negotiations began within months of the Commission's report (actually on the July of the same year) and came into conclusion in less than three years (May 1979) where the Accession treaty was signed. The integration of Greece to the European Union was not a one –off process requiring total readiness and preparedness of the candidate country in order to access the EU. Ifantis (2004) identifies three phases of integration: the first phase spans throughout the period 1981 – 1985 when Greece was battling to harmonize defense policy and converge with the policies of the EU and more importantly to achieve economic stability. In that sense, Greece required 'divergence' towards these two issues while the European Commission recognized only the economic issue as important and necessary for assistance (the European

Commission provisioned economic support for the restructuring of the Greek economy). The second phase marks the period 1986 – 1995 when Greece was more intensively pursuing integration through institutionalization of foreign policy and adoption of a common approach to that of the remaining European Union members.

Othleten et al. (2003) comment that while Greece did not adhere to the economic or political institutionalization required by the European Union the negotiations for membership as well as the entire integration process were actually implemented with minor constraints. In a similar manner, Ioakimidis (2000) state that while the Greek economy was characterized by very high inflation rates, governmental and state intervention, closed trade sector and structural administrative deficiencies the integration of the country to the European Union was never considered to be drawn from such limitations. Particularly, the public sector and the state intervention while should be considered as obstacles to integration were refrained from the major concerns. “After 1974 and despite the fact that Greece had submitted its application for accession to the EC, the conservative government began a massive process of state expansion, in the area of entrepreneurial activity with, among others, the nationalization of significant segments of the economy” (Ioakimidis, 2000, p. 4). Such governmental actions were out of the boundaries of the pre-accession transition and despite that the process of accession and integration was not suspended or frozen. Eventually the restructuring towards this end and the reduction of the massive state-controlled economy came only after the country had been an official member of the EU. In terms of the economic conditions, Othleten et al. (2003) state that “Greece entered the EU in a period of deteriorating economic performance” (p. 775). As the authors explain, at the time of accession the country’s GDP per capita was far below the average of the EU members (some 68%

lagging) and the overall economy was highly rigid and stiff owing to the dominance of agriculture and 'vast protection' from foreign investment especially in the area of industrialization. But apart from these the macroeconomic indicators (which reflect the potentials for macroeconomic stability which was a necessary requirement) also did not draw a favourable picture for Greece (Figure 1). Prior to the accession, Greece's economic position was 'worst' than during the period of negotiations and despite that membership was not declined by the Commission.

According to Sotiropoulos (2004) the requirements that were predominantly set by the Commission in the onset of Greek accession involved policy making in order to adjust to the needs for adopting the 'acquis' and this policy making related primarily to issues regarding economic and structural policy. But Greece as Ioakimidis (2000) notes made only some 'incoherent' steps towards this policy making. whereas the essential transformation took place once it had already become a member. Likewise, institutionalization and Europeanization came along with the country's integration to the Union and not prior to its full membership (Tsardanidis and Stavridis, 2005). One could argue however that at the time of Greece's membership the Copenhagen criteria which lay a standardized procedure and requirements had not been yet launched, but in spite of this the enlargement of the EU was marked by a number of requirements which were oriented particularly towards political and economic stability.

Figure 1: Macroeconomic Indicators prior to accession and during accession

	1951–1974	1975–1980	1981–1993
GDP growth	6.4	4.68	1.42
Inflation	6.0	14.98	17.96
Unemployment	4.0	2.07	8.03
Current account <sup>a</sup>	−2.1 <sup>c</sup>	−3.6	−3.62
Budget balance <sup>a</sup>	0.42 <sup>d</sup>	−2.5	−10.92
Government debt <sup>b</sup>	16.7	28.6	111.6

Source: OECD, Ministry of National Economy.  
<sup>a</sup> Percentage of GDP.  
<sup>b</sup> End of period value.  
<sup>c</sup> Average for period 1954–1973.  
<sup>d</sup> Average for period 1960–1974.

(Source: Oltheten et al., 2003, p. 778)

Figure 2. Greece's Economic Structure prior Accession

Table 1.5 **Greece: Economic Structure**

<i>Sectoral Composition of GDP</i>					
<i>(Value added as a percentage of GDP; at factor cost)</i>					
	1960	1965	1970	1973	1975
1 Agriculture, forestry	24.6	24.9	18.9	20.4	18.7
2 Mining, quarrying	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.4
3 Manufacturing	17.0	16.5	19.5	20.1	19.9
4 Electricity, gas and waterworks	1.4	1.7	2.1	1.7	1.6
5 Construction	6.9	7.0	7.6	10.0	7.2
6 Transportation and communications	6.9	6.9	7.5	6.8	8.1
7 Wholesale and retail trade	11.2	10.8	10.7	13.0	13.9
8 Banking	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.2	2.8
9 Dwellings	10.4	8.8	8.6	6.7	6.5
10 Public administration and defence	7.9	8.0	9.1	7.5	8.8
11 Health and education	3.9	4.7	4.7	4.1	4.7
12 Other services	6.5	7.1	7.5	6.1	6.5

(Source: Tsoukalis L., 1981, p. 23)

Greece's accession to the European Union in 1981 is of particular interest given the fact that the country had only 'combated' a dictatorship regime a few years ago. From 1967 to 1974 the negotiations and the open discussions for accession were frozen due to the military regime (Sotiropoulos, 2004).

The primary drivers of the interest of the country to join the EU are identified by Economides (2005) as being underpinned by "foreign policy and security considerations" (p. 473). In Economides' (2005) perspectives, Greece had long been

interested in achieving security in foreign policy matters and this was the fundamental basis upon which the bilateral relations were built. Economic stability or political stability as requirements for accession and full membership were not given much emphasis by neither of the two parties and this was a result of two main issues: prioritization on the Europeanization of foreign policy was highlighted and de-prioritization of particular conditions that would ensure “Europeanization” was implied (by the de-emphasis on the political, economic and administrative capacity). But in this respect also, the requirements and the obligations set for the Greek candidacy and prospective membership did not impose rapid and drastic transformations on the part of the country (Kouveliotis, 2005). Greece’s Europeanization towards this end (which was considered the number one requirement) was not fully realized and fully actualized in the pre-accession period. Foreign policy matters were developed and harmonized with the EU’s agenda in an ongoing basis as integration progressed and not as a prerequisite for integration (Ifantis, 2004).

A special consideration to the human rights and minority rights is given by Grigoriadis (2008) who studies the framework of requirements set for Greece (compared to the requirements set for Turkey). While during the accession of Greece to the European Union there were no specific ‘chapters’ on this area, respect for human rights and minority rights was always perceived as a prerequisite for the integration and the so called Europeanization of the candidates. Greece’s membership was not underpinned by any significant progress made towards this end and most importantly it was not underlined by specific criteria spelled out by the EU. The military regime (through the period 1967 – 1974) was marked by massive human rights violations and resulted in the de-valuation of the human rights’ issues within the political agenda of the country. At this point the European +Council suspended

the negotiations with Greece on the basis of such conditions which did not come to alignment with the respect for human rights advocated by the EEC. However, in 1974 when Greece consolidated its democratic political scheme and proceeded to the development of the new Constitution (in 1975) the European Council re-opened the path to discussions and negotiations and within a period of five years it set the date for accession. Screening was not implemented and more importantly hard evidence on the reforms and transformation of the former conditions were not established. The EEC rewarded the Greek effort towards complying with the human rights issues promoted but the “legislation reform did not form part of Greece’s EEC accession negotiation and no conditionality policies were attached” (Grigoriadis, 2008, p. 25). Similarly, the author explains that when Greece became a full member of the European Union in 1981 political criteria and human rights criteria were not officially incorporated in the accession requirements, nevertheless there were policies towards these issues which should have been adopted by candidate members and progress should have been evaluated if accession was to be realized. In the case of Greece, such policies were bypassed and asserted only by the transformations and restructurings that the country made without having any official reports on the developments in issues that had been problematic.

In addition, Tsoukalis (1981) argues that regarding the future and due to a very “heterogeneous economic unit” referring to the Community, consultations and co-ordinations should take place without omitting to add that a potential financial aid may take place, as well, in order structural reforms be achieved for each one Greece, Portugal, Spain.

A general conclusion that can be drawn from the review of the case of Greece’s accession to the European Union is that despite the inefficiencies and

drawbacks of the country in several of the 'later on' formal criteria for negotiations (such as economic, political or even human rights) was finalized without shortcomings and without delays stemming from ongoing negotiations. Neither the macroeconomic instability nor the political instability or other relevant issues refrained the European Union from accepting Greece as a full member.

### **3.2 The Bulgarian case of European Integration**

Bulgaria became an official and acknowledged European Union member in 2007 in the fifth enlargement of the EU (along with Romania). The basis for membership, however, had been built long before.

Bulgaria's first interactions with the European Union date back in 1990 when the country signed the Trade and Commercial and Economic Cooperation Agreement which foresaw the liberalization of trade between the two parties (the country and the European Union) (Stanimir and Latchezar, 1997). On the basis of this trade liberalization and initiation of relationships between Bulgaria and EU, the Europe Agreement (effective from 1995) was signed to further promote the relationships in an expansive manner on other areas as well. These areas included financial cooperation (assistance predominantly) and initiation of political dialogue. In essence, this Agreement was a step further towards the actualization of the membership status in the forthcoming enlargement (at the time) (Klimov, 2005).

The strategy for Bulgaria's accession to the European Union was spelled out and explicitly established in the Essen European Council summit in 1994. While prior to this the negotiations were delayed primarily because Bulgaria had been marked by economic instability and particularly by the characteristic of an ex-communist country which was largely dependent on the Soviet Union especially for economic matters

and trade, the Essen Summit in 1994 was underpinned by the Union's decision to accelerate the open discussions and negotiations as well as the strategy in order to 'catch up' with other prospective candidates such as Hungary and Slovakia (Nikolova, 2006).

In 1996 Bulgaria applied officially for membership to the European Union. Having being drafted the White Paper which outlines a number of reforms and areas of improvements in order to adopt the 'acquis', the Bulgarian government initiated several steps towards harmonizing especially with the EU regulations and laws and transforming external policies into national policies (Anastasakis and Bechev, 2003). In the onset of the Bulgarian application for membership, the Commission was requested to prepare a report on its opinion on the 'suitability' of the country's accession to the European Union. The resulting report stated that while Bulgaria had some important areas of failure (especially in terms of democracy and political stability), the country's candidacy was positively evaluated (Hubbard and Hubbard, 2008). In spite of the positive evaluation, however, the negotiations did not begin until 2000 when at the Helsinki Summit in 1999 it was decided that the discussions for accession would open (Anastasakis and Bechev, 2003). At the Helsinki Summit actually the future membership of Bulgaria was partially established although actual accession date was not finalized (Hubbard and Hubbard, 2008). However, the important issue at that point was that the country was to be economically assisted through fund programs (SAPARD, ISPA and PHARE) in order to enable the economic stability that was a key criterion (as established by the Copenhagen Criteria) (Nikolova, 2006).

Prior to the Helsinki Summit in 1999, the Luxembourg European Council provisioned the Accession Partnership in 1998 which laid the path towards

assistance of any kind to be provisioned to Bulgaria (along with Romania) in the onset of the preparation for the future membership (Hubbard and Hubbard, 2008). After this and with the opening of the discussions established for 2000 (by the Helsinki Summit), the negotiations began and concluded within four years, when in 2004 the Accession Treaty was signed. But even prior to 2004, the European Council at Copenhagen in 2002 had already set a possible date of accession the year 2007 (implying therefore that the official negotiations eventually would prove fruitful in only two years) (Nikolova, 2006).

The screening and monitoring of Bulgaria's progress towards fulfilling the criteria and the requirements had also began much earlier than the actual opening of the negotiations (Klimov, 2005). By 1998 the European Union observed closely the developments in Bulgaria and the Commission made regular reports on the evaluation on the progress or the improvement areas. From 2000 and on the Commission's opinions became much more frequent and the monitoring also meant that Bulgaria would be on the spot for its assessment towards progression.

According to the research undertaken by Nikolova (2006.) in examining the case of Bulgaria in all three phases of membership (pre-accession, accession and post – accession), the European Union's stance in negotiating with the country was such that exerted its power and dominance. The EU posed "add – on conditionality" to Bulgaria especially in regards to two issues: the first issue was the administrative capacity (horizontal capacity) to absorb EU rules and legislation but also to apply these in a 'quality' manner and the second issue was its imposition of decisions regarding aspects which were non-relevant to the membership criteria (as these were set in the Copenhagen Criteria). Regarding the administrative capacity, Nikolova (2006) and Klimov (2005) state that the outlining of the chapters and the official

membership criteria were not clear in that they required 'quality of the administrative capacity' (Nikolova, 2006, p. 397) but a mere implication that administrative capacity should be such that the candidate country can align its public administration domain and strengthen its compliance with the EU's policies and legislation. Despite this blurred requirement (which in fact was not spelled out), the Commission's opinion documented on its report noted that Bulgaria should ensure that quality of the administrative capacity was much more important and for this reason the accession should not be implemented with the large enlargement wave in 2004 but it would be delayed for 2007. Such requirement for 'quality administrative capacity' was not imposed on any other candidate (except Romania which was more or less treated similarly by the EU). Regarding the second issue, Nikolova (2006) and Hubbard and Hubbard (2008) underline that the European Union had also imposed a new criterion (add on conditionality) which did not reflect any of the official requirements; the closure of the country's nuclear plant and its main source of energy. This was decided to be a landmark that would signal the opening up of the negotiations and while Bulgaria initially resisted in the onset of the Council's decision in 2002 that the country's accession was not entirely guaranteed and that negotiations could be suspended at any point in time in case of unsubstantial progress, in the end the Bulgarian government appeared to be compromising. Last minute negotiations upon this subject, eventually, closed by the end of 2002.

In terms of the economic conditions of the country there are some controversies. While the Commission's report on the economic stability was positive and the country's path toward economic growth had been laid (Figure 2 shows the macroeconomic indicators prior to the accession which were reviewed by the Commission) special considerations on the unemployment rates had been overseen.

Bulgaria is a country which is dominated by rural population and the unemployment rates falling reflected the urban population which constituted only a part of the total population of the nation. In spite of the fact that the negotiations with Bulgaria on the chapters referring to the economic stability had been precise on the employment growth on all areas (urban and rural population), the Commission’s decision to take into account macroeconomic figures on the development only on the urban population shows hints of conditional requirements (Hubbard and Hubbard, 2008).

Figure 2: Bulgaria’s macroeconomic indicators prior to EU accession

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<b>Bulgaria</b>							
Real GDP growth rate (annual % change)	5.4	4.1	4.5	5.0	6.6	6.2	6.1
GDP per capita (EU25=100)	26.5	28.0	28.4	31.1	32.3	33.6	35.7
Government deficit/surplus (% of GDP)	-0.5	1.9	0.1	-0.9	2.2	1.9	3.3
Government debt (% of GDP)	73.6	66.2	54.0	45.9	37.9	29.2	22.8
Unemployment (% of labour force)	16.4	19.5	18.1	13.7	12.0	10.1	9.0
Inflation rate (% annual change)	10.3	7.4	5.8	2.3	6.1	6.0	7.4

(Source: Hubbard and Hubbard, 2008, p. 6)

Another equally important issue was the human rights and the minority rights which were at the heart of the Copenhagen criteria. Bulgaria prior to negotiations had also been on the spot for its regulations and jurisdiction as well as ‘incorporation’ of minorities and the discussions with the European Union forged towards this end. In the Commission’s report on 2004, Bulgaria’s path towards ensuring minority rights and promoting human rights indicated that the progress was rather weak as it had failed to acknowledge the Roma community and promote minority rights in its Constitution. Despite this however, the chapter on the minority rights and human

rights was effectively closed and the accession of the country to the European Union was decided at that point.

A general conclusion drawn for the case of Bulgaria is that the European Union has been rather flexible and has not been entirely consistent with its requirements. In the political environment some issues have been overlooked (political stability was not finalized or ensured but this did not refrain EU from initiating negotiations); this is true for some economic issues as well (for example the high unemployment rates as macroeconomic indicators) but also for the human rights. While the European Union appeared to taking into serious consideration the official and formal criteria in some cases, in others matters regarding the Bulgarian accession critical issues were bypassed.

### **3.3 The Turkey's candidacy and prospective integration**

Turkey's relations with the European Union and the overall process of accession marked by long term and inconclusive negotiations is actually a special case that reveals much of what is claimed by authors such as Bac (2005), Eder (2004), Hillion (2007) and Schimmelfennig (2009) that the procedures followed are not always consistent or standardized for all prospective members and more importantly that application of the criteria to some candidate countries reflect 'uneven' requirements. Turkey has long being interested in becoming a full member of the EU and despite the fact that the country has undergone through several reforms in the light of negotiations with the Union it still remains a country with a 'candidacy' status and an unclear and uncertain future in the process of integration (Arıcan, 2006; Stajano, 2007). Some researchers describe the case of Turkey as a peculiar and 'awkward' representation of the European Union's inconsistent policy in regards to

enlargement. In this section, the analysis presents some key points in the history of Turkey's – EU relationships and basic landmarks on the progress made by Turkey in terms of the Copenhagen criteria and the requirements set by the EU as the outcome of negotiations.

Looking at the history of the relationships between Turkey and the European Union, it is evidenced that these had actually started long before other official members at present had even started considering the accession to the EU (Bac, 2005). Turkey's interrelationships with the EU are traced back in time and particularly in 1959 when application for membership at the (then) EEC was first submitted on the part of Turkey. This application brought about the Ankara Agreement (signed in 1963 and effective from 1964) which recognized Turkey as an associate member to customs union and foresaw that the country would adopt trade policies (especially in relation to third countries) derived from the European Economic Community (EEC) (Stajano, 2007). The Ankara Agreement was a landmark for Turkey's potential membership at the time since it provided that under conditions the country would be a feasible applicant and consequently a viable candidate for EU membership in the future. This was a significant first step which in fact opened up 'venues' for future discussions and negotiations with the EU which would lead to membership. The Ankara Agreement was followed by a number of Protocols signed between the union and Turkey (in 1970, 1977 and 1980) and in 1995 a complete Customs Union was signed (Bac, 2005; Arıkan, 2006; Hillion, 2007).

In 1980 Turkey's political regime was tackled by a military coup which eventually led to the 'freezing' of the initiation of discussions for the accession to EU as it was provisioned by the Ankara Agreement. According to many researchers such as Arıkan (2006) and Bac (2005) the military coup regime was actually an 'excuse' on

the part of the EU to postpone the discussions and negotiations. In 1987 Turkey applied for the first time officially to the EU for its prospective candidacy. The application was declined by the Commission given that at that point in time the EU was pre-occupied with the integration process of other members. However, this decline was perceived as a decline not being based on the inability of the EU to engage into discussions and negotiations due to work load but due to “unwillingness” to enter in such a procedure (Erdemli, 2003). Later on in 1991 at the Turkey – EEC Association council in Brussels the sessions were re-established and for the first time in the history of the EU an external country (external to the EU) became so close in terms of political and economic associations with the EU. In 1997 the discussions froze again as a result of the Luxemburg Summit’s decision to exclude Turkey from the list of candidates for EU membership due to the unresolved issues and disputes on the Cyprus’ problem. The rejection was then followed by an adverse decision which was made at the Helsinki Summit in 1999 and which recognized Turkey as an official candidate for EU membership provided that it would fulfill the Copenhagen Criteria. The criteria would have to be met by 2004 and the path towards achieving those criteria was established (political reforms, economic reforms and democratic stabilization) (Hillion, 2007). Turkey adopted the NPAA (National Program for the Adoption of the Acquis) in order to comply with the requirements and attempt a systematic progress towards the criteria. Political reforms were especially launched towards the requirements but in 2003 the European Council once again declined the applications for initiating negotiations with Turkey. In 2004 adversely the EC decided to set a date (in December) in order to originate open discussions with the country. The screening for the ability of the country to adopt the acquis as well as for the progress towards meeting the Copenhagen criteria begun in 2005 but the

discussions were once again inconclusive merely due to the fact that the European Council suspended eight chapters of the Copenhagen criteria which meant further delays in the negotiations. Within three years and in the onset of several package reforms adopted by Turkey towards progression only ten chapters were eventually under negotiations. Today the negotiations still continue and Turkey's membership has not yet been granted (Arikan, 2006).

The historical landmarks of the relationships between Turkey and the European Union show that delays, freezing and suspensions are generally predominant issues in the negotiations for the accession of the country. While the European Union has set a standardized process of candidacy, accession, membership, integration and institutionalization, in the case of Turkey this process has been not only delayed but also modified in several cases. But the most important issue is to look why the EU has not finalized yet the membership status of Turkey.

The Turkish prospective membership has always been underpinned by the country's non-Europeanized approach to human rights, to political stability, to the military power and the economic prosperity (Schimmelfennig, 2009; Tocci, 2005). Regarding the human rights, Turkey (which has been a traditional authoritative nation) has proceeded into various reforms in its legal system and regulation (along with the penal code) to transform the authoritative character to a democratic character which respects human rights (Bac, 2005; Grigoriadis, 2006; Grigoriadis, 2008). In terms of the political criteria, Turkey proceeded into thirty four amendments to its Constitution in order to lay the path towards democratization and minimization of the military intervention. In the Laeken Summit in 2001 the European Council positively commented on the progress of Turkey towards both political and human rights' issues but still suspended the negotiations on the premise that further reforms

were necessary. According to the views of Arikan (2006), Flam (2004) Hillion (2007) Turkey's progress was in line with the Copenhagen criteria but further pressures were applied by the EU which were inconsistent and which were not clear; the EU was not clarifying its requirements from Turkey despite the fact that the official criteria spelled out in the Copenhagen Council were rather precise. Within a period of four years nine Constitutional packages were adopted and the changes were all oriented towards political and human rights reforms (these packages are shown in the figure below).

Figure 3: Constitutional Packages adopted by Turkey in the onset of Reforms

Date	Type	Major Changes
3 October 2001	1st Constitutional Package	34 Amendments to the 1982 Constitution
November 2001	New Civil Code	Gender equality in marriage
February/March 2002	2nd Constitutional Package	Constitutional amendments
2 August 2002	3rd Constitutional Package	Abolish death penalty/revise anti-terror law, allowed broadcasting in languages other than Turkish
3 December 2002	4th Constitutional Package	Operationalize previous reforms/revise Penal Code for torture
4 December 2002	5th Constitutional Package	Retrial of all cases decided in State Security courts
May 2003	6th Constitutional Package	Adopt Protocol 6 of the ECHR, convert all death sentences to life imprisonment/repeal Article 8 of Anti-Terror Law
July 2003	7th Constitutional Package	Revise the National Security Council
7 May 2004	8th Constitutional Package	Ten amendments of the Constitution, freedom of press, and gave priority to supranational treaties over domestic law, abolish State Security courts.
24 June 2004	9th Constitutional Package	Change Article 46 of the Penal code, revise the Higher Education Board and the Censure Board.
25–26 September 2004	New Turkish Penal Code	Revise laws on violence against women and children/change the penalties for various offences and redefine offences.

Source: (Bac, 2005)

In spite of Turkey's progress and consistent path towards institutionalization and adoption of the *acquis* on the one hand and the European Commission's positive evaluation of the progress in its report in 2004, negotiations did not come to an end.

The economic criteria were in fact easier for Turkey to accomplish. The Copenhagen criteria on the macroeconomic stability and trade policies were all advanced by the country. Inflation rates were decreasing in a stable manner, employment rates were increasing, budget deficits were reduced to less than 10% compared to previous (than 2004) years which amounted to more than 30%, the

private sector was intensified and grew to account for as much as 80% of trade, trade policies were harmonized with EU's corresponding policies in this area (Stajano, 2007; Hillion, 2007). Despite however these progressive steps towards macroeconomic prosperity and stability and despite the Commission's positive evaluative report on the economic criteria, the negotiations did not come to an end either.

One of the main argumentations as claimed by the Commission was that the reforms were substantial but the implementation of the reforms was not strong enough to justify criteria fulfilment (Commission of the European Communities, 2004, p. 76).

In the light of the inconsistency of the EU's application of the standardized process and the requirement on the standardized Copenhagen Criteria researchers have turned their attention to other issues and considerations which might have played a significant role in the inconclusive integration of Turkey to the European Union. Some researchers point the issues of religion and culture as being 'distant' from the European Identity and as being obstacles to the Europeanization of the country. Remember that Europeanization is a requirement for accession, though never being explicitly defined or clearly established in the EU's agenda. Other researchers point the issues of members' opposition to the Turkish accession. Each of these two views is better explored in the following chapter where comparison between the three cases is presented.

A general conclusion drawn from the case of Turkey is that the European Union has been selectively applying the criteria and has been distinctively pointing towards improvements which in some areas have in fact been substantiated by the country but they are overlooked by the EU. The economic issues have been

effectively dealt with by Turkey, the political criteria have largely been met and the human rights criteria have seen great progress, but in spite of these the country's accession has not been granted.

## Chapter 4.0 Comparative Analysis

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### 4.1 Comparison of the Cases

The analysis of the three cases in the previous chapter bares some discussion themes that emerge in terms of comparing the accession and/or integration to the European Union. However, prior to the brief comments on the comparative analysis there are three important issues that should be taken into consideration.

The first issue has to do with the fact that the three countries have been subjects to candidacy and membership (in the case of Greece and Bulgaria when it comes to membership) to the European Union at different points in time. This would be a non –defining element if all three cases were underpinned by a similar or identical approach on the part of the EU towards southeastern enlargement. So, especially in the case of comparing Greece to Bulgaria (which have both become members of the EU) the analysis is asymmetrical in that the criteria for membership as well as the entire process of accession and integration were vastly different. The Copenhagen Criteria were established in 1993; that is some thirteen years after the accession of Greece. And this implies that while a comparison is attempted, the footings upon which this is based bares considerable questions which stem from the assumption that since the official criteria were not existent at that time it is of course expected that the processes will vary significantly. However, aside from this limitation, the dissertation does not aim to investigate the terms upon which the process is different but in a general framework if the process is different. Having this in mind, therefore, it should be stressed that the comparison in the case of Greece and Bulgaria on the basis of their membership lies on the degree of elasticity and

flexibility on the part of the EU and the conditions and requirements as being imposed.

The second issue has to do with the fact that Turkey is not yet a member of the European Union. This again poses some limitations because it does not reflect a process of membership and integration but expands up to the pre-accession negotiations. However, once again it should be reminded that the dissertation aims to look at the procedures which underline the stance of the European Union and not the final outcome per se. So, the comparison between Turkey on the one hand and Greece and Bulgaria on the other hand, lies predominantly on the path towards the EU and not on the actual integration (this has been the reason why the analysis on the previous chapter spanned from the initiation of EU – countries' bilateral relations and the point of accession). Finally, the third issue has to do with the different perspectives upon which conclusions can be drawn from the comparative analysis; this means that while one could attribute the differences in the different chronological periods or the different countries' infrastructures and readiness or preparedness for EU accession, another point of view could be to attribute the differences in the disposition and treatment of the different cases as these are investigated from the stance of the European Union. This latter perspective is the one adopted in this comparative analysis.

The presentation of the three cases indicates that indeed differences in the negotiations processes and accession procedures exist. Greece became a member in 1981 where the criteria were undefined in a single framework but pointed towards economic stability to be aligned with that of existing EC members and more importantly towards foreign policy frameworks. Political stability was also implied despite the fact that it was not spelled out explicitly. But while these requirements

were fundamental, the Greek case shows otherwise. Political stability was not ensured given the military regime from 1967 to 1974. Within a year from the collapse of this regime the negotiations begun simultaneously with the application for membership. As Hibou (2009) points out it would have been rather “naïve” to consider that the democracy and political stability had been restored within such a short period. And even more on this, Greece’s accession came only after six years. In the case of Turkey the military coup in 1980 resulted not only in the delay of open discussions but in the suspension of the country’s ability to apply for candidacy. It was only in 1987 that the country managed to apply for candidacy. In a similar point of view, Bulgaria’s post-communism regime also meant political instability but this was also not considered as a refraining issue in the opening up of the negotiations. The country’s application for membership was implemented in 1995 and the negotiations begun in 2000 but the important issue was that open discussions and monitoring as well as screening had started much earlier for Bulgaria, signaling therefore the interest of the European Union towards keeping ‘an open door’ to Bulgaria. But unlike this willingness to keep an ‘open door’ to Bulgaria and Greece (evidenced by the immediate initiation of negotiations after the Greek dictatorship), the European Union has shown unwillingness to exert such flexibility in the case of Turkey where suspension had become rather frequent.

Moving on, concerning the economic issues underpinning the prerequisites for accession, again differences are spotted in the three cases. Greece as noted in the previous chapter not only entered the EC (at the time) in a turbulent economic period but its economic conditions and macro economic indicators prior to accession (which are now in the Copenhagen Criteria fundamental requirements) did not show a positive and favorable picture of the country in terms of accession and membership.

In the five year period prior to accession (where negotiations and discussions were held) the macroeconomic indicators drew an economically unstable profile of the country and in spite this fact along with the fact that economic stability was key at that time, the EC did not suspend any dialogue with the country but also proceeded into implementing and accepting its membership. Bulgaria's case indicates a consistency with the criteria but up to a point; for example as noted in the previous chapter some macroeconomic indicators were 'blindly' accepted by the Commission (as in the case of unemployment rates reflecting only the urban population). In this respect, the European Union in both cases of accession (Greece and Bulgaria) has shown a degree of flexibility; more in the case of Greece and less in the case of Bulgaria. Contrary to this flexibility, the case of Turkey shows adverse approach and stance of the European Union. Turkey's macroeconomic indicators had been harmonized, the country made significant efforts to open its trade (liberalize its trade) and while on the Commission's reports this was 'congratulated' the final conclusions indicated that the country should make more progress and there are still areas of improvement. Based on this (along with other issues) the accession of Turkey was once again delayed. It is important to note that Turkey's economic crisis affected its evaluation on the part of EU whereas Greece's crisis owed to the oil crisis at the time was bypassed. So, on the economic issues regarding the criteria and requirements the European Union's stance is viewed as inconsistent when dealing or treating the three SEE countries.

Another important area where comparison can be generated is the degree of Europeanization in the sense of each period's requirements. For the case of Greece, foreign policy and security were predominant issues and harmonization was a necessary activity to be made by the government prior to the accession. But as it has

been evidenced from the analysis in the previous chapter, Greece only achieved convergence and integration, after its full membership and while being an official member of the EC. Unlike the case of Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey have experienced greater pressures towards this end prior to accession. Bulgaria's requirement for 'quality administrative capacity' meant not only harmonization and absorption of the rules and legislation of the European Union but also application of these in a 'quality manner'. This further meant that the path to integration should have been laid before membership. Also in the case of Turkey, Europeanization has been a major issue especially when it comes to areas of culture and religion. Arıkan (2006), Grigoriadis (2006) and Tocci (2005) explain that Turkey is a special case of a European candidate basically due to the religious and cultural differences /distances with the remaining European Union members. In that manner, the Islamic religion which is dominant and which affects the entire culture is perceived as a barrier to the Europeanization. Other researchers point towards political power issues; for example Bac (2005) comments that the accession of Turkey might threaten the big powers of Germany and France in the EU and this also explains the opposition of those countries to the Turkish membership.

Finally, a last but very important element of the requirements is that regarding human and minority rights. In this area differences have also been identified in the stance of the European Union when compared to the case of the three countries. In the period of Greek membership to the EC, such issues were not at the forefront of the agenda for accession but remained integral to the requirements for integration. As it has been explained previously minority rights were not effectively handled by Greece in the onset of membership and integration but greatly afterwards. In the case of Bulgaria the subject of the Roma minority was included in the negotiations in

2004 and despite the non substantial progress made by the country (as this was spelled out by the Commission), the membership process was not suspended on this grounds. On the contrary, the Turkish candidacy has been largely confronted with issues on human rights and minority rights. It has been shown that the country has made a number of reforms in its law system and judicial system as well as Constitutional package reforms to achieve improvements on this end but the European Union places more pressures towards non defined benchmarks. As Arikian (2006) notes, the European Union has not set any benchmarks against which Turkey should measure its improvements and reforms on the issue of human rights or minority rights and it appears that despite the reforms improvement areas continue to be highlighted by the EU.

The comparison on these levels in the cases of Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey shows clearly that different approaches and different treatments are well identified in the negotiations, candidacy and membership processes. The dissertation has sought to answer two research questions: (a) In what ways are southeastern European countries treated differently when it comes to membership and integration to the European Union? and (b) What reasons underpin the difference in the integration process? The first question can be addressed by looking at the degree of flexibility and conditionality that the EU has imposed or required from the three SEE countries. The countries have been indeed treated differently on the basis of a number of arguments and these entail mainly the elasticity in the criteria. So, one conclusion that can be generated is the assumption that the European Union becomes more and more complex and more attentive of the need for Europeanization and Institutionalization, that it also becomes more mature and more demanding of its new members which have to cope with such great complexities and ever demanding

integration process. This is understood by looking at the case of Greece, then the case of Bulgaria and finally the case of Turkey in a progressive manner; in the case of Greece there was greater flexibility on the part of EU and willingness to 'oversee' deficiencies, in the case of Bulgaria there were also some short of flexibility but adds on conditionality may reveal greater urge for convergence and integration, whereas in the case of Turkey flexibility appears to have been rendered. But then again, Turkey and Bulgaria entered negotiations and kept on with these negotiations in almost the same time period and this cannot explain the differences. Therefore, comparing Greece to the two other SEE countries it can be argued that the integration is moderated by the maturity of the EU and the time during which membership was applied and negotiations were initiated.

Regarding the second research question it also draws from the first one. The reason might be the level of maturity but might also be the level of interest of the EU to 'incorporate' the new members. Enlargement is at the heart of the European Union policies but enlargement is not to be pursued at any grounds. Turkey's accession might threaten the European Identity (in the case of non-alignment) but apart from this opposition of other countries (as for example the case of Greece and France) might also play an important role. On the other hand, the accession of Greece was seen as an opening for the Mediterranean countries which was critical at the time for the European Union. For the case of Bulgaria it can be argued that while the evidenced issues do not show a clear interest on the part of the EU economic and expansive reasons were probably underpinning the specific treatment of the country (Nikolova, 2006).

## Chapter 5.0 Conclusions

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### 5.1 General Remarks of the Dissertation

The subject of EU eastern enlargement has been researched, investigated and explored in several studies as it constitutes an area of interest which is underpinned by the attempt to unlock the EU's stance on the membership and accession of SEE countries. It has been generally argued by many authors such as Niebuhr (2008) and Petrovic (2010) that the eastern enlargement is very different from the previous enlargement waves in a number of ways. The majority of the researchers have been focusing on identifying why the SEE countries present a challenge for the European Union or on exploring why SEE countries are so 'eager' to become members of the European Union. Anastasakis (2005) comments that Europeanization is critical for Southeastern countries since it is seen as top priority in their "foreign policy agendas" (p. 82). This creates a situation of 'urge' where the EU accession becomes the ultimate objective and the accession requirements and criteria are blindly followed. According to Anastasakis' (2005) views, this eventually leads to an asymmetry in the power between the two parties (candidate country and the EU) which is explicitly expressed in the inconsistencies and uneven 'obligations' and requirements set for these countries and the patronizing process which the SEE countries undergo for membership.

This exact assumption has been the main driver for the implementation of this study. Originating from the widely expressed view that the European Union adopts variant stances in treating prospective members in the south eastern region, the dissertation has sought to investigate these variant stances from a 'process' perspective predominantly. For this reason the procedures were explored in the

onset of identifying the differences especially in the treatment of three countries: Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey. Greece and Bulgaria are currently official members of the European Union, while Turkey is in the path towards accessing EU. The investigation involved secondary research based on past and present studies on the same subject or relevant subjects as well as on official documents such as Commission's reports on the progress of the countries. The objective of the dissertation was to trace differences in the processes of accession and integration in order to add a new perspective that lies not only on the premise of the contents requirements of the EU but also the process requirements. Having researched several articles, journals and documents the dissertation look at the history of the bilateral relations between those countries and the European Union and has proceeded into an analysis of both the chronology of the negotiations and the eventual accession (in the case of Greece and Turkey).

## **5.2 General Conclusions on the Comparison**

The integration and membership agenda of the European Union when it comes to negotiations and decisions for accession of new members is ever increasing and expanding. This can be observed from the analysis of the three cases as well as the comparative discussion on the three countries. The general conclusions drawn from the investigation of Greece's integration, Bulgaria's integration and Turkey's candidacy point towards making two alternative assumptions: on the one hand what is obvious is that as the EU expands and as it becomes more mature, it eventually deepens and widens simultaneously the criteria for membership. This is of course rather anticipated given the complexity of the integration as well as the focus on the preservation of the European Identity. But this

cannot explain why Greece and Turkey have been treated differently when the two countries' initial bilateral relations with the EC (at the time) were more or less on the same period. Also it cannot explain why Bulgaria and Turkey for which negotiations were held at parallel times were also treated differently by the European Union. So, the dissertation departs from this assumption and supports that enlargement is a matter of identity (European Identity) mostly and political interests rather being drawn on the basis of standardized procedures. In that respect, the 'uneven' application of criteria and requirements is verified in this study.

The present study cannot claim a theoretical foundation for the different treatment of the countries because it has looked into some specific aspects of the integration process and of the membership criteria. The case of Greece shows that the criteria were rather loose and the European Community (at the time) did not strictly adhere to the official and formal requirements but instead it bypassed some of these in order to accelerate the country's membership. The case of Bulgaria shows again that the criteria were not in total consistency with the actual practices and processes, nevertheless a stricter pathway was followed by the European Union. The case of Turkey shows that the European Union has exhausted its strictness in regards to the integration and the requirements and still the uncertainty of the Turkish membership prevails. Therefore, it is assumed that the integration process is selectively implemented in regards to the application of the formal criteria and more importantly that the matter of European Identity is dominant (as in the case of Turkey).

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