CHAPTER 17

INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FUTURE OF EUROPE FROM THE POLISH POLITICAL SCIENCE PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The article examines the significance of the expansion of the European Union for post-communist countries in 2004 and afterwards. However, it also shows what added value the expansion to the East represented. The admission of culturally diverse countries with different traditions allowed the construction of Europe in line with the vision adopted in the Treaty of Lisbon. Thanks to Central Europe, it became a fact that the Old Continent was united in diversity, as its slogan says. In this context and from the perspective of the Central European countries, the paper presents an opinion on the latest proposals for changes in the Community treaties. Discussion is critical now when the Russian invasion of Ukraine complicated the geopolitical situation in Central Europe and within the European Union as a whole.

Furthermore, the heroic defence of Ukrainians opened the door to the European Union for Kyiv, putting the need to reform EU treaties on the agenda again. However, the proposals for new treaties may paradoxically weaken Europe's defence, which is even more dangerous for the countries located on the eastern border of the European Union and NATO.

Keywords: European Union, Treaty reform, Central Europe, Future of Europe

1. Instead of an introduction – A short history of European integration until the Treaty of Maastricht and the Treaty of Nice from an institutional perspective

The history of European integration is full of twists and turns along with the evolution of the forms of cooperation. Yet one thing remains unchanged. European integration is the result of decisions made by the leaders of individual countries, who wanted to strengthen the position of their capitals in the international arena. It was therefore a conscious action in the interest of nation states. The first step was the signing of the Treaty of Paris and establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in April 1951. The purpose of this agreement was preventive, it was intended to create mechanisms that would guarantee peace on the European continent by deepening economic cooperation while agreeing to provide supra-state control over raw materials that could be used for armaments. The six countries signing the document (France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg) were, most importantly, bound by the terms of the largest three states. The following two Treaties of Rome on the European Economic Community and on the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) signed by the same group of countries in March 1957 expanded and deepened the areas of economic cooperation.

This structure turned out to be appealing and attracted new candidates. A pivotal event was when one of the world's most powerful economies, Great Britain acceded to the European Communities which, together with Denmark and Ireland, became a member of the Union on 1 January 1973. A few years later, in 1981, Greece joined the European Communities, followed by Spain and Portugal in 1986. The enlargements from 1973 through 1981 doubled the size of the European Communities compared with the number of the founding countries. This process led to the first reform efforts which resulted in the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in February 1992 and the founding of the European Union at the beginning of 1993.

The change in the form of cooperation thereby defined is evidenced by the provision in Article G, which states that the term 'European Economic Community' shall be replaced by the term 'European Community'[1]. Regarding declarations, it was recognised that the European Union thus established would be an association of states interested not only in economic but also political cooperation. In Maastricht, it was agreed not only to expand the scope of common economic policy but also to initiate the creation of a monetary union, and the areas of cooperation were supplemented with foreign policy, internal security and military policy. Moreover, the new treaty came into force just after the German unification, making Germany the most prominent European country with over 83 million citizens and having the most robust economy compared with others. As researchers of the subject aptly point out, one

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1   Skolimowska, 2014, p. 64.

of the reasons for building the eurozone was to limit the role of the German central bank. 'France and Italy, among others, hoped that the introduction of the euro would eliminate the exclusive position of the Bundesbank in shaping monetary policy and allow for greater control by Community countries'.[2] Austria, Sweden and Finland joined the European Union in 1995 under such conditions. At the same time, the Norwegians and the Swiss rejected the idea of joining the Community in a referendum. In Norway, the public voted against the accession on two occasions, the first time in September 1972, and the second time in November 1994.[3] The Swiss rejected the option of joining the European Union in a referendum held in December 1992, where 50.3% of Swiss people voted against integration with a 78.3% turnout.[4]

The failure of the accession referendum in Norway and Switzerland has shaken the European project. It showed that only some were ready for further integration and giving up their sovereignty. It was under these circumstances that Central European countries entered the international arena in Europe and, as a result of the Autumn of Nations, regained their sovereignty due to the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the disintegration of the Soviet state. The ability to freely decide one's fate was quickly manifested in the first steps towards integration with the institutions of Western Europe. First, the Central European countries sought admission to the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), but above all, the main goal was to gain membership in the European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance. Other activities in the regional arena were also subordinated to this goal. It is worth mentioning here that the declared goal of the Visegrad Group, established in February 1991, was the cooperation of the then three Central European countries (Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary) for European integration.[5] The subsidiary nature of this decision is evidenced by the fact that the V4 countries remain unformalised to this day, without any statute, institutional bodies such as a secretariat, or budget gained from the contributions of member states. It was the result of awe that establishing the Visegrad Group as a fully-fledged international organisation would be regarded in the West as an alternative integration project. As history has shown, this strategy turned out to be effective. The V4 became a kind of stabiliser in the region, reactivating and separating Central Europe from the entire Eastern Bloc which plunged into chaos in the early 1990s, becoming one of the most important partners for the European Union in its eastern neighbourhood.[6] Evidently, for some members of the European Union, admitting Central European

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2   Gwóźdź-Lasoń, Miklaszewski and Pujer, 2017, p. 10.

3   Boryczka-Cichy, 2012, pp. 242–243.

4   Tomczyk, 2013, p. 132.

5   The title of the document establishing the Visegrad Group made this perfectly clear: 'Declaration on Cooperation between the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Hungary in Striving for European Integration', see: Visegrad Group (1991) *The Visegrad Declaration* [Online]. Available at: www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/visegrad-declarations/ deklapl (Accessed: 27 November 2023).

6   Bajda, 2015, pp. 190–192.

countries to the ccommunity meant more of a problem than an opportunity. The best example of this may be the foreign policy of French President François Mitterrand, who, instead of opening up the EU to post-communist countries, proposed building a loose European confederation accessible to even the Soviet Union (later the Russian Federation), and intended to limit deeper integration only to Western Europe.

Fortunately, the calendar of historical events, including the collapse of the Soviet state, the civil war in the Balkans, and the determination of Central European leaders resulted in the European Community taking action to prepare the EU for major enlargement.

Consequently, the Treaty of Nice was signed in February 2001, which entered into force two years later and was intended to improve the functioning of the larger union. One of the main provisions was the extension of the scope of issues subject to qualified majority voting. For this purpose, votes in the Council of the European Union were divided between individual member states and candidate states, ranging from 29 to 3 for the smallest countries. Theoretically, the number of votes allocated was to reflect the size of the population of each country. The Federal Republic of Germany had a population of over 82 million. They had 29 votes in the Council of the European Union, the same number the three other largest parties to the Treaty: Great Britain, France, and Italy held all together.[7] The following number of votes was allocated to the countries preparing to join the European Union in 2004: Poland 27, the Czech Republic and Hungary 12 each, Slovakia and Lithuania 7 each, Latvia, Slovenia, Estonia, Cyprus and Malta 3 each. For candidates with whom further accession negotiations were conducted, 14 votes were reserved for Romania and 10 for Bulgaria. This meant that a total of 80 votes out of 321 were reserved for the group of 10 countries about to join the European Union. After the accession of Bulgaria and Romania, the new members held a total of 104 votes out of 345. According to the new provisions of the Treaty, a proposal submitted to a qualified majority voting required 74.8% of the votes from 51.9% of the member states if it was put forward by the European Commission, or needed the support of 66.6% of the countries if it was upon the initiative of one of the member states. Moreover, countries supporting the proposal had to represent a minimum of 62% of European Union citizens. Theoretically, after the first major enlargement, the new EU members could be outvoted by the rest because the countries with a longer history of membership had the required majority of 241 votes, and only the accession of Bulgaria and Romania in 2009 allowed for the more effective blocking of unfavourable solutions. However, when deciding on specific provisions of the Nice Treaty, the signatories possibly had limiting Germany's influence on their mind – since in their case, the principle of

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7   According to Article 3 Provisions concerning the weighting of votes in the Council of the Treaty of Nice amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts – Protocol annexed to the Treaty on European Union and the Treaties establishing the European Communities (Official Journal of the European Communities C80/1, 2001, p. 50).

proportionality in the number of votes assigned was clearly violated – rather than plans to impose their will on the new members of the European Community.

2. 2004 enlargement of the EU as a new hope for Europe

The accession of ten new countries to the European Union on 1 May 2004 changed the character of the community. From a club of relatively wealthy 15 members, suddenly emerged a union of 25 countries, including eight post-communist countries with a unique baggage of experience and, particularly, economic backwardness. It was a one-time increase of 66% in the number of member states. As one researcher of European integration aptly noted,

> the admission of Poland and other Central European countries to the European Union was a thoroughly geopolitical project, the aim of which was to include this region of Europe in the transatlantic strategic system'.[8]

However, the major enlargement's additional purpose was to give the European Union new hope. Brussels could boast of success after losing the referenda in Norway and Switzerland. Additionally, the admission of ten new members highlighted the rich diversity of a united Europe. A few years later (2007), the first country using the Cyrillic alphabet (Bulgaria) was admitted to the European Union.

Contrary to the reluctance of France to admit new members as mentioned above, other countries, especially Germany, Great Britain and the United States harboured geopolitical calculations, and as a result, advocated the eastern enlargement of the European Union. Interestingly, each of these countries was guided by different political interests. With the accession of Central European countries, Washington wanted to expand the area of stability and anchor the new members of the community more firmly in the processes of economic and political cooperation with the West, which was an essential complementary factor after the admission of the first countries to NATO. First, in 1999, for Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, and subsequently, for as many as seven countries (Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) in 2004. For Berlin, it was important to move the EU's external border further east and use its economic advantage to conquer new markets. In turn, Great Britain saw the enlargement of the European Community to include eastern neighbours as an opportunity to strengthen the transatlantic option favoured by London and weaken centralist tendencies that deepened EU integration.[9]

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8   Grosse, 2012, p. 90.
9   Ibid., pp. 90–91.

The aspirations of Central European countries to obtain membership in European and transatlantic organisations was a natural reflex and goal after the fall of communism, which in this region created a vast open grey zone susceptible to the competition of various ideas. In the 1990s, the European Union was undoubtedly the most significant regional power, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union into sixteen independent states. Moreover, over the years, the emerging promise of membership in the European Community motivated candidates to adopt EU regulations, open their markets to goods and services, and resolve disputes peacefully.[10] The candidate countries voluntarily submitted to the Europeanisation process, counting on future benefits and, one might add, breaking out of the grey security zone. However, as Zielonka mentioned above, the EU's intrusiveness was already felt at the time, which defined Brussels' policy.

> The EU not only told the Eastern European candidates what to do – for example, in terms of legislative changes or administrative reforms – but also sent its representatives to individual ministries to check whether the changes were being implemented in accordance with the recommendations contained in the twinning programme.[11]

At times Brussels ruthlessly penetrated areas reserved for the sovereign decision of states, such as demand for the liberalisation of the Latvian and Estonian citizenship law, opening the way to the naturalisation of many Russians living in either of the two former Soviet republics, which was against the national interests and the security of Riga and Tallinn.

It is also worth noting that Europeanisation was not the only proposal Central European states were offered. The Russian Federation, rebuilding its position in the international arena, tried to find a foothold in the region. The closest it got to implementing this plan was in the Slovak Republic during the government of Prime Minister Vadimír Mečiar in 1994–1998. His style of government, violation of democratic procedures, and attempts to monopolise the Slovak political scene resulted in Bratislava being excluded from the group of the first countries invited to accession talks with the European Union and the NATO. In these circumstances, Moscow proposed that the government in Slovakia establish closer political and economic relations with Russia. To this end, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin visited Bratislava in February 1995, and Prime Minister Vadimír Mečiar returned the visit to Moscow six months later. It was then agreed upon, among other things, that a framework for military cooperation, conditions for Russian assistance in expanding the Slovak nuclear power plant in Mochovce, and a customs union project be considered. However, the most dangerous idea was embodied in the statements of Slovak leaders supporting the declaration of Bratislava's neutrality,

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10   For more, see Zielonka, 2007, p. 71.
11   Ibid., p. 73.

which the Russian Federation would guarantee.[12] If realised, this scenario would have created a belt of neutral countries consisting of Switzerland, Austria and Slovakia, which would effectively break the cohesion of the North Atlantic Alliance. Fortunately, the parliamentary elections in Slovakia in September 1989 resulted in Vadimír Mečiar being removed from power. The new government of Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda accelerated the integration process with the EU and NATO, which led to Slovakia's inclusion in the first group of countries joining the European Community in May 2004 and the North Atlantic Alliance as part of the second round of enlargement by seven Central European countries two months earlier.[13]

However, this longer description of a single case study of an EU candidate country exemplifies that the Europeanisation process was one of many propositions in the international arena, and that Moscow, reverting to its imperial policy, tried to challenge Brussels. Today, similar competition for influence can be observed not only in the post-Soviet but also in the post-Yugoslav area.

Nevertheless, the major enlargement of the European Union by ten new countries radically changed the face of the Community. On the one hand, there was the accession of countries that were definitely poorer (except for Malta and Cyprus), even when compared with the not-so-wealthy Portugal and Greece. On the other hand, it moved the entire Community to the East to a considerable degree, integrating a sizeable post-communist area. May 2004 had one additional effect on the European Union: by reason of the enlargement, the EU became a community predominantly consisting of small countries. It should be noted that with a population of almost 38 million citizens, Poland alone was more populous than the nine accession countries together (35.3 million) and only slightly smaller in area – 312,696 km^2 as opposed to the 425,698 km^2 of the remaining ones. Only Romania's accession in 2007 changed these proportions somewhat, but Bulgaria – which joined together with Bucharest – and, subsequently, Croatia could hardly be classified as medium-sized countries. Naturally, the goal of EU enlargement was not the creation of a club for small countries; nonetheless, it is worth looking at the consequences of these processes. The first apparent impact was the frequent need to build consensus between the 25 and then 27 countries. Another result noted by Zielonka is that due to Brussels's somewhat protectionist approach to the new members, there was visible temptation to further impose Europeanisation from above. The voting power assigned to individual countries under the qualified majority voting procedure made it relatively easy to build a blocking coalition. Therefore, by implementing the Treaty of Nice, preparations were made for a more profound reform of the European Union. The literature on the subject calls this debate the "Nice compromise", which included focusing on the accession of new countries while opening a discussion on the reform of the Treaty. The directions of this debate were included in the "Declaration on the Future of the Union" adopted at the meeting of the European Council in December

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12   For more, see Bajda, 2010, pp. 108–115.
13   Ibid., pp. 169–171.

2000. The document assumed that the aim of these efforts should be to simplify the Treaties, precisely divide the competencies between the Community and the member states, agree on the status of the Charter of Fundamental Rights adopted in Nice, and strengthen the democratic legitimacy of the EU by extending the competences of European national parliaments in EU matters.[14]

3. The Treaty of Lisbon as a step towards deeper integration

The path leading to the Treaty of Lisbon began with the cognizance of the need for a sweeping organisational and systemic reform of the European Union. The previous Treaties of 1951–1957 inaugurating post-war international cooperation on the Old Continent set up three international organisations: the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Economic Community, and the European Atomic Energy Community – Euratom. Each of them had its own statute and relevant executive bodies. Simultaneously, under the Treaty of Rome in 1957, the origins of the European Parliament and the Court of Justice were created. A multitude of these solutions contributed to making the first attempt at structural order, sought by the so-called "Merger Treaty" signed in Brussels in 1965, on the basis of which bodies of the previously mentioned three institutions were merged into the Commission of the European Communities and a single Council was established.[15] However, it did not mean a formal merger of the ECSC, EEC and Euratom; it materialised only under the Treaty of Maastricht signed in December 1991 and with the establishment of the European Union. Nonetheless, the way to a comprehensive and integrated community was still long, and the institutional frameworks set up were based on three pillars of cooperation. The first one, which related to economic issues, was based on the final combination of three of the aforementioned international organisations. Thus the European Union, created within the first pillar, adopted its international and legal character from its predecessors, and became a typical, supranational, intergovernmental organisation. At the same time, the two remaining pillars, i.e. the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and cooperation in the field of Justice and Home Affairs did not have such rigid institutional frameworks. Cooperation within these two pillars took place under the international regime. Understood as a solution

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14   Barcz, 2008, p. 12.
15   Traité instituant un Conseil Unique et une Commission Unique des Communauté Européennes [Online]. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PL/TXT/?uri=CELEX:11965F/TXT (Accessed: 12 December 2023).

of a nature of non-formal models of states' behaviours, it aspired to fill in a loophole existing between a norm of international law binding subjects of international relations and their right to independence and freedom of action in the international environment.[16]

It touched on sensitive areas over which the states intended to maintain full sovereignty, and only later was migration and asylum policy slightly communitarised. The question of the sovereignty of member states in the European Union is beyond the scope of this article. However, it is worth noting that the leaders in countries have to calculate profits and losses, and decide in which areas and on what terms and conditions transferring other national competencies to the community level will be profitable.

The Treaty of Maastricht was of crucial importance for the countries of Central Europe. The Treaty was received as a signal of Western Europe's readiness to expand the European Union and as a positive response to the political changes after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc. It was a sound of hope for post-communist countries and triggered pro-European mobilisation.

Another two legal acts – the Treaty of Amsterdam of October 1997 and the aforementioned Treaty of Nice, were of an auxiliary nature, technically preparing the EU for a considerable expansion to the East. In this second case, additionally, further reformss were envisaged, seeking to simplify the Treaties by improving their clarity and comprehensibility, specifying the division of competencies between the EU and member states in compliance with the principles of subsidiarity, determining the formal-legal character of the Charter of Fundamental Rights (adopted in Nice) and explaining the role of national parliaments in the construction of the European Community.[17]

In consequence, the Constitutional Treaty was adopted in October 2004 which, apart from the simplification of the primary law, proposed the use of symbolic elements in the form of a hymn or a motto 'unity in diversity', and foreshadowed the introduction of Union acts or functions of Union ministers. It was supposed to prove the willingness to transform the European Union into a quasi-state structure, which provoked anxiety in the citizens of many countries, and prompted the French and the Dutch to reject the project in a referendum.[18] The negative decision of two of the founders of the European Community released other states from the obligation of ratification: eventually, Denmark, Poland, Portugal, Ireland, Great Britain and the Czech Republic did not hold a referendum.

The draft of the Treaty of Lisbon was a partial step back. On the one hand, it derived from the provisions of the rejected Constitution for Europe. However,

16   Skolimowska, 2014, p. 63.
17   Myszona-Kostrzewa, 2005.
18   Kabat-Rudnicka, 2016, pp. 31–32.

it abandoned plans to replace the founding documents. Therefore, the hitherto tested means of amendment was used, as in the case of the Treaty of Amsterdam and the Treaty of Nice, by introducing changes to the founding documents.[19]

Yet with the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, the nature of the European Union changed. Extending the scope of decisions requiring qualified majority voting enabled the most substantial countries to use arguments of force. It replaced the previous method of functioning on the basis of consensus. From then on, the European Court of Justice began to be used as a tool for disciplining those who resisted the new orders. This situation is particularly dangerous for small Central European countries. In practice, the new rules deprive them of the ability to block even the most alarming decisions. Institutionalisation of the European Union and, in theory, drafting treaties to the letter of the law weaken informal mechanisms in which the possibilities of small states are severely limited. Moreover, from the perspective of small states, the added value is the integrating function of international organisations (i.e. EU), harmonising rules and changing relations between states to a more conciliatory attitude, for breaking these rules exposes the perpetrator to the use of disciplinary or sanctioning measures. An integrated and solid organisation has sufficient capacity to take on administrative or operational roles, such as conducting humanitarian activities or peacekeeping operations.[20] Consequently, minor actors in international relations are in no need to perform independent activities which, due to limited human resources, allows those in state administration to be entrusted with other tasks. There is another reason to support deepening integration and institutionalisation. The European Union, due to the strength of its member states, has extensive knowledge in various areas, such as economics or social data, which are available to the members of the Community and is broader than national in nature, facilitating more rational decisions.[21]

4. The Conference on the Future of Europe – The start of a discussion on the new Treaty

The German–French idea of opening discussions on the future of European integration was put into action at the end of 2019. This means that discussions commenced before the outbreak of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic and well before Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Work on changes accelerated in March 2021 when European Parliament President David Sassoli, the Prime Minister of Portugal António Costa, on behalf of the Council presidency, and Commission President Ursula von

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19 Byrska, Gawkowski and Liszkowska, 2017, pp. 32–33.
20 Skolimowska, 2014, pp. 37–38.
21 Grøn and Wivel, 2011, p. 523.

der Leyen signed the joint declaration on the Conference on the Future of Europe. We could perceive the full effects of these discussions at the beginning of December 2023. On 7 December, a report summarising the results of the work undertaken by the Conference on the Future of Europe was presented in Brussels during the Council of the European Union meeting. The report is accompanied by a 303-page annex containing 49 proposals and 326 related specific measures. All proposals have been divided into nine chapters: 'A stronger economy, social justice and jobs'; 'Education, culture, youth and sports'; 'Digital transformation'; 'European democracy'; 'Values and rights, rule of law, security'; 'Climate change and the environment'; 'Health'; 'EU in the world'; and 'Migration'.[22] One of the most significant amendments proposed is the abolition of the veto right in Common Foreign and Security Policy, arguing that it is necessary to improve the EU's capacity

> to take speedy and effective decisions, speaking with one voice and acting as a truly global player, projecting a positive role in the world and making a difference in response to any crisis.[23]

Nevertheless, this is only one of the proposed changes as the veto power may be abolished in 65 other cases. That power is proposed to be transferred from the member states to the European Commission on a massive scale.

A vote in the European Parliament preceded the presentation of the draft Treaty amendments. In November 2023, the accompanying resolution was adopted with 291 votes in favour, 274 against, and 44 abstentions. It was not a clear majority but enough to proceed with the proposed changes. The eventual entry into force of the new Treaties will, first of all, strengthen the European Commission and the position of the two largest countries, Germany and France. Under the new conditions, it will be practically impossible to pass any decisions without the consent of Berlin or Paris. It is very well demonstrated by the voting calculator on the official website of the European Union.[24] For example, suppose no veto power exists in defence and security issues. In that case, the countries on the eastern side of the European Union will not even be able to build a blocking minority. Furthermore, the war in Ukraine has shown that maintaining the right to make autonomous decisions in the area of security and foreign policy is a crucial prerogative for the countries located on the eastern borders of the European Union.

It is difficult to agree with the argument that only by amending the Treaties will further enlargement of the European Union be possible. After all, Croatia's accession to the European Union took place under the regime of the current Lisbon Treaty.

The postulate of building European strategic autonomy is particularly dangerous. From the perspective of Central European countries, this means pushing out

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22   For more, see Council of the European Union, 2023.
23   Ibid., p. 150.
24   Voting calculator of the European Union, see: European Commission, 2023b.

the United States, which today is the most crucial security guarantor in Europe. It is said that NATO was created with the purpose of keeping the Americans in Europe, the Russians out, and the Germans down. In a pessimistic scenario, we risk that Americans will be "out", Russia "in", and Germany will "rise". The potential reason why even a great Euroenthusiast – the new Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk – is very cautious about new ideas.

5. Conclusions

The proposed amendments to the Treaty signal a dangerous trend of centralisation of the European Union. Instead of building a European community on consensual principles and the principle of subsidiarity, we may soon have a concert of powers. The new European Union will be far from a federal system, contrary to the public belief that the goal is to build a federal European community. To build a common state, we need European demos first. There is fear that building a deeply integrated European Union will end in its collapse. If weaker countries are forced to accept decisions that are adverse for them, a rise in nationalist sentiment can be expected. Moreover, this is the most likely scenario for the European Union to end up like the Soviet Union in the end.

However, the saddest of it all are the perceived trends in the narrative about the European Union. The first result of these processes will be new textbooks on European integration. It turns out that in place of the previous four founding fathers of the European Union (Konrad Adenauer, Alcide de Gasperi, Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman), the most important one is actually a former Italian communist, Altiero Spinelli and his Manifesto of Ventotene.[25]

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25   For more on Altiero Spinelli in EU narratives, see: European Commission, 2023b.

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